



**New York City Council Committee on Environmental Protection
Tuesday, March 7, 2023
Budget Hearing – 1% for Parks
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 city. Thank you to the Committee on Environmental Protection, Resiliency and Waterfronts for the opportunity to speak about our city's need to invest in parks as climate infrastructure.

It is imperative that the Environmental Protection committee champion 1% for Parks. This climate crisis has highlighted the critical needs of our parks system including adequate funding for park staffing to do resiliency work and to address inequities in access, infrastructure, and general maintenance. The city's decades long disinvested in parks continues to exacerbate these inequities in our parks system. The city council can fix this by making the 1% investment of the city budget into parks.

NYC's urban forest and natural areas play an important role in climate change mitigation. 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 and natural areas but needs more resources to do so.

As climate change intensifies flooding and increases heat, the city council has an extraordinary opportunity to mitigate the increasing dangers of climate change by investing in our parks system. More intense weather events cause more flooding and increases fallen trees. Climate change makes the city's response to harsh weather events and operational costs more expensive, and our parks department needs additional funding, staffing, and resources to meet this growing demand. Adding more trees and improving and maintaining natural areas and wetlands helps NYC's natural areas that are storing and sequestering carbon.

We are overdue for transformative investment in our parks system – 1% of the city budget for parks could ensure that our urban forest and natural areas 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%.

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