



**New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation
Friday, April 22, 2022
Committee on Parks and Recreation- Parks Equity Hearing
Sherrise Palomino, Director of Advocacy and Programs**

Good afternoon, my name is Sherrise Palomino and I am the Director of Advocacy and Programs at New Yorkers for Parks (NY4P). We are a founding member of the Play Fair Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs. Thank you to the Parks Committee for the opportunity to speak about parks equity. I also want to thank Chair Krishnan for his leadership on this important issue.

Covid has highlighted the critical needs of our parks system including spotlighting inequities in access, infrastructure, and maintenance. The city's decades long disinvested in parks continues to exacerbate these tragic inequities in our parks system. The city council and mayor can fix it by making the 1% investment of the city budget into parks.

Many parks and playgrounds need urgent investments in maintenance and upkeep. Parks like Oracle Playground in Ft. Greene lacks basic functioning equipment for kids of all ages and abilities. Many newly designed parks have workout equipment for the community, but many like Marcus Garvey Park still do not.

Parks like Joyce Kilmer Park in the Bronx and Rufus King Park in Jamaica constantly have litter problems. With a well-funded parks department, our parks and playgrounds can be properly maintained. Too many parks advocates and community leaders invest their time volunteering to do jobs that NYC Parks department has not been able to adequately fund like cleaning up parks and gardening. New York is the greatest city in the world with a parks system that does not reflect modernity nor have the proper infrastructure to support the climate crisis we are living in.

We are overdue for transformative investment in our parks system – 1% of the city budget for parks could ensure that parks are well-maintained and equitably serving New Yorkers of all communities and backgrounds. The NYC Parks department does a valiant job maintaining these aging resources but needs more funding to do so. It is time to allocate 1% of the city's budget to parks.

For over 100 years, [New Yorkers for Parks](http://www.ny4p.org) (NY4P) has built, protected, and promoted parks and open spaces in New York City. Today, NY4P is the citywide independent organization championing quality parks and open spaces for all New Yorkers in all neighborhoods. www.ny4p.org