

NYC Department of Transportation Testimony
Before the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure and Finance
May 13, 2025

Good morning, Chair Brooks Powers, Chair Brannan, and members of the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure and Finance. I am Ydanis Rodriguez, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Transportation. With me today are First Deputy Commissioner Margaret Forgione, Executive Deputy Commissioner Paul Ochoa, and Assistant Commissioner for Intergovernmental and Community Affairs Rick Rodriguez. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Mayor Eric Adams on DOT's Fiscal Year 2026 Executive Budget and Fiscal Year 2025-2035 Capital Plan.

The Scope of DOT's Operations

With an over **\$1.5B** operating budget and **\$33.5B** capital program, DOT's almost **6,000** employees safely and efficiently manage:



6,000 miles of streets



12,000 miles of sidewalk



809 bridges



24/7 S.I. Ferry Service



1,570 mile bike route network



13,900 signals



350,000 streetlights



200M linear ft of markings

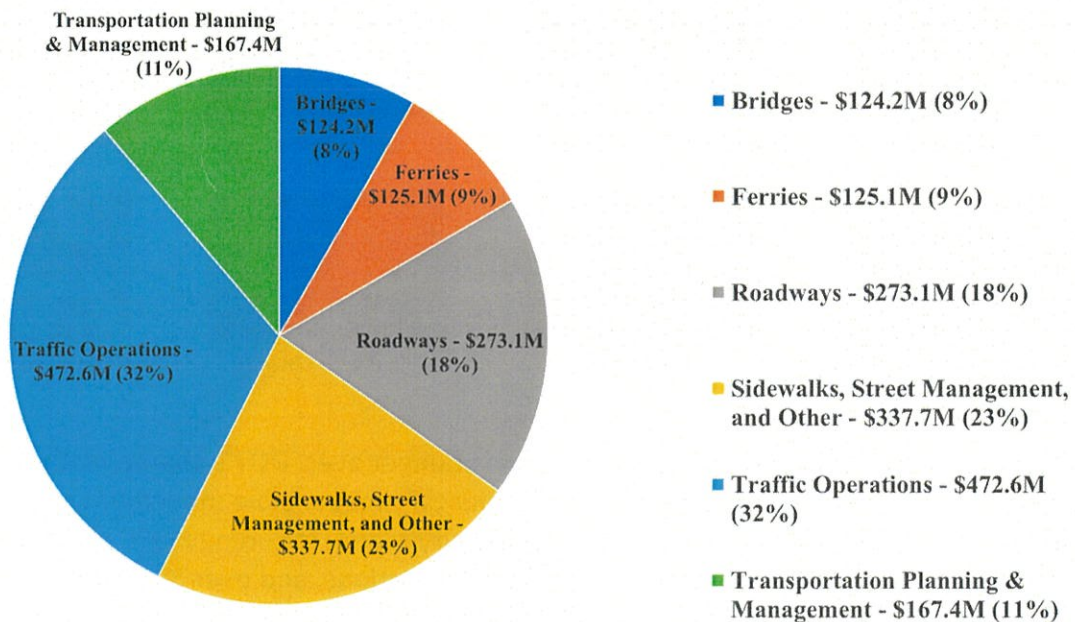
As Mayor Adams announced, this is truly our best budget ever. DOT's charge in the NYC Charter is to provide for the safe, efficient, and environmentally responsible movement of people and goods around our city while managing 26% of the city's land, including 6,300 miles of streets and highways, 12,000 miles of sidewalk, 44,000 intersections, and over 800 bridges and tunnels. With both baselined funding and the approval of new needs for nearly every one of our six divisions, this budget will help us achieve that mission. We appreciate the Mayor's continued investment in DOT, enabling us to maintain our programs and deliver for New Yorkers.

Expense Budget

DOT's FY26 Expense Budget is \$1.5 billion, and you can see the breakdown on the screen and in the chart in my testimony.

- \$124 million for bridge maintenance and inspection;
- \$125 million for ferry operations and maintenance;
- \$273 million for roadway maintenance;
- \$338 million for other DOT operations and administration, including sidewalk management and inspection;
- \$473 million for traffic operations, including signals, streetlights, automated enforcement, and parking; and
- \$167 million for transportation planning and management, including installation of street signs and roadway markings.

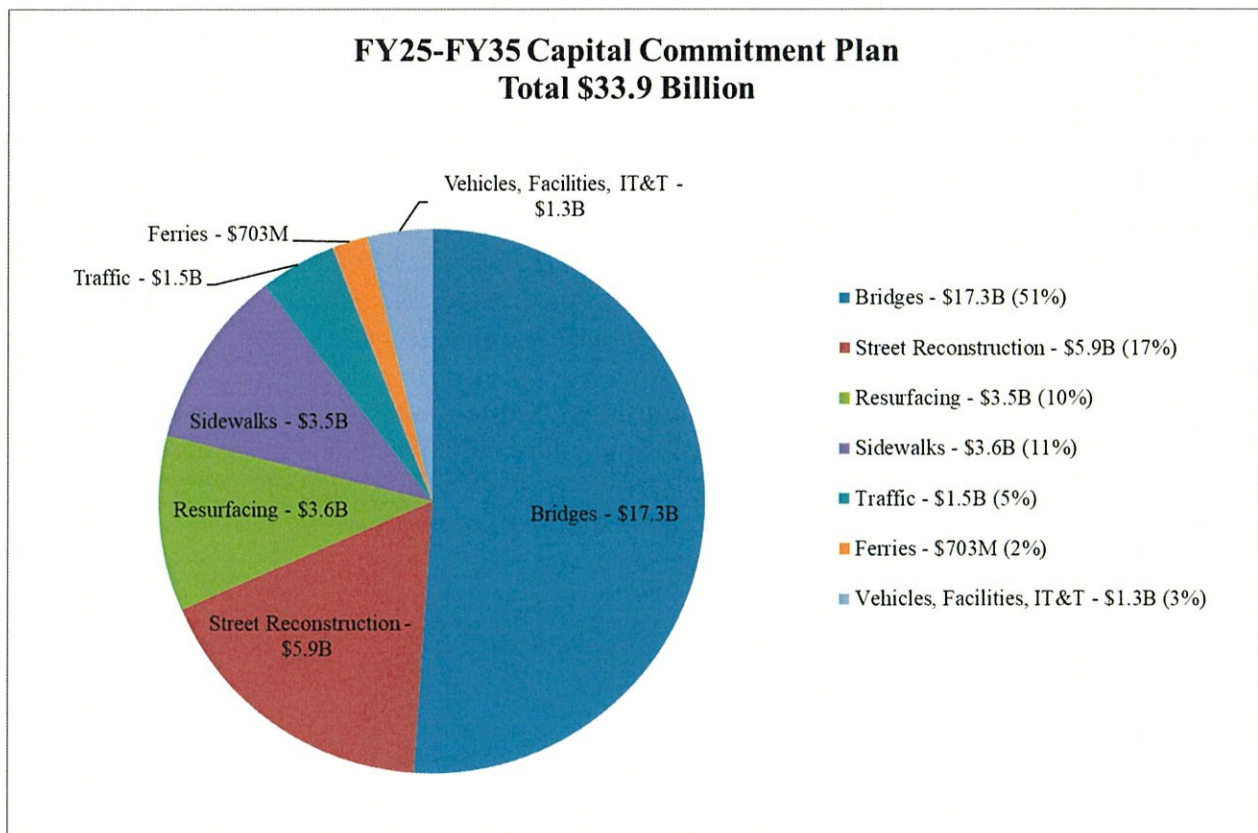
FY26 Expense Budget Total \$1.5 Billion



Capital Plan

DOT's FY25-FY35 Capital Plan is \$33.9 billion, and you can see the breakdown on the screen and in my testimony.

- \$17.3 billion for bridge reconstruction and rehabilitation;
- \$5.9 billion for street reconstruction;
- \$3.5 billion for resurfacing;
- \$3.6 billion for sidewalk and pedestrian ramp repair and reconstruction;
- \$1.5 billion for streetlights, signals, and automated enforcement;
- \$703 million for the Staten Island Ferry; and
- \$1.3 billion for the facilities and equipment needed to support DOT's operations.



This budget provides funding to support critical DOT operations that keep the city moving.

The Adams Administration included \$253 million over the span of the Ten-Year Capital Plan for replacement of DOT's aging fleet of medium- and heavy-duty vehicles, which will allow us to establish a regular schedule for replacing these vehicles as they reach the end of their useful life. This will allow DOT to continue providing core services for all New Yorkers, such as roadway resurfacing, curb and median construction, pedestrian ramp upgrades and installations, and bridge repair, just to name a few.



NYC DOT Roadways and Sidewalks Crews at work in Brooklyn

For our Sidewalks Division, which oversees 12,000 miles of sidewalk, this budget includes \$4.7 million to keep up with rising costs of steel, concrete, and other materials needed for pedestrian ramp upgrades and installations. Last year, DOT oversaw the upgrade or installation of pedestrian ramps at over 9,300 corners, and this new funding will allow us to continue this important work that helps New Yorkers of all abilities cross the street.

For our Roadways Division, this budget continues the important \$280 million in baselined funding annually to allow us to resurface 1,100 lane miles and 50 bike lane miles each year. Also, this budget adds an additional \$7.9 million to ensure we're fully funded for our resurfacing operation this year.



Bike Light Giveaway on the Hudson River Greenway, Manhattan

This month, we're celebrating bike month with month-long programming and community events designed to encourage cycling, promote safety, and celebrate the city's growing bike culture. There is so much to celebrate: under the Adams Administration, DOT has built a record 87.5 miles of new protected bike lanes and upgraded an additional 20 miles to support the over 226 million annual bike trips across the city. Our celebration includes dozens of events across all five boroughs, including free helmet fittings, bike light giveaways, educational outreach for delivery workers, and more.

For our Traffic Operations division, we also have good news to share. We have identified our top vendor for our new automated enforcement contract and are working with them on a schedule to install new red light cameras thanks to the expansion we secured in Albany last year. We are also working with our partners in the state legislature to reauthorize our life-saving speed camera program, set to expire in July. We look forward to working with the Council to pass the Home Rule message.

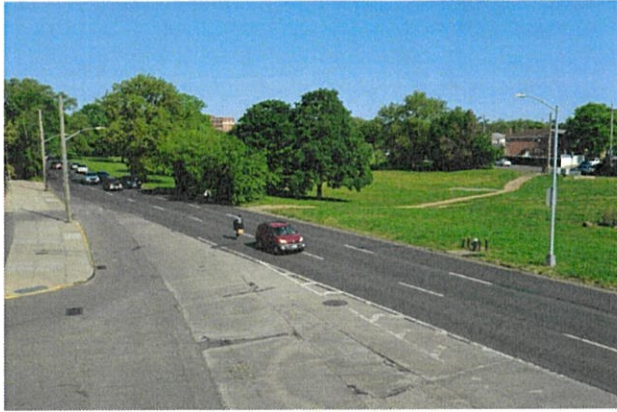


NYC DOT's Bridge Unit Doing work in Brooklyn

On Bridges, we continue our critical bridge projects to maintain 809 bridges and 4 tunnels in a state of good repair. This budget provides an additional \$42 million for the East 25th Pedestrian Bridge over the FDR tied to the Science Park and Research Campus in Kips Bay, which will be a first-of-its-kind job and education center in the heart of New York City.

In this budget, the Adams Administration also baselined \$3.2 million and 10 headcount between our Bridges and Planning divisions to support the inspection and repair of overhead sign structures. With these funds, we are creating a first-ever dedicated program to replace the over fifty-year-old signs on the highways throughout the city, instead of handling them on a case-by-case basis with in-house resources as we had previously.

I am also happy to say that we were granted expanded authority for our first-in-the-nation weigh-in-motion (WIM) program in the recently passed state budget. We are now authorized to use WIM on the BQE as well as eight additional bridges, including the Queensboro, Manhattan, and Williamsburg bridges. This will help keep overweight vehicles off our bridges and help us maintain them in a state of good repair.



Conduit Avenue, Brooklyn – Before and After

For our Transportation Planning and Management Division, this budget includes an increase of \$10 million for our pavement markings contracts next year, on top of the \$30 million we already have baselined. This funding is critical for allowing us to implement Street Improvement Projects, including new bus and bike lanes, pedestrian safety improvements, and so much more, to enhance street safety for all road users. This funding will also allow us to replace faded markings to ensure that our street designs remain in good condition.



Queens Boulevard, Queens – Before and After

And this budget includes \$101 million for street reconstruction projects that build out critical safety improvements in permanent, concrete materials. This includes \$79.6 million for the fourth phase of our Queens Boulevard redesign that will extend the improvements from Yellowstone Boulevard to Union Turnpike, \$13.3 million for our Northern Boulevard Douglaston Connector project to build out the cyclist transition on Northern Boulevard at the Cross Island Parkway, \$4.7 million for the Van Sinderen Avenue Streetscape project that will expand public space and improve pedestrian safety in the Broadway Junction area, and \$3.7 million for the Park Avenue Pedestrian Safety Improvements project that will slow traffic and create a new public space under the BQE.



Dining Out at the Upper West Side, Manhattan

I'm so happy to say that in this budget, the Adams Administration has stepped up with funding to support two hallmark public realm programs: Open Streets and Dining Out NYC. These programs were critical lifelines for the city during the pandemic and recovery periods, largely funded by federal coronavirus stimulus funds. With the stimulus funding expiring this year, the programs could only continue with an injection of City funds. This investment ensures New Yorkers can continue to enjoy these transformative programs that have re-shaped our streets as places to meet, dine, and spend quality time.



Car Free Earth Day in April 2025

For Dining Out NYC, this budget adds \$3.8 million next fiscal year to replace federal funding we once had for this program. For Open Streets, this budget adds \$2.1 million to replace the federal funding, which will allow us to continue supporting Open Streets throughout the city. Last month, we opened this season's Open Streets with Car Free Earth Day, connecting Open Streets and Plazas across the city while providing access to over 1,000 miles of NYC's bike network and showcasing public art and community programming. And looking ahead, for this year's Summer Streets, as the Mayor announced, we are planning to have 400 blocks to celebrate the city's 400th anniversary.

This budget also provides \$50 million for the Gotham Arches project which reconstructs the area by the Brooklyn Bridge with increased community connectivity and public space, and the Administration looks forward to continuing to work with the community on this project.

We are also proud to be part of one of the first rezonings of this Administration with the Bronx Metro North Rezoning, which will bring four new Metro North Stations to the East Bronx and create nearly 7,000 homes—including 1,700 permanently income-restricted affordable housing—and 10,000 jobs all close to public transit. This budget includes \$208 million for new projects to support this rezoning.



Doing Business with NYC DOT Event

Finally, DOT continues to be a leader in Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise, or MWBE, contracting investment. When I first stepped into my role as Commissioner, the agency's Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs) utilization rate was only 11 percent. It is with great pride that I share the progress we have made; in the most recent fiscal year, our MWBE utilization rate was an impressive 32 percent, and year-to-date our utilization rate is 37 percent. This achievement underscores our commitment to promoting inclusivity and providing meaningful support to diverse businesses within our community, reflecting a broader vision of equity and opportunity for all. In this budget, we were given \$3.7 million in FY26 to continue our MWBE contract for cleaning and vegetation control along highway service roads, which will allow us to continue this important progress.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we are thankful for the opportunity to testify before the Council today and for your continued partnership. We are grateful to the Adams Administration for investing in DOT. Every day the 6,000 people at DOT work to keep this city moving. We now welcome any questions.



**Joint Hearing before the New York City Council
Committee on Finance / Committee on Parks & Recreation
Fiscal Year 2026 Executive Budget
May 13, 2025**

Testimony By: Sue Donoghue, Commissioner, NYC Parks

Good afternoon, Chair Brannan, Chair Krishnan, members of the Finance Committee and Parks Committee, and other members of the Council. My name is Sue Donoghue. I am honored to be here today testifying as the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, and to be joined today on this panel by several members of our agency's senior staff leadership.

Firstly, I want to recognize the Council for its continued support for our city's open spaces and for championing the importance of parks for all New Yorkers. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the agency's Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2026, and to provide an update on our agency's efforts to build and maintain a healthy and thriving park system. The arrival of warmer weather in the spring means we're heading into our peak season, when our city's green and open spaces truly come alive, and more and more people get outdoors to take advantage of our amazing parks, beaches and pools to lead happier, healthier lives -- and we've been busy, delivering results for New Yorkers.

We were recently joined by students from P.S. 52 in Staten Island, along with Council Member Carr, to cut the ribbon on a \$3.5 million-dollar reconstruction of Dongan Playground, reopening a new, attractive play space featuring enhanced resilience to extreme weather and brand-new amenities for the community to enjoy.

We started construction on a new public park in Queens, Lieutenant Michael R. Davidson Playground, which was named after a heroic member of the FDNY who lost his life in the line of duty in 2018 and grew up in the adjacent apartment complex. This \$4.8 million-dollar investment will include a firefighter-themed play area for children, a peaceful seating area, a public restroom, and a restored historic outdoor pavilion.

This spring, we were thrilled to celebrate the reopening of the Tompkins Square Park Field House, a \$5.6 million-dollar investment by the Administration to modernize the public restrooms, ensure accessibility, upgrade the building's infrastructure, and create a more functional space for park operations. In conjunction with the Field House reopening, we transformed the area on the north side of the building with brightly painted games for kids, picnic and ping pong tables, benches, and decorative plantings. We also spruced up the nearby Slocum Memorial Fountain, and our incredible local volunteers have helped to further beautify the area, helping ensure that Tompkins Square Park can remain a vital resource for the East Village community for years to come. This long-awaited project is a testament to our dedication to making our parks more inclusive, and it's a great example of how our parks and public spaces make our neighborhoods more engaging, accessible, and livable.

Protecting this livability means we all need to do our part to keep our parks clean, so we were proud to recently enact new agency rules to increase penalties on bad actors who illegally dump trash in and around our parks. We appreciate the partnership with our sister agency DSNY in working alongside us to crack down on illegal dumping and get tough on irresponsible entities



that think our parks are an appropriate place to dump their trash. This enhanced enforcement will address a major challenge in our parks that exhausts a considerable amount of our staff's time and resources, allowing us to better focus on serving the New Yorkers that are appropriately using our parks. For example, thanks to increased Mayoral baseline funding provided earlier this year, our newest "Second Shift" evening and weekend park maintenance workers have been fully hired, trained and deployed. These new team members are already hard at work caring for 100 new busy park hotspots, which means the agency is now able to provide "Second Shift" coverage at a grand total of 200 separate heavily-used sites within 121 of our busiest parks.

Of course, as the temperatures rise, we are gearing up for the opening of our public beaches Saturday, May 24. Unlike a lot of other cities around the country, we have been able to open all of our pools and beaches in recent summers, and we expect to be able to do that again this summer, despite what continues to be a very challenging hiring environment. As we have shared with Council previously, we have worked tirelessly to find ways to recruit new potential lifeguards and encourage more lifeguards to return and help keep our beaches and pools safe for all New Yorkers to enjoy. Though it's still a bit too early to speculate about the final staffing levels that we will ultimately reach, we are cautiously optimistic about the progress we've seen, a result of our intense and focused effort to recruit and retain these vital members of the Parks team.

Turning to the specific topic for this hearing, the Fiscal Year 2026 Executive Budget reflects the Administration's ongoing commitment to fiscal responsibility amid the ongoing economic and fiscal challenges facing the city while maintaining critical services for all New Yorkers and investing in a greener, healthier city. The operating budget for our agency in the Executive Budget is \$667.3 million dollars, including new baseline funding for additional staff mechanics and service technicians to help care for our fleet of agency vehicles. It also includes baseline OTPS funding for our Office of Marine Debris Disposal and Vessel Surrendering, which will allow us to more proactively address the issue of derelict abandoned vessels and large marine debris from our city's shorelines and waterways, and launch a public vessel turn-in program. Since the establishment of the new office in 2024, with the initial funding that was provided by the Administration at that time, we have removed 82 vessels and over 430 cubic yards of debris from waterways around the city, which had been serious public safety, navigational and environmental hazards.

Our agency's 10-Year Capital Plan is \$10.4 billion dollars, and over \$250 million dollars in new investment has been provided in the newest Plan. This includes over \$103 million dollars for a full reconstruction of our Prospect Park Garage Compound. This vital operational hub serves as the headquarters for our skilled trades, forestry, borough crews, horticulture and fleet operations, serving the entire borough of Brooklyn. These facilities, which were initially constructed between the 1800s and the 1920s, had not seen any major improvements in over 30 years, so we're very excited to provide these necessary upgrades that will give our dedicated staff the working space they need and deserve, so they can keep our parks in the best condition possible.

We are also very excited to announce a \$51 million dollar investment to reconstruct the historic Tony Dapolito Outdoor Pool in Manhattan, including the preservation of the beloved mural created by famed artist Keith Haring, as well as 7 new playground renovations in the Bronx, community improvements to be delivered as part of the Bronx Metro-North Station Area plan.



NYC Parks

City of New York
Parks & Recreation
www.nyc.gov/parks

On a closing note, many of you may be aware that after three and a half incredible years leading this agency, I will be stepping down as Commissioner at the end of the month. It has been the greatest honor and privilege to serve alongside my fellow Parkies, dedicated public servants who bring our parks to life every day with their hard work, passion, and care for our city's greenspaces. Through initiatives like Vital Parks for All and Let's Green NYC, we've invested in the future of our parks, strengthened our commitment to sustainability, and expanded opportunities for all New Yorkers to enjoy the benefits of nature and recreation. We also made historic progress in public safety at our pools and beaches, negotiating the first meaningful changes to the lifeguard contract in 40 years to strengthen our management, recruitment, and coordination of the lifeguard corps. Since the start of this Administration, we've delivered transformative park improvement projects at nearly 500 park sites, with hundreds more capital projects actively underway. We have ensured our parks are cleaner, greener, and more welcoming than ever before, work that will leave a lasting impact on this city we all love.

I want to thank Mayor Adams for granting me the incredible privilege of leading this agency, and the opportunity to work with each of you to continue improving our parks and open spaces for all New Yorkers. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, we would now be happy to answer any questions that you may have.



JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS

**STATEMENT OF PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS
TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
May 13, 2025**

Good morning,

My name is Jumaane D. Williams, the Public Advocate for the City of New York. Thank you to Chair Brooks-Powers and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for holding this budget hearing.

The NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) has a 2026 executive budget totalling \$1.47B, or 1.3% of the city's proposed budget¹. In recent years, DOT has tried to establish legal mandates from Local Law 195 of 2019 to create a comprehensive master plan every five years to redesign city streets, improve transit, and expand pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.

Speeding remains one of the most dangerous driving behaviors, contributing to about a quarter of the city's traffic deaths each year². To address this, the DOT invested in technology and came up with a speed camera program which was expanded as of 2019. DOT reported at the Preliminary Budget Hearing on March 19, 2025 that corridors with speed cameras installed in 2022 experienced 14% fewer injuries and fatalities than locations without cameras³. At the end of 2024 there were over 200 fatalities and 40,500 injuries by car violence, and only 10% of both included bike riders or delivery workers⁴. Bikes can at times face blame for the reckless actions of cars and trucks, but 21 community boards in 4 boroughs, representing over 2 million New Yorkers, have since passed resolutions calling for daylighting at intersections⁵. Daylighting has been proven to save lives and improve drivers behavior at the intersection where most fatalities and injuries take place.

DOT should continue to use its budget to prioritize expanding pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, while redesigning the city streets. Installing speed cameras in city corridors may help reduce speeding, but I and other advocates would like to see a steady reduction in accidents and fatalities altogether. It is important to note that of the 250 miles of protected bike lanes required to be installed in New York City by 2026 (The 2022 NYC Streets Plan), only about 75 miles have been created⁶. Funds would be better spent by DOT on widening and expanding current bike lanes, addressing staffing shortages⁷, and continuing to collaborate with Council on implementing bus lanes and daylighting intersections.

¹ January 2025 Preliminary Budget Expense Revenue Contract — pg. 147E

² <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/jan25/perc1-25.pdf>

³ <https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/pr2025/nyc-dot-speed-cameras.shtml#:~:text=Speeding%20remain%20one%20of%20the,Vision%20Zero:%20Safe%20Driving%20webpage.>

⁴ <https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/speed-camera-report.pdf>

⁵ <https://documentedny.com/2024/12/05/delivery-worker-deaths-safety/>

⁶ <https://www.openplans.org/daylighting>

⁷ [\[TA Protected Bike Lane Tracker\]](#)

⁷ <https://ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/challenges-in-funding-staffing-dot-under-LL195-february-2025.pdf>

Thank you



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Mark Levine, Borough President

May 13, 2025

Testimony of Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine

NYC Council Executive Budget Hearing on Parks and Recreation

Thank you, Chairs Brannan and Krishnan and members of the City Council Committees on Finance and Parks and Recreation for the opportunity to testify in support of our City parks in this year's budget.

The Parks Department and its extraordinary staff maintains 30,000 acres of public space in our City, more land than the entire borough of Manhattan. And yet, for decades, we have asked them to do more with less. Over the last 50 years, the budget for parks has shrunk from 1.3% of our City budget to only 0.6% today. This is less than cities like Chicago and LA. And yet, the Executive Budget fails to significantly increase funding for our Parks -- New Yorkers deserve better.

The City must finally dedicate 1% of this year's budget to our parks for a greener, healthier, climate-resilient city.

New York City's parks are not a luxury. Parks increase our quality of life, they improve our health and mental health, and they are an essential respite for our children, our seniors, and everyone in between. Parks are essential climate infrastructure—they clean our air, cool our streets, and strengthen our communities. As our summers get hotter, storms grow stronger, and rainfall intensifies, we must invest more in trees and green spaces.

We're already seeing the impacts of disinvestment. Last fall, wildfires in city parks were out of control. Neighborhood treasures like the Amelia Gorman Park in Washington Heights have suffered from deferred maintenance that has forced the park to be closed to the public for years. The Upper Manhattan section of the Hudson River Greenway has seen repeated closures due to recurring sinkholes. Public bathrooms are falling apart. The list goes on.

The Mayor's Executive Budget also leaves out stable, adequate funding for the Parks Department staff whose very job it is to maintain our parks, keep them safe, and provide community-based programming. This budget must include \$79.7M of baselined funding to restore these essential staff, including Park Enforcement Patrol officers.

One percent for parks would also allow the City to continue making progress on the Million More Trees plan, which I introduced along with my fellow Borough Presidents, to plant or restore one million additional trees across the five boroughs. That means fully funding tree planting and maintenance—on Parks land and along streets, schoolyards, NYCHA campuses, and other under-canopied areas.

Finally, investing in parks is also investing in fairness. Low-income neighborhoods and communities of color from Washington Heights to Chinatown have limited access to trees and parks—and suffer the worst urban heat and pollution. That’s not a coincidence. It’s the result of historic disinvestment and environmental injustice. Fully funding our parks would finally allow our City to make investments in the communities where they are most needed.

It is time for our city to finally commit to New Yorkers’ health, quality of life, and long-term climate sustainability by dedicating 1% of this year's budget to our parks. Our city’s future depends on it. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Testimony of John Surico
Senior Fellow for Climate and Opportunity, Center for an Urban Future
Before the New York City Council
Committee on Parks and Recreation
May 13th, 2025

Good afternoon. I'm John Surico, the Senior Fellow for Climate and Opportunity at the Center for an Urban Future, an independent think tank focused on creating a stronger and more inclusive economy in New York. Thank you to Chair Krishnan and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify today.

New York's parks, playgrounds, and open spaces have experienced record usage in recent years, becoming even more vital to New Yorkers' health and the city's economic future. But today, our 30,000 acres of parks and natural areas face more than a billion dollars in unmet needs—and future funding remains uncertain. In the years ahead, the city faces a budget gap of \$8-10 billion, worsened by the potential loss of billions in federal dollars.

But for parks, this is nothing new. For decades, New York City has struggled to provide sufficient funding to pay for its parks and open spaces. Last year, the Department of Parks & Recreation (NYC Parks) absorbed a \$20 million cut and met less than one-third of its more than \$725 million in state-of-good repair needs. The Center for an Urban Future was glad to see partial funding restored in this year's executive budget, but if history is any guide, the reprieve is only temporary. To address the system's growing needs, this never-ending budget dance must stop, and policymakers can help do that by pursuing new innovative ideas for dedicated parks revenue.

In January of 2024, the Center [outlined](#) 20 specific, achievable ideas to do exactly that, from harnessing private development and parks' carbon-absorbing powers to expanding public-private partnerships and pilots that monetize waste streams. And this year, we've published briefs for two ideas in particular, laying out the steps needed to get them done.

The first was our [report](#) in January outlining a variety of scenarios for implementing a ticket surcharge dedicated to park maintenance. Our research found that just a 1% fee, or \$1.20 on average, placed on tickets sold at stadiums located on parkland, like Citi Field and Arthur Ashe Stadium, could raise about \$11 million annually, helping offset a significant share of the parks systems' unmet maintenance needs. But it'd require a push both here and in Albany from local leaders and advocates to make this happen.

The second [report](#) in April called on the city to launch 20 new destination-worthy concessions over the next three years. We found that this effort could generate \$10 million or more in recurring operating dollars, enough to hire 100 skilled gardeners, foresters, and other full-time maintenance staff. And it's one that City Hall and the Council could put into action today.

Money made in parks must stay in parks—and not doing so, we found, is a true 'only in New York' problem. To that end, the City Council could create a Parks Maintenance Fund to capture revenue allocated through future lease agreements with profit-making entities on parkland. Additionally, in neighborhoods that lack a conservancy, the city could work with a group of trusted partners to dedicate any new funding streams to local care, with clear guidance laid out in license agreements. An 80-20 split, where revenue mostly stays in the park it's made in with a portion going to underserved parks unable to handle a new concession or event, would help bolster parks equity.

The Center commends the City Council for consistently championing parks and open space, and advocating for funding to address the full scope of New York City's public parks' needs. Thanks, also, to Chair Krishnan for his thoughtful consideration of the ideas we continue to put forth publicly. By getting creative about generating dedicated new revenues for parks, city leaders can deliver the healthy, vibrant parks and open spaces that New Yorkers need now, and for decades to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**Testimony of Jenny Veloz, Policy and Advocacy Associate
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York**

**Submitted to New York City Council FY26 Preliminary Budget Oversight Hearing
Committee on Parks
Thursday, March 20, 2025**

Since 1944, Citizens' Committee for Children of New York has served as an independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring every New York child is healthy, housed, educated, and safe. CCC does not accept or receive public resources, provide direct services, or represent a sector or workforce; our priority is improving outcomes for children and families through civic engagement, research, and advocacy. We document the facts, engage, and mobilize New Yorkers, and advocate for solutions to ensure the wellbeing of New York's children, families, and communities.

As a member of the Play Fair Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs, we would like to thank the Chair Brannan, Chair Krishnan, and all the members of the New York City Council Finance and Parks Committee for holding this hearing.

The pandemic elevated the importance of city parks, particularly as families sought safe and public opportunities to engage children.ⁱ Parks provide a vital service for families and children, helping promote play, exercise, and positive mental health. Children explore and learn in playgrounds and natural areas. In a city where few residents have access to a backyard, parks are an invaluable resource that foster physical and mental health, provide spaces for social interaction, and mitigate climate crisis.

The budget cuts to NYC Parks jeopardize the very heart of our communities. Years of underfunding have presented challenges for NYC Parks employees in keeping parks clean, safe, and accessible. NYC Parks now has fewer workers than it did before the pandemic despite increased demand and clear need for these spaces, and thousands fewer workers than it had decades ago. NYC Parks is chronically underfunded and understaffed. There are not nearly enough maintenance workers and PEP officers to keep our parks clean and safe.

Mayor Adams' FY26 Preliminary Budget does not address the continued issues of staff shortages and lack of resources hindering the quality of City parks. New Yorkers can continue to expect trash strewn parks and playgrounds, delayed activation of sprinklers and water fountains during the summer, reduced hours and public programming at recreation centers, long-term bathroom closures, and neglected tree canopy care. While New York City's budget has grown by 127% since 1980 and other frontline city agency's budget has grown between 127%-165%, NYC Parks budget has only grown by 72%. NYC Parks budget has not kept up pace with other city agencies and neighborhood parks and green spaces are feeling the impact.

Parks are critical infrastructure for public health and safety and are drivers of social equity, and they should be funded as such. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed,

under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers. **CCC joins the Play Fair Coalition in calling on the City to fulfill the Mayor’s commitment to properly fund New York City parks by allocating \$79.7 million in the FY26 Adopted Budget to restore and strengthen NYC Parks programs and workforce.**

\$65 million of this funding would go towards baselining workforce, which would include 60 PEP officers to ensure public safety in parks, 125 positions for Forestry and Natural Areas that would be responsible for tree care, urban canopy management and trails and forest restoration and 75 administrative positions for essential management and oversight. The remaining \$14.7 million would renew key City Council funded parks staffing and initiatives that enhance community programs like The Parks Equity Initiative, funding for GreenThumb and tree stump removal which helps mitigate heat resilience by replanting healthy trees.

Parks are critical infrastructure for public health and safety and are drivers of social equity. New York City has a responsibility to make sure that our parks are safe, clean and equitable for all New Yorkers. New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green and resilient parks system.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

ⁱ New Yorkers for Parks. “1% for Parks Impact Report.” March 2023. <https://www.ny4p.org/client-uploads/pdf/NY4P-1-Percent-for-Parks-Impact-Report.pdf>

Committee on Parks and Recreation Jointly with the Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing Testimony

May 13, 2025

Good afternoon. I'm Heather Lubov, Executive Director of City Parks Foundation and a proud member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition. I am here today because the Mayor's FY26 Executive Budget fails New York City's parks and the New Yorkers who rely on them.

City Parks Foundation's programs rely on both private fundraising and discretionary funding from City Council members to reach neighborhoods that need them most. But even with this vital backing, our programs are directly affected by the city's overall disinvestment in parks. When park maintenance and security are understaffed, we face dirty and unsafe conditions, shuttered restrooms, delayed event permits, and missed opportunities for thousands of children and seniors, the majority of whom live in environmental justice areas. Let's be clear: NYC Parks has not been restored.

The budget crisis is not abstract for us. It is tangible, immediate, and exhausting. Every week, our Partnerships for Parks team, which has suffered from vacancies and the inability to hire any external candidates, is out in neighborhoods across the city, supporting local volunteers who are determined to make their parks cleaner, safer, and more welcoming. Crucial funding through the citywide Parks Equity Initiative is what allows us to offer year-round coaching, leadership development, and seed grants to nearly 600 community groups. Increased funding for parks is not optional, it is the difference between an open space that languishes and one that becomes a true community anchor. Without a significant increase in the budget, we simply cannot meet the surging needs created by the ongoing disinvestment in parks.

We have done what we can: raising private dollars and redistributing them through the NYC Green Fund, supporting volunteerism, offering free programs, and serving as a fiscal sponsor for other private funds that support the city's priorities. Everyone is stepping up for our communities except the Mayor.

Parks are not a luxury, nor are they spaces we can afford to take for granted. They depend on the dedication of hard-working, passionate people... thousands of whom are ready and eager to serve, but only if we invest in them properly. It's time to fund our parks like the essential public service they truly are. Please give New Yorkers the vibrant, safe, and thriving parks they deserve.



The Olmsted Center
Flushing Meadows Corona Park
117-02 Roosevelt Avenue
Flushing, NY 11368
646-360-0203

**Testimony: Historic House Trust of New York City
NYC Council Parks & Recreation Committee FY26 Executive Budget Hearing
Tuesday, May 13, 2025**

My name is Giulietta Fiore, and I'm testifying on behalf of the Historic House Trust of New York City. We are an organization that preserves and promotes 23 city-owned historic houses that operate as museums and community spaces in public parks across all five boroughs of NYC from the southern tip of Staten Island, to the eastern reaches of Queens. **These sites are unique, but also indicative of the cultural role that parks play in the lives of everyday New Yorkers.**

Our mission is not just to ensure that these places are open for New Yorkers to enjoy for the next five years. We're looking 50...100...200 years ahead. **The City must invest in our beloved community spaces today to ensure that they have a future tomorrow.** Our vision includes:

- A future for students to learn about NYC history in their own backyards;
- A future with well-maintained and vibrant community spaces citywide, **not just in Manhattan**;
- A future that includes creativity, art, authentic experiences, and connection;
- A future with **places made for the people who live here**;
- A future that New Yorkers are proud of.

In order to achieve this vision, we need investment now. So today, we are joining countless organizations and individuals across the city **advocating for full restoration of NYC Parks in the FY26 budget.** Too many parks need maintenance support, and there just simply are not enough NYC Parks staff to assist. The nuances of government and politics gets lost in the reality that many New Yorkers experience in their local parks daily of unusable bathrooms, overgrown lawns, and deteriorating conditions. This reality is unfair to Parkies who are in the field every day hearing from upset neighbors and park goers, and it's unfair to those who rely on these parks as critical city infrastructure.

We urge the City Council to support an increase in funding for NYC Parks for the benefit of *all* New Yorkers, past, present, *and* future. Thank you very much to Chair Krishnan for holding this hearing, and for advocating for our critical park infrastructure. We appreciate the opportunity to voice our needs, and for hearing our call to help sustain the places that help make New York City our home.

From: [Local Nature Lab](#)
To: [Testimony; ny4p@ny4p.org](mailto:ny4p@ny4p.org)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Written Testimony - May 13 Executive Budget Hearing
Date: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 11:05:12 AM

Good afternoon, my name is Georgia Silvera Seamans, and I am the director at Local Nature Lab. We are a proud member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, advocating for full restoration of NYC Parks in the FY26 budget.

NYC Parks has NOT been restored. The Executive Budget does not address the hundreds of staffing lines that have been lost over the past three years. This leaves parks understaffed and unable to meet community needs.

Budget cuts have directly impacted my community. In Washington Square Park where we host programs under the Washington Square Park Eco Projects initiative, we've seen declining health in trees, and new trees are not being replanted to replace those that have died or been removed. Additionally, PEP officers are not present in the park during early mornings to enforce regulations prohibiting off-leash dogs in lawn areas--in Washington Square Park--which is negatively impacting soil, ground vegetation, and migratory bird habitat.

We call on the Mayoral Administration and City Council to work together to restore and baseline **\$65M for 795 lost staff** and commit to an **additional \$14.7M for essential programs**. Parks are not a luxury—they are vital public infrastructure for New Yorkers of all ages, plants, and wildlife. In a growing city, parks must grow too!

Fund parks like the essential public health service they are!

Georgia Silvera Seamans
Local Nature Lab
Manhattan

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Our programs have been made possible by individual donors and the following foundations: Nuttall Ornithological Club, Voice for Nature Foundation, The Pittsburgh Foundation, Citizens Committee of New York City, Con Edison, LMCC, and the Puffin Foundation.



**New York City Council
Oversight: FY26 Executive Budget Hearing for NYC Parks
Committee on Finance and Parks and Recreation
May 13, 2025**

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 Chair Brannan and Chair Krishnan and the members of the Committees on Finance and Parks and Recreation for the opportunity to speak today.

We want to start by thanking the City Council for calling for a baselined restoration of funding for natural areas staff in the Formal Preliminary Budget Response. We also thank Mayor Adams for adding a \$3M one-shot allocation for natural areas into the Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) Executive Budget. This is a meaningful investment in the care of our natural areas, however we urgently ask that this funding be made permanent and baselined in order to be effective. In the FY25 budget, we lost 51 critical forest management positions, and we are concerned that a one-year restoration of funding will continue to leave us in an uncertain cycle of inadequate staffing and management in our natural areas.

In 2018, we co-created the Forest Management Framework (FMF) with our colleagues at NYC Parks. This 25-year, \$385M framework was created to provide an implementable roadmap for the city to adequately address the urgent ecological threats facing our forests. To date, only \$11.5M has been allocated to support the implementation of the plan, with inconsistent year-over-year funding, and a lack of real political ownership in the budget. Per the FMF financial model, NYC is behind. By this point in time, at least \$47.36M should have already been invested in forest management. While this might seem like a large investment, the reality is that healthy urban forests convey a far higher value to the city and its residents - our forests can prevent up to \$4.8M in annual hospital bills by cleaning our air, soak up as much stormwater as \$580M of new green infrastructure, and provide \$2.2B in recreational value for the city.

It is also important to note that in a city of 7 million trees, 5 million of them are located within our natural forested areas. The Mayor's decision to eliminate \$2.5M in funding in the FY25 budget that would have supported 51 critical forest management staff has drastically reduced the capacity of the city to meaningfully manage and address challenges in our forests, making them more susceptible to increasingly urgent concerns like the hundreds of brush fires that occurred in our parks last fall.

Last summer, the NAC conducted its first Ecological Assessment of forested natural areas in 10 years, and found troubling signs of degrading forest health and quality across the city. Our research found invasive vines present in 92% of the forest plots that our researchers surveyed, and also found that our forest midstory is showing a decline in the number of native tree species. Both of these data points indicate that forest regeneration is suffering in our natural areas. The vast presence of vines is also a reflection of insufficient staffing to care for our forests. With more permanent on-the-ground staff for forest care, NYC Parks would better be able to manage this threat to our trees.



This year we have been proud to stand beside our colleagues at the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice (MOCEJ) and NYC Parks to support the development of the Urban Forest Plan, and view this as a critical turning point for our urban forest. The FY26 Executive Budget unfortunately fails to meet the moment of ensuring that we are not simply creating an Urban Forest Plan that will sit on a shelf. If ever there was a time for the Mayor's office to show true dedication to advancing tree equity and investing in the care of our urban forest, that time is now.

We are thankful to see funding at least partially restored in the FY26 Executive Budget, but let's end the budget dance for our natural areas and parks once and for all. We urgently ask for the \$3M allocated to natural areas to be made permanent, with 51 full-time forest management positions baselined to provide consistent, year-over-year support for our city's precious and increasingly fragile natural areas.

We have long known that our forests are at risk, and our recent data confirms that the threats are only increasing in scale and intensity. The ability to have more dedicated, full-time staff for NYC Parks to care for our forests and wetlands would allow us to better protect what we have before it disappears from us forever.

Thank you.





NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT

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New York Restoration Project

Testimony before FY26 Parks Committee Executive Budget Hearing 05/13/2025

Good afternoon. Thank you, Chair Brannan and Chair Krishnan and members of the Committee on Finance, for convening this hearing. My name is Cory Hasson, and I am the Government Affairs Manager of New York Restoration Project (NYRP). NYRP is a member of Parks and Open Space Partners and the Play Fair Coalition. I would like to first thank Commissioner Sue Donoghue for her years of service to the city's park system. She has been a dedicated public servant and has been an incredible partner to NYRP. I am testifying today to advocate for the full restoration of the NYC Parks budget in the FY26 budget. The Parks department has been chronically underfunded for over 40 years.

For 30 years, NYRP has partnered with residents of the city's least green neighborhoods to reclaim public space by picking up trash, planting trees, renovating gardens, and stewarding parkland. Last week we completed our annual free tree giveaway, distributing over 3,600 trees across 23 events in all five boroughs. From the first year since the start of this program in 2008, we distributed every tree available at every event. Based on this turnout, and in speaking with attendees at all of the events, New Yorkers are clearly demanding more effort and resources be placed to greening our city. This will not only make our city more beautiful but will also prepare us for the climate challenges in the coming decades.

This was a great success, however NYRP cannot be in all places at once, the City MUST restore and baseline \$65 million for the 795 lost staff and commit an additional \$14.7 million for essential programs within the Parks Department. Budget cuts have made parks dirtier as we see overflowing trash bins and poorly maintained or outright closed public bathrooms. Budget cuts have made parks feel less safe as we see dramatic cuts to the PEP officers who respond to the concerns of park users.



NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT

Funded at its fullest capacity, parks are an invaluable resource that foster physical and mental health, providing spaces for social interaction and frontline protection from the devastating effects of climate change. We must treat Parks like the critical, life-saving infrastructure they are. This is a matter of social and environmental justice.

NYRP stands with our partners here today to call on this administration to fully restore the Parks budget and to demand 1% of the city budget for Parks. All New Yorkers deserve equal access to beautiful, high-quality public green space.

Thank You.



**Executive Budget Hearing on Parks
City Council Testimony, May 13, 2025**

My name is Adam Ganer and I am the Executive Director of New Yorkers for Parks. We co-founded the Play Fair for Parks coalition with The New York League of Conservation voters and DC37. The coalitions numbers more than 400 organizations across the five boroughs, all fighting for more funding and staff in the community's parks.

Thank you, Chair's Brannan and Krishnan, for the opportunity to submit testimony on the executive budget.

Under normal circumstances I would extol the broad value of our city's parks. The public health benefits, how they mitigate heat and flooding, their outsized economic impact. Instead, we are reduced to speak about funding basic services: keeping our parks safe and clean. I'll quote a headline in the New York Times from May 13th: "The largest public park in the South Bronx was once a refuge in a neighborhood marked by poverty and neglect. Now, many residents actively avoid it."

These are the realities New Yorkers across the city face in their community parks. Parks where they do not feel safe. Where they avoid the one free activity in New York – visiting their local park. This is not the city New Yorkers deserve. And it is directly the result of repeated budget cuts to the parks department by this administration. In the last three years, the agency itself has noted that it has lost a net of 800 positions. I'd like to suggest that that number be 801 with the departure of the Parks Commissioner herself, due to what I can only imagine is in large part due to constant cuts and lack of support from the administration.

PEG cuts, hiring freezes, eliminated programs. The agency has been decimated. To be clear, the administrations preliminary and executive budget do not restore these lost positions. We sincerely appreciate the city council's strong position, demanding that \$65M be added to the parks department budget to restore the core staffing to simply make our parks safe and clean. That's where the administration has left our city's parks. No grand vision. Just an urgent need to restore core services.

The agency needs PEP officers so New Yorkers can feel safe in their parks. Forestry and natural areas staff, programming staff to provide recreation activities for New Yorks children. And we need these positions to be baselined so the dedicated parks workers can have job stability. We've seen libraries get their budgets fully restored. And we've seen the same for cultural. Now its time for our parks. We are counting on the council to remain firm in this budget negotiation, and we are very grateful for your focus on parks.

May 14, 2025

New York City Council
Committee on Parks and Recreation
Executive Budget Hearing

Re: Fort Greene Park Conservancy's Testimony on Executive Budget

Good afternoon, my name is Rosamond Fletcher, and I'm Executive Director of the Fort Greene Park Conservancy. We are a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs, many of whom are testifying today. We thank the City Council Committee on Parks Chair Shekar Krishnan for holding this hearing.

The Mayor's Executive Budget does not restore critical Parks funding—years of budget cuts have left parks understaffed and underfunded.

It is critical that you restore and baseline \$65M to restore 801 jobs to the Parks workforce.

- The preliminary budget does not address these losses—it only focuses on new needs, ignoring the staff and resources parks have already lost.
- This means fewer cleanups, fewer safety patrols, less tree maintenance, and reduced programming.
- Baseline this funding—stop yearly budget cuts that keep parks in crisis.

Why is this important to us, and to New Yorkers? At 30-acres, Fort Greene Park, is neither large nor small but it is incredibly well-used. The park is located in the heart of Fort Greene, Brooklyn and directly adjacent to ever-expanding Downtown Brooklyn. Just north of the park, over 12,000 residents living in public housing, 36% below the poverty level, in an environmental justice area and now state-designated "disadvantaged community." The density and growth of the area over the last decade has dramatically increased use of the park by people and dogs. As the stewardship partner of the park, we welcome this use, but we have to contend with its impacts, like the erosion of the park's hills, which requires intensive seasonal lawn rotation and restoration, and the overflowing garbage cans, which require numerous day and evening trash pickups. The park's heavy use demands additional supplies that we happily provide, as well as adequate park staffing. We filled the staffing gap during the pandemic but **our role it is not to relieve the City from its responsibility to staff NYC Parks.**

NYC Parks budget has NOT been restored. This leaves Fort Greene Park, and other parks, dirtier, less safe, and unable to meet community needs.

We call on the Mayoral Administration and City Council to work together to restore and baseline park staff and commit to an additional \$14.7M for essential programs. Parks are vital public infrastructure. Cuts to parks are cuts to public health, safety, and climate resilience. **You can fix this!**

Thank you for your time,



Rosamond Fletcher
Executive Director



Testimony for May 13th City Hall Rally

Kathleen Corrigan/Friends of Tompkins Square Park/East Village/Manhattan

Good morning, my name is Kathleen Corrigan and I am a volunteer with Friends of Tompkins Square Park. We are a proud member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, advocating for full restoration of NYC Parks in the FY26 budget.

In 2024, our all-volunteer group hosted 28 events in the park with 504 volunteers. So far this year, we have hosted 7 events with 180 volunteers.

Our volunteers have planted thousands of Spring bulbs donated by New Yorkers for Parks, planted hundreds of tough, drought tolerant perennials & shrubs, sowed hundreds of seeds and amended the soil with countless wheel barrows of compost and mulch.

We have raked leaves, swept under benches, watered and collected trash and, most importantly, we have mobilized our community who love the park.

HOWEVER, we are NOT a substitute for the 795 lost staff jobs in the parks.

We are joining with our coalition partners today, to demand a total of \$79M in restoration for the parks.

**Testimony of Morgan Monaco,
President, Prospect Park Alliance
Executive Budget Hearing: Parks & Recreation
May 13, 2025**

I am Morgan Monaco, President of Prospect Park Alliance, the non-profit organization that operates Brooklyn's flagship park in partnership with the City. I am also co-chair of Parks and Open Space Partners, a citywide network of more than 50 nonprofit organizations dedicated to stewarding and programming New York City's green and open spaces. Together, we share a vision of an equitable and resilient park system for all New Yorkers.

I would like to thank the Council for holding today's budget hearing and for joining us in our fight to protect the Parks Department's budget. While we thank the Administration for providing nearly \$19M in funding as part of the FY26 budget, we encourage the administration and the Council to keep pushing farther to really ensure that our Parks are funded in the way that New Yorkers deserve. The Alliance is a proud member of the Play Fair campaign to restore the Parks budget and ensure that there is an additional \$65 million investment to strengthen our park system and restore 795 lost positions. These roles are critical to ensuring that our parks remain clean, safe and welcoming spaces for our communities. We also are urging the City to baseline this funding to prevent the yearly budget cuts that undermine our parks system.

Prospect Park is truly a public-private partnership—we rely on the City to help with day-to-day trash pickup and facility maintenance. This essential service is core to making Prospect Park a welcoming and accessible space for the diverse communities of Brooklyn. Our parks are not luxuries, they are essential community spaces where people who don't go upstate or to the Hamptons have Father's Day BBQs or see free theater or public art. The impacts to cutting parks are not just about the hardworking staff, but about the people who call NYC home. Our parks are the destinations people come to in moments of joy and in moments of sorrow or protest. During this political environment when our democracy is being tested, our parks are the great equalizers of the city and are one of the few remaining free, open democratic spaces—and we need them now more than ever.

Since the pandemic, visitorship to City parks has increased significantly, at the same time, the City has not kept up with this record use in its funding of parks in the City budget. We implore the City to not only increase funding for parks but also move beyond a cycle-to-cycle funding model and baselining this additional funding—therefore securing jobs for nearly 800 New Yorkers and living up to our mission for being the greatest city in the world with a clean, safe, accessible and resilient parks system.



May 13, 2025

Re: Testimony to Restore Parks Budget in the FY 2026 Executive Budget

PO Box 23812
Brooklyn, NY 11202

**Steering Committee
Members:**

Maria Garrett (Co-Chair)
Julian Macrone (Co-Chair)
Veronica Cromwell
Dany Cunningham
Jessica Downes
Beth Krone
Marlene Pantin

We represent the Steering Committee of the Brooklyn Parks and Open Spaces Coalition, a grassroots advocacy and networking group for park and open space stewards across Brooklyn. We are a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs. Our Coalition represents the interest of dozens of parks groups and hundreds of open space advocates around Kings County. We respectfully request restoration of the current planned budget cuts to parks and public spaces in the FY26 Executive Budget and honor your promise to increase NYC Parks's ("DPR") operating budget to 1% of the overall City budget.

Through the last several years of austerity budgets, our members have seen declining maintenance and cleanliness conditions in the parks we love, gardens, trees and landscapes degraded and damaged, and parks of all sizes go weeks or months without dedicated care. The cuts slated for DPR in the Executive Budget, while perhaps fiscally expedient in the short term, will be disastrous for our public spaces and the New Yorkers who rely on them over the long term. Well-maintained and operated parks underpin our City's civic life, the public health of our communities, and the economic vitality of the neighborhoods they anchor. With the proposed budget cuts, our neighbors who need clean, green spaces for refuge and play will suffer most, and hundreds of New Yorkers will needlessly lose good-paying jobs in the public sector offering a respectable livelihood and opportunity for future professional growth. DPR's fiscal resources have long lagged behind the rest of City agencies—these cuts will only further erode its ability to effectively provide the services millions of average, working-class New Yorkers depend on.

We call on you and the City Council to work together to restore and **baseline \$65 Million for 795 lost staff** and commit to **an additional \$14.7 Million for essential programs**.

Our Coalition, comprised of over 100 parks and open space advocates from around Brooklyn, has long known and benefited from the Mayor's commitment to parks. Mayor Adams's support as Borough President was crucial to the formation of our organization, and he often spoke eloquently of the need to boost parks and open space funding. The Mayor and Council now have the opportunity, and power, to make good on those words. We urge you to do so and choose the wise investment in a healthier, more vibrant future for our City.

Sincerely,

Maria Garrett and Julian Macrone, Steering Committee Co-Chairs
Brooklyn Parks and Open Spaces Coalition



Thursday May 15, 2025
FY26 Parks Committee Executive Budget Hearing

Red Hook Conservancy is a proud member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, advocating for full restoration of NYC Parks in the FY26 budget.

NYC Parks funding has not been restored. The executive budget does not address the hundreds of staffing lines that have been lost over the past three years. This leaves parks dirtier, less safe, and unable to meet community needs.

Budget cuts have directly impacted Red Hook parks and open spaces. Red Hook Conservancy has observed and reported to our local representatives the increasing amount of litter of paper and bottles observed on and around the play fields. Additionally, we also reported on the increase in park goers using our park spaces as public bathrooms, leaving behind evidence of human poop and soiled toilet paper, which poses serious health risk for all who use these greenspaces.

Having more PEP officers patrol the park spaces would help alleviate some of these harmful behaviors which also extend to the unmanageable levels of pets off-leash. Valentino Pier, that once had beautiful, green, grassy areas, is now a patchwork of dirt fields. Planted areas with beautiful flowers that once adorned some parts of the park are now gone as dog owners have refused to leash their dogs and instead allow them to roam and dig as they please. In Coffey Park a similar story has unfolded with dogs digging deep holes in some areas of the greenspace, even around the roots of mature park trees, compromising the sturdiness of those trees and risking lost lives and broken limbs if one accidentally steps into the holes. I can speak personally of having stepped into one of these holes while out managing a volunteer cleanup in the park. Maintenance and Operations (M&O) do their best with their limited staff to fill in all these holes, but it never ends, and they often have to return to do the same job over and over again which takes them away from addressing other maintenance projects.

We call on the Mayoral Admin and City Council to work together to restore and baseline \$65M for 795 lost staff and commit to an additional \$14.7M for essential programs. Parks are not a luxury – they are vital public infrastructure. In a growing city, parks must grow too.

Fund parks like the essential services they are!

Sincerely,

Marlene Pantin
Executive Director

From: [Maud Newton](#)
To: testimony@council.nyc.gov; [New Yorkers for Parks](#)
Subject: Testimony for Parks Funding
Date: Monday, May 12, 2025 7:28:42 PM

Rebecca (Maud) Newton-Clarke
Queens

As a resident of New York City, a longtime park user, and a member of the city's Super Steward program who regularly volunteers on plant restoration and trail maintenance in Forest Park, I'm writing to express my opposition to the years of budget cuts that have left parks understaffed and underfunded, unprepared for our new era of wildfires, and unable to meet the needs of my neighbors in Queens and parkgoers in the city at large. I see more trash in the park, more tree limbs dangling, more dangerously eroded trails, more invasive plants taking over the woodlands, more glass posing risks to dogs, wildlife and humans, and far fewer events to bring in the new volunteers necessary to keep the super steward program vibrant and enthusiastic.

Parks are a necessary resource for families, children, and all New Yorkers. Green spaces have been shown to help with mental and physical health for all and childhood development at every level. Trees and plants reduce the pollutants so prevalent in urban air.

And yet, contrary to the assertions made, NYC Parks funding has **not** been restored. The Mayor's proposal fails to address the hundreds of staffing lines that have been lost over the past three years. This leaves parks dirtier, less safe, and unable to meet community needs. In short, the Mayor's **Executive Budget is wholly inadequate** to meet the moment and to compensate for the years of cuts that have left our parks dirty, ill-prepared for wildfires, and less safe for kids and adults alike.

Please restore funding to make up for for past cuts in addition to the funding proposed for this year. I join other New Yorkers in calling on the Mayoral administration and the City Council to work together to restore and baseline **\$65M for 795 lost staff and commit to an additional \$14.7M for essential programs**. Parks are not a luxury—they are vital public infrastructure.

Parks must be funded like the essential service they are!

Thank you.

From: [Local Nature Lab](#)
To: testimony@council.nyc.gov; [New Yorkers for Parks](#)
Subject: Written Testimony - May 13 Executive Budget Hearing
Date: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 11:05:12 AM

Good afternoon, my name is Georgia Silvera Seamans, and I am the director at Local Nature Lab. We are a proud member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, advocating for full restoration of NYC Parks in the FY26 budget.

NYC Parks has NOT been restored. The Executive Budget does not address the hundreds of staffing lines that have been lost over the past three years. This leaves parks understaffed and unable to meet community needs.

Budget cuts have directly impacted my community. In Washington Square Park where we host programs under the Washington Square Park Eco Projects initiative, we've seen declining health in trees, and new trees are not being replanted to replace those that have died or been removed. Additionally, PEP officers are not present in the park during early mornings to enforce regulations prohibiting off-leash dogs in lawn areas--in Washington Square Park--which is negatively impacting soil, ground vegetation, and migratory bird habitat.

We call on the Mayoral Administration and City Council to work together to restore and baseline **\$65M for 795 lost staff** and commit to an **additional \$14.7M for essential programs**. Parks are not a luxury—they are vital public infrastructure for New Yorkers of all ages, plants, and wildlife. In a growing city, parks must grow too!

Fund parks like the essential public health service they are!

Georgia Silvera Seamans
Local Nature Lab
Manhattan

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New York Taxi Workers Alliance

AFL-CIO, Int'l. Transport Workers' Federation

31-10 37th Avenue, Suite 300 LIC, New York 11101

Phone: 718-70-NYTWA (718-706-9892) E-mail: MEDIA@NYTWA.ORG / www.nytwa.org

May 12, 2025

Committee on Finance
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
New York City Council
New York City Hall
NYC, NY 10007

Dear Chair Brennan, Chair Brooks-Powers and Members of the Finance and Transportation Committees,

Greetings. The New York Taxi Workers Alliance is a membership-based organization of over 28,000 Uber, Lyft, yellow cab and green cab drivers. On behalf of our members, for the purposes of this joint committee hearing, I write to ask for Council support in our on-going campaign for debt forgiveness for medallion owner-drivers and for support in meeting a court settlement entered into by the City of New York that mandates 50% of the taxi fleet be wheelchair accessible taxis.

TLC and the City Council must keep the Medallion Relief Program open and funded until the last group of medallion owner-drivers can settle their loans.

The Medallion Relief Program Plus, or MRP+, is a City program that has been a life-saving solution to a years-long crisis. When the taxi industry experienced a devastating crash after the artificial inflation of medallion values and the unregulated entry of Uber and Lyft into the market, it led to massive medallion debt that caused suicides, bankruptcies, and abject poverty.

After years of crisis, individual owner-drivers and a broad coalition of public officials finally won a solution. In November 2021, after a 45 day-long, 24/7 protest outside of City Hall and a fifteen-day long hunger strike, the New York Taxi Workers Alliance reached an agreement with the Mayor's Office and the largest lender in the industry. In exchange for a \$30,000 grant per medallion and a City-backed guaranty, participating lenders restructured loans down to \$170,000. To date, between MRP and MRP+, over 2,300 loans have been restructured, leading to over \$470 million in forgiven debt.

Unfortunately, not all lenders wanted to participate directly in the program. As a result, the debt crisis has not ended for a small group of a little over 200 drivers. Many have loan balances over \$500,000 and their mortgage payments are extraordinarily high—sometimes double that of owner-drivers in the MRP+, leaving these owner-drivers struggling to make even poverty wages.

The largest group of borrowers who have still not had their debt restructured are paying \$11,192 more for the year compared to borrowers whose loans are under the program. All the while, they are working with high debts, balloon payments, and confessions of judgment. This city made a commitment to give cab drivers their lives back from the bondage of debt. We cannot stop until we cross the victory line for all drivers.

And victory is on the horizon – the New York Taxi Workers Alliance is close to raising the funds necessary to help drivers refinance their loans with lenders who want to participate in the MRP+.

- **To ensure the final group of owner-drivers can access the live-saving debt relief MRP+ offers, the City Council must ensure that the MRP+ remains open and that funding remains available for the \$30,000 grants.**
- **Meanwhile, to protect the MRP+ guaranty fund, the City Council should allow for the transfer of loans that are currently in MRP+ to new borrowers, so that borrowers who are seeking to retire or exit the industry may do so without defaulting on their loans.**

City Council must exempt the wheelchair accessible vehicles purchased for use as taxis to meet the court mandate from the City sales tax and fund the Taxicab Improvement Fund to allow for the reinstatement of driver benefits.

As the result of a settlement the Taxi and Limousine Commission entered into in 2014 and a 2024 court order, all taxi medallion owners must put a wheelchair accessible vehicle (“WAV”) into service when their current vehicles are retired. While the City made the settlement, the City has never provided financial support to meet the terms.

Unfortunately, wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) cost around \$80,000, which is twice as expensive as other vehicles—and it is medallion owners—not the City—who bear the burden of ballooning vehicle costs. WAVs are also costlier to maintain. The increased cost of a WAV is particularly significant for owner-drivers, who both own the medallion and/or vehicle and drive it. After a decade of one devastation following another—from the unlimited entry of Uber and Lyft to the medallion debt crisis to the Covid-19 pandemic—many owner-drivers are struggling. The combination of these crises has led to a precipitous

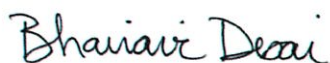
decline in the number of trips that taxicabs perform and thus income taxicab drivers earned; yellow cabs now perform only 26.6% of the trips they performed prior to these crises.^[1]

That is, in March 2025 taxis averaged 132,152 daily trips compared to 497,661 daily trips in March 2014. Owner-drivers will need both time and financial support to convert to WAVs. Otherwise, drivers will face severe consequences: they will be forced out of work, and many will have to go through bankruptcy or foreclosure to discharge their medallion loan debt before they can leave the industry.

The New York Taxi Workers Alliance recently spearheaded the creation of a pilot program, along with the Taxi and Limousine Commission and the Disability Opportunity Fund, that will offer low-interest loans to individual owner-drivers. **To make these vehicles more affordable—while simultaneously supporting an increase in accessible transportation—NYTWA asks the City Council to amend the City sales tax to exempt wheelchair accessible vehicles purchased for use as taxis. This will bring down the cost of the vehicles by as much as \$3,900.**

The City Council must also fund the Taxicab Improvement Fund (“TIF”), which was established in the wake of the 2014 settlement to finance the purchase and operation of wheelchair accessible vehicles and is currently funded solely through a surcharge on trips. TLC recently eliminated the \$1 per trip which drivers who operate a WAV received per trip. This is a significant \$2,500 - \$3,000 wage cut for thousands of drivers. TLC has also reduced the operations grants from \$16,000 to \$10,000 and increased the trip requirement to meet eligibility from 250 to 750 per quarter. As TLC has noted, these are austerity measures which will cost drivers thousands in income. After a decade of loss in trips, and with a court order to expedite conversions, TIF is quickly approaching insolvency. The City made the settlement. The City must do its share to support drivers in meeting the mandate. The Council must sufficiently fund TIF to allow for the reinstatement of the \$1 per trip reimbursement for WAV operators and also increase the operations grants.

Respectfully Submitted,



Bhairavi Desai, Executive Director
New York Taxi Workers Alliance

^[1] See Taxi and Ridehailing Usage in New York City (website), available at <https://toddwschneider.com/dashboards/nyc-taxiridehailing-uber-lyft-data/> (Date accessed: May 12, 2025) (presenting data collected by the TLC; compare 132,152 daily trips in March 2025 to 497,661 trips a day in March 2014).



New York City Environmental Justice Alliance Testimony for NYC Council Committee on Parks and Recreation Hearing for the FY26 City Budget

May 13, 2025

Hello to the Council. This testimony is on behalf of the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC-EJA), which is a 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. In addition, we are a member of Forest for All NYC, a coalition of over 170 organizations committed to helping the city reach 30% tree canopy cover citywide by 2035 in an equitable manner. Reaching this goal will require sustained and baseline funding for the staff and programs which care for and grow the NYC urban forest.

The proposed funding in the [Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget](#) is insufficient to both maintain and expand our urban forest at the pace that is needed to mitigate the impacts of climate change and extreme heat. Fully funding the urban forest is critical to public safety, workforce development, community health and wellness, and climate resilience. NYC Parks is responsible for the care of more than half of all tree canopy in NYC, but the Parks staff and programs that support the urban forest have continued to be cut. We call on Council and the Mayor to fund and baseline NYC Parks forestry staff positions, as well as fund the implementation of the forthcoming Urban Forest Plan by the Mayor's Office, updated citywide LiDar data to monitor the urban forest, and the 2025 street tree census. Additionally, restoring the hundreds of other Parks staff positions and tree programs that were cut in the past few years is critical to public safety, workforce development, community health and wellness, and climate resilience.

Background

The NYC Department of Parks and Recreation manages 53.3% of the total urban forest canopy in the city. Despite its laudable efforts, NYC Parks is chronically underfunded, particularly for urban forest management. Parks needs baselined and sufficient investment in the regular maintenance of the urban forest. While Local Law 148 of 2023 codified the goal of achieving 30% canopy cover citywide, echoing the commitments made in PlaNYC and the endorsements of the majority of Councilmembers, including Parks Committee Chair Krishnan, we have yet to see an increase in funding to support this new mandate.

Recent [tree canopy change data](#) (from 2017-2021) from The Nature Conservancy demonstrates that investment in trees is effective in improving the urban forest. In the South Bronx, where investment in tree planting has been focused for over a decade to address systemic inequities in access to green space and related heat and health burdens, we continue to see an increase in overall canopy. Yet, many areas continue to lag behind in canopy growth, or experience loss from development and storm impacts. We need more and sustained investment to continue to address inequities in canopy distribution citywide and help grow and sustain an urban forest that is resilient to climate change. In addition to the demonstrated value of capital investment in tree planting, the data make a strong case for the need for maintenance and protection of mature trees. A coarse proximity analysis of tree canopy change suggests that most of the citywide gain in tree canopy from 2017 to 2021 can be attributed to the growth of existing trees rather than new plantings. Even with expanded access to playgrounds accounted for in the Preliminary Budget, not all parks have healthy, abundant, and mature trees. According to the Mayor's Office's EJNYC Mapping tool, despite walking distance access to several playgrounds, neighborhoods like East Harlem, Mott-Haven, and Prospect-Lefferts Garden earn a Heat Vulnerability Index score of 5 and have less than 30% tree canopy cover.

Funding Asks:

- The City is required by Local Law 148 of 2023 to create the first NYC Urban Forest Plan, which will be released in 2025 and outline recommendations and strategies to help the city reach a goal of increasing tree canopy cover citywide to 30%. To ensure this Plan is successful, we call for the following:
 - Fund and baseline 148 forestry staff to equip Parks to improve tree health of existing tree canopy cover along 12,000 miles of sidewalks and in 30,000 acres of parkland, eliminating 35,000 dead trees, hanging branches and fallen limbs and complete an additional 66,000 preventive tree care priorities over the next five fiscal years, as well as respond to 30,000 incoming tree conditions annually, providing for 7 day a week response.
 - \$1M for the implementation of the citywide Urban Forest Plan (due to be released by the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice in FY26).
 - \$500K for an updated citywide Lidar remote sensing dataset to monitor the canopy coverage of the urban forest and measure the growth or loss of tree canopy coverage and track progress towards the 30% goal.
- \$6M for the 2025 street tree census which provides critical data on trends in tree counts, diversity, and health that can help NYC Parks improve operational efficiency in the field and better allocate funding for priority projects.
- We also call for restoring the NYC Parks positions and programs that have been cut since FY23:
 - \$60M for the restoration and baseline of 720 Parks staff cut from FY23-FY26, especially the cut Forestry positions, but also including Operations, Capital, Public Programs, Parks Enforcement Patrol, and Administration staff.
 - \$4.9M for 51 natural resources group and 26 trails staff to help manage and maintain 12,000 acres of natural areas and 300 miles of trails.

- \$2M for tree stump removal critical to clearing space, replanting, and improving heat resilience in vulnerable neighborhoods
- \$2.6M for GreenThumb to support and train volunteers, strengthen communities, enhance green spaces, and promote sustainable gardening
- \$5M to renew funding for programs that enhance stewardship, programming, and maintenance in green spaces, plus an additional \$1M to support the expansion of Partnership for Parks' work with volunteer groups by funding 13 staff members through the Parks Equity Initiative. These programs are critical to capacity building to offer quality, community centered, and well-maintained urban canopy that fosters emotional, physical, and social wellbeing in every neighborhood.
- Beyond restoration and expansion of the NYC Parks workforce and program, we also ask that the City commit to full funding for the NYC urban forest across other jurisdictions, including the NYC Housing Authority, public schools, and many other city agencies which play a part in their care.

Trees, vegetation, and green space are critical infrastructure in New York City, and needs funding to reflect how important it is. The Department of Parks and Recreation deserves enough funding to maintain, expand, and fully staff the over 30,000 acres that Parks is responsible for.



**Testimony of Alia Soomro, Deputy Director for New York City Policy
New York League of Conservation Voters
City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
FY26 Executive Budget Hearing
May 13, 2025**

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, Chair Brooks-Powers, as well as members of the Committee on Transportation for the opportunity to comment.

In order to effectively fight climate change and protect public health, we need to reimagine how people live and move in our City. According to the [New York City Comptroller's Climate Dashboard](#), New York City's transportation sector is the second highest source of NYC's greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). Moreover, [private vehicles account for 90% of transportation-based energy use in NYC](#) and are the largest contributors to transportation-related emissions and air pollution, which disproportionately impacts environmental justice communities. With the launch of Congestion Pricing, we must take a comprehensive approach to reimagining our street space throughout the five boroughs.

NYLCV has long-advocated that everyone should have access to reliable, affordable, and clean transportation in addition to safe streets and open spaces. We need to decrease the amount of private vehicles on our streets since they contribute a significant percentage of our carbon emissions and result in public health issues such as air pollution and asthma, vehicle crashes, congestion, and noise pollution. These issues are only more prevalent in New York City's low-income and communities of color, which experience longer commutes, poor air pollution, higher asthma rates, and more premature deaths.

For FY26, NYLCV urges the City to implement and fund the NYC Streets Master Plan, prioritize and fund Vision Zero policies, and increase the eligibility of the Fair Fares NYC program to 200% of the federal poverty line. We appreciate the Council's FY26 Preliminary Budget Response, particularly when it comes to Fair Fares. These plans and programs will help to improve existing infrastructure for transit, cycling, and pedestrians as well as solve bottlenecks and congestion, in addition to reducing the amount of dangerous vehicles on the streets. They will also reinforce the use of public transportation and micro-mobility options, will make our City safer and cleaner, and will put money back into our underfunded transit system.

NYC Streets Master Plan

NYLCV urges the City to fully commit and fund DOT staff to implement the NYC Streets Plan, an extensive five-year plan [mandated by law](#) that would expand and improve public transportation options and transition NYC's streets away from being entirely car-dominated, focusing on equity and safety. This plan requires the City to install 250 miles of protected bike lanes and 150 miles of dedicated bus lanes, 500 bus stop upgrades, 1,000 intersection signal improvements, 400 intersection redesigns, 500 accessible pedestrian signs, in addition to improving pedestrian spaces, commercial loading zones, and parking spaces, within five years. On top of these goals, on the campaign trail, Mayor Adams committed to installing 300 miles of protected bike lanes. However, as of [DOT's latest Streets Plan report](#), key benchmarks mandated by the Plan were missed.

According to the [Transportation Committee Preliminary Budget report](#), in FY24, DOT completed 32.9 miles of protected bike paths, which did not meet the required 50-mile benchmark set forth in the NYC Streets Plan legislation. DOT also failed to meet its quota for bus lanes installing only 15.7 miles of bus lanes in FY24. While this was double the production from FY23, it failed to meet the required benchmark of 30 miles. This is the third straight year that the agency did not meet the requirements. We urge the City to get back on track to meet these benchmarks, including prioritizing investments in bus stop upgrades and protected bike lanes to make our streets safer. We also encourage DOT to work towards a comprehensive citywide bike network with protected bike lanes and bike parking infrastructure along major bike commuting routes.

As Congestion Pricing continues, the City must improve public transportation service, reliability and safety, and reclaim space for pedestrians and cyclists by expanding open streets and greenways. In order for residents to see the benefits of this program, the City must make it easier for New Yorkers to get out of their private cars and into cleaner modes of transportation. The Streets Plan can be an effective tool that works in tandem with Congestion Pricing, and with the rollout of this program, the City must plan holistically and equitably, prioritizing areas of the City that have been historically neglected. We encourage the City to ensure mobility via bus and bike is dependable and safe by increasing enforcement of dedicated lanes, increasing bus service frequency, and connecting shared e-bike and e-scooter programs in transit deserts to mass transit.

Vision Zero

We also urge the City to prioritize and fund Vision Zero policies that encourage safety through engineering, education, and enforcement to better protect pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. Vision Zero, which was launched in 2014, called for eliminating all traffic deaths across the five boroughs by 2024. It sought to do this with expanded penalties and enforcements for dangerous car drivers and new street designs. However, we are not close to achieving the City's own goals.

According to the [Transportation Committee Preliminary Budget report](#), in the first nine months of 2024, 193 people died in traffic crashes. The number of traffic fatalities in 2024 was higher than in eight of the last 10 years. Additionally, motorized two-wheel vehicle (electric bicycle) fatalities rose by 14.0 percent to 98 in FY24, from the prior year. In the Council's FY25 Budget Response,

the Council called on the Administration to restore \$3 million for Vision Zero education and outreach that was eliminated as part of the Administration's PEG. To date, the funding has not been restored. We urge the Administration to restore this vital funding starting in FY26.

We appreciate that the Mayor's Preliminary Plan includes an additional \$1.4 million of City funds in FY25 and \$3.9 million in baselined funding, starting in FY26, to allow DOT to daylight intersections. The Plan includes funding for 19 additional positions in FY25, 28 positions in FY26 and FY27, and 30 baselined positions, starting in FY28. We encourage the Administration to commit long-term funding for Vision Zero policies and staffing, including launching public education campaigns about road safety and enforcement rules to ensure effective progress towards safety and reliability for all users.

Fair Fares

The Fair Fares program is crucial in making public transportation more accessible for New Yorkers. The program helps eligible New Yorkers with low incomes manage their transportation costs by providing them with discounted subway and bus fares. NYLCV stands with the City Council and advocates calling on the Administration to add \$60.8 million to the Fair Fares baseline, starting in FY26, to restore one-year funding added in FY25 and to expand eligibility to City residents with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty line. This expansion would bring the total baseline budget for Fair Fares up to \$157.1 million. Additionally, we echo the City Council calling on the Administration to redouble outreach efforts to ensure increased awareness and enrollment in the program. With the cost of living only increasing, it is critical that we ensure affordable transportation for everyone.

Micromobility & EV Charging

As stated in [NYLCV's 2025 NYC Policy Agenda](#), we also support increasing access to affordable multimodal strategies to bolster the city's public transportation system, with priority to low-income and transit desert communities. This includes support for bike-share programs and bike infrastructure, more public charging stations for e-bikes and e-scooters like the newly-proposed Street Deliveristas Hubs and electrification of strategic CitiBike hubs, light rails, ferries and car-sharing programs. We urge the City to continue equitably expanding and funding the DOT's shared e-scooter pilot program, originally started in the East Bronx, by prioritizing transit desert areas throughout New York City, as well as the Citi Bike program, to serve more neighborhoods in the outer boroughs. Additionally, we hope DOT continues to prioritize public EV charging access. We appreciate the Mayor's Preliminary Plan includes an additional \$546,750 in FY25, \$63,000 in FY26, and in the outyears for a microhubs pilot program. This will fund the legislation passed by the Council to establish the pilot, and will establish two microhubs in Brooklyn and one in Manhattan.

DOT Staffing

Lastly, we stand with advocates calling for the Administration to end DOT's hiring freeze. According to the [Transportation Committee Preliminary Budget report](#), DOT has 624 vacancies as of January 2025, a 10.7 percent vacancy rate. If DOT had the funding and staffing to fully do

its job, New York City would be able to meet its climate goals, achieve Vision Zero, reduce car dependency, and bring reliable transit service to more neighborhoods.

It is imperative that the City fully commits and funds the NYC Streets Plan, Vision Zero, and Fair Fares, in addition to prioritizing DOT staff retention and hiring. We hope the Council will work with the Administration to fund these crucial initiatives and plans so we can have a truly accessible and equitable City.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



**JUSTICE THROUGH
COMMUNITY POWER**

**Testimony by Suhali Méndez, Policy & Legislative Coordinator,
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
To the New York City Council, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
On May 13, 2025
Regarding the Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2026**

Thank you, Chair Brooks-Powers and Council Members, for the opportunity to present testimony.

Access-A-Ride (AAR)

AAR, with nearly 180,000 users, is a dysfunctional system: rides must be booked at least one day in advance, rides are chronically late, and riders often endure long, unpredictable, shared rides to get to their destination. We urge the City – which now funds 80% of the AAR system under new State legislation – to remedy these inequities, by advocating for improvement and expansion of the on-demand pilot and by eliminating AAR assessment centers and instead requiring proof of eligibility to be submitted by treating physicians. Notably, this latter recommendation would offer great savings to the city and state, is utilized by paratransit providers across the state, and was previously used by the city prior to the MTA taking over the AAR system. Additionally, the Council must ensure that the users of the on-demand pilot are not charged the Congestion Pricing toll.

Subway and Bus Accessibility

We urge the Council to exercise robust oversight over the MTA to ensure that it keeps and expands upon its promises to improve the accessibility of the subway system. A more accessible MTA system will ultimately benefit the interests of both New Yorkers and the MTA alike. Modernizing the system and making it accessible for the many who have long been shut out of the system, including people with disabilities, the elderly, and parents and caregivers, will encourage increased overall subway ridership – and less of a need for AAR.

The Council must also ensure that the MTA is held to its promise to allocate \$5 billion of the \$55 billion 2020-2024 Capital Plan and \$7.1 billion of the \$68.5 billion 2025-2029 Capital Plan to subway accessibility projects. Moreover, in addition to planned elevator and stair-free access, the Council must ensure that the MTA addresses platform accessibility issues, including the gap between the platforms and trains and the installation of detectable warning surfaces along all platform edges. Just as stair-free access from the street to the platform is essential to accessibility, so too is platform accessibility.

Additionally, the Council must mandate that the MTA make accessibility improvements serving the needs of riders who are deaf and hard-of-hearing. For example, when train conductors make verbal announcements, both in routine ways like when a train goes express, or in serious, unpredictable ways including emergencies like active shooter scenarios, riders with hearing disabilities have no way of receiving the message other than to read the faces of fellow riders. This does not equal access to transportation. At a minimum, the Council must direct

the MTA to ensure that a screen on all train cars contemporaneously relays messages as conductors announce them.

Lastly, the City must ensure that its bus network is accessible for people with disabilities. NYLPI recently advocated making bus-loading platforms more accessible for people with visual disabilities. Currently, there are 17 accessible bus-loading platforms along high-volume bus routes around the city. The City must commit to expanding the program, which improves ease of boarding and de-boarding for all New Yorkers and increases bus speeds.

Fair Fares

We commend the Council for expanding the Fair Fares eligibility levels to 145% of the federal poverty line. We, however, urge the Council to continue expansion to New Yorkers with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty line, which will make over 415,000 more low-income New Yorkers eligible to receive half-price mass transit rides.

Additionally, while the Fair Fares program was introduced several years ago, according to a recent Community Service Society of New York report, more than half of eligible New Yorkers are still not enrolled in the program. The problem is especially true for AA users. We urge the Council to mandate the implementation of an extensive advertising campaign – particularly targeted at eligible AAR users – to ensure that eligible New Yorkers are aware of the benefit and how to opt into it. Additionally, people who contact the MTA and the City Human Resources Administration should be promptly screened for Fair Fares eligibility.

Notably, the Fair Fares program – which is administered by the City not the MTA – serves as only a bandage over the MTA's discriminatory practice of excluding AAR users from the discount programs available to subway and bus riders. Subway and bus riders who have disabilities or are senior citizens have available to them a half-price MetroCard. They – and all other subway and bus riders – also have the option of purchasing 7-day and 30-day unlimited MetroCards, which provide significant savings to frequent users. AAR users are excluded from each of these discount programs.

The City contributes enormous funding to the MTA and is entitled to make demands on the MTA. We, therefore, urge the Council to exercise oversight and compel the MTA to include AAR users in the same discount programs available to all other mass transit riders.

NYC Streets Plan

The Streets Plan, as mandated by Local Law 195, is a bold reimagining of the City's surface level transportation networks and public spaces. However, the City Department of Transportation (DOT) has, in each of its first three years, missed several of its key benchmarks, to the detriment of all New Yorkers including those with disabilities. In addition to the completion of fewer miles of protected bike and bus lanes than required by law, the DOT has also failed to meet the required bus stop upgrades benchmark. Due to insufficient staffing and inadequate funding being allocated to DOT in 2026, NYLPI is concerned that DOT will continue its course of failing to meet its Streets Plan benchmarks. We urge the Council to exercise oversight to ensure all promises within the NYC Streets Plan are timely met.

Moreover, the Council must ensure that the City's Open Streets and Open Restaurants programs are accessible. In far too many cases, Open Restaurant sheds block the sidewalk and Open Streets barricades create access barriers for the disability community, both in that Access-A-Ride drivers refuse to move the barricades to pick-up customers at their doors, and with drivers with disabilities who are not able to move the barricades without

assistance. DOT told NYLPI that it is working on the problem, including by adding phone numbers on the barricades, which people in need of help can call and a nearby attendant will assist. DOT plans to add these phone numbers to the 34th Avenue Open Streets in Queens. The Council must ensure that this is completed expeditiously – both at this location and all other Open Streets locations throughout the city.

Green Rides Initiative

We urge Council to encourage City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) to meet with the MTA to determine how Congestion Pricing can be utilized to assist TLC in carrying out the Green Rides Initiative, which requires that all high-volume for-hire vehicles (HVFHV), including Uber and Lyft, be either wheelchair accessible (WAV) or zero-emission by 2030.

Further, NYLPI recommends that the Council urge TLC to amend and enhance its Green Rides Initiative to require that all HVFHVs be both WAV and zero emission by 2030. By permitting industry to choose between WAV and zero-emission vehicles, the transportation needs of the disability community will be at risk. If given the choice, NYLPI foresees that inaccessible zero-emission vehicles will be purchased at far greater rate than WAVs, given the relative costs of each type of vehicles. Though WAV zero-emission vehicles are not currently available in the United States, the city can harness its immense market power to influence changes in this regard; TLC must consult with vehicle manufacturers to encourage the design of a marketable WAV zero-emission vehicle.

NYC Ferry

Members of the disability community have reported that NYC Ferry suffers from various accessibility issues, including lack of signage, particularly important for those who are deaf and hearing impaired, as well as a lack of clear and accessible paths from street to landing. The Council must ensure that NYC Ferry funding be used to abate these accessibility issues.

Congestion Pricing

NYLPI has supported the Congestion Pricing plan which is now showing broad success in reducing motor vehicle usage, increasing transit ridership, and speeding bus and paratransit vehicle speeds while creating a reliable funding stream for the MTA needed for a vast array of subway accessibility improvements.

That said, people with disabilities must not be required to pay the toll. While people without disabilities can avoid paying the toll simply by taking the subway, people with disabilities do not have that option. The subway system is only 30% accessible, saying nothing of whether elevators in those stations are operational, nor anything about the litany of other accessibility barriers in the subways including excessive gaps between the platforms and the trains. The inaccessibility of the subway system, often referred to as the lifeblood of the city, means that people with disabilities must rely on ground transportation to get to their jobs, school, medical appointments, friends and family – everywhere.

The MTA's history of deprioritizing subway accessibility caused the current unavailability of mass transit as an option for many people with disabilities. Therefore, the MTA cannot now expect people with disabilities, who due to the MTA's own decision-making are left with only ground transportation, to pay the toll. Forcing people with disabilities to pay the toll would be an insult to injury; first, the needs of people with disabilities were long ignored by the MTA, and now they are expected to pay for fixing a problem caused by the MTA's own inaction. Shouldering people with disabilities with the burden to pay for subway accessibility is not right.

We recommend that the Council encourage the MTA to broaden its exemption, ensuring that people with disabilities are not charged the toll. To be clear, NYLPI is not advocating for delayed implementation of Congestion Pricing but instead recommends that the MTA expand the disability exemption in a timely fashion as Congestion Pricing evolves. NYLPI recommends various changes to improve the disability exemption, including linking the exemption reader to a personal device rather than to a vehicle, providing a remote option for applying for the exemption rather than requiring folks to appear in person at assessment centers, and expanding the exemption to cover all people requiring the use of wheelchair accessible taxis, Ubers, and Lyfts.

Thank you for reviewing my testimony. I am happy to discuss any of these recommendations.

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About New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

For nearly 50 years, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI) has been a leading civil rights advocate for New Yorkers marginalized by race, poverty, disability, and immigration status. Through our community lawyering model, we bridge the gap between traditional civil legal services and civil rights, building strength and capacity for both individual solutions and long-term impact. Our work integrates the power of individual representation, impact litigation, and comprehensive organizing and policy campaigns. Guided by the priorities of our communities, we strive to achieve equality of opportunity and self-determination for people with disabilities, create equal access to health care, ensure immigrant opportunity, strengthen local nonprofits, and secure environmental justice for low-income communities of color.



Transportation and Infrastructure Budget Testimony

Good morning. My name is Kathleen Irwin, and I am the NYC Government Affairs Manager for the New York State Restaurant Association (NYSRA). We are a trade association representing food and beverage establishments in New York City and State. We are the largest hospitality trade association in the state, and we have advocated on behalf of our members for 90 years. We have been involved stakeholders in Dining Out NYC, and we are concerned with the Department of Transportation (DOT) budget because Dining Out NYC is within its purview.

Last month, we testified in an oversight hearing regarding Dining Out NYC. At that hearing, we recognized the strengths and shortcomings we saw in the implementation of this program and made a set of recommendations for improvement.

Specifically, we acknowledged the willingness of the DOT to educate and engage with restaurants through the extensive visual guides and resources published online, and the many information sessions and trainings they have held. We appreciated the DOT effort to collect, vet, and list vendors through the marketplace database.

We went on to discuss the issues with the transition and implementation of Dining Out NYC. These include: the incentive and timing structure for applications creating a backlog; mismanagement of the timeline for approving or conditionally approving applications; coordination with other entities such as the SLA being limited and delayed; and the difficulty of the application process causing a reliance on private expeditors, contributing to the high cost of the program. Seasonality of roadway dining creates another major set of expenses – rather than constructing one high-quality café and paying for maintenance, restaurants are expected to pay to build, maintain, deconstruct, and store their cafes every year. Furthermore, strict siting guidelines have prevented or downsized cafes that had existed without issue for years prior, with no opportunity for waivers or exceptions.

We then issued a number of short- and long-term recommendations to improve Dining Out NYC:

1. We strongly recommend the opportunity for year-round roadway cafes – if restaurants are able to invest in a high-quality roadway café once, and then pay to maintain it, compared to paying to construct, deconstruct, and store a roadway café every year, that will result in a more affordable and accessible roadway dining program and more beautiful, clean, and creative cafes that preserve the heightened design and sanitation standards that Dining Out NYC has mandated.
2. We recommend additional city assistance with the application process, so that private expeditors are not needed for restaurants to feel confident in their applications.

3. We suggest more flexible siting standards, with the ability to appeal and seek waivers under certain circumstances (including successfully having a café so located under the old Sidewalk Cafes or Open Restaurants program with no safety incidents).
4. We recommend tracking Dining Out NYC restaurants by borough and neighborhood with an eye for increasing participation in areas with lower participation rates. This could look like targeted technical assistance, lowering or waiving application fees, and/or providing up-front grants to help restaurants with the initial investment of creating a Dining Out NYC-compliant café.
5. Furthermore, we recommend identifying neighborhoods that would be well-suited to additional pedestrianization to become “Dining Out NYC districts,” to combine the pursuit of additional open space with more formal encouragement and marketing of Dining Out NYC, as a draw for locals and visitors alike.

We would like to take the opportunity today to ask that the Department of Transportation’s FY 2026 budget include increased funding for Dining Out NYC, over and above what was allocated in FY 2025, to put our recommendations into action. We recognize that points 2 and 4 in particular reference new upfront expenditures for the DOT; however, increasing participation in the Dining Out NYC program would also increase revenue for the city through the increase in total application and revocable consent fees collected. Besides the offsetting financial impact, creating a well-functioning, accessible, equitable, and vibrant outdoor dining program in New York City is extremely valuable in its own right.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our input today, and we look forward to being part of an ongoing effort to make Dining Out NYC the best outdoor dining program possible.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Reilly Irwin
NYC Government Affairs Manager
New York State Restaurant Association
401 New Karner Road
Albany, New York 12205

Council Member Selvena Brooks-Powers
250 Broadway, Suite 1865
New York, NY 10007

May 13th, 2025

Re: Transportation and Infrastructure Budget Hearings and Fully Funded Open Streets Program

Dear Chair Brooks-Powers,

We, the undersigned Open Streets volunteer committees and coordinating organizations, call on the City to fully fund the Open Streets program by allocating \$48 million over the next three years to expand DOT and the City's capacity for supporting Open Streets and directly fund the organizations operating these programs.

NYC DOT's Open Streets program has been transformative for NYC neighborhoods. It has empowered communities all over the city to reimagine our streetscape and create new public open space. It has allowed community-based organizations to make our streets safer, provide free programming, daily maintenance, outdoor dining, and support for local businesses. That landscape spans Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), schools, arts and cultural nonprofits, restaurants, and groups like ourselves, which are entirely volunteer-run. The program has resulted in many tangible benefits such as economic development and direct reductions in crashes and injuries along Open Streets corridors.

The economic benefits of Open Streets are well documented. For example, Open Streets correlate with "considerably lower [vacancies] than their surrounding neighborhoods as a whole" according to a [Department of City Planning report](#) released in 2024. Various other City-run studies over the past several years have shown similarly positive findings, including a [2022 report](#) on the Fifth Avenue Open Street that revealed the program generated an additional \$3 million in spending along that corridor and a 6% increase in spending on adjacent corridors. Another [DOT report from 2022](#) found Open Streets corresponded to a 10% increase in new business during the pandemic compared to a 20% contraction on non-Open Street corridors.

These benefits have been routinely emphasized by City Hall. "Open Streets were an essential part of our city's economic recovery, and they will continue to be a core part of our city's future," **said Mayor Eric Adams, in 2022.** "The research is clear that Open Streets bring more people to our city's public spaces, more business to our city's stores, and more jobs to New Yorkers." **DOT Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez echoed similar sentiments:** "The data is clear: When we give more space to people walking and biking, business thrives," [he said, in 2023.](#) The city directly reaps these economic benefits, enjoying higher tax revenue thanks to Open Streets.

The Open Streets program makes our streets safer. By creating temporary open space, pedestrian plazas, shared streets, protected bicycling corridors and implementing traffic calming, crashes and injuries are greatly reduced along Open Streets corridors. This was first noted on the 34th Avenue Open Street in 2021, where injuries [dropped dramatically](#) compared to pre-Open Streets numbers. Similar trends have been seen along other Open Streets corridors across the city, like Berry Street in Williamsburg, which saw a 71% reduction in injuries since its transformation, and Underhill Avenue in Prospect Heights, which saw injuries plummet following the implementation of an Open Street.

These benefits rely on the work of volunteer organizers who provide countless hours of free labor every week and stretch small Open Streets reimbursement grants — at most \$20,000 per year, and usually far less — to run robust community programs. Not only is this DOT reimbursement grant only a fraction of the funding required to run these Open Streets programs, volunteer organizations often have to wait up to a year to receive reimbursement for monies they have paid out of their own pockets, further threatening the program's equity and sustainability. We are all running bare-bones budgets today — a properly funded program would require [at least 10 times](#) the current funding allocation.

While the Open Streets program is a sensational and innovative approach to transforming our streets, relying on provisional equipment and volunteer labor is not a sustainable arrangement. To ensure long-term stability for Open Streets sites, they need to be implemented with infrastructure, initially via “light-touch” streetscape changes — paint and planters — and ultimately via capital infrastructure work. **Infrastructure investments reduce the amount of labor required to run the Open Streets, and thereby reduce operating costs.** Critically, these **redesigns solidify street safety improvements** gained by the Open Streets program. However, many of the promised street improvement projects and capital redesigns have been stalled, due to lack of staffing and resources at DOT, as well as interference by the Adams administration. It is key that the City provide DOT with the funding, resources, and staffing required to realize this work.

Furthermore, **funding needs to go directly to the community partners operating the Open Streets** and should be significantly increased. Volunteer community organizations have taken on the brunt of the work executing Open Streets programs — everything from planning, fundraising, daily operations, community programming, communication and outreach, and site management. The limited funding and decreases in funding that have occurred over the years jeopardize the continuity and future of the program — funding pressure is already leading to downsizing (see e.g. [Vanderbilt Avenue](#)) and the disappearance of Open Streets programs.

Similar initiatives in other cities around the world receive substantially more funding. For example, Montreal [recently committed](#) to extend their pedestrianized street program for another three years through 2028. This investment allocates \$12 million to pedestrianize streets, including up to \$700,000 that is directly available to each merchants association running one of these programs. This amount — **more than 30 times the amount being provided to NYC**

Open Streets partners — aptly shows the value of these programs and the level of investment NYC should strive for.

A similar investment in Open Streets in NYC would likely produce incredible outcomes — substantial benefits for local businesses, reduced traffic injuries and improved air quality, reduced health care costs, and community programs and enrichment that have widespread socioeconomic benefits. Therefore, we urge the Council to fully fund the Open Streets program. To reiterate, the specific areas of need are as follows:

- Staffing DOT positions that support Open Streets work
- Directly funding community organizations that operate Open Streets
- Fast-tracking the implementation of street improvement work on Open Streets corridors.

Sincerely,

Manhattan

Canal Street Merchants Association, Manhattan — City Council District 1

Loisaida Open Streets Community Coalition, Manhattan — City Council District 2

FABnyc (East 4th Street Open Street), Manhattan — City Council District 2

Park to Park 103 (West 103rd Shared Street), Manhattan — City Council District 7

West 111th Street Block Association, Manhattan — City Council District 7

The Bronx

Evelyn Place (b/w Aqueduct Ave E and Grand Ave), The Bronx — City Council District 14

Decatur Block Association (E 194th St and E 195th St), The Bronx — City Council District 15

Caldwell Enrichment Program (Jennings Street), The Bronx — City Council District 17

Queens

31st Ave Open Street Collective, Queens — City Council District 22

34th Ave Open Streets Coalition, Queens — City Council District 25

Brooklyn

North Brooklyn Open Streets (Berry Street), Brooklyn — City Council Districts 33 & 34

Friends of Cooper Park (Sharon Street & Maspeth Ave), Brooklyn — City Council District 34

Troutman Open Streets (Troutman Street), Brooklyn — City Council District 34

Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council (Vanderbilt Avenue Open Street & Underhill Plaza), Brooklyn — City Council District 35

Fort Greene Open Streets Coalition (Willoughby Avenue), Brooklyn — City Council District 35

Hall Street Open Street, Brooklyn — City Council District 35

Park Slope Plaza, Brooklyn — City Council District 39

5th Avenue Open Streets (Park Slope Open Streets), Brooklyn — City Council District 39

Pineapple Ride (Bay Parkway Open Street, Bath Beach), Brooklyn - City Council District 47

Staten Island

The Angiuli Group (Minthorne Street), Staten Island — City Council District 49

Forest Regional Residents' Civic Association, Staten Island — City Council District 49

City-Wide Organizations

Street Lab

Open Plans

Transportation Alternatives

**Testimony of Morgan Monaco,
President, Prospect Park Alliance
Executive Budget Hearing: Parks & Recreation
May 13, 2025**

I am Morgan Monaco, President of Prospect Park Alliance, the non-profit organization that operates Brooklyn's flagship park in partnership with the City. I am also co-chair of Parks and Open Space Partners, a citywide network of more than 50 nonprofit organizations dedicated to stewarding and programming New York City's green and open spaces. Together, we share a vision of an equitable and resilient park system for all New Yorkers.

I would like to thank the Council for holding today's budget hearing and for joining us in our fight to protect the Parks Department's budget. While we thank the Administration for providing nearly \$19M in funding as part of the FY26 budget, we encourage the administration and the Council to keep pushing farther to really ensure that our Parks are funded in the way that New Yorkers deserve. The Alliance is a proud member of the Play Fair campaign to restore the Parks budget and ensure that there is an additional \$65 million investment to strengthen our park system and restore 795 lost positions. These roles are critical to ensuring that our parks remain clean, safe and welcoming spaces for our communities. We also are urging the City to baseline this funding to prevent the yearly budget cuts that undermine our parks system.

Prospect Park is truly a public-private partnership—we rely on the City to help with day-to-day trash pickup and facility maintenance. This essential service is core to making Prospect Park a welcoming and accessible space for the diverse communities of Brooklyn. Our parks are not luxuries, they are essential community spaces where people who don't go upstate or to the Hamptons have Father's Day BBQs or see free theater or public art. The impacts to cutting parks are not just about the hardworking staff, but about the people who call NYC home. Our parks are the destinations people come to in moments of joy and in moments of sorrow or protest. During this political environment when our democracy is being tested, our parks are the great equalizers of the city and are one of the few remaining free, open democratic spaces—and we need them now more than ever.

Since the pandemic, visitorship to City parks has increased significantly, at the same time, the City has not kept up with this record use in its funding of parks in the City budget. We implore the City to not only increase funding for parks but also move beyond a cycle-to-cycle funding model and baselining this additional funding—therefore securing jobs for nearly 800 New Yorkers and living up to our mission for being the greatest city in the world with a clean, safe, accessible and resilient parks system.

Thank you, Councilmember Krishnan, for holding this hearing, and for your tireless advocacy on behalf of our City's parks.

My name is Merritt Birnbaum, and I'm the President & CEO of Riverside Park Conservancy. We work in partnership with NYC Parks to help care for 400 acres of public parkland spread across 6 miles, from West 59th to West 181st Street in Manhattan.

I'm here AGAIN, because this is a screaming moment for New York City's Parks. Our parks are the lungs of the City, and they are being deprived of oxygen.

Again, the City budget fails to make simple restorations that would make our park system functional and able to deliver an exponential benefit for the lives of everyday New Yorkers.

The Mayor touted the creation of the "second shift." I want to underscore that this program is a **new need**, NOT a restoration of the previous staffing levels. So, while it's wonderful that certain areas of the system will get a later crew so that **SOME** bathrooms can stay open after 3:30pm, and **SOME** trashcans can get emptied in the evenings, this is not a solution to the crisis of understaffing in our parks. This program will not make our parks greener, safer, or cleaner in a long-term, sustainable way. This is scratching the surface of what is needed:

795 RESTORED AND BASELINED POSITIONS, CITY-WIDE, PERIOD.

Our lawns are overgrown.
Our trees are dangerously unpruned.
Our trash is piling up.

Just last week, our district received this email from a community member:

"Why are the sink holes still there? I cannot remember them NOT being there. Why is there no clean up? The mess of Sweet Gumball seed pods are all over the place and on more than one occasion I have almost fallen. Leaf debris from the fall season remains. Why are there not better trash receptacles? Not only are they not large enough to accommodate the volume of trash, but they are not rodent proof. The pavement is uneven and dangerous in numerous locations. The benches are GROSS. See if you would like to sit on one of these benches that are overgrown with moss. Not sure how tan pants would look following a lunch break."

This is what a park looks like when you cut maintenance staff, when you cut City Parks Workers, when you cut care for the most basic things that make our parks places where New Yorkers can come enjoy a simple lunch on a bench under a tree.

You are robbing New Yorkers of the right to clean, safe, green spaces in their communities. We urge the Council to stand with us for Parks, for workers, and for all New Yorkers. Our Parks deserve better. Parks Power NYC.

**Testimony for the NYC Council Committee on Parks and Recreation
Tami Lin-Moges, NY Cities Director, The Nature Conservancy
May 13, 2025**

My name is Tami Lin-Moges and I am the Director of The Nature Conservancy's Cities Program in New York. The Nature Conservancy is the world's largest conservation organization, and our diverse staff and more than 400 scientists conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. We impact conservation in 76 countries and territories, directly and with partners. We have 90,000 members across New York, 35,000 of whom are in New York City. We advance strategies that create a healthy, resilient, and sustainable urban environment and are committed to improving New York City's air, land, and water to sustain and support the people and nature of this great city.

In New York City, we convene the [Forest for All NYC](#) coalition and we are leading practitioners on the science and policy of the NYC urban forest. In 2021, we published the [State of the Urban Forest in NYC](#) (SUFNYC) a comprehensive assessment of the local urban forest, and with Forest for All NYC, released the [NYC Urban Forest Agenda](#), a collaborative roadmap that provides detailed recommendations to meaningfully protect, maintain, expand, research, and promote the NYC urban forest to benefit all New Yorkers justly and equitably. We also conducted an analysis of local [tree canopy potential](#) that shows the feasibility of expanding canopy cover in every neighborhood across the city. Later this spring, we will be publishing updates on these analyses using 2021 canopy data, allowing us to further understand the dynamics of the NYC urban forest.

I am here today on behalf of The Nature Conservancy and as a leading member of Forest for All NYC and the Play Fair Coalition to testify regarding the FY26 Executive Budget. The latest Executive Budget only provides an additional \$11.7 million to the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) – a far cry from the nearly \$82 million needed to restore past budget cuts and support planned activities in FY26. I call on City Council and the Mayor to fund and baseline (instead of another one shot funding) NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) forestry staff positions, as well as fund legislated and planned efforts in FY26 i.e. the implementation of the forthcoming Urban Forest Plan by the Mayor's Office, updated citywide LiDar data to monitor the urban forest, and the 2025 street tree census. Additionally, I call for a full restoration and baselining of 720 other Parks staff positions and tree programs that were cut in the past few years. They perform City services that are critical to public safety, workforce development, community health and wellness, and climate resilience.

I thank City Council including Chair Krishnan for their leadership in advancing important bills that led to the enactment of Local Laws 135 and 148 of 2023. Local Law 148 mandated the creation of a NYC Urban Forest Plan by July 2025 that sets the city on a path of growing the New York City tree canopy to 30 percent cover in an equitable way. To achieve this goal, we must prioritize funding for the urban forest and the funding of the creation and implementation of the first ever NYC Urban Forest Plan. We are grateful for the expertise of DPR and the leadership of Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice as they work to develop the Plan. Restoring DPR's staff back to baseline this year is a critical pathway for ensuring the workforce capacity to take on new urban forest initiatives in years to come.

The urban forest includes not just the trees and their canopy, but also their physical infrastructure, such as tree beds and soil, the accompanying biodiversity, and a rich social infrastructure, such as the people who dedicate

their careers and free time to it. The urban forest includes over 7 million trees, with their canopy covering 23% of the city as of 2021. It spans the whole of the city, crossing jurisdictions and owners, and can be found on our streets, private backyards, New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) campuses, City parks, schools, institutions, and other sites.

There are severe inequities in the spatial distribution of the NYC urban forest, and thus meaningful disparities in terms of where benefits and services are provisioned and to whom. In general, areas with lower income residents and higher proportions of people of color, and ultimately more socially and heat-vulnerable communities, tend to have less canopy than other areas, and should be prioritized for potential expansion for the urban forest (see Ch. 4 of SUFNYC). These areas also frequently are the subject of environmental hazards, such as high air pollution, and the disparities are a meaningful concern. To achieve long-term growth and canopy increases, trees require ongoing care and protection alongside additional plantings. Further, it is critical that investments in greening the landscape be carried out in ways that align with community visions, elevate community leadership, and work to avoid potential adverse impacts on the existing residents, such as economic displacement or gentrification.

Public funding dedicated to the NYC urban forest and parks is insufficient and has been heavily variable. Despite the urban forest's essential role in the health and resiliency of our city, it has faced chronic underfunding and has been vulnerable to disproportionate cuts during times of financial hardship. The NYC Department of Parks and Recreation is responsible for 53.5% of tree canopy in NYC but only received an annual average of 0.34% of the total City Other than Personal Services (OTPS) expense budget from FY18 to FY22. The portion allocated to urban forestry work was only 0.04% of the total City OTPS expense budget (or an average of \$23 million per year, adjusted for inflation to 2021 dollars). This funding limits critical maintenance activities necessary to keep trees healthy, like pruning, stump removal, and pest and disease management. It also constrains the number of new tree plantings each year despite a large potential for this activity, as demonstrated in our recent [tree canopy factsheets](#) for every Council and Community District. In addition to limited funding, the urban forest also suffers from inconsistent funding, and is vulnerable to drastic cuts, and these funding fluctuations interrupt cycles of regular tree maintenance and long-term planning that are essential to a long-lasting, healthy urban forest.

By not fully restoring and baselining Parks staff, the Administration's budget makes it much more difficult for the agency to ensure parks are safe, clean, green, and resilient across the city. We ask this Committee to restore these cuts and fully fund work needed to grow New York's urban forest. Specifically, we ask for the following changes to the FY26 Executive Budget for DPR:

- **Ensure the successful development and robust implementation of the first ever NYC Urban Forest Plan**
 - Fund and baseline 148 forestry staff to equip Parks to improve tree health of existing tree canopy cover along 12,000 miles of sidewalks and in 30,000 acres of parkland, eliminating 35,000 dead trees, hanging branches and fallen limbs and complete an additional 66,000

preventive tree care priorities over the next five fiscal years, as well as respond to 30,000 incoming tree conditions annually, providing for 7 day a week response.

- Provide \$1M for the early implementation of the Urban Forest Plan, due to be released by the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice later in 2025.
- Fund \$500K for an updated citywide Lidar remote sensing dataset to monitor the canopy coverage of the urban forest and measure the growth or loss of tree canopy coverage and track progress towards the 30% goal.
- **Provide \$6M for DPR to collect critical data in their upcoming Street Tree Census**, including information on tree health and diversity that helps Parks improve operational efficiency in the field and better allocate funding for priority projects.
- **Restore and protect the DPR workforce and programs** that have been cut since FY23, including:
 - \$60M for the restoration and baseline of 720 Parks staff cut from FY23-FY26, especially the cut Forestry positions, but also including Operations, Capital, Public Programs, Parks Enforcement Patrol, and Administration staff.
 - \$4.9M for 51 natural resources group and 26 trails staff to help manage and maintain 12,000 acres of natural areas and 300 miles of trails.
 - \$2M for tree stump removal critical to clearing space, replanting, and improving heat resilience in vulnerable neighborhoods
 - \$2.6M for GreenThumb to support and train volunteers, strengthen communities, enhance green spaces, and promote sustainable gardening
 - \$5M to renew funding for programs that enhance stewardship, programming, and maintenance in green spaces, plus an additional \$1M to support the expansion of Partnership for Parks' work with volunteer groups by funding 13 staff members through the Parks Equity Initiative. These programs are critical to capacity building to offer quality, community centered, and well-maintained urban canopy that fosters emotional, physical, and social wellbeing in every neighborhood.

Beyond DPR, we support funding for the urban forest under the jurisdiction of all NYC agencies that have trees in their care. In particular, New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is another key leader in relation to the urban forest outside of DPR's jurisdiction, though they are under-resourced for this role. NYCHA campuses play an important role for the urban forest and its benefits for New Yorkers. NYCHA occupies about 1.15% of all land in NYC and is home to about 2.23% of the total tree canopy. NYCHA's trees are meaningful not only for the approximately 339,000 NYCHA residents who may access their myriad benefits, from connecting with nature locally to cooling, but also for the broader communities where they may represent some of the limited vegetation in our most heat vulnerable communities. We strongly encourage that NYCHA's municipal funding be restored and increased.



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nature.org/ny

Thank you for this Committee's leadership in recognizing the urban forest as a critical part of the fabric of our neighborhoods, as well as a vital solution to climate change. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. The Nature Conservancy is pleased to make ourselves available for discussion.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tami Lin-Moges".

Tami Lin-Moges
Director, NY Cities Program
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Tami.Lin@tnc.org



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**New York City Council
Committee on Parks and Recreation**

May 13, 2025

Preliminary Budget Hearing – NYC Department of Parks and Recreation
Testimony of Chelten Leggett
NYC Playgrounds Program Coordinator, Trust for Public Land

Thank you, Chairperson Krishnan and Members of the Committee,
for the opportunity to testify on the FY2026 budget for NYC Parks.

I'm Chelten Leggett, NYC Playgrounds Coordinator at Trust for Public Land, a nonprofit dedicated to ensuring that everyone has access to the benefits and joys of the outdoors.

Parks make cities healthier, more livable, and economically stronger. Our 2022 report found NYC parks save the city \$1 billion in health care costs and \$2 billion in stormwater management while significantly boosting tax revenue.

In partnership with NYC Parks, the Department of Environmental Protection and many Council members, we've transformed over 230

schoolyards across all five boroughs—once barren asphalt, now vibrant, green, storm-absorbing spaces open to the community after school hours and on weekends. Please note that funding is still needed to keep 45 newer sites open to communities.

We're also working with EDC and NYC Parks to convert a 3.5-mile abandoned rail line into the QueensWay—a much-needed park and trail connecting six communities in Queens.

Despite the clear benefits of parks, NYC's park system remains underfunded and understaffed, with thousands fewer workers than decades ago. As a result, New York's national park ranking on ParkScore has dropped from 7th in 2017 to 12th in 2024, as other cities continue to invest more.

As part of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, we urge the City to restore past budget cuts and fully fund our parks. Thank you.



TESTIMONY: UJA-FEDERATION OF NEW YORK

New York City Council Budget and Oversight Hearings on the Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2026

**New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation
Honorable Shekar Krishnan, Chair**

**Submitted by:
Faith Behum, UJA-Federation of New York**

May 13, 2025

Thank you, Chairperson Krishnan and members of the Committees on Parks and Recreation for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Faith Behum, and I am a Manager of Government and External Relations at UJA-Federation of New York.

Established more than 100 years ago, UJA-Federation of New York is one of the nation's largest local philanthropies. Central to UJA's mission is to care for those in need—identifying and meeting the needs of New Yorkers of all backgrounds and Jews everywhere. UJA supports an expansive network of nearly 100 nonprofit organizations serving those that are most vulnerable and in need of programs and services and allocates over \$185 million each year to combat poverty and food insecurity, nurture mental health and well-being, counter antisemitism and strengthen Jewish life, and respond to crises here and across the globe.

Many of the nonprofits in UJA's network have pools in their facilities. Those with indoor pools offer private and group swim lessons as well as opportunities for children, youth and adults to engage in other aquatic activities throughout the year. Those who have outdoor pools are usually located at camps and use these spaces to host swim lessons and aquatic activities for their camp participants. In a few instances, when they do not have access to their own indoor or outdoor pool, some nonprofits use New York City pools for swimming lessons and water activities for their campers.

To maintain the services that nonprofits provide at pools, they require skilled and reliable lifeguards to ensure the safety of their participants. In the case of the nonprofits who partner with New York City pools, they also require access to NYC pools as well as an adequate number of lifeguards. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the nonprofits in UJA's network struggle to hire and maintain the number of lifeguards needed to staff their pools. This becomes increasingly difficult when the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYCDPR) increases wages for lifeguards at their facilities. Many lifeguards leave nonprofits to work at New York City funded positions. Nonprofits are unable to compete with the higher wages offered at the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation pools and beaches and are left scrambling to find lifeguards to staff their swimming programs.

For the last few summers, one nonprofit in UJA's network who partners with the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation to use a city funded pool for their summer camp, struggled to gain access to the facility.

NYCDPR cited lack of lifeguards and denied the nonprofit usage of their pool. The nonprofit had their own lifeguards they were prepared to use at the city's facility but were told they could not use them due to issues with the lifeguard union. They were unable to use the city's pool and were forced to rent pool space elsewhere, which proved to be costly and inconvenient, campers had to be transported twenty minutes each way to get to the pool. They also were only able to rent the pool three mornings a week, meaning most campers only accessed water two times a week. The limited availability of swimming at the camp caused by lack of lifeguards originally and later inability to access the city's pool caused many campers to drop out of the program. This has resulted in the program losing hundreds of campers over the last three years.

Lack of access to pools and limited availability of lifeguards create a barrier to teaching people how to swim. The nonprofits in UJA's network are committed to providing swim lessons and water safety instruction to the communities they serve. In many instances, if these nonprofits did not offer this resource their communities would lose access to this life saving skill. UJA joined the New York City Interorganizational Task Force on Lifeguarding and Aquatics in 2022 to partner with city agencies and local nonprofits to better understand why there is a lifeguard shortage and what can be done to address it. It soon became clear that to create a lifeguard pipeline, the Taskforce needed to broaden their focus by locating ways to increase access to swim and water safety training, as well as supporting nonprofits and municipal partners in building capacity. In many instances, access to swim lessons and water safety instruction is only available to those who can afford the classes and/or are fortunate enough to have access to a pool in their community.

UJA recognizes the investments the current Administration has made in expanding access to free swim lessons, re-opening public pools that were unusable and increasing wages for lifeguards. However, more needs to be done to prepare all New Yorkers, children & adults, to be safe around the water and address the lifeguard shortage. UJA with the New York City Interorganizational Task Force on Lifeguarding and Aquatics would like to propose that the City of New York create a citywide aquatics initiative.

The lack of broadly accessible swim instruction and sufficient lifeguards to staff beaches and pools, has created an urgent public health crisis. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), more children in the United States, ages 1–4, die from drowning than any other cause of death. And for children ages 5–14, drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury or death. This entirely avoidable public safety hazard has an outsize impact on communities of color. The CDC also reports that, on average, the drowning death rate among the Black community is 1.5 times that of the white population. As the lifeguard shortage continues to result in decreased access to swimming education programs, the racial disparities in drownings and water accidents are likely to continue to increase.

A challenge of this significance cannot be fully addressed by a single entity or solution. To achieve meaningful change, a multifaceted approach that meets people where they are and removes barriers to access is needed. **UJA supports the proposal of the New York City Interorganizational Task Force on Lifeguarding and Aquatics to create a \$5 million fund for nonprofits to provide access to four categories of programming:**

1. Land-based water safety education which consists of a multi-week set of classes that focus on water safety.
2. "Second Grade" Swim- A partnership between nonprofits and the NYC Department of Education that brings students (2nd grade or similar age) to schools with pools for multi-week swim safety classes.
3. Swim Lessons- Free city funded swim lessons provided to New York City youth & adults overseen by community-based organizations in all five boroughs.
4. Lifeguard Training and Certification: Free lifeguard training and nationally recognized certification programs provided across all five boroughs. Free lifeguard development programs provided across all five boroughs to create a robust pipeline of youth prepared to undertake lifeguard training and certification.

This aquatics initiative is both a lifesaving skills program and a workforce development program. In addition to stand alone programming, the four aquatics programs listed above can seamlessly push into existing youth

programs managed by both the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development and the New York City Department of Education. UJA urges the City to also consider beginning with pilot programs during this fiscal year at programs including but not limited to: 3-K/Pre-K, Saturday Night Lights, Beacons and Cornerstones.

To truly improve water safety at city pools and beaches, swim and water safety instruction must be made available to every resident in the city. New York City does not have enough pools to accomplish this. Nonprofits must be partnered with and funded adequately, particularly in poorer, under-resourced areas to increase the number of people accessing these life-saving lessons. The city already partners with nonprofits to provide a vast array of services to New York City residents. Nonprofits with pools have the infrastructure in place and connections to their local communities to support the city's efforts in improving water safety for its residents.

Lastly, when nonprofits rely on New York City pools to offer swim lessons, water safety instruction or other aquatic activities to their community members, NYCDPR must work with nonprofits to continue to allow them to use this resource. In the case of summer camps, nonprofits must be notified as soon as possible if NYCDPR will not be granting access to their pools, so they have enough time to look for other options for their campers. UJA also urges the city to work with the lifeguard union to understand and correct any obstacles that may be in place for nonprofits to use their own, non-city funded lifeguard staff at New York City pools.

Conclusion

Improving water safety across New York City and increasing and maintaining enough lifeguards at beaches and pools are issues that will require both city agencies and nonprofits to work together to address effectively. Thank you for your time and if you have any questions about the recommendations in the testimony, please contact me at behumf@ujafedny.org.



**New York City Council Committee on Parks & Recreation
May 13, 2025
Executive Budget Hearing
Van Cortlandt Park Alliance Testimony**

Dear Councilmember Krishnan and Members of the Committee on Parks & Recreation:

I am submitting this written testimony on behalf of the staff and Board of the Van Cortlandt Park Alliance. We are a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 500 organizations from across the five boroughs.

We are appalled that once again the Mayor is proposing a budget that is detrimental to our parks and to all New Yorkers who depend on our parks.

The time is now to **allocate \$79.7M in the FY26 budget** to restore and strengthen NYC Parks' workforce and programs. Funding needs to be **restored and baselined for 795 critical NYC Parks staff positions** that have been lost due to budget cuts and attrition, supporting a stable union workforce and working families while ensuring a safe and well-maintained parks system for all New Yorkers.

What does this mean for Van Cortlandt Park and other parks across the city? This means fewer cleanups (more garbage and trash in our parks!), fewer safety patrols (more crime in our parks!), less tree maintenance (less clean air for all!), and reduced programming (loss of free activities that the community needs!).

This funding needs to be baselined - it is time to stop yearly budget cuts that keep parks in crisis. **We are sick and tired of doing this budget dance!** It's time to stop having to fight for our parks and to actually go out and enjoy them.

Parks are critical infrastructure which have been overlooked and underfunded for the last 5 decades. The pandemic revealed longstanding inequities and highlighted the dire need to invest in the development and maintenance of a 21st-century parks system for all New Yorkers.

Year after year, NYC Parks staff does more with less. The staff is already stretched too thin. They are tired and frustrated, and so are we.

Van Cortlandt Park Alliance exists to add additional programming and resources to the park, not to replace New York City funding. But that is now the role we find ourselves in. Just this past summer, VCPA purchased garbage bags for Parks staff to keep the park clean and toilet paper to stock the public restrooms in the park.

What is going to happen next year when there are additional cuts? This can't keep happening without a reduction in the programming and services that VCPA currently runs. Are we going to trade free community programs for garbage bags and toilet paper? We are nearly there.

And, Van Cortlandt Park is one of the lucky parks that has a partner group to help. But really, the basics should be covered in the city's budget, not by an outside nonprofit organization.

To be sure, with these budget cuts, it is New Yorkers who will suffer.

Parks Power NYC! We demand an equitable investment of 1% of the city budget for NYC Parks.

Mayor Adams repeatedly committed to this investment but has not followed through. Parks are critical infrastructure, providing equitable and accessible public health, mental wellbeing, and much-needed social interaction. Parks need to be clean and safe in order to serve our great city. They should be funded accordingly.

Thank you,

Christina Taylor
Deputy Director
Van Cortlandt Park Alliance

May 10, 2025

To: New York City Council
From: Diane Drew and Michael Rahimi, [REDACTED] BRONX NY 10471
Re: Full Fair Play Funding to NYC Parks

Hello,

Eric Dinowitz is our City Council member. Since 2017 my husband, Michael Rahimi, and I have been Riverdale residents. Our home is close walk to Van Cortlandt Park, Riverdale Park and a twenty minute drive to Pelham Bay Park. We support NYC Parks receiving full Play Fair funding for FY26 City Budget. Likewise we support the allocation of 1% of the City Budget to the NYC Parks. And we ask the City to restore the following funding:

1. \$2.4 million for the Trails Formalization Program
2. \$2.5 million to reinstate 51 staff managers that support the care of forested natural areas

This funding is critical to ensure that natural forested areas and wetlands can be properly maintained. Forested natural areas make up 24% of the city's parkland portfolio, but receive an annual budget average of 0.7% of the expense budget, and 0.84% of the staff resources to manage these areas.

A report by the Natural Areas Conservancy found that in NYC the average number of staff in forested natural area care is 33. The NAC likened this to Central Park, if forested, to having only four people caring for all of Central Park.

We urge the City Council to restore and enhance NYC Park funding so that our natural forested areas and trails can be maintained and flourish. Our City parks are among the crown jewels of the New York. The NYC Parks enhance our lives, providing natural beauty, calmness, and recreation. NYC Parks abound with multiple species of birds, fungi, trees and plant life. My family enjoys volunteering at parks as stewards and restorers that maintain wetlands, trails and lakes. We see how vital these parks are to our family, neighbors and community. The parks enrich our lives and deserve our support. Please fight for NYC Parks, provide decent park funding in the FY26 budget, restore eliminated funding for park programs and staffing so that our parks will not only survive but thrive. Thank you.

Diane Drew and
Michael Rahimi

From: [Maud Newton](#)
To: [Testimony; ny4p@ny4p.org](mailto:ny4p@ny4p.org)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for Parks Funding
Date: Monday, May 12, 2025 7:28:37 PM

Rebecca (Maud) Newton-Clarke
Queens

As a resident of New York City, a longtime park user, and a member of the city's Super Steward program who regularly volunteers on plant restoration and trail maintenance in Forest Park, I'm writing to express my opposition to the years of budget cuts that have left parks understaffed and underfunded, unprepared for our new era of wildfires, and unable to meet the needs of my neighbors in Queens and parkgoers in the city at large. I see more trash in the park, more tree limbs dangling, more dangerously eroded trails, more invasive plants taking over the woodlands, more glass posing risks to dogs, wildlife and humans, and far fewer events to bring in the new volunteers necessary to keep the super steward program vibrant and enthusiastic.

Parks are a necessary resource for families, children, and all New Yorkers. Green spaces have been shown to help with mental and physical health for all and childhood development at every level. Trees and plants reduce the pollutants so prevalent in urban air.

And yet, contrary to the assertions made, NYC Parks funding has **not** been restored. The Mayor's proposal fails to address the hundreds of staffing lines that have been lost over the past three years. This leaves parks dirtier, less safe, and unable to meet community needs. In short, the Mayor's **Executive Budget is wholly inadequate** to meet the moment and to compensate for the years of cuts that have left our parks dirty, ill-prepared for wildfires, and less safe for kids and adults alike.

Please restore funding to make up for for past cuts in addition to the funding proposed for this year. I join other New Yorkers in calling on the Mayoral administration and the City Council to work together to restore and baseline **\$65M for 795 lost staff and commit to an additional \$14.7M for essential programs**. Parks are not a luxury—they are vital public infrastructure.

Parks must be funded like the essential service they are!

Thank you.

**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: Adam Ganser

Address: [REDACTED] Apt 24C

I represent: New Yorkers for Parks

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: 05/13/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Amber Sanchez Peralta

Address: [REDACTED] Queens, NY, 11369

I represent: Unit #205

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: Rick Rodriguez

Address: _____

I represent: DOT 007

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: Yanis Rodriguez

Address: _____

I represent: DOT

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: Margaret Fargione

Address: _____

I represent: DOT

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: Paul Orhaci

Address: _____

I represent: DOT

Address: _____

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

THE COUNCIL *Parks*
THE CITY OF NEW YORK *admin*

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/13/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Commissioner Danaghue

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Parks

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: 5/13/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: First Deputy Commissioner Rodriguez-Rosa

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Parks

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: 5/13/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Deputy Commissioner Joy Wang

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Parks

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: 5/13/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Deputy Commissioner Eric Boorstyn

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Parks

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: 5/13/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: EFO David Stark

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Parks

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: 5/12/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Assistant Commissioner Ben Osborne

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Parks

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: Kader Gverrab

Address: _____

I represent: NYTWA

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: Ashley Kibria

Address: _____

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: Gulietta Fiore

Address: _____ 11368

I represent: Historic House Trust of NYC

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

31

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/12/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gabrielle A. Perez

Address: 3333 Henry Hudson Pkwy, Bronx, NY, 10463

I represent: The Bronx is Blooming

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

Budget Policy
+ Zoning
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Constance Lesold

Address: 89 Sterling St, Bklyn 11225

I represent: Eastern Parkway Coalition

Address: (same as presenter)

**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: 5/13/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Emily Walker

Address: _____

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: 5/13/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alia Soomro

Address: _____

I represent: New York League of Conservation

Address: Villars

Parks

**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: 5/13/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Heather Lubov

Address: _____

I represent: City Parks Foundation

Address: _____

Parks

**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: 5-13-25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Margaret Monaldi

Address: _____

I represent: Prospect Park 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: Suhali Mendez

Address: _____

I represent: NYLPT

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: 5-13-2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Wain Chin

Address: [REDACTED] St Brooklyn NY 11214

I represent: NYTWA

Address: 3110 37th Ave Suite 300 LIC NY 11101

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Transportation

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/13/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Richard Chow

Address: 252 Merrymounts + Staten Island
NY 10314

I represent: NYTWA

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: Rajiv Desai

Address: [REDACTED] BX 10475

I represent: New York Taxi Workers Alliance

Address: 31-10 37 Ave LIC, NY 11101

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: Dorothy Leconte

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: New York Taxi Workers Alliance

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: 5/15/21

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christopher Leon Johnson

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: SCIF

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: 05-13-

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Passang N. Sharpe

Address: _____

I represent: NYTWA

Address: 37-31 Long Island City

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. Transportation Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: May 13, 2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Allison Langley

Address: 31-10 27th Ave, Suite 300

I represent: New York Taxi Workers Alliance

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. Transportation Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/13/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Adriano Averzano

Address: Brooklyn, NY 11201

I represent: NYTWA

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

PARKS

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CHELTON LEGGETT

Address: _____

I represent: TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND

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: 5/13/2005

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Marlene Gigg

Address: 125 Barclay Street NY NY 10007

I represent: Treasurer, Local 983, DC37

Address: Union Side Ramps (PEP)

**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: 5/13/2005

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Carmen de Leon

Address: 125 Barclay Street NY NY 10007

I represent: President, Local 768, DC37

Address: Clarke exterminators

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: 5/13/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joe Puleo

Address: 125 Barclay Street NY NY 10007

I represent: President, Local 983, DC37

Address: Urban Park Rangers (PEP)

**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: SCOTT DAILY PARKS!

Address: _____

I represent: NYJTL

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: 5/13/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ralph Baselice

Address: 125 Barclay Street NY NY 10007

I represent: Vice-President, Local 983, DC37

Address: Urban Park Rangers (PEP)

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: Suhali Méndez

Address: 151 West 30th Street 11th Floor

I represent: NY Lawyers for the Public Interest

Address: (same as above)

**THE COUNCIL Parks
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/13/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kaitlin Krause

Address: Parks Budget

I represent: Rising Tide Effect

Address: [Redacted] BK 11201

**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: SCOTT DALY

Address: _____

I represent: NYITL

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: JOHN SURKO

Address: _____

I represent: CENTER FOR AN URBAN FUTURE

Address: QUEENS, NY 11103

**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: Sommer Diner

Address: _____

I represent: coalition to save the public rec downtown center

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: Darren Hinton

Address: BK

I represent: Myself (Play NYC)

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: Dejon Williams

Address: 128 Broadway St NY NY 10007

I represent: President, Local 299, DC27

Address: Recreation Specialists

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Parks

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/13/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Merritt Birnbaum

Address: _____

I represent: Riverside Park 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: 6/11/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alish JAVADI

Address: [REDACTED] NY NY 10022

I represent: HOPE GARDENS FUND

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: 5/13/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Deputy Comm Mark Focht

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Parks

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: 5/13/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Deputy Commissioner Margaret Nelson

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Parks

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: 5/13/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chief of Citywide Legislative Affairs Matt Drury

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Parks

Address: _____

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