

Bill DeBlasio
Public Advocate



PARKS 2009 CAMPAIGN

*Friends of Hudson River
Park
Governor's Island Alliance
New York Restoration
Project
Metropolitan Waterfront*

Dear Candidate,

On behalf of New Yorkers for Parks and the Parks 2009 Advisory Committee, we are launching a campaign to support parks and the quality of life of all New Yorkers. In this economic recession, New Yorkers will be relying on the city's features that benefit the most such as parks and open spaces.

Enclosed is a candidate survey that addresses key parks issues, through which we'll learn more about your vision for our city's parks, playgrounds and open spaces. **Please take the time to thoroughly respond to the issues on the attached questionnaire.**

This candidate survey will help to inform the public about parks related issues and policies. Questions are both direct and open ended, so please circle "yes" or "no" when asked and take the time to answer the question as completely as possible in the space provided. If more room is needed to adequately address these issues, please feel free to attach additional pages when resubmitting the survey.

Answers to this survey will be featured in the **Parks Voter Guide** to be distributed by Parks 2009 prior to the primary election; in some cases we may use excerpts or summaries from your answers. They will be made available on our website, www.ny4p.org, and upon request to the public and the press.

To ensure that your views are included, please return the questionnaire by June 19th 2009 to:

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New Yorkers for Parks
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If you have further questions, do not hesitate to call us at 212.838.9410.

* We need your answers by June 19th for inclusion in Parks 2009 printed material. We welcome responses via email, fax, mail, etc.

(For non-Mayoral candidates: if any question below specifically relates to Mayoral authority, please indicate if you would support and/or call upon the Mayor to take such action)

2009 CANDIDATE SURVEY

What do you believe are the top priority park issues that need to be addressed in your district and citywide?

I believe we need to focus on both parks expansion and parks maintenance. I fully support the Mayor's proposal in PlaNYC to convert 290 schoolyards into parks, allowing all New Yorkers to be within a 10 -minute walk of a playground in the next 20 years. At the same time, we need to preserve and protect our existing parks to keep them clean, functioning and safe.

Securing Adequate Funding / Maintenance for Parks

a. Will you work towards securing long term funding for Parks?

Yes No

i. If so, would you consider exploring creative financial models such as Parks Improvement Districts (based on the BID model), tax increment financing (TIF), zoning benefits and public private partnerships to supplement maintenance and operating costs?

We need long term funding for our parks and I am open to a range of funding models, particularly those that are partially and fully self-sustaining.

b. Would you support dedicating revenue earned through park concessions to parks maintenance and operations?

Yes No

I support this but would need to see the specific financial model/details.

i. If so, would you also support revising the Major Concessions Rules to include all significant private uses on public property (including parks) to community/borough review?

I agree that we need greater public input and review for a wider range or proposals.

c. Will you support establishing the tracking of spending and staffing on a park by park basis?

Yes No

d. When a capital project is not fully funded will you support diversifying funding sources to ensure their completion? What would those sources be?

Yes No

We need to create more park space throughout New York City. Rather than letting projects sit in a

construction so that we can meet community needs.

e. What specific actions would you take to ensure that every park in every neighborhood has properly working facilities such as ball-fields, educational facilities, restrooms, etc?

Parks throughout New York City should be safe, clean and supported so that community members may enjoy them. This takes a combination of:

- Ongoing maintenance - even in difficult fiscal times, we need to make sure that our budget includes funding for basic maintenance, repair and cleaning of parks;
- Government oversight - it is the responsibility of the Parks Department, the City Council and other elected officials to ensure that we maintain the highest standards for our parks, regardless of their location, and devise solutions for problems when they arise;
- Community engagement -- through the encouragement of parks associations, conservancies, and park alliance organizations, we can facilitate local support/stakeholders for maintaining and improving parks.

i. Will you support a "fix it first" policy for funding capital projects, so that resources are allocated to existing projects in need of repair?

Yes No

I support this approach though the specifics of every situation must be taken into account.

f. Will you support adequate staffing and funding to ensure that new and existing parks stay in a "state of good repair"?

Yes No

i. What funding/programs would you use to increase the full-time parks maintenance staff?

Even in difficult fiscal times, we need to make sure that our budget includes funding for basic maintenance, repair and cleaning of parks. We need long term funding for our parks, including funding for maintenance, and I am open to a range of funding models, particularly those that are partially and fully self-sustaining. In addition, through the encouragement of parks associations, conservancies, and park alliance organizations, we can facilitate local support/stakeholders for maintaining and improving parks.

ii. What can be done to improve the baseline services, or maintenance of effort, in our parks to ensure that partnerships don't need to replace poor, existing services or neglected services such as bench and fountain repairs?

I believe we must alter our basic approach to parks by treating them as important community assets that make our neighborhoods strong and our local economies flourish. Making basic repairs in parks is smart public policy. Keeping parks clean and functioning will have a ripple effect on communities by encouraging residents to engage with their communities, thereby supporting the local economy, and improving quality of life.

iii. How would you fund the unique maintenance costs of waterfront parks (e.g. access, bulkheads, and piers)?

New York City is full of unique outdoor spaces, including waterfront areas that offer incredible opportunities for creating public parks. Funding the maintenance of such parks is very challenging.

am open to a variety of proposals that would provide adequate funding to maintain the park while also ensuring that the park remains a truly public place and does not restrict public use in any way.

g. Will you support park ratings by borough and community board in addition to the citywide level in the Mayor's Management Report?

Yes No

h. Will you support making the official Parks Department "property list" - that specifically delineates all 1,700 properties - available online?

Yes No

Protecting Parkland

a. Will you support more laws that require public notification and input when a park will be used for non-park purposes, to afford parks the protection they need from development or use by other agencies?

Yes No

I would need to see the details of the laws being proposed, but am supportive of greater public notification and input.

i. How would you require that professional sports organizations assist in maintaining and operating public parks near their facilities?

I believe that we must require professional sports organizations to be good neighbors to communities. Depending on the specifics of a project, their relationship with surrounding parks is something that can be agreed upon during the landuse process and/or in connection with any public benefits that are considered for a project. Professional sports organizations also have an interest in helping to maintain the park areas near their facilities, as a more welcoming environment will help encourage New Yorkers to attend events.

b. Will you work to strengthen parkland alienation regulation by requiring Environmental Impact Statements before parkland alienation bill is filed by municipality?

Yes No

Parkland alienation is a very serious issue for communities. I support working with the state and city to promote increased public participation, oversight and review in connection with parkland alienation.

i. How will you do this?

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c. Will you support mitigation for taking of parkland and ensure replacement of lost parkland for the community?

Yes No

Parkland alienation is a very serious issue for communities. I support working with the state and city to promote increased public participation, oversight and review in connection with parkland alienation.

i. How will you do so?

We cannot afford to see a reduction of parkland in our urban environment. Depending on the specifics of a project, replacing lost parkland is something that should be agreed upon during the landuse process and/or in connection with any public benefits that are considered for a project.

d. How would you prevent "pay to play" situations from arising at public and amateur sports facilities?

We must increase oversight and transparency in the development and siting process, including when it comes to sports facilities.

e. Will you support legislation that requires regular NYPD reports to the City Council on crime in parks (i.e. Intro. 470)?

Yes No

I support legislation that requires regular NYPD reports to the City Council on crime in parks.

f. Will you work towards making parkland part of the city's CompStat system?

Yes No

Expanding Park Use

a. Will you work toward creating, with significant community involvement, a comprehensive citywide master plan for parks and open spaces that will guide the overall acquisition, restoration, improvement, and maintenance of parks, natural areas, playgrounds and athletic facilities in the five boroughs?

Yes No

I support this concept and spirit, but any plan would have to acknowledge adjust for the changing needs and circumstances of the City/community.

i. What is your vision for some of the new parks?

Children in urban environments need greater access to outdoor play space. I have sponsored millions for new playgrounds, fields, and recreational programming in Brooklyn. As Public Advocate, I will launch an initiative to identify neighborhoods that lack recreational options for children, and will work with communities to find solutions that range from the conversation of former industrial use spaces (such as Brooklyn Bridge Park) to simply arranging to open school yards during non-school hours, as I have done in my district.

I also support Mayor Bloomberg's proposal in PlaNYC to convert 290 schoolyards into parks, allowing all New Yorkers to be within a 10 -minute walk of a playground in the next 20 years.