



New York City Council Committee on Parks & Recreation
Monday, September 27, 2021

Oversight Hearing – Maintaining the City’s Tree Stock
Sherrise Palomino, Director of Advocacy and Programs

Good afternoon, my name is Sherrise Palomino, and I am the Director of Advocacy and Programs at New Yorkers for Parks (NY4P). We are a founding member of the Play Fair Coalition, which includes over 300 organizations from across the five boroughs, many of whom will testify today. We thank the City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation for inviting us to speak about our city’s trees and their maintenance. I also want to thank Chair Koo for his leadership and partnership in the Play Fair Coalition and for raising these important issues.

The NYC Parks department is responsible for maintaining more than 2.6 million street trees on our streets and in our parks. These trees and urban forests are a critical resource in this city’s climate change resilience. They mitigate the urban heat island effect, lower temperatures by up to 9%, cut air conditioning use by 30%, and reduce heating energy use by a further 20-30%. Trees in our parks capture almost 2 billion gallons of stormwater runoff every year, a statistic made even more poignant after the impact of recent tropical storms. Our trees are essential to our public health as well, providing shade and cleaner air, impacts that should resonate with our city’s leaders as we continue to make our way through this pandemic.

In short, these trees are an essential part of NYC’s green infrastructure. The NYC Parks department does a valiant job maintaining this critical resource but needs more funding to do so. This is one of the many reasons why NY4P and our Coalition are calling for an increase in the Parks budget to 1% of the city’s budget – a call that the majority of city council candidates support along with the leading candidate for mayor.

For over 100 years, [New Yorkers for Parks](http://www.ny4p.org) (NY4P) has built, protected, and promoted parks and open spaces in New York City. Today, NY4P is the citywide independent organization championing quality parks and open spaces for all New Yorkers in all neighborhoods. www.ny4p.org