



**New York City Council Committee on Parks & Recreation
Wednesday, March 1, 2023
Hearing - Committee on Parks and Recreation
Sherrise Palomino, Director of Advocacy and Programs, New Yorkers for Parks**

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 our city's need for 1% for Parks. I also want to thank Chair Shekar Krishnan for his leadership on this important issue.

The bills before the committee support equitable access for young people at recreational centers that provide much needed opportunities for youth development, increase critical work community gardens provide in urban farming and much more. Community gardens play a crucial role in communities of color by providing fresh and healthy foods, especially in the South Bronx and other food deserts. Supporting and increasing urban farming has significant public health impacts. We must invest in NYC Park's GreenThumb program and expand urban agriculture to make these programs accessible to all New Yorkers in equitable ways. Increasing the NYC Parks budget to 1% for Parks can do this!

With a well-funded parks department, our parks and recreational centers can be properly maintained. Allocating 1% of the city operating budget to NYC Parks would generate cleaner and safer parks, comprehensive access to the city's 10,000 acres of natural areas and trails, protect vulnerable wetlands susceptible to changing climate, free access to programs at recreational centers for NYC children and so much more.

We are overdue for transformative investment in our parks system – 1% of the city budget for parks could ensure that recreation centers are fully staffed and functioning to provide the programming that young people need. The NYC Parks department does a valiant job maintaining these aging resources but needs more funding to do so. This is one of the many reasons why NY4P and the Play Fair Coalition are calling for an increase in 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