



*New Yorkers for Parks staff with our signature Daffodil Van getting ready to distribute bulbs this in October.*

## **Executive Summary**

Thanks to you, New Yorkers for Parks has had an incredible year of growth and success. As cities grapple with public health challenges and plan for climate change resilience, parks and open spaces are at the center of conversation about city life. With your partnership, we've been able to seize this momentum and make concrete improvements to our park system today, as well as set ourselves up to achieve even greater victories over the years ahead.

This past June, for the second year in a row, we achieved the largest Parks budget in city history, with \$624 million allocated for parks and open spaces. Our budget victory was powered by a growing movement of parks advocates who are rallying around our Five Point Plan for Park Equity—detailed below—and demanding policy change. This movement is led by our Play Fair Coalition, which includes advocates from every neighborhood and borough of the City.

Concurrently with our budget advocacy, we've been building relationships with Mayor Eric Adams and his administration, as well as with the City Council. Mayor Adams has made multiple commitments to reaching our benchmark of 1% of the City's budget for parks, and our allies in the City Council are working towards that goal as well. We're thrilled to have defined the terms of the debate around parks funding in New York City.

Over the year ahead, with your continued support, we have ambitious plans to move our policy agenda forward. We will work to hold our elected officials accountable to their commitments to allocate 1% of the City's budget to parks, and we'll undertake new research to help us understand and communicate about the needs of our parks and open spaces. We'll also continue to invest in movement building to make certain the grassroots voices of New Yorkers are heard in City Hall.

## 2022 Accomplishments

Thanks to your support this past year, we:

### **Secured the largest ever parks budget**

This past year, we led a comprehensive, months-long campaign to dedicate 1% of the City’s budget to the Parks Department. In partnership with the 400+ members of our Play Fair Coalition, we held rallies, petitions, and email-writing campaigns, testified at public meetings, and gathered grassroots support for our goals. The campaign culminated in major success in the annual budget process, when the Mayor and City Council agreed to a \$624 million budget for parks in FY2023—the largest in City history. This follows on the heels of the FY2022 budget of \$618 million, which was also record-



*Members of the Play Fair Coalition rally for 1% for Parks in June.*

setting. This year’s gains are particularly meaningful because the FY2022 budget included significant federal money related to pandemic recovery and economic stimulus. This year’s budget is funded entirely by the City, without federal support. While the budget is still short of our ultimate goal of allocating a full 1% of the City’s budget to parks, it is an important step in that direction.

### **Used the Five Point Plan for Park Equity as the basis for advocacy**

Last year, with your support, we unveiled our Five Point Plan for Park Equity, which calls on New York City to:

1. Dedicate 1% of the City Budget to Parks
2. Build More Parks
3. Fix the Capital Process
4. Empower our Communities
5. Create a Director of the Public Realm

Over the past twelve months, the Five Point Plan has become an incredible focal point for parks advocates from all over the city, including our Play Fair Coalition. We’ve been partnering with organizations in adjacent sectors on shared goals—like the creation of a Director of the Public Realm within City government and the reform of the City’s broken capital process. And as parks advocates increasingly rally around the Five Point Plan, we are getting more and more public recognition of the importance of parks and open spaces.

### **Built Relationships with the new Mayoral Administration and City Council**

Since Mayor Eric Adams and the new City Council took office in January 2022, we have held dozens of meetings with Council Members and members of the Mayoral Administration to discuss the needs of parks and open spaces across the city. These relationships are helping us set the terms for the public debate around funding for parks, which will be a boon for the city’s parks and open spaces through the term of the City Council and the Mayor. These elected officials have begun to adopt our language and



policy goals as the baseline for conversation around parks issues, which is an important indicator of our ultimate success.

### **Expanded the Daffodil Project**

We just wrapped up distributing more than 750,000 daffodil bulbs as part of the 21st annual Daffodil Project. We held distribution events at Union Square, Manhattan; Brookfield Park, Staten Island; Mill Pond Park, the Bronx; the RISE Center in Far Rockaway, Queens; Forest Park, Queens; and Prospect Park, Brooklyn. This year, we invested in making the Daffodil Project easier and more efficient for those picking up bulbs. We started by using new software to manage our registration system, which streamlined the process, and continued with better signage at the distribution events themselves. The Daffodil Project has become a beloved civic program that contributes to the beauty and vibrancy of New York City’s parks and public spaces. It’s also an incredible vehicle for engaging New Yorkers in the care and stewardship of the public realm. We’re so grateful to you for helping make the project happen, and to the tens of thousands of New Yorkers who picked up and planted bulbs this fall.



*A volunteer prepping daffodil bulbs during a distribution event at Mill Pond Park in the Bronx.*

### **Convened Partnerships and Conversations with an array of sectors**

In addition to our 1% for Parks campaign, this past year we’ve partnered with the Center for an Urban Future (CUF) on a campaign to reform New York City’s capital funding process. The City’s process for approving, funding, and building capital projects is inefficient and burdened by administrative and bureaucratic hurdles. The Parks Department often takes years to complete a simple capital project like repairing a playground. We’re working with CUF to recommend solutions that will make the process faster and more efficient. One major victory is that the City Council will hold a hearing on the capital process this December, and that’s just the first step towards a larger campaign. We also expanded our partnerships through the Daffodil Project. We partnered with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and the Times Square Alliance on major planting events. We also worked to distribute and plant bulbs in partnership with the 34th Avenue Open Streets Initiative (in Jackson Heights, Queens), the Bronx Borough President’s office, and many more.

## **2023 Priorities**

With your support, over the year ahead we will:

### **Advocate for 1% for Parks**

Building off our success in the FY2022 and FY2023 City budget cycles, we are excited to continue holding Mayor Adams and the City Council accountable for their commitments to expand funding for our parks system. Over the next twelve months, we will work with our Play Fair Coalition to build broad public participation in our campaign through strategic communications, rallies, public programs,

and petitions. We'll also expand opportunities for individuals to participate in the Play Fair Coalition so that we can reach a larger group of advocates throughout the city.

### **Conduct research that supports the Five Point Plan for Park Equity**

To support our broad advocacy goals, we're excited to undertake significant research over the next year to flesh out the Five Point Plan into a framework of actionable campaigns and adoptable policy. We'll start with research into how the Parks Department can best deploy expanded funding towards the goal of creating an equitable parks system. This research will include best practices and present a roadmap for incremental growth towards 1% for Parks. We are also looking to expand our research into the neighborhoods and communities of New York City that have the least access to parkland—based on the research into Community Boards that your support helped us undertake last year. We will identify short-, medium-, and long-term strategies to expand access to parks and open spaces in these communities, which tend to be low-income and/or communities of color.

### **Launch new campaigns centered around the Five Point Plan for Park Equity**

We're partnering with the Municipal Art Society, Open Plans, and the American Institute of Architects to create a new coalition to encourage Mayor Adams and the City Council to centralize and coordinate responsibility for the public realm challenges. Part of our platform is to call for the creation of a Director of the Public Realm position within City government. In the year ahead, our coalition will develop petitions, host rallies, and work towards policy solutions to public realm challenges. We'll also continue our partnership with CUF around reforming the capital process, and launch more campaigns as opportunities arise.

### **Expand the Daffodil Project through partnerships and engagement efforts**

As we wait for this year's bulbs to bloom in the spring, we're already turning our attention to the 2023 Daffodil Project. Next year, we'll distribute another 750,000 daffodil bulbs throughout the city. And we'll continue to invest in partnerships with organizations across the city, including block associations, park stewards, and more. We'll also work to engage those who participate in the Daffodil Project in our other advocacy efforts so that we can build an even bigger movement for park equity.



*Bags of daffodil bulbs ready for distribution at Union Square in Manhattan.*

## **Conclusion**

With your support over the year ahead, NY4P will keep investing in the growing movement for parks. We'll work to protect our recent gains in the City budget, and to keep focus on the budget until we reach 1% for Parks. We'll conduct new research that supports our objectives and helps the public better understand the needs of our parks. And we'll continue distributing hundreds of thousands of daffodil bulbs so that the city comes alive with bright yellow blossoms every spring.

Thank you for being a part of our community.