

## MAS Testimony on the FY27 Budget for the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation

March 23, 2026

The Municipal Art Society of New York (MAS) has long championed New York City's public realm, advocating for equitable design and maintenance to meet the needs of New Yorkers across all five boroughs. As a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition and the Forest for All NYC Coalition, **we stand with our partners in urging the City to allocate 1% of the City budget to the Department of Parks & Recreation (NYC Parks).**

Mayor Mamdani committed to 1% funding for NYC Parks during his election campaign and since holding office. Yet, the Fiscal Year 27 (FY27) preliminary budget only allots 0.5% of the budget for NYC Parks, half of what the mayor had pledged, and \$33 million less than last year's adopted budget. While 700 staffing lines have been lost since 2023, 276 additional Parks employees are set to lose jobs by the end of this fiscal year. These crucial positions must be baselined to carry out minimal work needed across over 30,000 acres of City parkland, including parks, plazas, recreation centers, and playgrounds.

In addition, the upcoming release of the Urban Forest Plan from the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice (MOCEJ) later this year must have adequate funding to reach its goal of 30% city tree canopy coverage by 2035. The city's urban forest is essential to livability by improving public health outcomes and mitigating environmental impacts, including the heat island effect and lowering emissions.

Devastating budget cuts will diminish public health and further limit accessibility to our parks system. The City budget must retain employees to end the growing burden on NYC Parks staff and to ensure these integral resources are useable and can continue to serve New Yorkers with open space, programming, and environmental protection.

Our parks system is the backbone of our city's vital public infrastructure that supports and protects our environment, our future resiliency, and residents and visitors alike. Investing in our public realm today returns greater cost-savings in the future and avoids growing challenges. **The City must reaffirm the 1% for NYC Parks pledge and baseline the 276 staffing positions in the FY27 budget to sufficiently maintain our parks system and public realm, delivering a safe, equitable, and green future for the next generation of New Yorkers.**

Sincerely,



Keri Butler  
President, Municipal Art Society of New York