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NEW REPORT HIGHLIGHTS THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE IN NEW YORK CITY PARKS

October 28, 2009—New York, NY, New Yorkers for Parks released “Parks for All New Yorkers: Immigrants, Culture, and NYC Parks,” which reports on the particular open space needs of new immigrants in New York.

While the Parks Department has built new cricket and soccer fields to accommodate the sports preferences of new immigrants, and the Mayor has mandated increased language access, more can be done. Through interviews and other research tools, New Yorkers for Parks identified nine ways to improve the connections between parks and new immigrants, including providing resources to enhance translation services, implementing a transparent process to issue permits for fields and events, and increasing culturally diverse food vendors in parks.

“New York City’s population is 36% foreign-born, immigrants who come from all over the world,” said Christian DiPalermo, Executive Director of New Yorkers for Parks. “The diversity within the immigrant population means that local neighborhoods have particular preferences and needs,” said Cheryl Huber, author of the report and Deputy Director of New Yorkers Parks. Provisions for new immigrants will ultimately benefit all New Yorkers. “Our park system needs to reflect the feedback of all New Yorkers and operate in a more transparent and inclusive manner,” she added.

The report focuses on three major topics in New York City parks that were highlighted through interviews with local community groups: improving language access through bilingual staff and translated signage; reserving park space for sports and events; and diversifying the park experience through culturally relevant food vendors. This policy report is meant to improve integration of new immigrants into the park system.

New Yorkers for Parks is the only independent watchdog for all the city’s parks, beaches and playgrounds. For over 100 years, New Yorkers for Parks has worked to ensure greener, safer, cleaner parks for all New Yorkers.

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