



Statement on the FY13 Executive Budget for the Department of Parks and Recreation

Submitted to the New York City Council Finance Committee

June 6, 2012

New Yorkers for Parks (NY4P), the citywide independent organization championing quality parks and open spaces for all New Yorkers in all neighborhoods, calls upon City Council and the Bloomberg Administration to **restore \$33.37 million to DPR's FY13 expense budget**. This is the base minimum to ensure that all of the city's swimming pools can be opened and sufficient seasonal staff can be hired this summer, that essential maintenance jobs are not slashed, and that trees are pruned and stumps removed to keep our sidewalks and streets safe.

Following is a detailed breakdown of the additional funding required:

Seasonal staff and services: \$13.12 Million

As has become the tradition in recent years, the FY13 Executive Budget does not include funding needed for summer seasonal staff - including Job Training Participants (JTP's) and Playground Associates - and four swimming pools, and would necessitate a reduced season for all pools. Not only should \$13.12 million be restored to avert these service cuts, but these functions should be baselined in DPR's budget going forward, as they are essential services of the Parks Department.

Job Training Participant (JTP) program: \$16.25 Million

JTPs make up the bulk of Parks' maintenance crews, yet this program may lose up to 700 positions in Fiscal Year '13, on top of seasonal reductions. In our comparison between the proposed FY 2013 budget and the FY 2008 adopted budget, NY4P identified a decrease of 1,435 JTP workers, a 62% cut. If the Council and Administration do not restore \$16.25 million to hold the JTP program harmless, New Yorkers will increasingly see a precipitous decline in park conditions across the city.

Pruning and stump removal: \$4 Million

At the same time the City is planting a million new trees, the budget for pruning and stump removal has been slashed by 80 percent since 2008. With a budget of \$1.4 million, trees are now pruned on a 15- to 20-year cycle rather than the recommended five-year cycle, and funding for stump removal, which stood at \$2.3 million in FY08, has been totally eliminated. Tree maintenance is not optional; unmaintained trees create dangerous conditions, and \$4 million for pruning and stump removal should be baselined in DPR's budget.

The City has committed generous capital funds to acquiring and building new parks, but vastly insufficient funds to taking care of our 2,100 existing parks. DPR faces a cumulative cut to its maintenance and operations budget of \$64.4 million – over 23 percent – since 2008. All New Yorkers – in every neighborhood and every borough – care about our city’s parks, and everyone is affected when they are not well maintained, or their hours are cut, or swimming pools are closed, or drinking fountains and restrooms are broken, or tree maintenance is deferred, due to insufficient resources. The time has come to start investing in the maintenance of our city’s park system as generously as we have in its expansion.