



**New York City Council Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises
Governors Island: South Island Rezoning, Manhattan
Application N 210126 ZRM, C 210127 ZMM
April 5, 2021
Emily Walker, Director of Outreach and Programs**

My name is Emily Walker, and I am the Director of Outreach and Programs at New Yorkers for Parks (NY4P). Thank you for giving us the opportunity to submit testimony on the Governors Island Rezoning being considered today. NY4P testifies in support of this proposed action. With a mission to be self-sustaining for the long-term, the proposed rezoning will help allow for the development needed to ensure that Governors Island can become a year-round destination, and remain a vital open space asset for New Yorkers for years to come.

We are pleased to note that the rezoning will now bring 9.85 acres of additional open space to Governors Island, bringing the total acreage of public open space on the Island to 55.85 acres. Given the challenges in identifying land for new open space development throughout the City, this is a welcome opportunity to provide more public space for New Yorkers to enjoy. Additionally, the proposed rezoning would help Governors Island become a year-round destination, which would allow for more robust and regular utilization of the Island. This goal has become all the more important in light of the COVID crisis, and the need for New Yorkers to have ample access to parks and open space as safe places to gather, recreate, and seek respite during this challenging time.

We expect this rezoning to bring a reliable funding stream to provide for the maintenance and operations of Governors Island, as well as vital investments in the transportation infrastructure that allows for ongoing and increased public use and access to the island. We encourage the Trust for Governors Island to remain committed to free transport for NYCHA residents and low-income New Yorkers, and hope that the rezoning can be a way to secure the funding to ensure that all New Yorkers, regardless of zip code or income, can have access to Governors Island.

Additionally, we encourage the Trust for Governors Island to take into serious consideration all feedback from the public process to ensure that the development this rezoning will bring will be approached in a thoughtful manner, and one that is appropriately scaled to the Island and its open spaces. The building height and mass reductions that have recently been made to the rezoning application are an encouraging shift, and we hope the final results of the public process will result in site conditions that incorporate as much external feedback as possible, while resulting in development that presents as little negative impact to the existing and new open spaces as possible. Additional site considerations for sunlight access, wind reduction, and wildlife habitability, particularly bird-friendly design methods, should be included in any final designs. Thank you.