

FY 2027 Borough Budget Consultations

Manhattan – Department of Parks and Recreation

Meeting Date: October 3, 2025

AGENDA ITEM [1]: IMPACT OF ANTICIPATED CUTS IN FEDERAL PROGRAMS AND SPENDING

Recent reports, updates from elected officials, and experts on the news share the expectation of severe cuts to or elimination of funding and other resources from the federal government for a host of programs and initiatives, as well as the effective elimination of entire federal agencies and partnerships. Some of these cuts and closures are taking place in the current federal fiscal year, with even more significant cuts and closures anticipated in the next federal fiscal year beginning October 1, 2025.

With these developments in mind, please answer the following questions.

- 1) Which programs and initiatives at your Agency are currently funded or have in-kind support from federal sources?
 - a) If available, please provide both percentages and approximate dollar amounts.
 - b) Please identify the federal program(s) or funding stream(s) for each portion of such funding.

We have baseline Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for Bronx River, Van Cortlandt, Pelham Bay and Prospect Parks, as well as temporary CDBG-DR (Disaster Recovery) funding related to storm resiliency.

	Positions	FY25 Adopted
Bronx River	4	\$351,140
Van Cortlandt	3	\$383,060
Pelham Bay	5	\$485,025
Prospect Park	8	\$575,618
Total Baseline	20	\$1,794,843
CDBG-DR Forestry	1	\$72,298
Total One-Shot	1	\$72,298
CD Grants Grand Total	21	\$1,867,141

These are all funded with CDBG and CDBG DR monies.

- 2) Has your Agency been advised of announced cuts in funding from federal sources for FY 2026 or projected FY 2027? **No**
 - a) If so, please identify the federal Agency, program or funding stream that has announced such cuts.

- b) By how much is the federal funding of your Agency expected to be cut based on these announcements in FY 2026 and projected FY 2027?
- 3) Apart from announced cuts in federal sourced funding, does your Agency currently anticipate that federal funding for programs and initiatives for your Agency will be cut or eliminated FY 2026 and projected FY 2027 - and if so by how much? **We do not anticipate CDBG/CDBG-DR funding will be eliminated.**
- a) Please identify the federal Agency, program or funding stream that your Agency expects or anticipates will cut such funding.
- b) What program or initiative in your Agency will experience the most significant impact from such cuts?
- 4) Do you anticipate all or any portion of the announced or anticipated cuts to your Agency's funding will be restored or replaced by other sources (e.g. by state funding)? **If CDBG/CDBG-DR funding was cut, we would expect to be made whole with City funds.**
- a) Will funds from other programs or initiatives in your Agency be re-allocated to narrow or eliminate the gap in funding for any program or initiative? If so, please provide details of the reallocation.
- 5) What other measures is your Agency taking in connection with announced or anticipated cuts or elimination of federal funding? **None at this time.**

AGENDA ITEM [2]: 1% FOR PARKS INITIATIVE

Mayor Adams at one time proposed allocating 1% of the city's budget to NYC Parks. Last year Parks reported 0.55% of the City's budget was dedicated to Parks. What is the FY26 and projected FY 27 budget in comparison to prior years, and did this year's budget move closer or further to the target and why.

Parks' budget increased to .59% with the FY26 Adopted Budget last June. As of right now, we are projected to be at .53% for the FY27 Budget.

What is the additional amount Parks would need to receive to get up to 1% of the city budget?

Parks would need an additional \$471M for its operating budget to reach 1% of the City's budget. However, if you include Fringe, Debt Service, Pensions and Legal Payments, we are already at 1% of the City's budget.

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM [3]: Community Parks Initiative

What is the FY26 and projected FY 27 budget for CPI compared to the FY allocation of \$2.253M?

These are the projects funded in FY 26:

FMS ID	FY	Boro	Project	Total
846 P-3CPIEPR	FY26	Manhattan	East River Playground Public Restroom (CB 11)	\$8,700
846 P-303ABCP	FY26	Manhattan	ABC Playground Reconstruction (CB 3)	\$6,075
846 P-3CPIMCN	FY26	Manhattan	Dr. Ronald E. McNair Playground Reconstruction (CB 11)	\$8,000
846 P-3CPIART	FY26	Manhattan	Harlem Art Park Reconstruction (CB 11)	\$4,500
Total				\$27,275

In FY 25, we received \$20.8M for three projects: Nathan Straus Playground (CB 3), East River Playground (CB 11) and McKenna Square (CB 12). The FY 27 projects have not yet been chosen so there is no projected budget at this time.

Please update the projects in process as reported last year. The sites in Manhattan were:

- Percy Sutton Playground (CB 10) **in construction**
- Frederick Johnson Playground public restroom building (CB 10) **completed**

were underway or in construction

- McCray Playground (CB 10), **in construction**
- Anibal Aviles Playground (CB 7) **in construction**
- Det. Omar Edwards Park (CB 11) **in construction**

Were in procurement.

- St. Nicholas Playground South (CB 10) and Renaissance Playground (CB 10)

was in design. **Both are still in design.**

Please indicate whether any additional sites are planned or in any stage of the design or implementation process in FY 26 and projected FY 27, and if so, please provide details. **Holcombe Rucker Park (CB 10), Peter Minit Playground (CB 11), Nathan Straus Playground and East River Playground are currently in design. Design work on McKenna Square should begin in FY 26.**

Is all necessary funding secured for each of these projects? **Yes**

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM [4]: Restrooms

Restoration and renovation of restrooms in parks is a borough-wide priority for community boards. What is the FY26 and projected FY 27 budget for the restoration and renovation of such facilities?

Please provide a list of new restrooms planned and funded in Manhattan by district, and the cost associated with each one.

- Battery Park (1)
- Columbus Park (3)
- East River Park (3)
- Little Flower Playground (3)
- Lorraine Hansberry Plaza (4)
- Mathews-Palmer Playground (4)
- McCaffrey Playground (4)
- Murphy Brothers Playground (6)
- Stuyvesant Square Park (6)
- Ruppert Park (8)
- Brig. General Charles Young Playground (10)
- Holcombe Rucker Park (10)
- St. Nicholas Playground South (10)
- Harlem River Park (11)
- Marx Brothers Playground (11)
- Poor Richard's Playground (11)
- Fort Washington Park (12)
- North Cove Park (12)
- Payson Playground (12)

A new restroom, a single free-standing unit called a Portland Loo, was recently installed in Thomas Jefferson Park (11).

What Parks require restrooms that are not yet funded?

Penn South Playground (4)
Riverside Park South (7)
Riverside Park @ 108th Street (7)
Andrew Haswell Green Park (8)
Annunciation Playground (9)
Courtney Callender Playground (10)
Harlem River Park / Manhattan Greenway (11)
Playground 103 (11)
Thomas Jefferson Park (11)
Jacob Javits Playground / Fort Tryon Park (12)

Many other existing public restroom buildings should be renovated with up-to-date fixtures and made ADA-compliant.

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM [5]: Staffing; Hiring Freeze

1. Please provide an update on the status of the hiring freeze from previous fiscal years. **We are able to hire to a limited extent. We had a significant staff increase recently when we were able to hire 46 second-shift workers who have been assigned to “hot spot” locations around the borough.**
2. What are the full-time, part-time and seasonal general workers, apprentices, plumbers, gardeners, skilled trades, forestry, and staffing numbers and FY26 and projected FY 27 budgets for Manhattan, by district? **See attached chart.**
3. Please provide details of the staffing needs by Community (or Parks) District, and indicate the vacancies projected for FY 26 and projected FY 27. What is the need by district? **We are very proud of our ability to deliver services to all Manhattan parks with our current staffing levels. We would welcome additional staff in all our districts, particularly where we have new and expanded parks spaces such as the reconstructed East River Park (CB 3), the extension of the East River Esplanade (CB 6), the newly built fields in Brig. Gen. Charles Young Playground (CB 10) and the new Manhattan Greenway / Harlem River park (CB 11).**

4. Has the forestry budget changed for staffing? Is this the same as arborists?

Arborist is not an official title used by the City. Our on-the-ground forestry workforce is primarily made up of Foresters, who perform inspections, and Climber & Pruners, who perform tree work. However, many of our Foresters and Climber & Pruners are Certified Arborists as well as Tree Risk Assessment Qualified through the International Society of Arboriculture.

Currently, we have 77 Climbers & Pruners, up from 68 in spring 2024. The Climber & Pruner Training Program has helped increase our numbers, and we are expecting another graduating class to join the workforce next spring.

We have 67 active Foresters, up from 54 this past spring, and we are actively working on hiring more.

5. What is the turnaround for response for complaints on tree safety dangerous trees?

In Fiscal Year 2025, we responded to immediate priority conditions in an average of two days, and high priority conditions in an average of four days. Our public service level agreements are 7 days for immediate priority and 28 days for high priority conditions. Tree risk prioritization involves assessing the potential risk of a tree or branch falling and hitting a person or property.

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM [6]: Wi-Fi In Parks

What funding is needed in FY 26 to bring WiFi to all Manhattan Parks sites, and has the Parks Department found any new partnerships to fund this expansion?

Are you depending entirely on Private Partnerships and what programs or initiatives are planned or in place to create new partnerships?

AGENCY RESPONSE:

We have Wi-Fi available to the public at 39 parks and recreation centers in Manhattan. It's not possible to estimate the cost of providing Wi-Fi at all Manhattan parks because each park is

different, and different ways would have to be figured out to bring coverage to each one. Installation methods and network speed/ consistency would vary, along with costs. We have not found any new partnerships to fund an expansion. Yes, we are depending upon private partnerships to expand our Wi-Fi program. Our Marketing division is constantly looking for possible partnerships to enhance parks in various ways.

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM [7]: Playground Associates and Camp Staff

1. What is the FY26 and projected FY 27 budget for playground associates and camp staff?

Approximately \$350,000 has been allotted to support various Playground Associates and other seasonal staff related to Kids in Motion and Summer Camp programs in Manhattan. We expect that FY 27 funding will support comparable seasonal staffing levels, but the budget has not been determined.

2. What is the source of this funding?

Our seasonal staffing plan is funded by the Mayor, sometimes with additional funding provided by Council Members. In FY26 one Council Member funded a Playground Associate.

3. How many associates and camp staff will this fund and at which Manhattan locations?

For FY26 there were 11 Playground Associates at Kids in Motion sites and 25 Summer Camp staff.

The following sites have been assigned Playground Associates this year:

Bloomingdale Playground (7)
Carmansville Playground (9)
Columbus Park (3)
Langston Hughes Playground (10)
Martin Luther King Jr. Playground (10)
Matthews-Palmer Playground (4)
Poor Richard's Playground (11)

Samuel Seabury Playground (8)
Seward Park (3)
Sol Lain Playground (3)
Tompkins Square Park (3)

Summer camps were held at the following recreation centers:

Alfred E. Smith Recreation Center (3)
Chelsea Recreation Center (4)
Constance Baker Motley Recreation Center (6)
J. Hood Wright Recreation Center (12)

4. How is funding allocated to rec center staff?

Funding is allocated for recreation center staff based on the agency-wide staffing levels. To the best of our ability, we assign staff based on the usage levels for each center and hours of operation. Manhattan Recreation currently has about 108 staff total, including administrative staff, to run 14 sites.

5. How many Manhattan playgrounds could still benefit from having an associate?

In an ideal world, we would like to have a PA working at every playground with a public restroom building, organizing recreational activities for children and helping to maintain the playground. We have approximately 65 playgrounds with public restrooms that would be eligible for a seasonal PA.

6. Last year you expressed difficulty finding qualified associates -- do you have an update on practices and success of identifying qualified candidates?

The FY26 hiring season was a challenge; several positions were difficult to fill. Once again, we struggled with getting ample applicants to fill all positions. We conducted increased outreach and attended more job fairs than in the past, which yielded good results. The current job market continues to be very competitive. With so many options in the private sector, we find it hard to get the quality and quantity of applicants we need. We hope that we will see more resumes and applications next year as we have started to promote the positions we expect to have next year.

7. Please provide a list of playgrounds that had playground associates in calendar 2025 (FY 2026) and projected for calendar 2026 (FY 2027). How many playgrounds meet the criteria for need for an associate but do not have them?

See answers to #3 and #5.

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM [8]: Lifeguards

Please provide an update on the Lifeguard program. Please include the current level of pay for lifeguards, and the amount to which that pay has increased in recent years. What is the projected pay scale for lifeguards for FY 2027 (Summer 2026)? To what extent has this improved staffing numbers.

Thanks to an aggressive recruitment campaign and expansion of training opportunities, Parks had 1,082 lifeguards staffing pools and beaches this summer – the highest total since 2019. This included a 23% increase in new recruits from 2024. Parks also had an 80% retention rate for lifeguards returning from last year, surpassing the average annual retention rate of 70% prior to 2024. Manhattan saw a nearly 90% increase in lifeguards in 2025, with about 220 lifeguards staffing 15 outdoor and three indoor pools (compared to 117 lifeguards in 2024).

These gains in lifeguard staffing come after the city's agreement with District Council 37 last year to permanently improve the pay of city lifeguards to \$22 per hour, along with providing returning lifeguards with a \$1,000 annual bonus.

Are further pay increases for lifeguards in FY 2027 (Summer 2026) necessary to meet hiring goals?

The current pay rate has been effective in attracting new lifeguards. We believe we can continue to increase the numbers by continuing our aggressive outreach campaign, which we are kicking off next week.

Please provide a breakdown of lifeguards on staff during FY 2026 (Summer 2025) and projected for FY 2027 (Summer 2026) in Manhattan, by District?

It is not possible to say how many lifeguards worked in each district since the numbers fluctuated depending upon the need for coverage at the various pools. It is also not possible to provide a breakdown for the projected number of lifeguards next summer at this time.

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM [9]: PEP Officers

What is the FY 26 and projected FY 27 budget and staffing level for PEP officers in Manhattan?

Please distinguish between PEP officers funded through the City budget vs those privately funded through grants or other sources, such as Park Conservancies and “friends-of” groups. .

How many teams and shifts are deployed in FY 26 and projected FY 27 at the current funding levels?

AGENCY RESPONSE:

Manhattan Borough (City-funded):
3 Captains; 5 Sergeants; 30 PEP Officers

Grants:

Randall’s Island: 1 Sgt, 3 PEP
Riverside Park South: 1 Sgt, 5 PEP
West Harlem Piers: 5 PEP
Washington Square Park: 1 Sgt, 6 PEP
East River Esplanade (downtown): 4 PEP
High Line: 4 PEP
Bella Abzug Park: 3 PEP; 3 CSAs (City Seasonal Aides)
Hudson River Park: 1 Capt., 6 Sgts., 29 PEP, 8 CSAs

It is not possible to provide projected FY budget and staffing levels at this time.

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM [10]: Capital Equipment

1. Are there capital equipment needs that would improve quality of service or efficiency? Please provide a breakdown for Manhattan with estimated cost and the location(s) to be served.

2. What funding would be needed for such equipment?

AGENCY RESPONSE:

We are currently at our vehicle / equipment cap. The City has funded new vehicles for the coming years, which we receive as old ones are salvaged. If we had an unlimited number of vehicles assigned to the borough, we could use additional mini-packers (garbage trucks) and backhoes.

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM [11]: Capital Projects and Renovations

Please provide a list by Community District of Capital Projects in Manhattan Parks for FY 26 and projected FY 27, and please include:

- The Community District(s) in which such capital projects are located.
- In what phase is each project (e.g. design, bidding, active construction).
- The cost for each project in FY 26 and projected FY 27, and the estimated total cost of each project.
- The source of funding for each project to the extent it is funded by grants, Council-Member allocations, Conservancy or partner allocations, or other non-City sources.

AGENCY RESPONSE:

See attached spreadsheet of all active Manhattan projects, including those in the pipeline, organized by Community Board. You can find your Community Board number in Column Q.

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM [12]: Recommended Priorities for Community Board Advocacy

What programs, initiatives or budget line items would Parks recommend that Community Boards include in their Statements of District Needs and Budget Priorities for FY 2027?

AGENCY RESPONSE:

We encourage the Community Boards to utilize the Vital Parks data available on our website to identify parks that might be in need of capital funding, prioritizing renovations of outdated playgrounds, fields and Public Restroom Buildings, waterfront/resiliency projects, improved accessibility, infrastructure including paths and staircases, etc.

We also would appreciate your support in advocating for our year-round and seasonal M&O workforce, including the second-shift workers; Recreation staff, including for the recreation centers and the Playground Associates; the Parks Enforcement Patrol; Forestry staff; GreenThumb staff, and last but certainly not least, Partnerships for Parks, which works with volunteer groups that help maintain and activate many parks.

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS: