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New Yorkers for Parks Releases “Open Space Index” to Help Communities Plan for Parks

April 13, 2010—New York, NY, New Yorkers for Parks released “The Open Space Index,” a new tool to help neighborhoods plan locally for world-class parks.

Because the City has no master plan for the improvement and expansion of parks, New Yorkers for Parks has created a tool that empowers and enables local communities to plan for how they would like their park system to grow. By establishing a set of 15 “targets” for open space, based on extensive research and best practices, New Yorkers for Parks has provided every community with a set of built-in goals. Targets include the number of athletic fields and playgrounds per capita, percentage of permeable ground surfacing, and tree canopy.

“New York City’s population is extremely diverse, and parks should be shaped based on local needs,” stated Lee Stuart. “Communities that have significant elderly populations will have different passive and recreational preferences than those with lots of children. And, where stormwater runoff and flooding is a particular problem, communities may want to examine the availability of permeable surfacing and trees,” she added.

“Every neighborhood in New York City has different strengths and challenges in terms of open space, and the Index is flexible enough to support planning efforts in Red Hook, Riverdale, or the Rockaways,” stated Alyson Beha, Manager of Research and Planning for New Yorkers for Parks and author of the report. “By conducting the research and offering our expertise on the ground, New Yorkers for Parks is laying a solid framework for communities to lead their own plans.”

After conducting a pilot study on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, New Yorkers for Parks plans next to bring the Index to Jackson Heights, Queens, where it will support local greening efforts and help the community create a parks advocacy agenda. Other groups interested in the Open Space Index for their neighborhoods are encouraged to contact New Yorkers for Parks via www.ny4p.org.

New Yorkers for Parks is the citywide, independent organization dedicated to ensuring that all New Yorkers enjoy a world-class park system.

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