

**Testimony of**  
**Rohit T. Aggarwala**  
**Chief Climate Officer**  
**and**  
**Commissioner, New York City Department of Environmental Protection**

**before the**  
**New York City Council**  
**Committee on Environmental Protection, Resiliency, and Waterfronts**  
**and**  
**Committee on Parks and Recreation**

**October 11, 2023**

Good afternoon, Chair Gennaro, Chair Krishnan, and members of the Committees on Environmental Protection, Resiliency, and Waterfronts and Parks and Recreation. I am Rohit T. Aggarwala, Chief Climate Officer of New York City. I oversee the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice (MOCEJ), and I am also the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). I am joined today by Elijah Hutchinson, the new Executive Director of MOCEJ; and Marit Larson, Assistant Commissioner of Natural Resources and Planning, at the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks).

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today on New York City's climate resiliency efforts. Climate change is here. We have all witnessed its impact, as recently as less than two weeks ago, when Tropical Storm Ophelia brought extreme rainfall on September 29.

Since day one, the Adams administration has been focused on better preparing the city for the impacts of climate change, including creating my position as the city's Chief Climate Officer. As the first person to serve in the role, I work closely with the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice, also created by Mayor Adams by combining several separate offices, bringing environmental justice to the forefront.

MOCEJ leads the city's efforts to ensure New York City is reducing its emissions while also protecting New Yorkers from the intensifying impacts of climate change. With a focus on equity and public health, MOCEJ works to make buildings efficient and resilient; ensure infrastructure is climate-ready; transform streets and the public realm into living, open spaces; and make energy clean and resilient.

I am particularly excited about the addition of Executive Director Hutchinson to MOCEJ. He previously led coastal resilience and new greenway initiatives as Vice President for Waterfronts at the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC). His work and ideas will be central to this city's climate policy, including its resiliency policy going forward, and I am pleased to have him as my colleague.

## Climate Hazards: Why Resiliency Is Important

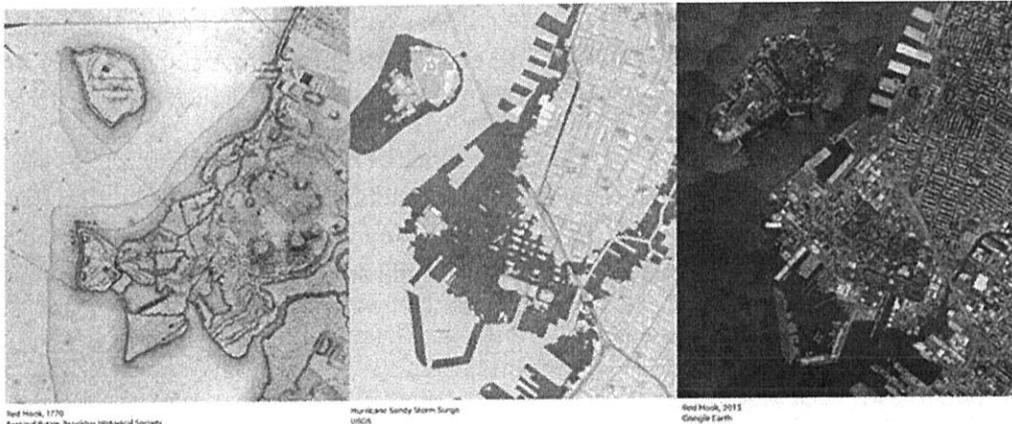
Climate change presents a real threat to New York City and the 8.4 million New Yorkers who call it home. According to the New York City Panel on Climate Change, sea levels in New York City have already risen by a foot since 1900 and are expected to rise by up to 5.4 additional feet by the end of the century, contributing to chronic tidal flooding and heightened coastal storm surge. The city's average annual precipitation is projected to increase up to 10 percent in the 2030s and as much as 30 percent by 2100.

The events we experienced last month were the latest example of our new normal. It was frightening, but what's even scarier is we know more of these events are coming. We have had three record-breaking rainfalls in the last two years. This September was the wettest month the city has experienced in 100 years.

Though we have been focused in recent weeks on extreme rainfall, I want to point out that extreme heat kills more people, in New York and nationally, than all other climate threats combined. Last summer, 370 New Yorkers died of heat-related illnesses and Black New Yorkers die of heat-related illness at twice the rate of white New Yorkers. Extreme heat is getting worse: New York City's annual average temperature is projected to increase up to almost five degrees Fahrenheit by the 2030s. There are projected to be up to six times as many days above 90 degrees per year by the 2080s from our current baseline.

Access to air conditioning, which saves lives, is generally high but as low as 76 percent in certain neighborhoods. The majority of people who die from heat exposure inside their homes die in apartments without a functioning air conditioner. Cooling is a life-saving feature that needs to be part of New York City's building regulations.

If we were in any doubt climate change is upon us, as of the last five years, New York City is now within the humid subtropical climate zone, which requires that summers average above 72 degrees and that winters average above 27 degrees. When we face flooding events like we experienced last month, we must remember we are a coastal city built on historic waterways. Most of the locations that experienced severe flooding on September 29 were in fact locations that were streams, creeks, tidal flats, or other waterways before they were filled in for development. As the historian Eric Sanderson and author of *Mannahatta* wrote, water has memory.



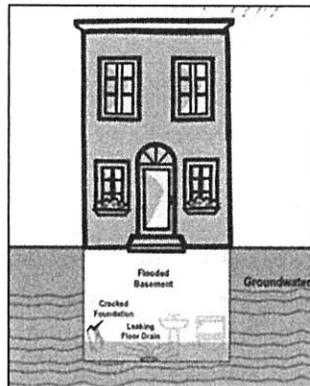
## Flooding Types

Climate change brings more intense and more frequent flooding events because it adds extra moisture to the atmosphere, making storms more intense and harder to manage. There are several different types of flooding, with different causes and different management techniques.

Late last month, areas of the city were hit with extreme rainfall, or cloudbursts. It was the most intense rainfall since Hurricane Ida two years ago. During cloudburst events, a lot of rain falls in a short time, which can overwhelm stormwater management systems.

Low-lying areas, areas with poor drainage, and areas with insufficient stormwater infrastructure, including inland neighborhoods, are particularly vulnerable to stormwater flooding.

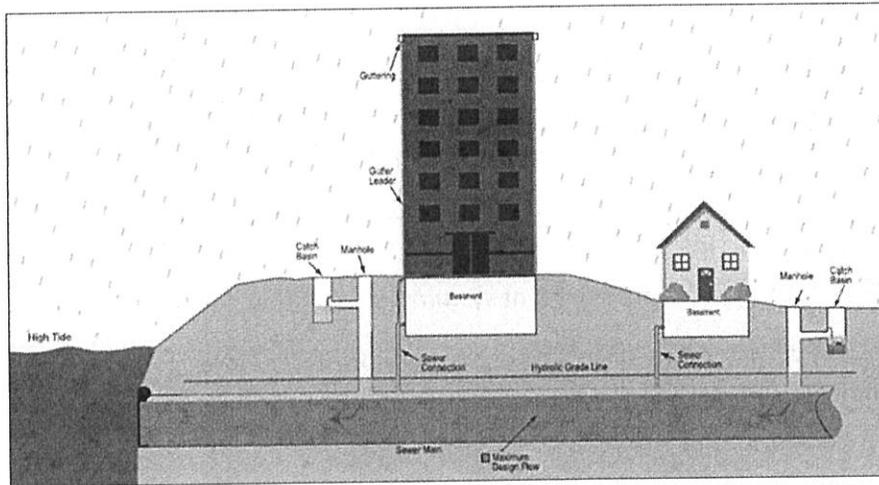
Both cloudburst events and slow, steady rain can lead to groundwater flooding. Groundwater flooding occurs when the ground becomes so oversaturated it can no longer hold the water. If water finds penetration points, such as cracks in foundation or a leaking floor drain, it starts to seep into basements.



Properties along the city's 520-mile coastline are vulnerable to two additional types of flooding: coastal surges and chronic tidal floods. Coastal surges happen when a large amount of seawater rushes onto land, as the city experienced during Hurricane Sandy. The frequency and intensity of coastal surges are exacerbated by sea level rise. Since 1900, sea level in our city has risen 12 inches and is projected to continue to increase by as much as 6.25 feet by 2100.

Chronic tidal flooding, which is also called sunny day flooding because it can occur on sunny days, occurs when water from regular high tides breaches the land, even without storms. This impacts our low-lying coastal communities. Sections of the city's coastline will be subject to daily tidal flooding by the 2050s. Some low-lying areas are already experiencing chronic tidal flooding.

High tides can also exacerbate other types of flooding. Tides can even impact inland communities, if high tide water comes up the sewer system outfall and prevents stormwater from draining, leading to street flooding and oversaturating the ground, contributing to groundwater flooding. Some of the hardest hit areas on September 29 were contending with tidal flooding and extreme rainfall at the same time.



## City's Climate Work: Fighting Against and Adapting to Climate Change

Under Mayor Adams, MOCEJ and partner agencies have been advancing short-, medium- and long-term solutions to respond to these many threats. We call this a multi-layered, multi-hazard approach.

In the summer of last year, the mayor and I announced *Rainfall Ready*, which outlines steps the city and New Yorkers can take to combat extreme rainfall. It built on initiatives announced in *The New Normal*, which was put out within weeks of Hurricane Ida and outlined actions to protect New Yorkers from future intense precipitation events.

Recently, the Mayor released *PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done*, the administration's first holistic climate plan. *PlaNYC* builds on lessons from Hurricanes Sandy and Ida, from the climate plans of previous administrations, and from goals outlined in *The New Normal*. Rather than just outlining a vision, this is an action plan, focused on real, impactful actions to make things happen, including leveraging unprecedented federal funding.

Just six months after its release, many of the plan's 72 initiatives are underway, including our stormwater flooding adaptation plan, housing mobility program, tree canopy expansion, implementation of congestion pricing, and, in collaboration with our partners at the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), our world-class, neighborhood scale coastal protection projects.

We are not done. Just last month, we released *Getting 97 Done*, a mobilization strategy for buildings to comply with Local Law 97, which the Council passed in 2019. We also released *PowerUp NYC*, the city's first long-term energy plan.

## Combatting Flooding

The city is combating flooding with a variety of measures, but it goes without saying that changing infrastructure takes a serious investment of time and money. Projects need engineers, project managers, and procurement staff, which limits the number of projects we can do at once. The bigger the project, the faster that work is done, but the more projects we tackle at once, the more it is going to cost. DEP's flooding resiliency work is funded by water rate money. We must be cognizant that more

investment more quickly could mean raising water rates. When making decisions about balancing needs, we have to factor in ratepayers' needs.

More than 70 percent of New York City is covered by surfaces that aren't absorbent, which means more than 70 percent of the city's surface is not managing flood waters. Traditionally, the city has relied on storm sewer systems to remove flood water from our streets, but our sewer infrastructure was designed for a different weather world than the one we have now. Some parts of the city have sewers only designed to manage 1.5 inches of rain, or less, in an hour. Our current standard is 1.75 inches per hour.

When the intensity exceeds that rate, the stormwater sewers can't keep up with the pace and streets can begin to flood. During Hurricane Ida, parts of the city received 3.75 inches in an hour – more than twice the maximum sewer capacity. During Tropical Storm Ophelia, some areas were hit with more than 2.5 inches in one hour. It becomes a problem when intense rain continues over time; this is why we saw flooding on September 29 but not the previous weekend, when there was a steady but slow rain over several days. We are currently re-evaluating our 1.75-inch standard, but it is not feasible to create a sewer system large enough to manage the most intense storms. Sewers are just one tool in the toolbox for managing water.

#### Sewer Improvements

DEP has recently completed a citywide all-pipes hydraulic model. Through this several year-effort, DEP has produced a first-of-its-kind and comprehensive digital representation of the city's sewer system, which will be used to analyze the existing system performance and for drainage planning. DEP will continue to refine and build upon the model to maximize its utility. This will help support capital planning, prioritization, stormwater management, and flood mitigation. In addition, DEP will use the model to better integrate innovative solutions, such as the Bluebelt program, with traditional grey infrastructure to meet current and future drainage needs.

#### Long-Term Sewer Improvements

DEP has been working with the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and other partner agencies to expand stormwater sewer systems, particularly in areas that were developed without them, like areas of Southeast Queens.

For several years, DEP and partner agencies have been working on a \$2.6 Billion project to install storm sewers and other critical infrastructure throughout neighborhoods in Southeast Queens. Part of the funding the city dedicated to infrastructure after Hurricane Ida was allocated for ramping up sewer expansions specifically in this area.

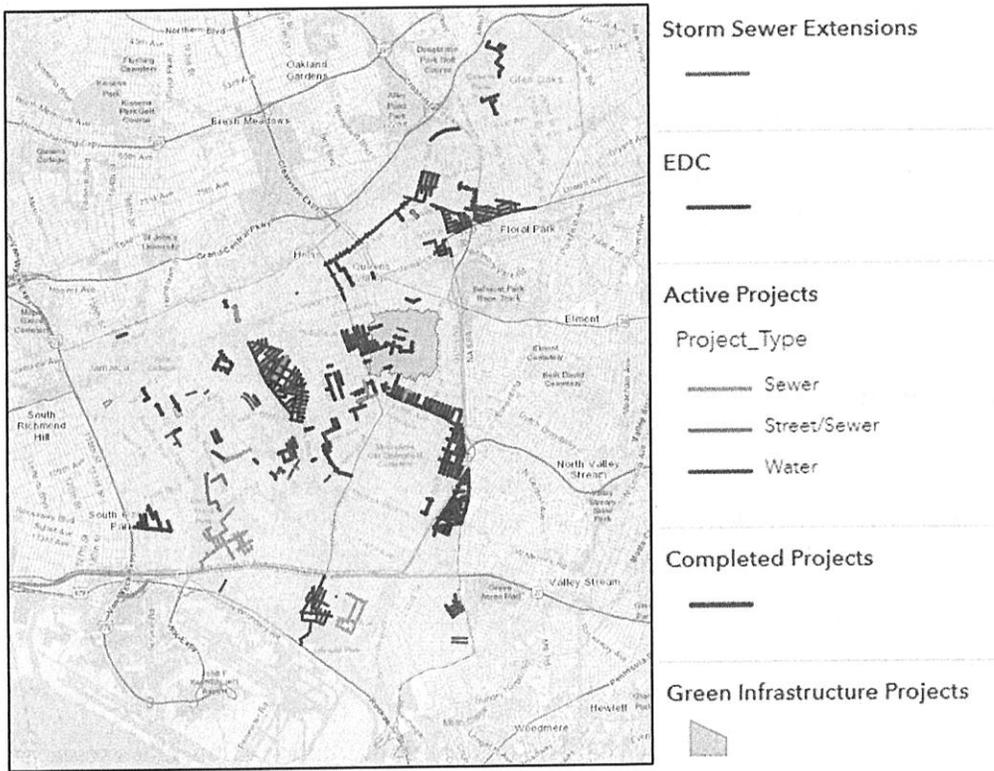
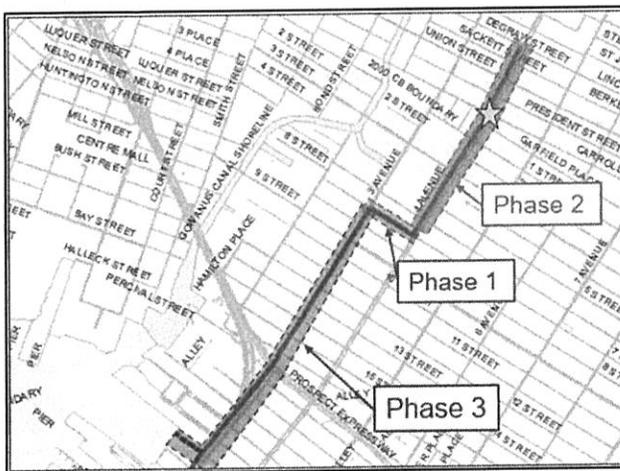


Image: Southeast Queens Projects

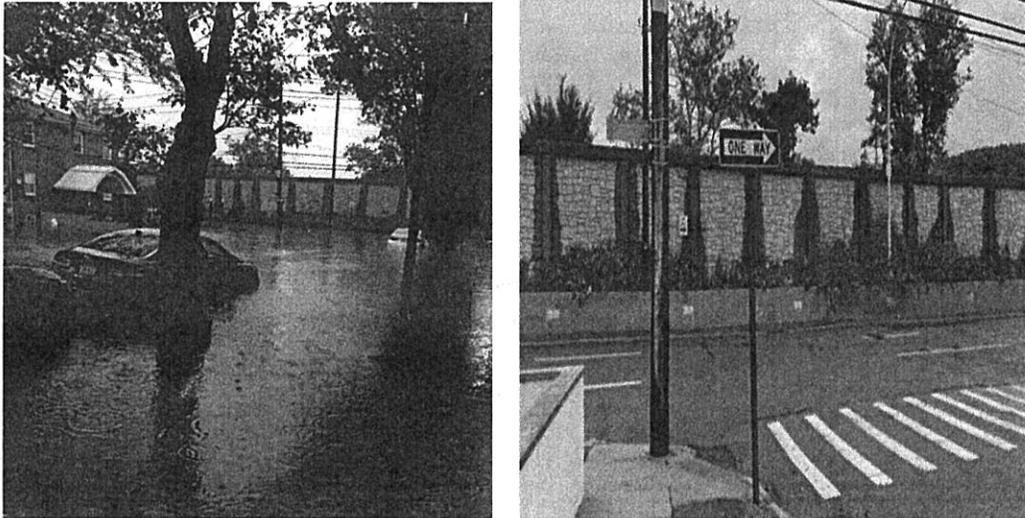
DDC and DEP are engaged in a storm sewer project in Gowanus that will lead to cleaner water and reduce flooding. This ongoing work will reduce flooding in Gowanus and Park Slope, in particular prioritizing the area around the intersection of 4th Avenue and Carroll Street, which experiences flooding regularly even during storms that don't rise to the intensity of one like Ophelia. With this work, we expect a 40 percent reduction in flooding during a typical storm by next year and a 100 percent reduction in 10 years.



- **Phase 1:** 7<sup>th</sup> St. between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Ave.
  - Increase capacity by 78%
  - 2024 à 40% flood reduction
- **Phase 2:** 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. between Degraw and 7<sup>th</sup> St.
  - Increase capacity by 167%
  - 2031à 50% flood reduction
- **Phase 3:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. between 7<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> St.
  - Increase capacity by 495%
  - 2033à 100% flood reduction

Image: Gowanus sewer expansion plans, with 4<sup>th</sup> and Carroll noted

Additional major projects are underway in central Queens, Broad Chanel, South Beach, Staten Island, and in Southern Brooklyn. Where projects have been completed, neighborhoods have seen real, significant results. During the storm last month, our teams checked on several previous chronic flooding locations, documenting the impacts of the work.



*Intersection at Sheridan Ave and South Gannon Ave during past storm and the storm on September 29, 2023*

#### Short-Term Sewer Work

Full sewer expansion takes time, so we are looking for shorter term solutions wherever possible, installing high-level storm sewers, which drain directly to the waterways without connecting to the larger sewer system.

We have seen successes with this type of infrastructure. For example, last week, the mayor joined fellow Commissioners, Executive Director Hutchinson, and me to tour the Jewel Street neighborhood in Brooklyn and Queens. This area is commonly nicknamed “the hole,” a reference to its basin shape. For decades, that basin has filled with flood waters any time there is rain, and sometimes when there is sun. In some instances, it has taken literally weeks for the flood waters to fully recede. DEP and our partners have focused efforts in this area, including installing new sewer infrastructure earlier this year. Thanks to that infrastructure work, the approximately seven inches of rain that fell on the neighborhood on September 29 eased within hours and completely dissipated in two days – a significant improvement over Hurricane Ida, when a similar volume of rainfall took weeks to fully clear. The work around “the hole” is not done, but at least we have been able to provide some relief to residents while bigger projects are still pending.

Part of maintaining an effective stormwater sewer system is ensuring water can actually get into the sewers, which means making sure all of the city’s approximately 150,000 catch basins are functioning properly. Last year, DEP implemented a data-driven inspection schedule that prioritizes catch basins and commercial and other heavily trafficked areas, where we have found that cleanings are needed more often. With this schedule, catch basins in the highest need areas are proactively inspected twice per year and basins in lower need areas are proactively inspected less frequently. This allows our teams to use limited resources as effectively and efficiently as possible.

## Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure refers to infrastructure assets that, in contrast to “gray infrastructure” like sewers, absorb water and allow it to naturally infiltrate into the ground. New York City has been investing heavily in a variety of green infrastructure asset types, including:

- Rain gardens, infiltration basins, stormwater green streets
- Green roofs, blue roofs
- Permeable pavement
- Subsurface detention systems
- Rain barrels and cisterns
- Daylighting natural water bodies

Between 2012 and 2022, DEP and partners have “greened” about 2,300 acres of land around the five boroughs. About 90 percent of our green infrastructure has been installed in environmental justice neighborhoods.

Green infrastructure is particularly beneficial because it manages stormwater before the water gets to sewers, keeping volume out of the system. We estimate newly installed green infrastructure will capture more than 369 million gallons of stormwater annually. In addition, green infrastructure provides important “co-benefits” for communities, beyond managing stormwater. These additional benefits include increased urban greening, reduced urban heat island impact, more habitats for birds and pollinators around the city, and general beautification of city streets.

## Bluebelts

The city remains committed to expanding its Bluebelt Program. Bluebelts increase the system’s capacity by utilizing existing streams, ponds, and wetlands, partnering these natural bodies with storm sewers to safely drain large volumes of stormwater. The water naturally filters before eventually flowing to the New York Harbor. There are 94 Bluebelts citywide. Staten Island’s 83 Bluebelts provide drainage for more than a third of the island. There are also 10 in Queens and one in the Bronx. Several additional Bluebelts are currently in the pipeline, and DEP engineers are determining what sites around the city are feasible for future Bluebelts.

A secondary benefit of Bluebelts is they attract birds and other wildlife, improving the city’s ecological health, increasing biodiversity, beautifying neighborhoods, and even contributing to increasing property values in their neighborhoods. We are always looking for opportunities for more community-driven infrastructure, like Bluebelts, that serves multiple purposes.

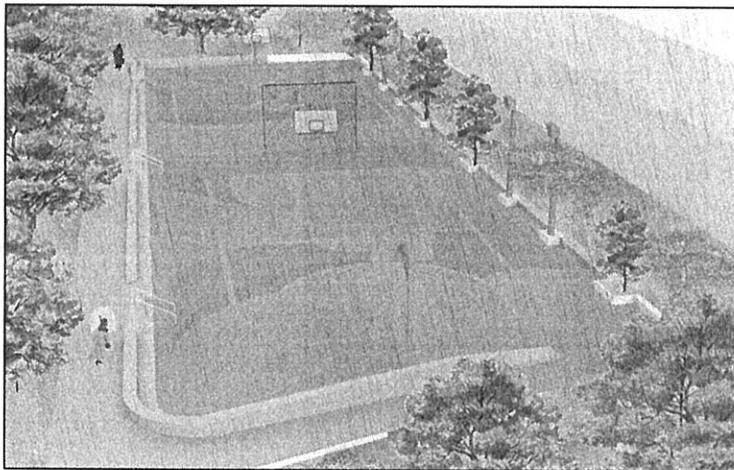
## Cloudburst Systems

This past January, the administration announced four cloudburst hubs in Corona/Flushing Park, Kissena, Parkchester, and East New York. Cloudburst systems are designed specifically to manage cloudburst events of intense, overwhelming rainfall by incorporating multiple strategies.

These four locations were selected using a framework that examined historic and future stormwater flooding hotspots, existing city projects, environmental justice areas, and social factors that may increase vulnerability to stormwater flooding. Construction is expected to begin in 2025.

These four sites add to existing work in South Jamaica and St. Albans in Queens and East Harlem in Manhattan. An eighth cloudburst area has been chosen in Brownsville, Brooklyn. More than two dozen additional locations are being evaluated for future projects. DEP will continue to aggressively apply for federal funding to support this vital work and expand this critical program.

Like Bluebelts, cloudburst systems also provide benefits to communities beyond managing stormwater. The systems are built as community spaces to provide services during dry weather. For example, the cloudburst project designed for NYCHA's South Jamaica Houses is a sunken basketball court that will absorb and divert stormwater during future storms. Most days, the basketball court will provide recreation for residents. During cloudburst events, the stormwater will intentionally be diverted to the court, which will hold the water safely until the rain is over, taking that rainwater off the street and out of the sewers.



*Image: Rendering of Sunken Basketball Court at South Jamaica Houses, during rain event*

These projects are funded with \$390 Million in city capital.

### Unified Stormwater Rule

The city cannot meet our stormwater management needs with work on public land alone. We need cooperation from private property. For many years, DEP has offered incentives and assistance for private spaces to install green infrastructure, including offering grant funding for green roofs.

In 2022, DEP rolled out the new Unified Stormwater Rule, which increases the amount of stormwater that new and redeveloped properties must manage on-site. When stormwater is managed on-site, it stays out of the stormwater system and does not contribute to backups or overflows.

### Coastal Flood Protection

As mentioned earlier, flooding doesn't just come from storms. It can also come from the coasts. The city has been focused on coastal resiliency since the devastation of Hurricane Sandy. We are currently advancing many projects to address coastal storm surge.

East Side Coastal Resiliency (ESCR) is an integrated flood protection system comprised of a combination of floodwalls, land elevation, floodgates, and interior drainage infrastructure improvements. The project includes elevating East River Park approximately eight feet and installing flood protection in the new

space beneath it. Spanning 2.4 miles along the east side of the Lower Manhattan waterfront, from Montgomery Street north to East 25th Street, it will provide protection against storm surge and sea-level rise for 110,000 vulnerable New Yorkers while delivering critical waterfront open space and access improvements.

The Brooklyn Bridge-Montgomery Coastal Resiliency project will provide critical flood protection in the Two Bridges neighborhood through a series of deployable flip-up gates and floodwalls, while also maintaining access and visibility to the waterfront, and protect 30,000 New Yorkers, forty percent of whom are public housing residents.

The Seaport Coastal Resiliency Project will protect the most low-lying and vulnerable part of the shoreline between Fulton Street and the Brooklyn Bridge, which includes almost 100 buildings and 1,000+ jobs, against sea level rise and storm surge, mostly through raising the bulkhead.

The Financial District and Seaport Climate Resilience Master Plan, released in December 2021, is a blueprint for comprehensive flood defense infrastructure for two low-lying neighborhoods, where nearly one million people work, live and commute, from coastal storms and sea level rise. Implementation of the full plan is estimated to cost \$5 to \$7 Billion.

The Battery Park Resilience project will rebuild and elevate the wharf promenade in The Battery, an important historic and revenue-generating asset for the city, staying true to the character and uses of the park, while protecting it from sea level rise in the year 2100. Construction began earlier this year.

The South Battery Park City Resiliency Project is a continuous flood barrier from the Museum of Jewish Heritage, through Wagner Park, across Pier A Plaza, and along the northern border of Historic Battery Park. The North and West Battery Park City Resiliency Project will span the North Esplanade, extending into Tribeca.

#### HATS

The city has been working closely with USACE, the state, and New Jersey on the New York-New Jersey Harbor and Tributaries Study (HATS), which will inform work to protect our region from storm surges. USACE released its Draft Report and Environmental Impact Study (EIS) last fall. Its preliminary recommendation for a \$52 Billion plan proposes storm surge reduction measures for New York Harbor that include individual in-water and/or land-based flood reduction measures. The city has long advocated for many of these. During the comment period, the city submitted feedback to USACE, articulating the project outcomes for the study:

- The proposed projects must serve multiple purposes, address multiple risks, and integrate into the local urban context;
- Projects must be delivered as efficiently and flexibly as possible;
- A phased approach with ability to prioritize project implementation for the disadvantaged/socially vulnerable communities; and
- Engagement with the communities must be well-planned and well-resourced throughout the life of the study and its resulting projects.

USACE is currently reviewing all the public comments and determining what additional analysis, evaluation, and concept design may be needed to complete the study before they issue the final recommendation and report.

### Bureau of Coastal Resilience

*PlaNYC* proposes the creation of a new Bureau of Coastal Resilience within DEP. DEP's leadership role will allow for streamlined decision making and faster capital project implementation. Streamlining this work helps the city design, construct, and operate coastal protection projects, and helps New Yorkers by providing a central point of contact on flooding.

Though all agencies play a role in creating a more resilient coastline, there is a need for one agency to have final responsibility as this portfolio of work grows. Assigning leadership responsibility to one agency will unify long-term planning and funding; increase coordination and efficiency; and improve maintenance of flood resilience projects. This new structure will also provide a central point of contact and information for New Yorkers on coastal and rainwater flooding events across the city. DEP is uniquely situated to take on this leadership responsibility because it complements the existing mission for flood resilience planning and operations. DEP's experience operating emergency and just-in-time systems and delivering complex construction projects will be critical for the coastal resiliency work we expect.

## Preparing Residents

New York City is a collective community of interconnected systems and people. The work the city is doing must be supported by work on private properties. Further, because infrastructure work takes time, residents and business owners must have the tools to protect themselves and their property from climate threats like flooding. Some of the most important work we are doing is to provide those tools.

Much of storm preparedness is about awareness, which is why we expanded FloodHelpNY.org, which MOCEJ runs in partnership with the Center for NYC Neighborhoods. FloodHelpNY.org is a user-friendly website and communications tool to promote a greater citywide awareness of flood risk, flood insurance, and flood resiliency retrofits. Flood insurance is the best financial resource available after a flood to address damages.

### Rainfall Ready and DEP Tools

As I mentioned earlier, we released *Rainfall Ready* last year to help residents prepare for rain and flooding events. It includes commitments from the city, and advice for homeowners and other residents about what to do in preparation for, immediately before, during, and after storms. DEP issued a new map, available online, which identifies properties around the city we believe to be most susceptible to flooding.

DEP regularly partners with Council Members and other elected officials to hold distribution events and information sessions around the city, where we supply residents and business owners with rain barriers, inflatable water barriers, and even sump pumps. This summer, DEP worked with local elected officials and community boards to hold more than 100 rain barrel giveaways and provide nearly 15,000 rain barrels to residents. The information and tools from these events empower residents and business owners to protect their properties during floods.

## FloodNet.NYC

FloodNet.NYC is a network of street flooding sensors designed to help the city better understand the frequency, severity, and impacts of flooding events. There are currently 74 sensors in place. The city funded the program with \$7.2 Million, enabling us to increase the number of flood-prone areas and monitors to 500 FloodNet sensors by 2027 in high-priority neighborhoods vulnerable to high tides, storm surge, and precipitation events. FloodNet captures real-time flooding conditions in New York, allowing us to prioritize interventions and direct resources before and during flooding events.



*Image: FloodNet monitor locations*

## Voluntary Mobility and Land Acquisition Program

We understand moving and the impacts of flood damages on homes and families is personal and often traumatic. As we develop a voluntary Housing Mobility and Land Acquisition Program, we are taking a human-centered approach and coordinating extensively among agencies.

The city will launch an entirely voluntary Housing Mobility & Land Acquisition Program, which means residents in highly vulnerable coastal and stormwater risk areas can let the city know whether they're interested in participating in a future buyout and receiving housing, financial counseling services, estate planning, and relocation support. No residents will be forced to relinquish their property. Through our program, the city will work with flood vulnerable residents to ensure they understand their options, including opportunities to move. The city will convert acquired properties to resilient and sustainable uses that bring tangible benefits, helping to reduce the overall flood impacts to neighborhoods through an increase in green infrastructure and open space such as Bluebelts, parks, and wetlands.

## More than Just Flooding

### Heat

The impacts of climate change aren't limited to floods. Extreme heat rarely makes the headlines like other extreme weather, in part because wealthiest New Yorkers can cool their homes to escape the worst consequences.

In *PlaNYC*, we announced several initiatives to help us combat extreme heat, such as achieving a 30 percent canopy cover in the city, planting more than 30,000 native trees and shrubs, and making open spaces more accessible and connected. Increasing biodiversity also provides community health and social benefits.

### Climate Strong Communities

Through the Climate Strong Communities program, MOCEJ is developing equitable multi-hazard resiliency projects focused in areas of the city that still face disproportionate risks from climate change challenges. It is designed to invest in communities left unaddressed by Hurricane Sandy recovery funding. Community feedback and engagement are critical components. Communities were selected based on criteria that prioritized equity, climate risks, and project opportunities. We also select communities with high social vulnerability to climate hazards and face multiple climate hazards. Communities were selected based on the ability for the program to achieve risk reduction with city-led adaptation or sustainability projects led through CSC. Our Year One communities are East Harlem and Canarsie; Corona, Brownsville, Soundview, and Port Richmond.

Program engagement will value and learn from the lived experiences and expertise from residents to guide and inform work; lead a transparent process; implement and integrate resident expertise into project design and applications; ensure people feel empowered and comfortable coming to the table; and compensate residents for their time and sharing their expertise.

### Buildings

Buildings are the single greatest contributor of greenhouse gas emissions in the city. The groundbreaking Climate Mobilization Act of 2019 requires most large buildings to meet new energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction milestones by 2024 and 2030 and is estimated to create up to 140,000 jobs.

But roughly 15,000 buildings will need \$12-15 Billion to comply with 2030 emissions limits at current costs and with current technology, and only about a third would pay for itself through energy savings. *Getting 97 Done* is our strategy for compliance. We are working to ensure 97-covered buildings can receive the \$625 Million we estimate they can access in federal tax refunds and subsidies from the Inflation Reduction Act. We are also calling on you to expand J-51 tax abatement approved by the New York State Legislature to help our low- and moderate-income buildings comply with the law. In addition, we are working with the City Council to hold workshops with buildings known to be at risk of noncompliance to match them with the free one-on-one technical assistance program NYC Accelerator and answer questions about LL97.

### Clean Energy

A critical component of protecting us from climate threats is transitioning to clean and renewable energy sources. We have committed to 100 percent clean electricity by 2040 and have initiatives to launch a public solar program, maximize climate infrastructure on city-owned property, and build an EV charging network.

The state estimates we will need 6GW of battery storage by 2030, with 2GW located in NYC. We are committing to streamlining and accelerating storage projects in pursuit of these targets, and initiatives

detailed in *PowerUp NYC*, our long-term energy plan, will help us achieve them. The city is also progressing on solar deployment and is nearly halfway to its target to deploy 1000 MW of solar citywide by 2030.

## Looking Forward

Our multi-layered strategy, which includes sustainability as well as resiliency measures, means we are fighting many fires at once. What we call sustainability – work to reduce emissions – is part of a resilience strategy. We will continue our work to implement Local Law 97, support the MTA in the implementation of congestion pricing, promote a circular economy, convert gas to grid, keep New Yorkers safer from heat, and create green jobs. I want to personally thank the Council, and Chair Gennaro in particular, for the work you have all been doing to both lead and support the work of the past few administrations. I would like to point out some of the challenges facing any of us engaged in climate adaptation work.

### Speed and Capacity

Major physical projects take a significant amount of time, typically one to three years for planning and design, one to two years for procurement, and from one to four years of construction. To reduce this time would require changes to several processes, such as environmental review, ULURP when acquisitions are required, and procurement rules.

DEP has invested significantly in improving our procurement, with great success. We have reduced a nearly a two-year procurement cycle to down to just one-year. Further, we have improved internal processes to increase our commitment rate. One of our big disappointments of FY22 was we achieved only a 69 percent commitment rate for the year. Through a significant whole-of-agency effort, we are proud to report that, for the first time in 10 years, DEP achieved our capital commitment target, reaching 103 percent of our \$2.3 Billion goal. DEP committed \$2.4 Billion dollars in new capital projects, a year-on-year increase of \$800 Million of new projects breaking ground for construction or starting into design.

DEP has contributed to the Capital Process Reform Task Force convened by Mayor Adams and Comptroller Lander. Last year, the Task Force released a set of recommendations, including using price adjustment allowances to offset volatile commodity prices, expanding work allowances to reduce change order approvals, and amending procurement laws and regulations. Also, significantly, the Task Force has made recommendations for the city to adopt alternative project delivery mechanisms such as Progressive Design Build and has proposed the DDC become an Authority. We strongly support these recommendations, as these efforts will speed up capital projects, reduce costs, and increase the City's capacity to address emerging needs. We look forward to continuing to work with the mayor, partner agencies, the comptroller, and the council to identify additional opportunities for improvement.

While there aren't a lot of easy ways to speed up an individual project, we also face constraints in how many we can take on at once. This is basically a function of DEP's planning and engineering capacity, and DDC's engineering and contracting capacity. I would welcome any help the City Council can offer in figuring out how to increase DEP's and DDC's capacity to deliver projects, or how the city's design, procurement, and construction timetables can be speeded up.

## Trade-Offs in Resilience Work

Climate work is generational and because of that, there are trade-offs. We must balance water rate affordability with our resilience considerations. Stormwater projects are breathtakingly expensive. Starting last year, DEP has been working on a set of example projects to understand by extrapolation what it would take to create true stormwater resilience across the city. In 2021, my predecessor estimated it would require a cost of \$100 Billion, which would require us to raise water rates by 500 percent. Depending on the level of stormwater resilience we want, we may have to brace for dramatic increases in water bills. This is not theoretical; as we begin work towards our FY2025 capital plan, it would be helpful to know what Council Members think about how much to invest, given all of our investments in stormwater resilience are passed along in the water bill.

We must also consider the importance of affordable housing to resilience work. Three key strategies for resilience – requiring air conditioners, protecting people who live in basement apartments, and a voluntary mobility program available to those who live in at-risk properties – are likely to directly reduce the city's affordable housing supply. We cannot have both affordable housing and resilience unless we dramatically increase the creation of new housing across the city, and we need to recognize some homes are impossible to protect from flooding. MOCEJ has been collaborating closely with DCP on City of Yes: Zoning for Housing Opportunity, which was kicked off in September, on the issues of basement apartments and flood risk, and the considerations of climate hazards when siting and building new housing.

We have worked closely with our colleagues at the Parks department, working to explore opportunities for both Bluebelts (for stormwater resilience) and coastal protection on the large portion of the city's waterfront that is parkland. But the reality is there will be times where parks uses and resilience uses are at odds, or at very least, cause delay and increase costs. Right now, the protection afforded to parkland ensures Parks' objectives will take precedence, but this is a reality we have to acknowledge.

I would welcome the City Council's advice on how to balance these trade-offs. Some of these are political more than technical, so they are appropriate for the City Council to opine on.

## Collaboration

All New Yorkers, especially those who own their homes, must take responsibility for protecting themselves and their property. As I have said many times, for 400 years, New Yorkers have enjoyed a relatively mild climate. However, this is no longer the case. The city can and should do as much as it can, but tropical rainstorms are difficult to predict and New Yorkers will need to protect themselves. Anyone who owns a home needs to have flood insurance. Homeowners should disconnect the downspouts from their roofs so they do not connect to their sewer line – which can cause sewer backups inside the home even when the city's sewer is not at capacity. Homeowners need to stop – and reverse – the paving over of permeable surfaces.

I know several Council Members have worked with us to raise awareness through events such as rain barrel giveaways. I appreciate those efforts and I would welcome more ways the City Council could help us encourage New Yorkers to do their part.

My colleagues and I are happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

**Committee on Environmental Protection, Resiliency, and Waterfronts;  
Committee on Parks and Recreation**

New York City's Climate Resiliency Efforts: October 11, 2023

Chairs Krishnan and Gennaro, and members of the joint committee,

I'm Heather Lubov, Executive Director of City Parks Foundation, a nonprofit that encourages New Yorkers to use and care for their neighborhood parks and open spaces.

I want to begin by expressing our strong support for Int. No. 1069, a crucial proposal that mandates testing for harmful substances in the water at our city's waterfronts. In a city with four Superfund sites, including one of the largest in the nation, this is a common-sense initiative. City Parks Foundation has firsthand experience with water contamination issues. In 2011, we designated Kaiser Park as a Catalyst priority site, and by encouraging the community to conduct water testing, they revealed shocking levels of pollution in Coney Island Creek, leading to a lawsuit settlement and the creation of an Environmental Benefits Fund. We now run our Coastal Classroom education program in Kaiser Park, as well as at Inwood Hill Park, Bushwick Inlet, Hallet's Cove and Conference House Park, connecting children to their waterfronts while actively engaging in water testing efforts as an educational tool, working with partners like the Billion Oyster Project. Our teams have an eye on the water and we see that community members - young and old - regularly swim at these sites. Protecting our waterways is vital for the well-being of our communities, especially for our children.

Additionally, Res. No. 608 calls for the creation of a voluntary buyout program to mitigate flood risk. We support this resolution as the effects of climate change are rapidly threatening our city. Just two weeks ago New York was inundated by a month's worth of rain within just a few hours. And of course, few New Yorkers can deny the absolute devastation caused to our city in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy. City Parks Foundation responded swiftly after the storm, mobilizing over 7,000 volunteers who stepped in when the Parks Department was overwhelmed with service requests and instigated the planting of beach grasses and other flood mitigation measures.

However, none of these essential initiatives can succeed without proper funding. Mayor Adams' order for New York City agencies to reduce spending by up to 15% by April 2024 dangerously threatens our park system and climate mitigation efforts. We cannot afford a repeat of the pandemic-era funding cuts that harmed our parks. Climate change is here, and flooding is a looming threat, especially to swaths of land located on waterfronts, including roughly half of the land managed by the NYC Parks Department. Please join us in urging the administration to abandon these austerity measures and to uphold the Mayor's promise to invest 1% of the city budget for parks.

Thank you for your consideration,



**New York City Council  
Oversight Hearing: New York City's Climate Resiliency Efforts  
Committees on Parks and Recreation and Environmental Protection, Resiliency, and  
Waterfronts  
October 11, 2023**

**Testimony By: Emily Walker, Natural Areas Conservancy, Senior Manager of External Affairs**

My name is Emily Walker, and I am the Senior Manager of External Affairs at the Natural Areas Conservancy (NAC). Thank you to Chairs Krishnan and Gennaro and the members of the Committees on Parks and Environmental Protection, Resiliency and Waterfronts for the opportunity to speak today.

In this era of climate instability, we believe that our parks, and in particular our natural areas, play a tremendous role in protecting and fostering a more resilient city. Research consistently shows that access to quality green spaces and parks have a multitude of benefits for residents of cities, while also providing crucial habitat for flora and fauna.

We also know that our parks function as critical green infrastructure, in addition to serving as spaces for passive and active recreation, and vital respite for city residents. When it comes to our natural areas, the data is clear:

- They contain up to a quarter of the existing canopy in NYC, but account for nearly 70% of the carbon stored, and 83% of carbon sequestered by trees across the city;
- They are almost 10 degrees cooler than our streets during extreme heat events;
- They prevent \$4.8 million in hospital bills from pollution-induced illness annually;
- They provide \$2.2 billion in recreational value, \$1.1 billion in public health value;
- They soak up as much stormwater as \$580 million worth of new green stormwater infrastructure.

Our natural areas convey all of these benefits to NYC despite decades of disinvestment. It should be noted, however, that as we continue to delay the proper funding for management and care of our natural forested areas and wetlands, these benefits will diminish, putting more strain on our city and its residents.

We are deeply alarmed that these benefits are today at risk due to the citywide budget cuts that were announced in September. As an agency already operating on a relative shoestring, the mandated 5% budget cuts will have a catastrophic impact on the ability of NYC Parks to implement much of its work, including crucial care for our natural areas and urban forest.

On Earth Day, the NAC stood proudly with Mayor Adams as he committed to \$2.4 million in baselined funding to formalize, maintain, and program over 300 miles of nature trails in our city parks, which would unlock access to over 10,000 acres of invaluable green space for New Yorkers. We are profoundly disappointed that the funding for this initiative, prioritized in the 2023 *PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done* report, will no longer be implemented for its intended purpose as a result of the 5% budget cut.



Trail formalization is not just about increasing public access, an urgent need for a city as dense as New York, but also about ensuring that our natural areas remain safe for recreation, while decreasing negative impacts, such as reducing forest fragmentation and managing invasive species. The stresses on our natural forested areas and wetlands are tremendous, and without appropriate public investments in their care, we stand to lose these assets entirely.

We applaud the Council's efforts to examine the intersection of resiliency and our green spaces, but we also believe the urgency of this moment requires us to speak out about further constraints on the budget for NYC Parks. Despite decades of chronic disinvestment in the agency, our peers at NYC Parks have moved a tremendous amount of innovative work forward that has increased the health, resilience, and condition of our parks and green spaces to the benefit of all New Yorkers. But they cannot continue this work without consistent and meaningful funding, a goal that has eluded the city for decades.

Our parks and natural areas benefit the lives of every New Yorker, from longtime residents to our most recent arrivals. While we understand that moments of crisis demand hard choices from our elected officials, we also believe that these choices shouldn't come at the expense of the shared resources that make our city more resilient and livable, and that provide pathways to good, green jobs amid the worsening climate crisis. We call on our elected officials from every level of New York City's government to work together to restore the proposed budget cuts, and prevent additional cuts to services that make our city stronger.





## PUBLIC TESTIMONY OF THE WATERFRONT ALLIANCE

October 11, 2023

### New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation and Committee on Environmental Protection, Resiliency, and Waterfronts Oversight Hearing RE: New York City's Climate Resiliency Efforts.

Thank you, Chair Krishnan, Chair Gennaro, and Council Members, for the opportunity to testify. I am Tyler Taba, senior manager for climate policy at the Waterfront Alliance. Waterfront Alliance is an alliance of more than 1,100 organizations, businesses, and individuals, and we are the leader in waterfront revitalization and climate resilience advocacy for the New York-New Jersey Harbor region.

We spearhead and are members of the Rise to Resilience Coalition, a coalition of 100+ groups advocating for making climate resilience an urgent policy priority. We run the WEDG® (Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines) program for promoting resilience, ecology, and public access into waterfront projects. We are also a proud member of the Play Fair Coalition, a coalition of over 400 organizations advocating for the importance of our City's park system and 1% of the City's budget for the Department of Parks and Recreation.

While this hearing was scheduled before the extreme rainfall on September 29th, we are yet again reminded why it is so important that New York City continue to invest in climate resilience. In a matter of hours, major flooding to our critical infrastructure including subway lines, schools, airports, and highways, was on full display yet again. A state of emergency was declared calling for residents to avoid travel, given the disruption to roads and transportation infrastructure, and causing extensive damage to homes and communities.

Some neighborhoods saw up to 8 inches of rainfall. The Brooklyn Navy Yard, at one point, saw 2.5 inches of rainfall in one hour, which is significantly beyond the 1.75 inches per hour that the NYC stormwater system was designed to handle.

The theme for our testimony today is that **climate risks in our region do not operate in silos, rather they are exacerbated and compounded by other climate risks.** We are experiencing coastal flood risks, inland flood risks, and extreme heat risks. We must meet the moment by promoting solutions that span across the range of climate stressors in the region.

This oversight hearing brings together parks and resilience, which Waterfront Alliance and our Coalition partners have seen work together to do exactly that - span across the range of climate stressors in the region. From flooding and combined sewer overflows to extreme heat. Investment in our parks is an investment in climate resilience.



A study by our Coalition partner, Natural Areas Conservancy, found that NYC's forested natural areas [soak up as much stormwater as \\$580M worth](#) of new green stormwater infrastructure. Extreme rainfall events, like the September 29th event, showcase the need to invest in more green infrastructure to help alleviate the burden on the sewer system.

Flooding is not the only concern during these extreme rain events. Several neighborhoods across the five boroughs experience combined sewer overflow (CSO) events, where raw sewage and rainwater are mixed and flow directly into local water bodies. Parks act as green infrastructure solutions and reduce runoff by 90% and filter out as much as 95% of major pollutants from water.

This year, we also experienced record breaking global heat. Forested natural areas in New York City are 4-6°F cooler than under the street tree canopy during summer heat waves.

Earlier this year, the latest version of [PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done](#) covered goals ranging from creating nature-based stormwater management solutions, investing in the City's green infrastructure program, and creating over 10 acres of new open space. We believe these goals are vital not only to make our City more sustainable and equitable, but also to combat the disproportionate impacts of climate change.

Waterfront Alliance continues to call for investments in our parks as a climate resilience solution. Not just new infrastructure solutions, but also ensuring that operations and maintenance for existing infrastructure is prioritized.

The waterfront facilities maintained by the NYC Parks Department are 77 years old, on average, which is a long stretch for infrastructure that takes constant abuse from water and weather. When Hurricane Sandy battered the region, the storm swamped 5,700 acres of the city's parkland, took the lives of 48 New Yorkers, and spawned \$800 million in damages. We need to integrate more resilient features into park designs, upgrades, and retrofits; however, we must also be sure that we consider the operations and maintenance funding required to keep up with existing and new infrastructure.

In response to the City's commitments to climate resilience outside of parks, Waterfront Alliance has long called on the City to develop a comprehensive plan for climate resilience investments and priorities.

We are pleased to see the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice's (MOCEJ) Climate Strong Communities (CSC) program kickoff, as well as recent commitments made in PlaNYC. MOCEJ announced that the Climate Strong Communities program will be in Soundview, Brownsville, Corona, and Port Richmond neighborhoods in its first year, while also building on prior work in Canarsie and East Harlem. Climate Strong Communities only details six neighborhoods, and we encourage MOCEJ to continue to expand their reach and engagement across the five boroughs.



On the notion of resilience and comprehensive plans, we would be remised not to mention the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Harbor and Tributaries Study (HATS). Waterfront Alliance and the Rise to Resilience Coalition have been advocating for a comprehensive approach from the Army Corps since the plan's inception.

We are at a critical inflection point with HATS. The Corps' current tentatively selected plan falls short, failing to address multiple flood hazards (i.e., tidal flooding and extreme rainfall) and the priorities of frontline communities. The next step in the Army Corps timeline is for the states of New York and New Jersey, and the City of New York to meet with the Corps to determine whether to proceed with the existing plan or take another approach.

We, together with more than 45 organizations in the Rise to Resilience Coalition, [submitted a robust public comment letter to the Army Corps](#) earlier this year calling for (1) greater environmental justice consideration, (2) prioritizing nature-based (including parks) and non-structural solutions, and (3) addressing multiple climate hazards.

We have appreciated the level of support and alignment from the City of New York, particularly the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice. We continue to encourage the City and State to use their non-federal sponsor (NYSDEC) and non-federal partner (MOCEJ) status to push for a more comprehensive and equitable plan.

As soon as possible, we call for the City to send a letter to the USACE headquarters invoking Section 8106 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2022.

**We are pleased to speak more about the Army Corps with any Council Member and their staff at any time. Please do not hesitate to reach out to learn more about this plan.**

The Army Corps plan should not be a catch all for how the City views regional infrastructure and comprehensive planning.

With the theme of today's oversight hearing being "New York City's Climate Resiliency Efforts," we must underscore the need for adequate and dedicated funding for climate resilience. Today, there are historic levels of climate resilience funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), and New York State Environmental Bond Act. We strongly recommend the City use this as an opportunity to advance local climate resilient infrastructure, especially in environmental justice communities. We also recommend greater transparency and understanding in how the City is going to leverage state and federal funding in frontline communities.

Waterfront Alliance strongly believes in a "no single solution" approach to climate resilience. We have discussed the importance of parks, operations and maintenance, comprehensive planning, large scale infrastructure, and dedicated funding.



**Climate resilient solutions exist.** We, together with our Alliance and Coalition partners, are taking action to bring those solutions to life.

We thank the Council for hosting today's oversight hearing, and for the opportunity to testify. We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that climate resilience is integrated into the fabric of our City.



October 11, 2023

**Founders**

Vernice Miller-Travis  
Peggy M. Shepard  
Chuck Sutton

**Board of Directors**

*Chair*  
Jeff Jones

*Secretary*

Nancy E. Anderson, Ph.D.

*Treasurer*

Ken P. Mak

*Members*

Lakeisha M. Aquino  
Peter Bokor  
Dennis Derryck, Ph.D.  
David Evans, Ph.D.  
Abiola Fasehun, Esq.  
Eric A Goldstein, Esq.  
Neetin Gulati  
Christy Loper  
Sarangi Iyengar  
Marielle Villar Martiney  
Crystal Romeo Upperman  
Vernice Miller-Travis  
Phillip Morrow  
Dart Westphal

*Executive Director*

Peggy M. Shepard

**Testimony of WE ACT for Environmental Justice**

**To the New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation and  
Committee on Environmental Protection, Resiliency and Waterfronts**

**Regarding New York City's Climate Resiliency Efforts**

Dear Committee Chair Shekar Krishnan, Committee Chair James Gennaro and  
Committees on Parks and Recreation and Environmental Protection,  
Resiliency and Waterfronts:

WE ACT for Environmental Justice (WE ACT) is writing to testify on the need to invest in the City's future by funding environmental and climate policies and programs. Founded in 1988, WE ACT is a community-based organization in Harlem, New York City. At the city, state and federal levels WE ACT has been fighting environmental racism – racial discrimination in environmental policy-making, enforcement of regulations and laws, and targeting communities of color for toxic waste disposal and siting of polluting industries. We recognize and advocate for community-driven solutions that can remedy the institutionalized harms associated with unjust urban planning policies that have plagued communities of color for generations.

**We strongly urge this Council to recognize the importance and value of  
our parks and green space as a necessary investment in citywide  
resiliency, with climate justice as a foundation.**

Due to historic disinvestment and structural racism, such as redlining, our parks, green spaces, and access to the City's waterfront are not equitably distributed. Access to green spaces is on average much lower in environmental justice neighborhoods that are already plagued by adverse health problems and high levels of pollution. NYC Parks does not have the resources it needs to provide access to quality green spaces and infrastructure in every neighborhood, and Mayor Adam's proposed austerity cuts of 5% to as much as 15% will further decrease the agency's ability to serve New Yorkers.

This past summer was the [hottest on record](#), and we can expect to see worse in the coming years. 72% of New York City's built environment is concrete or asphalt, a material that absorbs heat and amplifies the urban heat island effect. A recent [study](#) found that New York City has the worst urban heat island effect in the country - temperatures can measure up to



nine degrees Fahrenheit hotter than surrounding rural areas for nearly 80% of the population. While all of New York City experiences the urban heat island effect caused by the density of impermeable surfaces that absorb heat, environmental justice neighborhoods like East Harlem are subject to a hyper-local urban heat island effect, exposing these residents to [temperatures as much as 10 degrees hotter than the City average](#). And while NYC's natural areas are 4-6 degrees Fahrenheit cooler than the average temperature of other land surface types during extreme heat events, low-income communities have [21% less park space](#) than higher-income neighborhoods. Failure to correct these inequities built into our urban environment results in Black residents dying at twice the rate of their white counterparts from heat stroke and heat-exacerbated illnesses.

It is also well documented and known to many city agencies that East Harlem is vulnerable to flooding from extreme rain, sea level rise, and storm surge. Residents have been consistently vocal about flooded streets during strong rain. Large areas of the neighborhood sit directly in the 100-year flood plain, according to [flood maps](#) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, however East Harlem's waterfront - its first line of defense to future coastal storms - remains dilapidated and inaccessible. The extreme rainfall and subsequent flooding the city experienced on Friday, September 29th underscores the need for more significant investments in parks, openspace, and proven green infrastructure solutions such as bioswales, street trees and blue belts. Likewise, NYC's forested natural areas [soak up as much stormwater as \\$580M worth](#) of new Green Stormwater Infrastructure. The proposed cuts to NYC Park's operating budget will prevent these life saving investments from taking shape and cost us more money long-term remedying more severe flood damages.

The most at-risk areas have residents that are majority Black and Latinx and represent some of the poorest in New York City. This is just one of the ways communities of color tangibly feel the legacy of racist policies like redlining. Such policies that have discouraged investment in communities of color have resulted in a lack of tree coverage, disparities in generational wealth, and poor building maintenance; all of which render both the inhabitants and the built environment ill-equipped to withstand extreme weather events that will only become more severe and frequent as climate change persists.

Comprehensively bolstering vulnerable communities' resilience to flooding and extreme heat requires that the appropriate resources are designated to the expansion of tree plantings, permeable surfaces, as well as solar, cool, and green roof installations. An equitable, fiscally responsible, and resilient New York cannot exist without ensuring frontline communities receive these investments that are long overdue. Directing green infrastructure projects to low income neighborhoods first and foremost is not only the most equitable option, but also the most cost-effective. Research conducted by the [Smart](#)



[Surfaces Coalition](#) demonstrated the cost-to-benefit ratio for implementing these technologies in low income neighborhoods was consistently favorable across five cities, accounting for energy, financial incentive, stormwater, health, climate resilience, and employment benefits.

The city's budget needs to adapt to our changing climate and move away from the woeful status quo that targets the Parks Department when there is a budget crisis. This means that NYC Parks needs the budget to maintain a growing number of green infrastructure projects that may fall under their jurisdiction, including the maintenance of our street trees and tree canopy. A persistent concern that comes up in conversations with employees at NYC Parks about potential future green infrastructure projects that harness Bond Act capital funding involves a lack of funding for maintenance. Parks employees do not feel like they have the staff necessary to handle an increase in operations, despite their willingness and eagerness to do so. As climate change continues to increase the strength and frequency of extreme weather that is already impacting New York City, our infrastructure and our city's operations need the resources to properly respond.

On the campaign trail, Mayor Adams said that he "proudly committed to a 'percent for parks' plan," stating that "parks are not a luxury, it's a necessity." The mayor and the City Council have also recognized that our city's parks are critical infrastructure in our efforts to mitigate climate change. But our parks cannot do that if they aren't funded. We need to protect our parks from further cuts. Slashing the parks budget, tiny in comparison to other major agencies, is short sighted. Expanding the agency's funding to 1% of the overall budget in FY25 will be a good investment in New York City's long term resiliency and liveability.

**This Council must hold Mayor Adams accountable to his proclamations and ensure the following plans and programs are adequately funded:**

1. **The NYC Parks Department at 1% of the total FY25 budget.** We are [lagging behind](#) other major cities in our budget allocation to parks, despite having far more acreage to maintain. San Francisco spends 1.6 percent of its municipal budget on parks, Los Angeles spends 2.9 percent, Chicago 4.3 percent and Minneapolis 5.3 percent. This is short sighted planning, and a disservice to New Yorkers who rely on parks not only to improve neighborhood resilience, but as spaces of play, joy, and a connection to nature.
2. The Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice's [AdaptNYC](#), especially the [Climate Strong Communities](#) program



which “... invests in communities left unaddressed by limited Hurricane Sandy recovery funding and with a focus on environmental justice...” and “...leverages existing resiliency and sustainability planning and capital commitments...” The Climate Strong Communities program vital to environmental justice communities like East Harlem whose in desperate need of implementation of the [Vision Plan for a Resilient East Harlem](#), especially since there is an unfunded gap in the New York City Economic Development Corporation’s [107th Street Pier & Bobby Wagner Walk Reconstruction project](#). We have been waiting to see action on the Climate Strong Communities program, however since the announcement, we have seen no city budget allocated to the program, and no rollout or progress announced. Actions are louder than words, and this program is falling into dangerous territory of becoming another unfulfilled promise for environmental justice communities.



Map illustrating the gap in the NYCEDC project from East 107th to East 118th Streets.

3. Expand and fund green infrastructure<sup>1</sup> throughout the City **and ensure the agencies like NYC Parks and DEP have funding for**

---

<sup>1</sup> Green infrastructure involves capturing rain water through natural systems before it enters and overwhelms the combined sewer system.



**maintenance:** Green infrastructure projects, such as rain gardens, bioswales, water squares, green and blue roofs, daylighting rivers, and permeable pavements help absorb stormwater, purify the air, and mitigate the urban heat island effect. This would maximize environmental benefits to all communities, especially in underserved communities and areas that have underutilized spaces. When WE ACT has met with NYC Parks to discuss green infrastructure and street trees in East Harlem, a historically underserved community, their main concern for not expanding desperately needed green infrastructure was maintenance costs. This cannot continue to be a hindrance for the agencies responsible with adapting our built environment for climate change.<sup>2</sup>

4. Leverage the funds from the New York State Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act of 2022. [There is \\$1.1 billion in the Bond Act](#) for restoration and flood risk reduction, including \$100 million for coastal rehabilitation and shoreline protection and \$100 million for inland flooding and local waterfront revitalization. Prioritizing natural and nature-based solutions will also spur green jobs. Additionally, the City should leverage federal funding from the bipartisan [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#).
5. Improve and expand the City's [cloudburst infrastructure](#), prioritizing vulnerable communities and holistic solutions. Cloudburst infrastructure involves both grey infrastructure<sup>3</sup> (such as sewer pipes and underground storage tanks) and green infrastructure. The City should continue implementing the [Stormwater Resiliency Plan](#) and improving emergency management for storm-related extreme weather, as detailed in [The New Normal: Combating Storm-Related Extreme Weather in New York City](#). We are encouraged to see progress made on the stormwater catchment project cited for Clinton Houses in East Harlem and would like to see continued community engagement as this project moves into the construction phase.
6. Improve sewage and wastewater infrastructure: An updated and modernized sewer system and wastewater treatment process would prevent combined sewer overflows (CSOs) from dumping unregulated

---

<sup>2</sup> East Harlem is a formerly redlined community that has suffered from years of neglect, disinvestment, and short-sighted planning from the public and private sectors. This has allowed severe racial, economic, and environmental disparities to proliferate. East Harlem has no tree canopy, and a 6 block stretch surrounding 125th street received no new tree plantings this year, and no anticipated tree plantings next year. When we inquired about this with the Parks Department about this stark oversight, they told us that East Harlem is a hostile environment for baby trees which lowers their success rate of plantings without extra maintenance, which they do not have funding for. When WE ACT inquired about a potential green infrastructure project leveraging Bond Act funding for the 125th street corridor to help cool the environment in the absence of tree canopy, their first response was a concern over maintenance, and a lack of funding.

<sup>3</sup> Examples of grey infrastructure include upgrading and increasing capacity of treatment plants or creating large storage tanks or tunnels to hold CSOs during rain events.



contaminants in our waterways. The City must significantly increase investments and prioritize both green and grey infrastructure to prevent CSOs.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to the issue of resiliency.

Sincerely,

**Annie Carforo**  
Climate Justice Campaign Manager  
WE ACT for Environmental Justice



**Testimony of Alia Soomro, Deputy Director for New York City Policy  
New York League of Conservation Voters  
City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation  
Jointly with the Committee on Environmental Protection, Resiliency and Waterfronts  
Oversight Hearing – New York City’s Climate Resiliency Efforts  
October 11, 2023**

My name is Alia Soomro and I am the Deputy Director for New York City Policy at the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV). NYLCV is a statewide environmental advocacy organization representing over 30,000 members in New York City. Thank you, Chairs Krishnan and Gennaro, and members of the Committees on Parks and Environmental Protection for the opportunity to testify at this timely hearing.

As co-founders of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, we stand with New Yorkers for Parks, DC37, and over 400 coalition organizations to demand a City budget that gives parks the fair funding they deserve. Mayor Adams, Speaker Adams, and forty-four other Council Members have [already committed to funding](#) 1% of the City’s budget to parks, and our Coalition of advocates have been strong supporters of adequately funding maintenance, safety, and accessibility for our parks. Our campaign has the support of twenty-seven Community Boards and has collected 11,500 petition signatures. NYLCV also is a member of Forest for All NYC (FFANYC), a coalition of over 100 organizations collaborating to support the City’s urban forest and equitably achieve 30% tree canopy cover by 2035. Lastly, we are also a member of the Rise to Resilience Coalition, a coalition of over 100 organizations across New York and New Jersey calling for climate resilience to be a more urgent policy priority.

I bring this up because the goals of all three coalitions connect to each other. Parks and green spaces make up 14% of the City’s land. NYC Parks manages 53.5% of the total urban forest canopy in the City. And roughly half of the land managed by the NYC Parks is directly on the water. Yet NYC Parks receive less than 1% of the City’s budget.

We cannot maintain our parks system, increase our tree canopy, or improve our waterfront resiliency if we cut our parks budget. All three coalitions show that approximately six hundred organizations in the City support our parks, open space, tree canopy, waterfront, environmental justice, and, most importantly, long-term funding for these necessary services and infrastructure. This doesn’t even account for the tens of thousands of members these organizations represent. It’s clear that New Yorkers want our elected officials to take these interconnected issues seriously and fund them.

This leads me to shift to the Mayor's proposed budget cuts. These citywide PEG cuts (5% starting October 1 and as much as 15% by April) would be nothing short of devastating for our City's parks system. This would amount to a \$75 million reduction to an already strapped agency that has fewer workers today than it did before COVID. These budget cuts directly contradict the Mayor's campaign commitment to increase money for parks and undermine the goals set out in [PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done](#). The extreme heat our planet experienced this summer, the City's air quality emergencies in June, and the heavy rainfall and flooding on Friday, September 29, showed the urgency of the climate crisis. Our city cannot afford to disinvest from our parks system or from proven climate solutions. Parks and green spaces are not a luxury. They are critical infrastructure, serving as the backyard for New Yorkers, offering a safe space to play and relax in nature, providing respite from extreme heat, and absorbing stormwater, air pollution and carbon dioxide. Allocating 1% is a necessary and reasonable ask, especially considering other major cities consistently [commit between 2-5%](#) to their parks each year.

Pivoting to the City's climate resiliency efforts, NYLCV urges the City to prioritize environmental justice and equity in all of its climate and environmental planning and policies—whether for smaller-scaled green infrastructure or larger gray infrastructure projects. We support DEP's prioritization of areas that have been historically overburdened and underinvested in and urge the City to provide robust funding for DEP's mitigation efforts to combat odors and truck traffic problems from treatment plants located in EJ areas. This includes southeast Queens and [the "Jewel Streets" neighborhood](#). However, the heavy rainfall and flooding on Friday, September 29, underscored [yet again](#) that the City has a long way to go to prepare in the short-, medium-, and long-term. In the short term, the City must improve its emergency preparedness, notification, and response systems. We urge the City to utilize the recommendations outlined in [Rainfall Ready NYC](#) action plan and [The New Normal](#), including implementing an early warning system to keep New Yorkers informed before, during, and after the weather event (especially to New Yorkers living in basement apartments during heavy rainfall), appointing an Extreme Weather Coordinator in the Mayor's Office, accelerating "high-level" storm sewer upgrades in College Point and Southeast Queens, and more.

Along with improving its weather preparedness, NYLCV recommends the City continue investing in smaller [stormwater management solutions](#) such as rain gardens, bioswales, permeable pavement, water squares, and wetland restoration. Green infrastructure, which uses vegetation, soils, and natural processes to manage water and reduce the risk of flooding, such as rain gardens, green roofs, bioswales, and bluebelts that use natural drainage corridors, should all be considered. These projects should be expanded and implemented equitably so that all neighborhoods can receive the environmental benefits that come with them, with priority for frontline communities that have borne the brunt of environmental racism and climate injustices, including NYCHA campuses. We urge the City to timely implement its [Climate Strong Communities](#) program and to continue making progress on implementing bluebelts and daylighting rivers and streams.

Linking parks with the City's resiliency efforts, unlike traditional types of concrete playgrounds and pavements that contribute to flooding and the urban heat island effect, parks and playgrounds with green infrastructure features help absorb or hold large volumes of stormwater, especially as storms and extreme rainfall become more frequent and severe with climate change. The City needs to strengthen the coordination of planning and maintaining our parks and green infrastructure systems.

Additionally, cloudburst infrastructure is designed to manage extreme rainfall events too intense for traditional stormwater infrastructure, such as stormwater retention basins and permeable pavements. As DEP is set to formally launch the [Cloudburst Management program](#) in 2025, the City must ensure there is dedicated and sufficient funding and staffing for the program. Together, these programs can not only help to reduce stormwater runoff and complement existing stormwater infrastructure, but can also help to improve air and water quality, enhance biodiversity, and reduce urban heat island effects. We commend DEP for their work on green infrastructure to date, but moving forward we need more ambition and a public deployment plan to allow for accountability.

Most importantly, in the long-term, the City must fund and comprehensively plan for large-scale gray infrastructure projects and upgrades to our antiquated sewage system, subway system, airports, and more. We understand that our existing sewage infrastructure cannot keep up with the increasing rainfall that comes with climate change. For instance, New York City's sewer system can only handle [about 1.75 inches of rain an hour](#). Yet, on Friday, September 29, weather stations in [Central Park](#) and parts of Queens recorded 2 inches of hourly rainfall around 10 a.m that morning. In addition to installing more green infrastructure, the City needs to prioritize upgrading our system of sewers and pipes in the coming years. [The average yearly precipitation](#) in the metropolitan area is increasing [at nearly an inch](#) per decade. It is projected to increase by [up to 11%](#) in less than 30 years alongside a rise of more frequent severe storms. This is exacerbated by sea level rise, which also [raises the water table](#), meaning the soil cannot absorb as much water. When soil is easily saturated, more storm water will run off into streets and homes, increasing the likelihood of flooding. NYLCV urges the City, State, and MTA to develop comprehensive climate change solutions into all capital projects, including our [aging subway system](#), which frequently becomes a second sewer system during heavy rainfalls.

From the historic disinvestment in our parks system in the 1970s, to the Covid-19 pandemic-related budget cuts and brain drain from our City agencies, to the urgency of the climate crisis, it is clear that parks are underfunded. We urge the City not to cut funding for an already strapped agency. We stand with the Play Fair for Parks, Rise to Resilience, and the Forest For All NYC Coalitions in calling for increasing funding and the equitable allocation of our parks, trees, green spaces, and waterfront, especially as the impacts of climate change accelerate year after year.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



## **New York City Environmental Justice Alliance Testimony on NYC's Climate Resiliency Efforts To NYC Council Committee on Environmental Protection, Resiliency and Waterfronts**

**October 12, 2023**

Thank you Chair Genarro, Chair Krishnan and members of the Council for taking the time to hold this oversight hearing. Founded in 1991, the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC-EJA) is a non-profit, 501(c)3 citywide membership network linking grassroots organizations from low-income communities of color in their struggle for environmental justice. NYC-EJA empowers its member organizations to advocate for improved environmental conditions and against inequitable environmental burdens by the coordination of campaigns to inform City and State policies. Through our efforts, member organizations coalesce around specific common issues that threaten the ability for low-income communities of color to thrive.

On September 29th, tropical storm Ophelia caught New Yorkers uninformed and unprepared to protect themselves as streets, homes, subway stations, and buses filled with dangerous flood waters. The response from our Mayor was that residents of NYC must be "living under a rock" not to have been prepared - and rather than address the city to help protect New Yorkers from harm, the Mayor chose to attend a private re-election fundraiser as the storm approached. Only after the worst of the flooding had passed did the Mayor declare a state of emergency and tell New Yorkers not to travel when many were already at work or in school. How is this an acceptable response? In addition, when flooding was discussed at the October 11th Council oversight hearing, DEP's response to the flooding issue was to highlight the City's barely launched FloodNet program and sensors and other flood mitigation measures that have slowly been rolling out. While these are important steps forward, they are insufficient on their own and are being implemented too slowly for the protection of our most vulnerable communities. New Yorker's homes, workspaces, schools, and communities are being severely affected by extreme weather events like tropical storm Ophelia. We have huge weaknesses in our city's infrastructure in relation to flood risk that will be expensive and time-consuming to resolve. We need to take a more active approach in responding to those challenges than we are currently seeing from the Mayor's office and City agencies.

NYC's Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) system in combination with vast swaths of impervious surfaces like roads and pavements continues to present major challenges during extreme rain and flood events. Communities of color and low-income neighborhoods are the most likely to be negatively impacted by flooding events, with high proportions of these residents living in floodplains and flood-prone parts of the city. What immediate actions are being taken to improve the CSO problems and decrease the flooding consequences of those problems?

Green infrastructure must be a key part of the solutions that help fight storm surges and flooding while also restoring natural habitats such as wetlands and beaches in environmental justice communities, making them both accessible and multipurpose. Our work in the Forest for All NYC coalition is focussed on growing, maintaining, and protecting NYC's urban forest and natural areas for their varied and priceless benefits to residents, wildlife, and the ecosystem. An essential part of this mission is to uplift the needs of the NYC Parks Department, a central player in the urban forest of NYC and a much undervalued and underfunded part of NYC's government agencies.

The Mayor's proposed budget cuts starting at 5% across the board and increasing to 15% across the board for all City agencies is inequitable and harmful. While this may not affect DEP's or NYPD's budget as much, this could have serious consequences for the DPR. Taking such a huge percentage from an agency like NYC Parks with such a small budget and huge mission will result in disproportionate negative consequences and will likely lead to negative impacts to what few small parks and natural areas lie in environmental justice communities as resources are pulled to higher priority areas like Central and Prospect Parks. Greater austerity on a program barely surviving on a shoestring budget will handicap our city. Parks are more than a tourist attraction or pretty place to take pictures. Parks, street trees, and other natural areas are **essential** infrastructure and require appropriate funding to maintain and ensure their benefits continue to be felt.

Finally, in regards to the US Army Corps of Engineers NY/NJ Harbor and Tributaries Study, we urge the City to remain vigilant and engaged in the process to protect the city and its most vulnerable residents from the threats of climate change. This study may be our last good chance to protect coastal communities throughout the New York-New Jersey metro area. The study is said to be the largest of its kind, done in partnership with the states of NY and NJ and NYC, covering 900+ miles of affected shoreline, 25 counties in New York & New Jersey. The affected population is roughly 16 million people, including New York City and the six most populated cities in New Jersey.

This study needs to move forward with appropriate improvements to ensure that it protects the city's most vulnerable residents with resilience solutions that match the visions of the communities in question. They need to ensure that the infrastructure they plan to build for storm surge doesn't put communities at risk with other types of storm and flooding risks, particularly three distinct problems, which our communities simply were not built for: storm surge like we saw with Hurricane Sandy ten years ago, heavy downpours like Irene and Lee brought us last year, and seas that will rise by a foot or more over the first half of this century. DEP's Commissioner claims that the agency has had open communication with the Army Corps team and that they are working to ensure New Yorkers receive the best possible protection. However, as advocates that have been deeply involved with the process for over two years, we can say that this supposed transparency is not at all apparent to us. We are concerned that both USACE

and DEP have failed to show proper urgency and transparency in this process and this apparent complacency has a high risk of poor outcomes for our most vulnerable residents. We hope the City Council will stay alert and engaged in the HATS study and lend its own support to the needs of the most vulnerable communities.

It is ever clearer from the orange skies to flooded streets we have experienced this year that New York City cannot solely rely on our Mayor to provide sufficient leadership and safety under increasingly frequent environmental disasters. At the same time, successful policies and protocols can be developed to save lives in times of crisis. The City Council can and must provide critical legislation and oversight in lieu of inconsistent leadership from the Mayor. Thank you.

**TESTIMONY OF:**

**Lowell Barton, Vice President, and Organizing Director, Laborers' Local 1010**

**for**

**Joint Hearing before The New York City Council**

**Parks and Environmental Protection Committees**

**October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

Laborers' Local 1010 is the premier Paving and Road Building Union in New York City. Our members work together to build streets, bridges, and highways throughout the five boroughs of NYC. Local 1010 is an affiliate of the NYS Laborers, representing over 40,000 men and women across the state, and is a proud affiliate of the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA). I want to thank Committee Chairs, Shekar Krishnan and James Gennaro for having this important and timely joint Committee hearing today with the Parks and Environmental Protection Committees.

Local 1010 is a proud member of the Play Fair Coalition, a coalition of over 400 organizations across the City, which advocates for the importance of our City's park system and 1% for Parks.

NYC Parks and capital projects are important to Local 1010 because it is precisely where many of our members work. Parks capital projects have long suffered from delays, waste, wage theft, and corruption and proposed budget cuts to the NYC Parks agency would be further devastating to parks infrastructure and recreational and green space for all New Yorkers.

**For too long, unscrupulous contractors have been permitted to exploit the current system, cheating workers, and taxpayers. We don't need more cuts to Parks. We need investment, transparency, oversight, and accountability to receive better results for New Yorkers and the workers tasked with performing Parks work across the City. In 2020, within months of severe budget cuts, NYC Parks were in their worst condition in two decades.**

Parks are critical infrastructure for public health and safety and are drivers of social equity. They should be funded as such. All New Yorkers deserve access to safe, clean, and equitable parks, pools, beaches and recreation center.

**Unionized laborers, when awarded the opportunity to work on NYC Parks capital projects, bring years of skills training to the job, helping to complete the work on budget and in a timely manner.**

Thank you again to Chairs Krishnan and Gennaro for having this important hearing today. Together, in partnership we can make our City fairer and our Parks more beautiful. Thank you.

### **Conclusion**

As a member and Vice President of a 2,700-member construction local, the agency overseeing the timely process of capital projects must prioritize integrity and safety on all job sites. **Preserving and expanding all NYC Parks funding is crucial to the agency's ability to hire staff to vet and award quality contractors in NYC.** I appreciate your consideration of our comments.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Council to create meaningful accountability in our city.



October 14, 2023

Honorable James Genaro  
Chair, New York City Council  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Statement to the Joint Committees on Environmental Protection,  
Resiliency & Waterfronts, and on Parks and Recreation Hearing on  
October 11, 2023

~~Dear Chairperson Genaro,~~  
*Jim*

Anyone serious about managing Climate Change would increase the DEP, DPR and DOT Budget for Green Infrastructure (GI). Climate Change mitigation is not going to happen on its own, or by constructing buildings, or by cutting funds from important agencies that are poised help. Rain is not the cause of flooding; more hard surfaces is. Hard surfaces do not allow water to drain into the soil. In the highly dense NYC urban environment, the only way is catch up for hundreds of years of building is to “green” every piece of land as fast as you can -- to allow water to drain. By the way, when rain drains underground to the base flow, there is an added advantage of getting clean water! Clean water means healthier people.

I write on behalf of the Bronx Council for Environmental Quality (BCEQ). Founded in 1971, we have sought to establish — as an Inherent Human Right — a sound, forward-looking environmental policy regarding an *aesthetic, unpolluted, environment* protecting a natural and historic heritage. We advocate for improving water quality, developing waterfront greenways and recreational uses, increasing ecosystem services, and restoring shoreline natural habitats, among other things. We successfully urged the DEP, DPR and DOT to work together to build the largest Green Infrastructure in the City in the Tibbetts Brook Daylighting and Greenway. They recreated a natural area at the old run down abandoned railroad.

The goal of your committee, “to make New York City more resilient in the face of climate change, and preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies, and matters relating to the waterfront” is being challenged. Today city government is not doing much to solve climate change challenges and, in fact, the latest cuts are making the problem worse. This is an added disadvantage to our economically disadvantage communities who already suffer the most from climate change, and who now from arbitrary budget cuts which delay the important work of recreating natural areas in the little space left in our city.

New York City government created the severe climate change we are experiencing now. If you continue to build on every spare square foot, how can the rain get into the ground? You have a math problem and should look at it that way. If you keep buying suits without replacing old ones, soon there will be no room in the closet. If you buy a new closet to hold your new suits, soon you will have no space to walk in the home. Make every change in imperviousness a cost. By the way, have you reviewed the enforcement and effectiveness of DEP’s new Unified Stormwater Rules? Or is it only another paper rule?

Use this opportunity to stand up to the proposed cuts and offer realistic choices. Discretionary budgets of agencies that are not “needed,” can be put on pause for a few years. Choose to cut anything that causes more carbon and greenhouse gas than other services. One group that comes to mind is New Housing. During the pandemic the construction of affordable housing was exempt from

budgetary cuts, while most agency budgets, including capital construction, was not. Developers had their chance. Now is the time to help those in need, and not those in search of greed.

We call on you to reject Mayor Adams perverse order of priorities for a general cut, when there are a few agencies that can survive a few years without funding. An added benefit would be that there would be less capital work for DDC and they would eventually become more efficient. No need for another Authority – one more power grab of the public's transparency.

If we allow these agencies to help manage climate change, this has the double benefit of maintaining more city jobs to do the necessary work to manage climate change, is in sync with the goals of this committee. *More people working* in full-time city employment with a career path and a pension, can manage the landscape for more environmentally productive parks, open spaces, and trees. They will build and maintain green infrastructure, to clean out drains and pick up garbage before rain storms. They can design waterfronts peppered with green infrastructure upland and living shorelines along the 520 miles of the city's waterfront. They will build natural-nature-based-systems with zero discharge can help manage the big storms.

We will have the opportunity to change the pace of progress in mitigating climate change by recognizing that the city's drainage system built for 90% of the storms, but only manages 10% of the annual rain; while 90% of the big storms overflow the sewer – and pollute rivers. You know this is needed. It is easy to change the standard design storm for storm sewers, especially for Green Infrastructure (GI), which would be hard to overflow, as it goes into the ground and easily accommodate zero discharge.

In the Bronx, our residents need all kinds of jobs. As we watch rents, food and clothing prices rise our families are suffering. We do not need new housing; we need to fix the housing we live in now. We do not need to you to put a new building in every open space. What we need are trees, green areas, parks, and access to and in the waterfront. Clearly, we need more people working not less.

While all agree to protect our future by cutting down on greenhouse gases. The question is just how much are we willing to give up. Cement manufacturing accounts for 8% of the world's CO2 emissions. Concrete, which is made from cement, is the most widely used substance on Earth — behind only water; the third largest consumer of energy; and the second largest emitter of CO2 when looking at industrial players alone.

As individuals, it is great to recycle, compost, bike, or drive hybrid / EV. Now it is time for industry, government, and transportation networks to step up, too. We need big changes faster. NYC government should take a four year pause on building housing. Halt the discretionary building of “affordable” housing for the future; choose to take care of the people here and now; restore full funding and more to GI agencies mentioned above.

Because rain does not cause flooding. "Hard surfaces that don't drain water result in flooding."

Your friend,



Karen Argenti, Secretary BCEQ



**Joint Committee Hearing - Committee on Parks and Recreation and Committee on  
Environmental Protection, Resiliency and Waterfronts  
Oversight – New York City’s Climate Resiliency Efforts  
Wednesday, October 11, 2023**

**Submitted by Hunter Armstrong, Executive Director, Brooklyn Greenway Initiative**

Thank you to Chairs Shekar Krishnan and James Gennaro for having this important and timely hearing, especially given the citywide flooding on September 29. We’re a proud member of the Play Fair Coalition, a coalition of over 400 organizations across the City, which advocates for the importance of our City’s park system and 1% for Parks.

Brooklyn Greenway Initiative advocates for and engages communities to use the Brooklyn greenway system. We also founded the NYC Greenways Coalition, a citywide coalition of 45 organizations. The city’s greenway system, much of which is located within NYC parklands, are vital corridors for New Yorkers to commute and recreate and are important connectors for people and wildlife. They should be properly supported and maintained by NYC Parks, and budget cuts would do further damage to an already underinvested system that serves millions of New Yorkers. Greenways provide commuting alternatives to New Yorkers and reduce carbon emissions. They also provide greenery to cool the city and planting beds and tree beds can absorb stormwater.

On the campaign trail, Mayor Adams said that he “proudly committed to a ‘percent for parks’ plan,” stating that “parks are not a luxury, it’s a necessity.” The mayor and the City Council have also recognized that our city’s parks are critical infrastructure in our efforts to mitigate climate change.

But our parks cannot do that if they aren’t funded. The recently announced PEG cuts (5% which began on October 1 and as much as 15% today by April) would be nothing short of devastating for our city’s parks system. This would amount to a \$75M reduction to an already strapped agency that has fewer workers today than it did before COVID. We all remember the cuts from just three years ago and the conditions of our parks.

We need to protect our parks from further cuts. While we recognize this is a challenging time for the city and there is a real crisis. Slashing the parks budget, tiny in comparison to other major agencies, is short sighted. We cannot afford to cut our parks system, especially as NYC experienced record-breaking heat this summer, increased rainfall, and massive flooding on Friday, September 29, underscoring the need for our city to invest in parks, open space, and proven green infrastructure solutions such as bioswales, street trees and blue belts.

The crises our city has faced over the last 3 years highlight the inequity in our parks system and the relationship between parks and public health, public safety, climate resilience and quality of life. Parks are critical infrastructure and must be funded and protected as such.

During this challenging time, we are asking that you to protect our parks and green space in highlight of this climate crisis.

Thank you.

## **Testimony**

New York City Council

Oversight Hearing on New York City's Climate Resiliency Efforts

Wednesday, October 11, 2023

### **Gowanus Canal Conservancy Testimony for City Council, Oversight Hearing on New York City's Climate Resiliency Efforts**

My name is Natasia Sidarta. I am the Community Stewardship & Operations Director at Gowanus Canal Conservancy (GCC), where I oversee community stewardship and volunteer programs to empower local stakeholders in stewardship of local green spaces. We are a proud member of the Forest for All NYC Coalition and the Play Fair Coalition. We are here today to ask this Council to fight for a budget that prioritizes equitable management of our shared public realm, which provides critical services to support health, quality of life, resilience, and justice for all of us.

On September 9th, Mayor Adams ordered all New York City agencies to reduce spending in the coming months (5% soon and as much as 15% by April), citing slowed revenue growth and financial strain due to the asylum seeker crisis. This administration's proposed austerity cuts of 15% will devastate our park system. This would amount to a \$75M reduction to an already strapped agency that has fewer workers today than it did before COVID.

We cannot afford to cut our parks system, especially as we have experienced record-breaking heat this summer and massive rainfall and flooding on Friday, September 29th. In Gowanus alone, we saw the effects of this flooding in countless ways, including damaging local businesses and homes, halting public transit, and overflowing our combined sewer system. This underscores the need for our City to invest in parks, open space, and proven green infrastructure solutions such as rain gardens and street trees.

In Gowanus, 670 young trees installed over the past decade are growing to help fill a neighborhood-wide gap in the urban canopy. When mature, these trees will provide benefits of flood management, cooling and shade, benefits which will grow exponentially as this planted infrastructure matures. However, surviving to maturity depends on adequate maintenance and protection from the Parks Department, local organizations, and volunteers. In Gowanus, we empower a network of volunteer tree stewards, who water, weed, prune, and remove litter and debris. These activities provide social infrastructure, offering opportunities for neighbors to organize together for neighborhood beautification and environmental benefits.

However, street trees will always need maintenance that cannot be done by volunteers and small community organizations, such as structural pruning, stump removal, sidewalk repair, and invasive species control by Parks. The urban forest is critical public infrastructure and does not receive the resources it needs to equitably serve New Yorkers.

We appreciate the City's efforts to leverage federal and state funding for climate resilience and infrastructure, however this Council must end the long-term underfunding of the Parks Department and the workers who care for these trees; continue fighting for baseline funding of 1% to Parks; and ensure that our young trees are able to provide essential social and ecological infrastructure equitably across NYC.

These cuts actively go against the climate resilience priorities laid out in the Administration's PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done, which include goals ranging from connecting over 300 miles of nature trails, creating nature-based stormwater management solutions, investing in the NYC Green Infrastructure Program, to creating over 10 acres of new open space and achieving 30% tree canopy coverage. Achieving these goals are vital not only to make our City more sustainable and equitable, but also to combat the disproportionate impacts of climate change.

Every New Yorker deserves safe and equitable access to our parks and open spaces.



A COLLABORATION OF OPEN  
SPACE ORGANIZATIONS

**Committee on Environmental Protection, Resiliency, and Waterfronts;  
Committee on Parks and Recreation**

New York City's Climate Resiliency Efforts

Testimony Submitted by Lynn Bodnar Kelly, Co-Chair, Parks and Open Space Partners

October 11, 2023

Thank you to Chairs Krishnan and Gennaro, and Committee members, for having this important hearing, which is very timely considering the citywide flooding on September 29th.

I'm Lynn Bodnar Kelly, and I am the Executive Director of the New York Restoration Project, and Co-Chair for the NYC Parks and Open Space Partners Coalition. Today I am testifying on behalf of the NYC Parks and Open Spaces, a coalition representing over 50 organizations that share ideas to address common challenges, amplify advocacy efforts, and offer technical assistance and guidance in service of an equitable and resilient parks system for all New Yorkers.

As the committee is aware, Mayor Adams has ordered all New York City agencies to reduce their spending, citing slowed revenue growth and financial strain due to the migrant crisis. While the coalition is truly sympathetic to the plight of asylum seekers and understands the logistical challenges being faced by the administration, we refuse to believe that mass budget cuts are the answer to a complex situation in which human beings and public land are front and center. In fact, if the administration follows through with proposed cuts of 15%, they can expect to see a devastating impact on our parks systems, which is still recovering from cuts made during COVID-19, and has fewer workers than it did before the pandemic. This austerity plan only furthers societal division during a time when we should be building community and ensuring the availability of critical services to new and current New Yorkers alike. In fact, a 15% cut to Parks negates the city's own climate resilience priorities as laid out in "PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done". Goals in this plan range from creating nature-based stormwater management solutions, investing in the NYC Green Infrastructure Program, to creating over 10 acres of new open space and achieving 30% tree canopy coverage.

Achieving these goals are vital not only to make our City more sustainable and equitable, but also to combat the impacts of climate change. The time to implement these measures has never been more critical. Climate change is rapidly changing our urban environment with summer heatwaves and more frequent instances of massive rainfall causing extensive flooding and damage to properties, infrastructure, and public spaces.

The subject of today's meeting is legislation pertaining to the health and protection of our waterfronts. In fact, waterfront parks figure centrally into New York City's open space and pose unique challenges and opportunities in terms of parks operations and maintenance. Roughly half of the land managed by the NYC Parks Department is directly on the water and as such are deeply susceptible to flood damage. When Hurricane Sandy battered the region, the storm swamped 5,700 acres of the city's parkland, took the lives of 48 New Yorkers, and caused \$800 million in damages. Storms and other dangerous-weather events will continue to decimate our waterfronts and will do so with more frequency unless we make these investments to protect our lands and our citizens. We need to integrate more resilient features into park designs, upgrades, and retrofits, to mitigate repeated damage to property and to save people's lives.

We truly appreciate the City's efforts to leverage federal and state funding for climate resilience and infrastructure, and we continue to urge the City to look at these funding streams as opportunities to advance resilience and adaptation projects for communities who face the greatest climate and environmental justice risks.

However, we cannot wait idly until the next storm. We urge the City to be prepared for new infrastructure by committing to dedicated parks funding for operations and maintenance. Budget cuts to the Parks department is a step in the wrong direction. Every New Yorker deserves safe and equitable access to our parks, open space, and waterfronts.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lynn Bodnar Kelly  
POSP, Co-Chair

**Testimony of Morgan Monaco, President, Prospect Park Alliance  
NYC Council Oversight Hearing: New York City's Climate Resiliency  
October 11, 2023**

Good afternoon, Chair Gennaro, Chair Krishnan, and members of the Environmental Protection, Resiliency and Waterfronts Committee and the Parks Committee. My name is Morgan Monaco, and I serve as Prospect Park Administrator and President of Prospect Park Alliance, the non-profit that operates Brooklyn's Backyard in partnership with the City. I am also the co-Chair of Parks and Open Space Partners, a coalition of more than 50 conservancies and friends of parks groups, and the Alliance also is a member of the Play Fair Coalition, which seeks 1% of the City budget for parks. I am here today to voice my support for the resiliency efforts of our City, as well as my concern for the proposed budget cuts to NYC Parks. I thank the Council for its leadership in holding this hearing today.

Prospect Park Alliance cares for Prospect Park's natural areas, 585 acres of meadows, waterways and woodlands, including Brooklyn's only lake, last remaining forest, and over 30,000 trees. Our staff performs critical work in preserving the park's natural habitats for our community and for countless species of mammals, birds and insects, all of whom rely on the park for their health and well-being. This work has become more critical than ever, both in terms of the environmental benefits that the park provides to our City, but also the existential threat faced by our trees, plants and other flora due to extreme weather conditions associated with climate change.

Less than two weeks ago, Prospect Park experienced one such assault, Tropical Storm Ophelia. Well-loved paths became high-powered streams: washing away soil, dislodging boulders and leaving pedestrian hazards in their wake. Areas where stormwaters pooled for several days overwhelmed our aging drainage, including our 60-acre Lake, which flooded the surrounding streets, as captured by so many in the press.

Prospect Park Alliance has taken a proactive approach to address climate change by updating the park's 150-year-old drainage system each time we undertake capital projects in the park, and through our woodland restoration work. We also have led the charge to advocate for the restoration of our Lakeshore to improve its environmental resilience. Currently we have secured \$3M of the \$20M needed to advance this project, and will present a master plan and pilot project to the community in the coming months.

With proper City investment, Prospect Park can do so much more to serve as a counterweight for our communities in battling severe storms. We implore our leaders to support this work by investing the \$17M of remaining funds for our Lakeshore project, as well as considering the park for additional resiliency efforts. We also request that the Administration reconsider its plan to cut up to 15% of the park's budget at this time when the city's green spaces are more critical than ever. Rather, we need our leaders to do the opposite, and invest in the city's resiliency efforts by following through on the pledge to invest 1% of the annual City budget for NYC Parks.

Our city and our parks will continue to feel the effects of climate change firsthand. It is crucial to ensure the continued resiliency of our green spaces by the proper investment in green infrastructure. We applaud the Council for its recent work to support the creation of an Urban Forest Plan to expand the City's tree canopy to 30% coverage, and appreciate your consideration of further investment in parks.

Good afternoon Chairs Krishnan and Gennaro, and members of the Committee.

My name is Andrea Adereti, Communications Manager at Randall's Island Park Alliance (RIPA) and I am delivering this testimony on behalf of RIPA.

Randall's Island Park is located in the East River between East Harlem, the South Bronx, and Astoria, Queens. RIPA is dedicated to cultivating and upholding the Park, offering a range of robust public programs and educational opportunities to all who visit.

Parks are communal spaces that foster joy, unity, and a sense of belonging among the diverse populations that make up the fabric of New York City. They are where families gather, children play, and individuals find solace in nature's embrace.

Yet the challenges faced by our parks extend far beyond underfunding. When budgets are cut the burden often falls on dedicated partners to preserve the status quo, making it increasingly challenging to fulfill the organization's mission. The allocation for parks not only falls significantly short of the recommended 1% of the city's budget but also introduces the imminent danger of a 15% reduction of park funding, placing additional strain on the already limited resources allocated for maintenance and programming.

It is imperative that parks are not perceived merely as "nice to have " but rather as a critical component of people's lives and wellbeing. Parks are essential. They are the cornerstone of our communities, nurturing mental health, and providing a much-needed intermission from our bustling urban landscape.

Allocating 1% of the city budget to NYC Parks would demonstrate a commitment to the well-being of our communities and environment. It would ensure that parks have the necessary resources to flourish, benefiting every New York resident and visitor alike.

A well-maintained and adequately funded park system is an investment in the city's future. The impact of these decisions reaches far beyond parks' boundaries, affecting not only those who need these spaces but also those of us who support them. It is organizations like RIPA who tirelessly make these spaces accessible and vibrant for all.



**NYC Council Hearing - October 11, 2023 at 1 PM - Committees: Parks & Recreation + Environmental Protection, Resiliency and Waterfronts**

---

Dear Committee Chairs and Committee Members,

Thanks for this hearing and your support for the recently passed urban forest master plan legislation.

My name is Matthew Shore, born - and still living - in the Bronx, and I'm an Organizer at [South Bronx Unite](#), a community-based advocacy organization focused on environmental justice and health equity in the South Bronx neighborhoods of Mott Haven & Port Morris.

You've heard from several upset and tired environmental organizations across the five boroughs, but can you imagine how this City's Black and Brown communities that bear the brunt of environmental justice impacts feel? We cannot talk about climate resiliency and parks without acknowledging the direct correlation between lack of real green spaces and high levels of polluting infrastructure to poor health impacts.

Although the Bronx is the greenest borough, that green is mostly concentrated in the northern parts of the borough, far away from the most impoverished, polluted "disadvantaged communities" that could most benefit from green spaces!

Here are the numbers from New Yorkers for Parks Open Space Index Profiles and NYC government data:

- Looking at Bronx Community District 8, which has the affluent neighborhood of Riverdale, Riverdale enjoys the highest amount, of all 59 community districts, of tree canopy. Additionally, it also ranks near the top 10 of all 59 community districts for the percentage of land that includes parks spaces!
- How does this benefit Riverdale? Well, when looking at the occurrences of childhood asthma per 10,000 residents, Riverdale has 218 occurrences, one of the lowest rates of childhood asthma in the City. Additionally, it has the lowest severity of heat vulnerability.

Now, how does that compare to the Bronx Community District 1, which includes the South Bronx neighborhoods of Mott Haven and Port Morris, which is in the US' poorest congressional district?

- Well, of 59 community districts we rank 46 when it comes to tree canopy and 45 when it comes to the percentage of park spaces -towards the bottom!
- Why does this matter? We have the highest rate of childhood asthma occurrences per 10,000.
- We also have the highest severity of heat vulnerability.

There's no coincidence that this is tied to our low availability of green spaces, but it's also tied to publicly-owned green spaces being given away to industries that worsen our vulnerability to poor air quality in the form of:

- 1) greatly increased truck traffic;
- 2) worsened flooding in a South Bronx that already has a tremendously inaccessible waterfront that is in a high-risk flood zone; and,
- 3) lots handed to real estate developments that do not meet the average 27% AMI of local residents, but of people making, at minimum, \$86K for a studio apartment.

Make no mistake, the only park in Mott Haven with real green spaces is St. Mary's Park. Many "parks" in our area are actually fake parks, nothing more than "heat traps" that contain many impermeable spaces and lack real green spaces, thus exacerbating urban heat island.

Our community has been disproportionately harmed, disinvested, and neglected, but we invite you to be a part of the change.

1. Recognize that the City can both increase green spaces **AND** improve existing green spaces, including NYCHA open spaces. They can also be holistically planned for, ensuring that we're not planning green spaces in silos, but comprehensively and adjacent to areas with high pollution, such as highways.
2. Recognize community-envisioned green space equity plans when introducing agency plans, such as the Harlem River Greenway Plan, which can and should do more to acknowledge and see the opportunity that the community-envisioned [Mott Haven-Port Morris Waterfront Plan](#) provides.
3. Speaking of, we urge this body to continue to support the community-envisioned Mott Haven-Port Morris Waterfront Plan, which is a State DEC priority plan that aims to create a series of interconnected community-managed green spaces across our peninsula which is greatly deprived of waterfront access, suffers from flooding, is obstructed by polluting train tracks, and many other issues. We invite you to visit us in Port Morris for a tour of our waterfront and how we continue to be affected by a multitude of environmental injustices. Shoutout Waterfront Alliance and EDC, which have been instrumental in supporting this comprehensive community vision.
4. You can also support the CLT movement, led by the NYC Community Land Initiative, by supporting the Community Land Act, which includes Intro 637 (Restler) aka "Public Land for Public Good," which requires the City to prioritize CLTs and nonprofit developers when disposing of City-owned land, to ensure public land is used for permanently-affordable housing and community stewarded green spaces, for example, removing spaces, such as our increasingly gentrified waterfront away from the speculative market and empowering local residents.
5. This month, South Bronx Unite is excited to build on the success of NYCCLI by launching a citywide initiative on CLTs as a tool for environmental justice and green space equity. We look forward to engaging with you all this much needed conversation.
6. Additionally, improve notifications between the Parks Department and community-based organizations on the ground. Why do we have to contact Bronx Community Board 1 in order to be notified about Parks Capital Projects and follow our council member's social media to be informed about community input sessions? Similarly, why do we have to communicate through the community board to request that the Parks Department meet with us and open up discussion on their tree plantings, surface renovations, etc.?
7. Lastly, please continue to support the important work of the Play Fair Coalition and Forest for All Coalition. This can be done by pledging to support 1% of the City's budget be used for the Parks

Department and holding the administration accountable when that urgent need is not being met for our city's Black and Brown communities.

Thanks for your support and thanks once again for hosting this crucial hearing.

In community,

Matthew Shore  
Green Space Equity & Community Land Trust Organizer  
[South Bronx Unite \(@southbronxunite\)](#)  
[matthew@southbronxunite.org](mailto:matthew@southbronxunite.org)



# THE NEW YORK CLIMATE EXCHANGE

## Written Testimony for the Committee on Parks and Recreation & Committee on Environmental Protection

Oversight – New York City’s Climate Resiliency Efforts

October 11, 2023

Dear Chair Krishnan and Chair Gennaro,

In advance of the Committee on Parks and Recreation and Committee on Environmental Protection Joint Oversight Hearing on New York City’s Climate Resiliency Efforts, The New York Climate Exchange (“The Exchange”) is writing to you to introduce ourselves and offer The Exchange as a future resource to your committee on issues relevant to our global climate crisis.

In April, The Exchange was announced the winner of a global competition to develop a center for climate solutions on Governors Island. As such, we are currently operating as a startup and dedicating time building our team, identifying early programming opportunities, and honing the design of our site on Governors Island. We look forward to being able to support our city, state, and federal leaders in deploying equitable, scalable solutions to the global climate crisis.

The Exchange is based on a simple idea: collaboration works. The Exchange’s partner network includes climate experts, researchers, educators, business leaders, and community organizers who are working together to tackle the effects of climate change (*see full Partner list below*). With a robust partner network encompassing diverse climate topics, ranging from extreme weather events to energy resilience, food and water systems, environmental law, deep climate tech, and climate justice, we leverage our extensive connections and our future home on Governors Island to drive impactful research, education, and public discourse. The Exchange will use education, research, an innovation hub, job training, and public programs to prepare communities to respond to climate challenges, ultimately becoming a renowned thought leader and innovator in the development of climate solutions.

Expected to open in 2028, The Exchange’s home on Governors Island will be a beacon for sustainable and resilient urban environments around the world, using renewable energy and zero-waste technologies to generate more energy than it consumes. The Exchange also aspires to be New York City’s first large-scale mass timber development and first Living Building Challenges certification.

Together, The Exchange’s partner network, physical campus, and extensive offerings are committed to addressing pressing climate issues, including climate resiliency efforts. By harnessing the expertise of its

diverse network, The Exchange aims to revolutionize these efforts, pioneering unique and transformative approaches for a sustainable future.

As an illustrative example of our expertise, today we're pleased to offer a deeper understanding of New York City climate resiliency efforts and the urban tree canopy, guided by insights from one of our esteemed partner experts, Andrew Reinmann, Assistant Professor at the City University of New York. This serves as a testament to our capabilities and demonstrates how we can serve as a valuable resource in this domain moving forward.

### **New York City Climate Resiliency Efforts & the Urban Tree Canopy**

*Dr. Andrew Reinmann, Assistant Professor, Environmental Sciences Initiative, The City University of New York*

For the foreseeable future, New York City will experience rising air temperatures and sea levels and increases in the severity, frequency, and duration of extreme climate events (i.e., heat waves, drought, excessive precipitation). Through these changes, New York City faces the daunting task of maintaining human health, livability, and overall sustainability of a city that was built under a very different climate regime.

As a forest and urban ecologist, my expertise most squarely lies in how trees and forests fit into our city's resiliency efforts. New York City has a considerable urban heat island effect, meaning that because of its built infrastructure, air temperatures in the city—particularly at night—are much warmer than they are in nearby suburban areas. However, even within the city there is a lot of spatial heterogeneity in the magnitude of the urban heat island effect. There are many factors driving this heterogeneity such as building height (taller buildings have higher temperatures than shorter buildings), roof color (white roofs reflect more sunlight and are cooler than black roofs), and vegetation. Through shading and transpiration—the movement of water from the soil, through the plant, and out of the leaves as water vapor—plants, particularly trees, can play a critical role at local and city-scale in mitigating the magnitude of the urban heat island effect.

Neighborhoods with an abundance of tree canopy cover tend to be cooler than those with little cover, and forested parks are much cooler than surrounding neighborhoods. For example, in the evenings when the magnitude of the urban heat island effect is largest, Central Park can be >5-6°F cooler than the Upper West Side and Upper East Side. This difference in air temperature is larger than the amount of warming the region has experienced from climate change over the past 100 years. In addition to cooling benefits, trees and forests also help to mitigate flooding and are essential for carbon sequestration. Over the course of a year, forests can intercept and transpire 50% or more of the precipitation that falls, thereby diverting runoff back to the atmosphere and mitigating flooding risk. Because of the myriad of ecosystem services the urban tree canopy (i.e., forests and non-forest trees) provides, it is critical that we recognize it is a key component of climate resiliency strategies.

Currently, New York City has 22% of its land area covered by trees. However, not all New Yorkers have equal access to forested parks or canopy cover in their neighborhoods. Lower income

communities and communities of color are less likely than more affluent communities to benefit from the range of ecosystem services provided by trees and forests. There are calls for New York City to pledge to attain 30% tree canopy cover by 2035. Such efforts could be an opportunity to work with community groups to maximize the distribution of the benefit of trees moving forward. I would also argue including tree maintenance and forest restoration as part of broader efforts to leverage the ecosystem services of trees. Although urban trees tend to grow faster than their rural counterparts, street trees in particular die much younger; a considerable amount of this mortality could be mitigated through proper maintenance and street tree pit sizing.

In recent decades, scientific research and literature has highlighted the important roles of the urban tree canopy in enhancing city livability and mitigating the effects of climate change. These canopies are crucial for building cities resilient to future climate changes. To realize the full benefits of increasing tree canopy cover, there needs to be equitable distribution of new plantings/maintenance efforts and community buy-in. Between the universities, personnel at NYC Parks, the US Forest Service, The Natural Areas Conservancy, numerous “tree-centric” stewardship and community groups, and of course The New York Climate Exchange, there is a plethora of intellectual resources available to the city to develop effective policies and strategies for increasing the climate resiliency of New York. As such, we are excited by the opportunity to continue to engage with the Committee on Parks and Recreation on pressing climate topics like this.

**Appendix: The Exchange Partners**

| <b>Core Partners</b>  | <b>Affiliate Partners</b>  | <b>Advisory and Community Partners</b>   |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stony Brook University</li> <li>• Georgia Institute of Technology</li> <li>• Pace University</li> <li>• Pratt Institute</li> <li>• University of Washington</li> <li>• Boston Consulting Group</li> <li>• IBM</li> <li>• Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City University of New York</li> <li>• Duke University</li> <li>• SUNY Maritime College</li> <li>• New York University</li> <li>• University of Oxford</li> <li>• Rochester Institute of Technology</li> <li>• Moody’s</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• American Geophysical Union</li> <li>• American Museum of Natural History</li> <li>• Aspen Global Change Institute</li> <li>• Association for a Better New York</li> <li>• BEAM Center</li> <li>• Billion Oyster Project</li> <li>• Bronx Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• The Building and Construction Trades</li> </ul> |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  |  | <p>Council of Greater New York</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Jobs NY</li> <li>• The Climate Museum</li> <li>• Earth Matter NY</li> <li>• Educational Alliance</li> <li>• Green City Force</li> <li>• Grow NYC</li> <li>• Harvestworks</li> <li>• Laborers' International Union Local 79</li> <li>• Lower Manhattan Cultural Council</li> <li>• Manhattan Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Museum of the City of New York</li> <li>• New York Building Congress</li> <li>• New York City Employment &amp; Training Coalition</li> <li>• Nontraditional Employment for Women</li> <li>• Queens Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Solar One Education</li> <li>• Staten Island Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• The Point Community Development Corporation</li> <li>• The Urban Assembly New York Harbor School</li> <li>• The Waterfront Alliance</li> <li>• 32BJ SEIU</li> <li>• Variety Boys &amp; Girls Club of Queens</li> <li>• WE ACT for Environmental Justice</li> </ul> |
|--|--|---|



**Date: October 10, 2023**

**To: NYC Council Member Shekar Krishnan, Parks Committee Chair & Parks Committee**

**Re: Testimony for the NYC City Council Parks Committee Meeting**

Thank you for having this important and timely hearing, especially given the citywide flooding that recently happened on September 29th. Van Cortlandt Park was impacted by this flooding and will continue to be whenever there are heavy rains. Unfortunately, we barely have the staff to deal with flooding when it happens. And if the proposed budget takes place, it is a guarantee we will not be able to clean up after storms.

We're a proud member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, a coalition of over 400 organizations across the City, which advocates for the importance of our City's park system and increasing the City's parks budget to 1%.

Back in 2021, Mayor Adams ran on a campaign promise to increase NYC Parks' budget to 1% of the city's overall budget. He acknowledged that NYC Parks was underfunded and last year increased the Parks budget but still did not reach the 1% promised. **Mayor Adams must make good on his promise and continue to increase the Parks budget and not make cuts!**

**This administration's proposed austerity cuts of 15% will devastate our park system. This would amount to a \$75M reduction to an already strapped agency that has fewer workers today than it did before COVID.**

We cannot afford to cut our parks system, especially as our planet has experienced record-breaking heat this summer and massive rainfall and flooding on Friday, September 29th, underscoring the need for our City to invest in parks, open space, and proven green infrastructure solutions such as bioswales, street trees and blue belts.

**New Yorkers must demand more! We deserve a park system that is safe, clean, and equitable.**

While NYC's budget for Parks is hundreds of millions of dollars more than any other U.S. city, the budget for Parks in other large cities is 2% of the overall budget, on average. In NYC, parks make up 14% of its land mass—and yet, the budget for parks is a paltry half a percent. Simply put, it is just not enough money to run an agency of the size and scope that NYC Parks is asked to maintain. Van Cortlandt Park alone is 1,146 acres and serves nearly 3 million visitors a year. Yet, on an average day, our park might have two Park Enforcement Patrol officers covering the whole park.

We just finished another busy and exhausting summer in the park. Community members once again looked to parks as their catch-all venue. Visitors came to Van Cortlandt Park for celebrations like birthday parties, barbecues, weddings, baby showers as well as recreational sports like baseball, cricket and cross-country races. While those uses are invited and encouraged, other uses also dominate the park during these months, including speakers blaring late into the night and E-bikes, ATVs, and motorcycles flying across our pathways. Mountains of trash gathered. People set up encampments. Grass needed to be mowed, over and over again. Graffiti needed to be removed. The list goes on.

Our NYC Parks staff stepped up and took care of it all with pride, but they are stretched too thin and it simply isn't fair. They are tired and frustrated, and so are we. NYC Parks staff need more resources to do the work the public expects and deserves.

NYC Parks does not have the ability to cut their budget and still maintain our parks. They are already operating on a shoestring budget. New Yorkers deserve clean and safe parks and NYC Parks needs staff and funding to do so.

**Join us and acknowledge that NYC Parks budget cannot be cut like other city agencies.**

Sincerely,

Christina Taylor  
Deputy Director  
Van Cortlandt Park Alliance

Thank you, Chairs Krishan, and Gennaro and to the members of the committee for having this important hearing regarding our city's parks and resiliency plans.

My name is Annie Gugliotta, and I am an intern alumnus for the Natural Areas Conservancy. This spring and summer, I had the pleasure of working on the City-Wide Trails Team along with my colleagues from NAC and NYC Parks. During the internship, I helped care for part of our over 300-mile trail network. These trails provide access to peaceful, natural spaces and are a very important resource for residents of an urban area as dense as NYC. Maintaining these trails keeps them safe, accessible, and easily navigable. They offer a source of exercise, mental health benefit, and relief from the city's urban heat island effect- among many other uses, at no cost.

As my internship ended, the Parks department announced they had received a large funding boost and were creating a plethora of new jobs. These were to be full-time, permanent positions dedicated to formalizing all 300+ miles of our trails. I excitedly applied for a position, eager to join the Parks department and continue this important work. I was extremely disappointed to hear that these jobs are now frozen indefinitely not very long after they were even created.

When I was working daily in the field, I saw the condition of many of these trails. A lot have eroded or easily flooded terrain. There are also countless unofficial trails or "desire lines" which fragment forested areas and cause habitat degradation and navigational confusion. A lot of people may not feel safe going for an urban hike. There is still so much work to be done.

City dwellers can benefit from having well maintained nature trails, as many of them are reachable via public transportation. Being able to walk in nature should not be reserved for the privileged few who are able to leave the city, but to all New Yorkers. I urge the council to put pressure on restoring this funding, as they are an asset to our city.

Thank you for your time,

Annie Gugliotta

My name is Ciara Kosior and I am a member of the public from District 40.

I'm writing to advocate for at *minimum* 1% of the city budget for the park system and oppose the mayor's austerity measures cutting the parks' department budget. I'm writing because of climate resilience planning and investment in our parks. I'm writing because of the disproportionate effects of environmental injustice.

We all know with our common sense that parks are good for New Yorkers. For one, parks reduce tragically high asthma rates, especially in vulnerable neighborhoods like the South Bronx.

After living through Hurricane Sandy over a decade ago and seeing the flooding the other week, it's clear that we need urgent support and funding for our parks as fortifications against the climate crisis, air pollution, water pollution and more.

Instead of reiterating the words of others who I agree with, I'd like to remind you why we need funding for parks as crucial spaces to support human joy, health, and well-being.

Parks are places we New Yorkers go to for solace when we're sad, to host baby showers full of joy, and to enjoy picnics, birthdays, barbecues, graduation parties, and other celebrations when we have no other space at home. Parks are where we get married! Parks are where everyone, regardless of income, can spend time. They're where asylum seekers and our unhoused neighbors go to rest. Parks are places for New Yorkers to burn off steam by exercising. Our parks have inspired countless paintings of mine and artworks of others, adding value to the city through art sales and cultural wealth. Parks are where New Yorkers can finally take a breather. Parks are where some babies first learn to walk, where our children learn to play and share and interact with others.

Parks are not superfluous to New York. They are the lifeblood, protective skin, lungs, and heart of New York. They're where New Yorkers sit to read and expand their minds. They're where entrepreneurs and students meet to invent and brainstorm new inventions with fellow innovators to advance our city. Parks are not just the spaces between buildings! They're places where our melting pot of cultures and religions come together peacefully to enjoy a nice day. They are crucial to our economy, our health, and our resilience in the face of climate change. They're essential to the emotional wellness of sanity of our city. Mayor Adams is taking it for granted that they will always be there for us without receiving funding and support in return.

I'm not asking for 1%, I think it's reasonable to fund the parks department with 3-5% of the city budget like other major metropolitan American cities like Chicago.

Our last council and Mayor Adams funded the NYPD 10.8 BILLION dollars for the year. We have the funds and ability. If we take one drop of NYPD's budget and reallocate it, we can have a robust parks department to make our city the green city we so desperately and direly need.

October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Dear New York City Council members of the Committee on Parks and Recreation and the Committee on Environmental Protection, Resiliency, and Waterfronts,

As members of the climate activist group 350NYC, we strongly oppose budget cuts for public parks in New York City.

Our beloved public parks, trees, and open spaces are essential tools for stormwater management. Flooding of NYC streets and subways, from Superstorm Sandy in 2012 to last month's torrential rains underscore the serious water damage to city structures as climate change accelerates. Nature-based stormwater management techniques require strong waterfront parks, abundant trees, and permeable open spaces, to enhance resiliency.

Green parks and playgrounds provide a wealth of mental and physical health benefits, especially in our dense city environment. Park maintenance and renovation should be a top priority, not a subject of discussion when city budget reductions are considered.

Those of us with young children and grandchildren rely on our neighborhood parks for play and socializing. Those of us who engage in sports rely on the basketball, pickleball, soccer, and many other facilities in our neighborhood parks. Locals and tourists alike depend on waterside views and green park space for walks along paths and sitting on benches. Water fountains and water refill stations in parks reduce reliance on single use plastic water bottles. Trees serve to filter harmful pollutants and mitigate the urban heat island effect, which has a disproportionate impact on low income neighborhoods and communities of color.

Climate resilience priorities are clearly stated in the administration's PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done. The excellent vision outlined by the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice highlights the creation of 10 acres of new open space, 300 connected miles of nature trails, nature-based stormwater management systems, and 30% tree canopy coverage. We urge you to invest in the NYC Green Infrastructure Program, rather than imposing short-sighted reductions for fiscal reasons. Certainly the current financial strain is great as our city accommodates the influx of migrants. However, new arrivals need green park space just as much as long-time residents do. Maybe more.

We thank Chairs Krishnan and Gennaro, and all Committee members, for holding this essential hearing. Record-breaking summer heat and citywide flooding on September 29th remind us to value our city parks, especially along the waterfront, as key resources for sustainability.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Crawley, Jane Selden, and Eileen Leonard  
350NYC

My name is Laurie Dalesandro, and I am a volunteer at my local park, Kissena Park in Queens. I am a member of the Kissena park as a member of Kissena Synergy.

Thank you to Chairs Krishnan and Gennaro and the members of the Committees on Parks and Environmental Protection, Resiliency and Waterfronts for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

I believe our parks, especially the natural areas, play an important role in protecting and enhancing our city's environment and air quality. I work with Kissena Synergy to maintain trails, pick up litter and remove invasive plants. It is an amazing feeling to be so close the earth. It helps me feel connected to, not only the earth, but to my community. We saw baby owls last spring. It was breath taking.

I would like to quote Emily Walker:

“Research consistently shows that access to quality green spaces and parks have a multitude of benefits for residents of cities, while also providing crucial habitat for flora and fauna. We also know that our parks function as critical green infrastructure, in addition to serving as spaces for passive and active recreation, and vital respite for city residents. When it comes to our natural areas, the data is clear: - They contain up to a quarter of the existing canopy in NYC, but account for nearly 70% of the carbon stored, and 83% of carbon sequestered by trees across the city; - They are almost 10 degrees cooler than our streets during extreme heat events; - They prevent \$4.8 million in hospital bills from pollution-induced illness annually; - They provide \$2.2 billion in recreational value, \$1.1 billion in public health value; - They soak up as much storm water as \$580 million worth of new green storm water infrastructure. Our natural areas convey all of these benefits to NYC despite decades of disinvestment. It should be noted, however, that as we continue to delay the proper funding for management and care of our natural forested areas and wetlands, these benefits will diminish, putting more strain on our city and its residents. We are deeply alarmed that these benefits are today at risk due to the citywide budget cuts that were announced in September. As an agency already operating on a relative shoestring, the mandated 5% budget cuts will have a catastrophic impact on the ability of NYC Parks to implement much of its work, including crucial care for our natural areas and urban forest. On Earth Day, the NAC stood proudly with Mayor Adams as he committed to \$2.4 million in baselined funding to formalize, maintain, and program over 300 miles of nature trails in our city parks, which would unlock access to over 10,000 acres of invaluable green space for New Yorkers. We are profoundly disappointed that the funding for this initiative, prioritized in the 2023 PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done report, will no longer be implemented for its intended purpose as a result of the 5% budget cut. Trail formalization is not just about increasing public access, an urgent need for a city as dense as New York, but also about ensuring that our natural areas remain safe for recreation, while decreasing negative impacts,

such as reducing forest fragmentation and managing invasive species. The stresses on our natural forested areas and wetlands are tremendous, and without appropriate public investments in their care, we stand to lose these assets entirely.

We applaud the Council's efforts to examine the intersection of resiliency and our green spaces, but we also believe the urgency of this moment requires us to speak out about further constraints on the budget for NYC Parks. Despite decades of chronic disinvestment in the agency, our peers at NYC Parks have moved a tremendous amount of innovative work forward that has increased the health, resilience, and condition of our parks and green spaces to the benefit of all New Yorkers. But they cannot continue this work without consistent and meaningful funding, a goal that has eluded the city for decades. Our parks and natural areas benefit the lives of every New Yorker, from longtime residents to our most recent arrivals. While we understand that moments of crisis demand hard choices from our elected officials, we also believe that these choices shouldn't come at the expense of the shared resources that make our city more resilient and livable, and that provide pathways to good, green jobs amid the worsening climate crisis. We call on our elected officials from every level of New York City's government to work together to restore the proposed budget cuts, and prevent additional cuts to services that make our city stronger."

I feel strongly that we still have time to improve the quality of our environment. I urge you to restore the proposed budget cuts and prevent additional cuts to services which improve the quality of my life and every one of our community.

Sincerely,

Laurie Dalesandro

#### 162 Street

Fresh Meadows, NY 113365

Leslie Garcia

Testimony

10/12/2023

As a young professional passionate about parks and resiliency through natural areas restoration, my time working with Natural Areas Conservancy and NYC parks, I faced a hurdle due to budget cuts impacting job availability in my desired field. Despite this, I proactively sought internships and volunteer opportunities to gain experience and network within the industry. I engaged in courses to enhance my skills and knowledge, while also connecting with mentors who provided guidance and advice. I remained persistent, believing in the value of my passion and dedication, eventually securing a fulfilling role that aligned with my aspirations in parks and natural areas restoration.

The impact of Trails funding being cut has been profoundly felt by aspiring young professionals like myself who are eager to work in natural areas management. This reduction has created a notable setback, stripping away a vital pipeline to full-time employment opportunities. The Trails funding not only supported the conservation and management of natural areas but also provided a crucial platform for young talent to gain hands-on experience, mentorship, and skill development.

Dear Chairs Krishnan and Gennaro, and Committee Members,

Thank you for holding this timely hearing on financial support for NYC's parks. I am a member of two environmental organizations in the city, WeAct and 350.org, both of which are strong advocates for just climate solutions and resilience. I strongly support Play Fair for Parks' goal of increasing the City's parks budget to 1%.

There are few more important and cost-effective ways for the city to maintain livability; meet its emissions targets; combat air pollution and heat island effects (which disproportionately affect marginalized New Yorkers, including the poor and people of color); and ameliorate flooding than by maintaining and increasing its green spaces and parks.

The 15% cut ordered by Mayor Adams runs contrary to his own administrations *PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done* agenda, which includes nature based stormwater solutions, creating 10 acres of new open space, and achieving 30% tree canopy coverage.

NYC's 7,300 acres of forested natural areas and parks:

- Absorb the CO2 produced annually by 4,500 cars.
- Soak up as much stormwater as \$580 million worth of infrastructure
- Are 4-6 degrees cooler than the average temperatures of other surface types during extreme heat events

If this summer and the storm on September 29 have shown us anything, they have shown us how seriously we need to take preparing for climate change. Heat waves and storms are growing more frequent and more intense, and the climate science is clear that they will only continue to do so. We simply cannot afford anything that jeopardizes the City's green spaces. We cannot afford NOT to spend adequately on the trees and open spaces that cool our city, absorb rain water, clean the air, and absorb carbon from the atmosphere.

Thank you for reading my testimony, and for your leadership.

Sincerely,

V. Page Fortna



The parks in our community are currently ridden with drug abuse and violence. It is very difficult to find a safe park as most of the benches are occupied by homeless people or addicts. It's very unsafe for younger children as they have nowhere to play. My younger brother is even more unsafe in these parks since he has autism. There are many instances where fights are broken out. There are no police on site although they claim to be patrolling the parks most of the time they are nowhere to be seen. Is it fair that my mom has to spend money to take us far from this neighborhood in order for us to have fun somewhere else that is safer? This community suffered the most during covid since we were all stuck in our apartments, is it fair that we still have to be stuck inside?

- Jalene

To: Parks Committee  
Name: Esmeralda Gabriel  
Class: 7C1  
School: IS 61 Leonardo da Vinci  
Academy: Cornell

#### Why are parks important to you?

1. Parks are important to me because they are a place to go when you want to take a break when you feel stressed or want to have a fun time with people.
2. Some people like to go to the park when they want to be outside instead of being locked inside and being on their phones too much.
3. Many people, including me, like to go to the park with friends and family because we want to feel relaxed and have fun.
4. When I go to the park I like to play on the swings, slides, and more but I also like to hang out with my friends and have fun just being at the park and playing games like tag to connect with them and communicate outside of school.

#### Problems you see when you go to the local park

1. One problem I see often is that there is not enough space to play around without running into people or feeling crowded which can make people uncomfortable and make them have less of a fun time and enjoy it less.
2. Another problem is that they should keep the park clean and and more safe. For example they should clean the parks more so that it is more safe for kids to play around. They should also update their swings, slides, and more because if they don't update them they can make people seriously injured which isn't safe.
3. Parks should also have more park rangers because without them people can feel unsafe with everything that can happen like getting injured, losing something valuable, and getting lost from your family.

#### End: why should we upkeep and fund the parks?

We should upkeep and fund the parks because we need a place that is meant to help us have a fun time and help us relax and be in the fresh air/nature while enjoying it. Funding the parks can help us maintain our parks and keep them safe for everyone to enjoy for as long as you want to. If we can upkeep and fund stuff that people don't enjoy as much we should be able to upkeep and fund our parks because many people support them and actually like them.



How they look when they are unclean and unsafe

How they look when they are safe and clean

Class: 7C1  
School: IS61 - Corona - Queens  
Academy: Cornell

Parks are important to me because they not only serve as a place to do homework but also as a place for social gatherings. Along with those reasons, parks are free and open most days, so it is accessible for many people of all ages and backgrounds. Parks can also be important in other ways not just to me, they can house plants, trees, animals, etc. The more healthy plants/trees they house the more oxygen can be produced and more carbon dioxide can be absorbed.

My experience at the parks are the following:

#### PROS:

1. Pretty safe environment
2. Great place for relaxing and homework
3. Makes me get social with my peers
4. Makes me get out more

#### CONS:

1. Equipment is worn out in some parks.
2. Extreme levels of littering
3. Dog feces EVERYWHERE
4. Sometimes there's overcrowding and not even equipment to be shared.

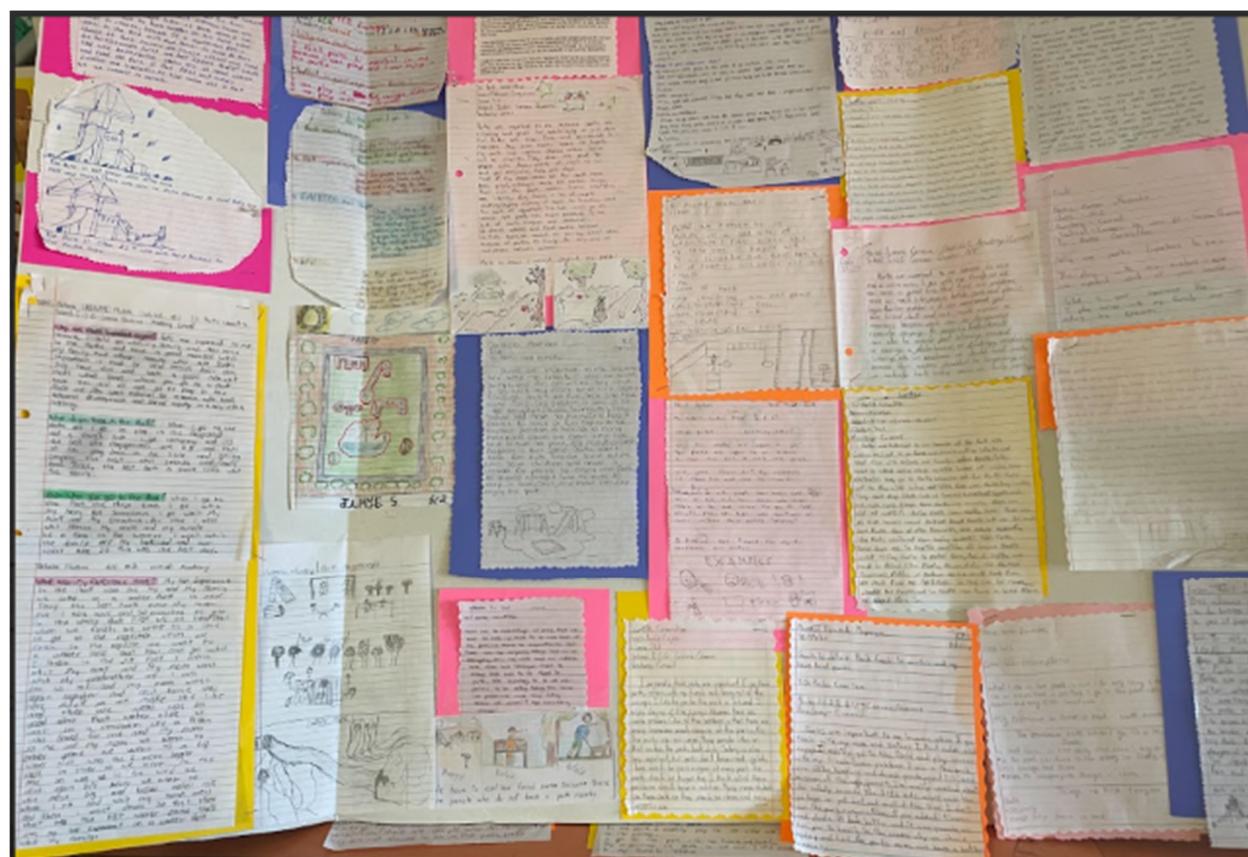
#### Furthermore:

There are more problems that I haven't mentioned including the safety of the people that go to the parks. I feel that there aren't enough park rangers in every park. The safety of little children could be compromised by anyone that approaches them. Which brings me to another issue: Vandalism. It would not be a problem if again, we had more park rangers/guards.

#### WHY should we keep up and fund our parks?

Well, better park funds mean better park experiences, safer and cleaner environment, and less crimes like vandalism. Children and adults can be happy knowing the parks are a safe place to be.

I hope that in the future the parks can be safe and clean for children and adults to enjoy.



---

Aminur Rahman Rehan

7C1

IS.01 Leonardo Da Vinci

Cornell

10/11/23

Dear Parks Committee,

I hope this letter finds you well. I wanted to express my thoughts on the importance of park funds, express some common problems at average parks, and stress the importance of safety in our community's recreational spaces.

Parks are necessary for various reasons. First, they promote physical and mental well-being. They provide a safe and accessible space for people of all ages to engage in physical activities, such as walking, jogging, or playing sports. Regular physical activity is necessary for maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and parks serve as an accessible resource for our community to achieve this.

Moreover, parks are important to create social connections and a sense of community. They are gathering places for people to meet, interact, and form friendships. Picnics, events, and recreational programs in parks bring people together, creating a stronger and more cohesive community.

Parks also have a positive impact on the environment. Green spaces improve air quality, absorb carbon dioxide, and provide habitat for local wildlife. Maintaining and enhancing our parks can contribute to a more sustainable and eco-friendly community.

However, it's important to acknowledge that some average parks face various issues. Maintenance problems, like damaged play equipment, litter, and overgrown vegetation, can diminish their appeal and utility. Proper funding is

---

necessary to address these issues and ensure that our parks remain safe and welcoming.

Safety in parks is paramount. Issues like insufficient lighting, poorly maintained paths, or a lack of security measures can create unsafe environments. By increasing funds for improved lighting, better infrastructure, and security measures, we can enhance safety in our parks, making them more inviting and secure for everyone.

In conclusion, park funds are crucial for the overall well-being of our community. They promote physical and mental health, build strong social connections, contribute to a healthier environment, and offer numerous educational and cultural opportunities. However, to fully realize these benefits, addressing common problems and prioritizing safety is essential. I urge you to consider the vital role that our parks play in enhancing our quality of life and to support efforts to ensure their continued maintenance, development, and safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

-Aminur Rahman Rehan

# To OBTAIN PARK FUNDS TO Maintain local PARKS

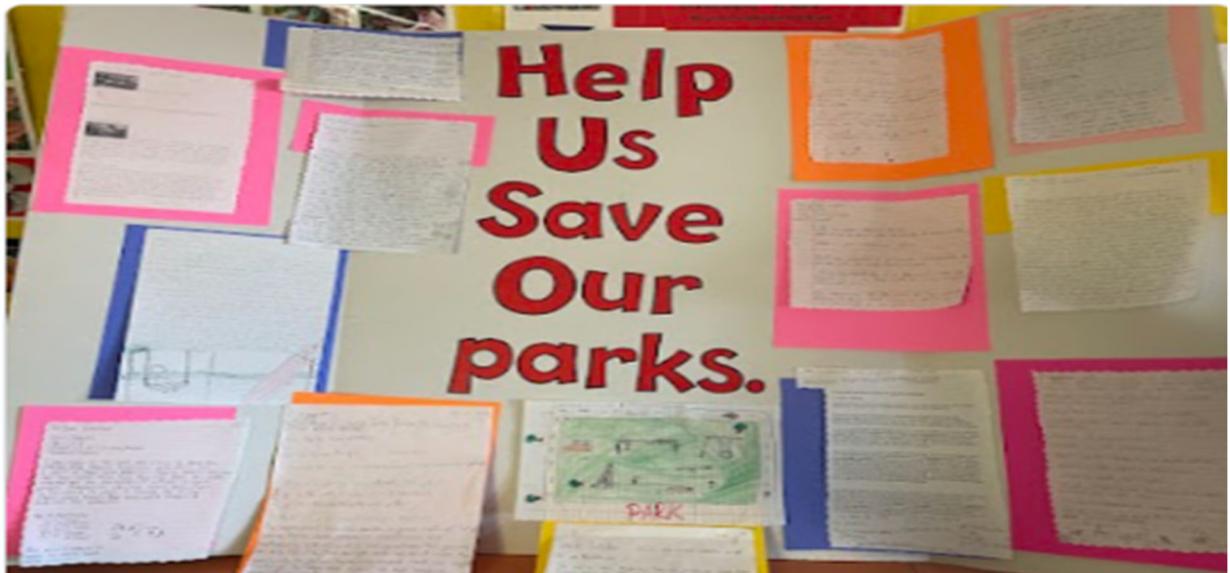
★ Why are PARK important to you?

La mayoría de los niños como yo, aprendemos a tener un mayor control de la coordinación de nuestro cuerpo mientras jugamos ejercitamos nuestro cuerpo. Algunas estas actividades pueden ser correr, trepar y Balancearce

★ what do you do there?

Principalmente cuando voy a un parque me encuentro con la naturaleza y empiezo a divertirme con mis familiares o amigos

Sara Guzman 6C2 IS61 Corona-Queens



**Nestor Fajardo**

Eso esta lleno de borrachos los fines de semana no hay como llevar a nuestros hijos

2:13 PM

**Blanca Collaguazo**

Y ademas son un peligro para la Sociedad, para todos los que avitamos al rededor y un mal ejemplo para nuestros juvenes. Ya es hora de levantar nuestra voz, y exigir cumpliniento. Ademas nuestra querida asambleista Catalina Cruz, se esta descuidando mucho de lo prometido mediante su candidatura. El poyo y ayuda con los derechos del inmigrante. Mientras hoy en dia nuestros parques se estan volviendo completamente peligro para la comunidad entera.

5:15 PM

**Elizabeth Bazquez**

Ya no hay confianza de que nuestros hijos vallan a jugar a divertirse si esos parques están llenos de borrachos y vendedores de drogas y además exponemos a bistrós hijos a gente mala q uno no sabe si traigan armas o armas blancas

5:17 PM

**Norma Panjon**

Buenas tardes. Cuando me ido con mis hijos. Hay niños tomando cervezas Y los adultos no respetan Duermen en la juegos. Para niños Y lo dejan muy sucio con vomito otra veces. Sangre. Ya no hay seguridad para llevar a nuestros hijos al parque

5:54 PM

**Cinthia De Jesus**

Mi inquietud sobre los parques, 1.Es que ya los niños No tienen esa libertad de jugar sin que allá gente tomando y asiendo alborotó con música y peleas y drogándose y lo peor es que luego hay hombres asiendo sus necesidades en pleno día cuando los niños están en el parque Y no hay esa libertad de antes Ya los parques No son nada seguro y nada limpios, Me gustaría que hubiera Seguridad en los parques así la comunidad se sentiría más segura y tranquila...

6:43 PM

Es un gran problema, los los parques, muchos indigentes tomando, otros fumando marijuana, es tan incómodo e insalubre ir a un parque, pienso que los parques son espacios creados para niños, pero para llevar los niños a esos lugares? A inhalar humos tóxicos, no debería ser, así hay muchos niños asmáticos y eso los pone peor

3:51 PM

**Laura Voluntaria**

You

I would like to know if anyone is willing to give me their input about your concerns regarding our local parks. we will forwar...

Hola Ms Martha buenas tardes. Realmente son muchas, en lo personal, las personas que beben alcohol, hacen sus necesidades en los árboles., también el humo de las personas que hacen asados, afectan a las personas con problemas respiratorios., a sea que ya no se puede hacer una caminata tranquila, para relajarse y respirar aire fresco., pienso que deben asignar áreas específicas para los asados.

3:39 PM

Mi opinión, 3:39 PM

La basura que tira la gente, otro problema ambiental, que me incomoda

3:39 PM

**Alfonso Rosendo**

En los parques de la 104 y 41 ave, 108th st y 46th ave muchos jóvenes drogándose y fumando marihuana, y las motonetas dentro de los parques

3:47 PM

**Anabel Rosendo** +1 (347) 965-2528

Muy buenos días en realidad todo lo que han dicho las demás personas es cierto pero otra de las causas a las cuales yo no estoy de acuerdo es que deje morir tantos árboles hay tantos árboles en los parques que se están secando incluso en las calles y nadie hace nada eso me entristece mucho ver cómo se muere un árbol porque los árboles nos dan vida son nuestros pulmones y no los cuidamos

8:14 AM

**Susana Gonzalez**

El parque de las amélicas está lleno de borrachos da miedo ir al parque pues hay algunos muy groseros es incomodo

4:02 PM

**Santa segundo Segundo**

De mi parte seria todos los parques de corona ya son muy inseguros y muy sucios

4:18 PM

Y no tienen suficiente botes de basura

4:19 PM

**Juan Antonio**

Esto nos podemos reunir todos(as) para pedirle al concejal que nos apoye

4:19 PM

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. 608  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: 10/11/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Isabel Friedman

Address: North 3rd St Brooklyn, NY 11249

I represent: Natural Resources Defense Council

Address: 40 W 20th St NY, NY 10011

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: 10.11.2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rosa CUNY

Address: TIME ST, H-104

I represent: GUMBU PARK

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: OCT 11, 23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Adam Ganser

Address: 55 BROAD ST

I represent: NEW YORKERS FOR PARKS

Address: SAME AS ABOVE

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Annie Carford

Address: 1854 Amsterdam Ave

I represent: ME ACT for Environmental Justice

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 10.11.23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Emily Walker

Address: 1234 5th Ave.

I represent: Natural Areas Conservancy

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CORY HANSON

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: New York Restoration Project

Address: 254 W 31st St



Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1069 Res. No. 608

in favor  in opposition

Date: 10/11/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Heather Lubov

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: City Parks Foundation

Address: 830 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LYNN KELLY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Parks & Open Space Partners

Address: 254 W 31<sup>st</sup> ST, NYC, 10001

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: K Webster

Address: Bowery NYC

I represent: Sara Roosevelt Park

Address: 30 Delancey St NYC 10002

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Katie Danny Heowitz

Address: West St

I represent: North Brooklyn Parks Alliance

Address: 86 Kent Ave, BK NY

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 10/11/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ALIA SOOMKO

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NY League of Conservation Voters

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 10/11/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: TYLER TABA

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: WATERFRONT ALLIANCE

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: SARAH NEILSON

Address: The Arsenal, Central Park

I represent: NYC PARKS

Address: 830 Fifth Avenue NYC 10065

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Marit Larson

Address: W 113<sup>th</sup> St

I represent: NYC Parks

Address: 1234 Fifth Ave NY NY

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kimberly Cipriano

Address: Deputy Chief Operating Officer

I represent: DEP

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Carrie Grassi

Address: Deputy Director M&J

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Elijah Hutcheson

Address: Executive Director, M&J

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rit Aggarwala, DER Commissioner

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor     in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Anieto Heruvill  
Address: Strang Ave Bronx NYC 10466  
I represent: Seton Falls Park Coalition  
Address: North Bronx NYC 10466

▶ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◀

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. <sup>FUND</sup> PARKS DEPT Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor     in opposition

Date: 10/11/2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CIARA KOSIOR  
Address: E 19TH ST. BROOKLYN, NY  
I represent: N/A  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

▶ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◀

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 10/11/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MORGAN MONAGO

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Prospect Park Alliance

Address: 95 Prospect Pk. West

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 10/11/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Andrea Adeketei

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Rainbow Island Park Alliance

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms