



**City Council Oversight Hearing:
The status of crime prevention and safety in parks
Parks Committee**

**New Yorkers for Parks Testimony
March 1, 2007**

New Yorkers for Parks is the only independent watchdog for all the city's parks, beaches, and playgrounds. For nearly 100 years, New Yorkers for Parks has worked to ensure greener, safer, cleaner parks for all New Yorkers.

In December 2005, thanks to the City Council's support, the Mayor signed a bill requiring the NYPD to track crimes that occur in the 20 largest parks in NYC. Prior to the passing of this legislation, there was no comprehensive tracking of crime in parks, other than Central Park, which has its own police precinct.

New Yorkers for Parks has received and posted on our website quarterly crime data for these 20 parks and Central Park from April to December 2006. The data shows that Central Park, Flushing Meadows Park, Prospect Park, Riverside Park, and Van Cortlandt Park reported the highest numbers of crimes between April and December. Van Cortlandt, Prospect and Flushing Meadows were the three parks that reported murders during the 8 month time period. One reported rape occurred, in Forest Park.

We also found that out of the three seasons for which data are available, October through December generally had the lowest crime rates. In most parks, the warmer months saw a slightly higher occurrence of crime.

Additional resources must be channeled to the parks that are witnessing high crime rates. Fifty-six reported crimes occurred in Flushing Meadows between April and December. We believe that constructing a Response Center for Park Enforcement Patrol officers in this park would deter criminal activity as well as ensure that security responses are swift and effective.

As the seasons progress, we will analyze this data in various ways, in order to examine the types of crimes that occur in each park and when, and pinpoint strategies of how best to devote resources to address this important issue.

New Yorkers for Parks will continue to act as a clearinghouse for crime data as it becomes available, with the belief that public awareness will lead to increased safety in our parks.

In addition, we look forward to the time when crime data will be collected for all parks large and small, and encourage the NYPD to expedite this system. Tracking and announcing crime statistics for parks will lead to a more effective deployment of resources to ensure public safety citywide.

Thank you.