

# The Trust for Public Land Releases Comprehensive Park Equity Plan for NYC

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NEW YORK CITY

The Trust for Public Land has announced the release of the [NYC Park Equity Plan](#) designed to lead our recovery by increasing park access in high need areas across the city and creating more community playgrounds and outdoor education spaces.

“Parks helped our city survive during COVID-19 and, as our most visible infrastructure, can lead recovery by creating jobs and an even more attractive city,” said Carter Strickland, New York State Director for The Trust for Public Land. “Great cities have great parks that give all residents space to walk, play, hang out, and stay cool during hot summers, and will also attract visitors and new businesses seeking a dynamic, livable, and social environment. We can start by putting every New Yorker within a 10-minute walk of a park that becomes the pride of the community for its abundant nature, recreational opportunities, and smart design.”

According to The Trust for Public Land’s analysis, New York City falls behind other major U.S. cities in having potentially more crowded parks (measured by park acreage per person) and fewer park amenities.

The equity plan is broken into three steps and encourages elected officials to commit to a targeted expansion of the city’s park system, which will not only improve access to green space for residents, but also include the creation of new playgrounds and community centers. The plan calls for the following commitments:

- Ensure that 100% of residents live within a 10-minute walk to a park
- Overcome our playground deficit and create open space for kids by transforming asphalt schoolyards into 100 new vibrant green community playgrounds
- Create more parkland in high-need, under-served neighborhoods so that all New Yorkers have enough room.

Unequitable access to green space has real consequences for residents, from park overcrowding to lack of shade on hot days. In large swaths of the city, however, easy access to green space is severely limited or non-existent, according to The Trust for Public Land's analysis.

The Trust for Public Land's research finds that in New York City communities of color have 33.5% less park space per person within a 10-minute walk compared to white communities, and low-income communities have 21.2% less park space per person within a 10-minute walk compared to high-income communities.

"Playgrounds and schoolyards are critical components to creating more park access for high need communities, but also provide kids with safe spaces to get outside and play," said Bill Dobranski, Program Director at Maspeth Town Hall, a community group that works with schoolchildren in afterschool programs. "This equity plan offers solutions to lack of park access across the city and will allow more residents and visitors to reap the benefits of green space."

Improving equitable access to green space will require dedicated funding and we recommend an increase in capital funding for parks of \$1 billion over four years. The Trust for Public Land joins the Play Fair coalition in calling for an increase in the parks baseline operating budget of 1% of the city budget—up from 0.6% currently— so that existing and new parks are better staffed, maintained, and programmed, a goal we are pursuing through the Play Fair coalition.

“We've all been humbled by this past year in our appreciation for quality outdoor recreational space,” said Wayne John, parent at PS 152K. “As a PS 152K parent and fitness professional, I'm truly grateful that The Trust for Public Land was able to transform our school playground into a natural, outdoor oasis where our children and families can be active and that all can enjoy. I'm in full support of bringing spaces like this to more people across New York.”

The Trust for Public Land is committed to creating equitable, close-to-home parks for all and proud to work with communities across the country to ensure all residents have access to parks and green space.

“By committing to these goals, the city and its elected officials can show residents they understand the value of parks and nature as critical infrastructure,” said Strickland. “By investing in green space, the city could also stimulate COVID-19 recovery efforts with job creation and attracting visitors back to the New York.”

### **About The Trust for Public Land**

The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. Millions of people live within a 10-minute walk of a Trust for Public Land park, garden or natural area, and millions more visit these sites every year. To support The Trust for Public Land and share why nature matters to you, visit [www.tpl.org](http://www.tpl.org).

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