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Mayor de Blasio Announces 11 Sites Added to Community Parks Initiative

September 25, 2017

NYC Parks Community Parks Initiative will now fully reconstruct 67 total sites C reaching 500K New Yorkers who live within a short walk of one of these parks

NEW YORK — Mayor Bill de Blasio and NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP, announced the next set of parks added to the Community Parks Initiative portfolio C the City's first major parks equity initiative investing \$318 million to revitalize everyday community parks that have received less than \$250,000 over the past 20 years. With 67 park sites to receive full reconstruction with the additional 11, CPI is one of the largest data-driven park equity programs in the nation, with 500,000 New Yorkers within a short walk of one of the parks.

When we talk about improving parks in New York City, we're really talking about improving the lives of New Yorkers, said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. The Community Parks Initiative focuses on parks and neighborhoods that have faced the most historic disinvestment and serve dense, growing populations C so every New Yorker can be proud of their neighborhood park.

"Since 2014, the Community Parks Initiative has brought New Yorkers together to improve their parks and playgrounds - and in doing so, to strengthen their communities. With the addition of eleven more parks to the program, thousands more will now have the opportunity to reimagine and rebuild their most precious resource: their shared public space," said **NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP**.

Launched by Mayor de Blasio in October 2014, CPI is a multi-faceted investment in the neighborhood/local parks that are located in New York City's densely populated and growing neighborhoods where there are higher-than-average concentrations of poverty. CPI is NYC Parks' first major equity initiative and part of the Mayor's OneNYC: The Plan for a Strong and Just City.

Entering the design process this fall, the 11 parks bringing the CPI portfolio total to 67 are:

Bronx

- Prospect Playground
- Mapes Ballfield

Brooklyn

- Bartlett Playground
- Lewis Playground
- Penn Triangle

Manhattan

- Bill Bojangles Playground
- Harlem Lane Playground
- Joseph C. Sauer Park
- Playground One

Queens

- Chappetto Square

Staten Island

- Mariners Harbor Playground

Newly reconstructed CPI parks began opening ahead of schedule this summer across five across Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens, from the initial 35 announced in 2014: twelve sites will be open by the end of 2017 and the balance in 2018. The 12 parks announced in 2015 are in procurement, and are expected to enter construction in 2018; and the nine announced in 2016 will enter procurement next year. The final 11

parks, entering design next month, are expected to be completed in winter 2020/21.

Additionally, CPI receives capital program support for many of these sites from DEP, which has committed \$50 million in funding for the construction of green infrastructure installations. The green infrastructure will manage the precipitation that falls on the parks, and some of the surrounding streets, keeping it out of the combined sewer system and helping to reduce combined sewer overflows that sometimes occur during heavy rainfall. New York City has the most ambitious and aggressive green infrastructure program in the nation, with thousands of installations currently under construction across the city. In addition to managing stormwater, green infrastructure helps to improve air quality while also providing shade and lowering summertime temperatures. In addition, CPI parks has also received support from city and state elected officials, sister agencies including HPD, as well as Parks-related conservancies and private developers.

"The Community Parks Initiative targets park investments in some of the neighborhoods that need them most," said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. "Manhattan is densely packed from top to bottom, and too many of our neighborhoods lack any green space or sorely need investment in the open spaces they have. I'm pleased to see four more Manhattan parks and playgrounds benefit from this program."

"I thank the de Blasio Administration for their new investments, through the Community Parks Initiative, in Bedford-Stuyvesant's Lewis Playground as well as Williamsburg's Bartlett Playground and Penn Triangle. Open space equity is an important mission for us to pursue as we seek to create safer and more sustainable communities to raise healthy children and families, said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**.

Parks are important to our communities and serve as gathering hubs, oases for relaxation, recreation, and are often the crown jewel of many neighborhoods across the city, said **U.S. Representative Adriano Espaillat**. I commend Mayor de Blasio and NYC Parks Commissioner Silver for recognizing the vital need to have area parks that can be enjoyed by all New Yorkers, regardless of their economic status or background. Today's announcement to invest and revitalize city parks helps close the gaps in park funding and ensures all New Yorkers have access to beautiful and functional parks to enjoy.

U.S. Representative Carolyn Maloney said, "Although community parks make a huge difference in the quality of life of a neighborhood, they have traditionally been neglected when it comes to city resources. I am delighted that Mayor de Blasio is making a real investment to revive many of these beloved parks."

U.S. Representative Nydia M. Velquez said, The ability to play on a playground, sit on a park bench or simply enjoy the fresh air should not be restricted to residents of certain neighborhoods. Instead, all New Yorkers deserve space to unwind and enjoy the outdoors. I applaud the Mayor's efforts to invest \$318 million to bring much needed repairs and upgrades to local parks in many of the City's most vulnerable neighborhoods.

U.S. Representative Daniel Donovan said, Investments into Mariners Harbor Playground will benefit the families of Staten Island and improve recreation in our local community. Parks serve as safe and enjoyable places for children and residents, and I'm pleased that Mariners Harbor Playground will receive the additional resources needed to improve and maintain its facilities.

No matter where in the city they live, every New Yorker should have access to adequate park space and recreational opportunities for themselves and their families, said **U.S. Representative Joe Crowley**. The Community Parks Initiative is an investment in the health and sustainability of our neighborhoods and I applaud Mayor Bill de Blasio and Parks Commissioner Mitchell Silver for including additional, underserved sites to the program and for making our overall parks system a priority.

State Senator Brad Hoylman said, "Parks are fundamental to New York's social fabric, offering a quiet respite from the city bustle. Here in my district, where green spaces like Joseph C. Sauer Park are such precious commodities, the Community Parks Initiative represents a much-needed investment in New York City's quality of life. I want to thank Mayor de Blasio, Parks Commissioner Silver, and Executive Director Lubov for this important commitment to improving the character and livability of our city."

"We love Central Park and our city's other destination parks that draw tourists from all over the world and visitors from all over our city, but local parks and green open spaces are what make our communities livable. Revitalizing these spaces, supporting new programs, and enhancing sustainability are great ways to make our communities stronger and healthier, said **Assembly Member Brian Kavanagh**. I am happy to support the Mayor's initiative to invest in our green spaces in the neighborhoods that need it the most.

A thriving park system isn't just a luxury in a dense city of 8.5 million people. It's essential to livability, said **Council Member Levine, Chair of the Parks Committee**. The Community Parks Initiative reverses decades of underinvestment in neighborhood parks in the city's low-income and most densely populated communities. And it avoids the mistakes so common in the past of focusing on capital spending without adequate attention to the less sexy, but still critical, funding for park maintenance. I am incredibly proud that the Mayor and the Council came together on a plan that is already delivering for New Yorkers in nearly 80 parks across the City.

I am thrilled that Joseph C. Sauer Park will be renovated under the Mayor's Community Parks Initiative. This park has been on my list for capital improvements, but was reshuffled down the list as other pressing issues came up in other parks. I am grateful that this park will get the repairs and attention it needs as well as grateful that the Mayor and the Parks Department chose Sauer Park. The initiative will allow children and adults to articulate their wants, needs and to see their ideas become a reality, said **Council Member Rosie Mendez**.

Council Member Costa Constantinides said, "Improving a park brings improvements to an entire neighborhood. The Community Parks Initiative has already begun to improve under-served parks in Astoria including Van Alst and Astoria Heights Playgrounds. We are looking forward to seeing upgrades

at Chappetto Square. The capital improvements and added infrastructure upgrades will be enjoyed by children and families. As a greenspace that is so frequently used yet hasn't been renovated in many years, the CPI funding for Chappetto Square will provide a real benefit to the neighborhood around it. I look forward to working with the Parks Department and the community as we move forward with this initiative."

With the success and growth of the Community Parks Initiative, our City is delivering on its commitment to invest in the revitalization of parks and open spaces in the neighborhoods that need them the most, which includes Playground One in my district, said **Council Member Margaret S. Chin**. Thanks to the efforts of Mayor de Blasio, Commissioner Silver and the community partners leading on this initiative, our City is setting a strong example for the rest of the country as a national leader in parks equity. With 67 park sites already taking part in this program, I look forward to seeing the Community Parks Initiative expand to even more parks in every corner of New York City.

"As a district heavily reliant on pocket parks to serve our residents' need for open space, Community Board 3 is grateful for the attention being paid to parks like Joseph C. Sauer Park," said **Jamie Rogers, Chair of Community Board 3**.

"We strongly support the Mayor's Community Parks Initiative as a wonderful way to ensure that all New Yorkers and our East Village/Lower East Side families at Joseph Sauer Park have access to safe, accessible and beautiful public space," said **Robert Cordero, Executive Director of Grand St. Settlement**.

NYRP is delighted to see that the Community Parks Initiative will now reach even more New Yorkers thanks to Mayor de Blasio's significant investment. As the only conservancy working citywide in high need communities, we see the great impact this program has on neighborhoods every day, said **Deborah Marton, Executive Director of the New York Restoration Project**.

We consider Prospect Park Brooklyn's Backyard, so it has been wonderful for us to share our award-winning design expertise to benefit communities across the borough, said **Sue Donoghue, President of the Prospect Park Alliance**. We recently broke ground on Stroud Playground in Crown Heights, while Epiphany Playground in South Williamsburg will break ground in the new year."

"The Central Park Conservancy is a proud partner of the Community Parks Initiative. We will continue to support these impressive efforts through Gardener Training, operational support, shared equipment, and teaching of best practices to ensure that New York City parks can be incredible assets for all New Yorkers, said **Douglas Blonsky, President & CEO of Central Park Conservancy and Central Park Administrator**.

The Battery Conservancy is honored to partner with the Department of Parks and Recreation on the Community Parks Initiative. We are especially pleased that the Mayor is making today's announcement

at Sauer Park, as the special focus of our horticultural assistance is to parks south of 14th Street, including the Lower East Side, said **Warrie Price, President of The Battery Conservancy**.

Friends of the High Line is excited to participate in the Community Parks Initiative and to partner with the de Blasio administration, the Department of Parks & Recreation, GreenThumb, and community stakeholders in the South Bronx to help beautify their gardens and support a legacy of community-led, sustainable green spaces for all to enjoy, said **Robert Hammond, Co-Founder & Executive Director of Friends of the High Line**.

Parks are the souls of neighborhoods in NYC. They are centers for recreation, respite and cultural gatherings. We commend the Administration for investing in parks in underserved communities because it is a direct investment in the health and well-being of its residents, said **Lynn Kelly, Executive Director of New Yorkers for Parks**.

We've partnered with the city to offer educational programming such as pop-up reading rooms in CPI parks since 2015, so we've seen first-hand how park renovations are bringing more New Yorkers out into public space and making people proud of their local park. Investing in parks is a great way to invest in people, especially young people, and CPI is strengthening our city for generations to come, said **Leslie Davol, Executive Director of the Uni Project**, a nonprofit that brings programming to NYC public spaces.

New York Road Runners applauds the Mayor's support to transform New York City's neighborhood parks, said **Mike Schnall, Vice President of Community Engagement Initiatives for NYRR**. As a proud partner of NYC Parks Community Parks Initiative, New York Road Runners expanded NYRR Open Run to 13 local parks. The community based initiative, which provides free weekly runs and walks across the city, helps neighborhood parks with the greatest needs thrive as community hubs for active and healthy living.

In addition to CPI's capital investment in neighborhood parks, the initiative has an impact on these neighborhoods through community partnership building, park programming, enhanced sustainability, and operating support. Through funding from the City Council, in-kind donations from park conservancies; and community engagement through partners including City Parks Foundation, New York Road Runners, the Uni Project and El Museo del Barrio resources are allocated across critical categories including community outreach, recreational programming, green infrastructure, and park maintenance.

For additional information on the Community Parks Initiative, please visit nyc.gov/parks.

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