



## COMMUNITY BOARD 9 – MANHATTAN

### RESOLUTION

DATE: MARCH 21, 2024

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: LANDMARKS PRESERVATION AND PARKS

RE: Mayoral Preliminary Budget NYC Department of Parks & Recreation \$60 Million Budget Cut

WHEREAS: Mayor Eric Adams recently put forward his First Preliminary Budget proposal, which the New York City Council is currently reviewing; and

WHEREAS: Adams had previously committed to increasing the budget for the Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks Department) to 1% of the total city operating budget, which would mean nearly \$1 billion annually. Adams failed to follow through on that pledge during his First Preliminary Budget by proposing a \$60 million cut to the Parks Department budget. This equals .5% of the overall budget (in comparison, 10% is allocated for the construction of new jails); and

WHEREAS: The parks serving the residents of West Harlem in Manhattan Community Board 9 (CB9M) are chronically underfunded, leading to homeless encampments, broken stairs, unsafe and inadequate playgrounds, uncollected garbage and overgrown invasive weeds that obscure sightlines. Communities of color deserve the same – indeed more – operational and capital funding for parks than affluent areas that often have the additional support of well-funded, private conservancies and foundations.

WHEREAS: Childhood asthma remains the leading cause of pediatric emergency department visits and hospitalizations disproportionately affecting children living in urban environments. The proportion of high-density renters and dense buildings have the highest rate of asthma which is exacerbated in neighborhoods with proximity to high-traffic areas and lack green spaces. Investment in protected urban parks will ensure clean air for the residents of CB9M.

WHEREAS: New York City parks have suffered decades of reduced funding and operating on a skeleton staff, never having fully recovered after the 1970s and 1980s recession. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated how important parks are and called attention to a historic lack of funding for the Parks Department. There was a Parks Department budget cut two fiscal years ago with the onset of COVID-19, and within a matter of weeks the condition of parks across the city degraded significantly just as usage was skyrocketing; and

WHEREAS: There has been a hiring freeze at the Parks Department over the past two years. 250 positions were eliminated just from the most recent cut. That cut has been temporarily masked by federally funded positions that have been working in our parks over the last fiscal year. Nearly 3,200 employees currently working in parks are federally funded, and those positions will expire at the end of June. Additionally, about 250 City Council funded positions are set to expire at the end of June. This totals 3,450 parks positions that will no longer exist on July 1, leaving the City's parks in certain risk of immediately degrading in conditions and in safety; and



**WHEREAS:** Whereas Manhattan Community Board 9's open spaces such as St. Nicholas Park, Riverside Park, Morningside Park, and others carry cultural and historical significance for the City of New York and Harlem residents and therefore deserve to be properly recognized, maintained, and preserved;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT: Manhattan Community Board 9 urges Mayor Eric Adams to fulfill his previous commitment of 1% of the total city operating budget to be allocated to the Parks Department. This funding is essential not only to maintain the conditions and safety (via both Parks Enforcement Patrol and Urban Park Rangers) of the parks, but also for protecting natural areas and combating climate change.