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**Testimony: Historic House Trust of New York City  
NYC Council Parks & Recreation Committee FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing  
Thursday, March 20, 2025**

My name is Giulietta Fiore, and I'm testifying on behalf of the Historic House Trust of New York City. First, I want to thank Chair Krishnan for holding this hearing, and for advocating for our critical park infrastructure. We are joining countless organizations and individuals across the city who are asking the city to invest in our parks and their diverse resources by dedicating 1% of the budget to NYC Parks.

Some of the oldest structures in New York, the 23 city-owned sites that we help steward sit on over 400 acres of public parkland land that have remained greenspace for hundreds of years. Thanks to the partnership of community-based nonprofits that operate the sites as museums, these historic places tie the history of New York City to our present day lives, and provide opportunities for residents to be outside, to learn, and to engage with their neighbors. Located in areas that are often underserved by larger cultural institutions, our partner sites serve many communities that are historically underrepresented.

As historic preservationists, we are playing the long game. We are not looking to preserve these historic houses for another five years — We are looking to preserve them for 50, 100, 200 years into the future. Unfortunately, years of disinvestment in NYC Parks has taken a toll on these public resources. **The idea that these places can exist for the public to learn from and enjoy past our lifetimes should not be a radical idea.** It is imperative that the city invests in NYC's critical park infrastructure now, through funding for additional staff positions and support for maintenance citywide. I love the historic houses — as do hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers across the city — but they are not the only resources that NYC Parks maintains. Playgrounds, pickleball courts, baseball fields, exercise equipment, recreation centers, and boardwalks all need investment today for a livable NYC tomorrow. **We are asking you to help us build a future in which:**

- Beloved resources are safeguarded and made resilient to meet the needs of a changing city
- Every New Yorker has access to free or low-cost cultural experiences where they live
- Schoolchildren feel connected to history in their own backyard
- Families are empowered to explore their local park, as well as all parks citywide
- Civil servants are supported with livable wages and opportunities for advancement

By allocating more funds to NYC Parks in the FY26 budget, you will be **supporting livable communities citywide, and empowering millions of New Yorkers in their own communities.** On behalf of our partners and neighbors, thank you for this opportunity to voice our needs, and for hearing our call to help sustain the places that make New York City our home.