



City of New York
Parks & Recreation

March 25, 2008

Mr. Christian DiPalermo
New Yorkers for Parks
The Arthur Ross Center
for Parks and Open Spaces
355 Lexington Avenue, 14 Floor
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. DiPalermo:

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to review and respond to the *Tracking Crime in New York City Parks* report. I appreciate the tremendous effort that was put forth in its preparation.

Safety in parks is our highest priority and thankfully crime across the city has never been lower. Major felony crime in New York City has fallen each year for the last 17 years in a row. This remarkable decline in crime has touched every borough in the city, and all of our parks. New Yorkers are flocking to parks to take advantage of new recreational opportunities and programming that contribute to better and safer neighborhoods and healthier park patrons.

The Parks Department works closely with the New York City Police Department (NYPD) to ensure safety in all City parks. The NYPD focuses its efforts on serious crimes. The Parks Department's Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) prevents crime by addressing quality of life issues, establishing a uniformed presence in parks, issuing summonses, and performing arrests, if necessary. The Mayor and the City Council recognize the importance of PEP officers and over the past 2 years have added 81 full time officers to our staff, virtually doubling our the PEP positions assigned to Parks under our jurisdiction. At the height of the season, we have over 800 uniformed staff in the parks, including full-time and seasonal PEP and Rangers, and fixed post enforcement officers.

The Parks Department also recognizes the integral role community organizations and individual park users play in deterring crime. From dog walkers to sports leagues, park safety is a community endeavor bolstered by a variety of organizations. For example, Partnerships for Parks publicizes an array of safety strategies on their website. Communities also play a role in designing safer parks. Parks is reaching out to communities for anti-crime strategies during design, to make them safer, incorporating concerns quality of life issues such as vandalism into its choices of materials, and providing other deterrent amenities including lighting and cameras.

We agree with the New Yorkers for Parks (NY4P) on the importance of making best public safety practices widely known, particularly as it relates to our City parks. To this end, we accept your recommendation and will shortly be updating our website to include this information. And,

while crime data is not published on Parks' website, we do note that neighborhood crime statistics are available by precinct on NYPD's site [www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/crime-prevention/crime statistics](http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/crime-prevention/crime-statistics). We also value NY4P's interest in park usage measurements. This summer, a pilot was conducted to measure playground usage but the data was inconclusive. We would like to explore this issue further with you, particularly in regard to conducting a joint usage study of a medium sized, destination park.

I look forward to a continued dialogue with New Yorkers for Parks as to how to keep our parks safe for all New Yorkers.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adrian Benepe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Adrian" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Benepe".

Adrian Benepe