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Historic House Trust of New York City
FY27 Preliminary Budget Hearing Testimony
NYC Council Parks & Recreation Committee
Monday, March 23, 2026

My name is Giulietta Fiore, and I'm testifying on behalf of the Historic House Trust of New York City. I'm also proud to stand with the Play Fair for Parks Coalition in calling on the City to **dedicate 1% of the budget to NYC Parks**. Thank you for this opportunity to share my perspective.

The Historic House Trust partners with NYC Parks to steward **23 City-owned historic sites across more than 400 acres of public parkland**. These include Revolutionary-era homes, abolitionist sites, centers of immigrant history, and neighborhood landmarks. Operated by nonprofit partners, these sites bring history to life every day, especially in communities that have long been underserved by major cultural institutions.

As we approach the 250th anniversary of the United States, it is more important than ever to support New York City's historic sites. **They are places where our stories live, in the spaces where history actually happened.** They are public spaces for everyone, stewarded by the community, offering low-cost programs that connect New Yorkers to history, culture, and each other. And they deserve equitable and reliable support, regardless of borough, neighborhood, or local wealth.

In today's digital age, where teens spend up to nine hours per day on screens, **hands-on, in-person learning is more urgent than ever**. Our historic sites provide this, bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world experience. They boost engagement, expose young New Yorkers to new perspectives, and make history tangible and relevant, contributing directly to a city where people can learn, explore, and thrive.

Historic preservation is a long game, but we are not stuck in the past. We are looking ahead to the next 250 years, securing our legacy and imagining a bright, vibrant future. **Yet years of underfunding for NYC Parks have put that future at risk**. Allocating 1% of the City budget is how we meet this moment with action and vision. The 250th anniversary should not be symbolic—it should be a catalyst. Cultural and open space resources are essential to daily life and the quality of life of every resident. **It's not enough to survive; we deserve to thrive**. If we act now, future generations will have the same opportunities to learn, explore, and live fully in New York City. If we fail, our city could lose its unique character, irreplaceable resources could vanish, and young people may take their talents elsewhere rather than investing in the public life of their own city.

We are calling for sustained investment in NYC Parks for staffing and maintenance—not just for historic sites, but for the entire system. Parks are where New Yorkers live their daily lives: in playgrounds, on ballfields, along boardwalks, and inside recreation centers. Without these cultural and recreational assets (the spaces that make New York City truly New York City) the city cannot fully support the well-being and livability of its residents. Let's make this city not just enduring, but truly vibrant for all New Yorkers, today and for generations to come.