



**New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation**  
**Thursday, June 23, 2022**  
**Committee on Parks and Recreation- Oversight – Tree Canopy**  
**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 members of Forest for All NYC. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. New Yorkers for Parks is a founding member of the Play Fair Coalition that advocates for parks and open space and includes over 400 organizations. I also want to thank Chair Krishnan for his leadership on the important issue of improving tree canopy.

NYC Parks identified six target communities in greatest need of tree canopy growth for the Trees for Public Health Neighborhoods initiative- all of them are low-income communities of color- Hunts Point, Morrisania, East New York, East Harlem, Stapleton, and the Rockaways. New Yorkers for Parks cares about the urban forest because the racial and economic disparity of tree canopy has measurable and lasting impacts on communities and residents. In communities with higher tree canopy the temperatures are on average 10 degrees cooler. It's time that the city council invests in a fully funded parks system that can support and increase tree canopy growth.

**We believe the city needs to set a goal of at least 30% canopy cover by 2035. New York can't wait. We are in the midst of a climate crisis.**

NYC's urban forest plays an important role in climate change mitigation and adaptation. Urban forests capture atmospheric carbon dioxide. Trees help reduce air and water pollution and cooling costs by acting as energy savers. The parks department plays a critical role in managing the urban forest but nearly half is outside of their jurisdiction. The urban forest needs better protection and management. The parks department needs more resources and the whole urban forest needs investment. The city council has an extraordinary opportunity to demand a comprehensive plan that allows for meaningful investments in the management, protection, and expansion of our urban forest. This is possible with the city council making a commitment to allocating 1% of the city budget to NYC Parks.

We are overdue for transformative investment in our parks system – 1% of the city budget for parks could ensure that our urban forest can be resourced to support New York City during this climate crisis. This is one of the many reasons why NY4P and the Play Fair Coalition are calling for a commitment to increase the Parks budget to 1% of the city's budget – a call that the majority of City Council Members support along with Speaker Adams.

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](http://www.ny4p.org)