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## NYLCV FY2022 New York City Budget Priorities

NYLCV supports a Fiscal Year 2022 City budget that secures progress on many of the environmental, transportation, and public health priorities Mayor de Blasio has committed to in OneNYC and beyond. Our city is on the road to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is incumbent upon our elected leaders to invest our tax dollars in climate action and solutions as we rebound from this crisis and not lose ground, especially with the influx of relief funds that will flow from the Federal Government.

We would like to highlight four budget investments in FY22 in order to fight climate change and protect public health; parks, organic waste management, electric school buses and building emissions.

### Parks

Parks and other green spaces are one of the city's most valuable environmental assets, and are a major source of the city's urban canopy, which mitigates climate change, provides clean air and habitats for native wildlife, and contributes to the well-being of our residents and economy. Preserving these spaces is a top priority for NYLCV.

But over the past year, through the hardships of the pandemic, we have seen the cleanliness and safety of our parks drop significantly due to unfair budgetary cuts to staffing and programs, which also impacts access to parks for people most in need. Due specifically to the \$45 million in cuts to seasonal staff spending and forestry contracts last year, parks saw one of their worst years for cleanliness on record.

Now, in this critical third year of our campaign, we ask the council to Play Fair Now and restore \$78.9 million in the FY22 Parks budget to ensure our parks are safe, clean and accessible. NYLCV and the entire Play Fair Coalition requests this funding be allocated in the following ways:

- *Baseline \$10M to make permanent 100 City Park Workers and 50 Gardeners, and create secure, stable jobs.*
- *\$30M to restore critical Seasonal staff budget for maintenance and operations workers citywide.*
- *\$3M to restore the Parks Opportunity Program and provide a pathway to full-time employment.*
- *\$4.5M for NYC's natural forests, wetlands, and trails to receive the proactive care and maintenance they need to remain healthy and resilient in our changing climate, and as they receive unprecedented use by New Yorkers.*
- *\$15M to restore critical parks forestry contracts for tree pruning, stump removal, sidewalk repair, and invasive species control.*



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- **\$4M to restore the Parks Equity Initiative, and support park stewardship organizations citywide.**
- **\$3.4M to restore 15 GreenThumb staff, and expand access to plant materials, resources and tools for community gardeners citywide.**
- **\$3M to hire 50 Urban Park Rangers to connect New Yorkers with the nature that surrounds us, and help ensure our parks remain safe and accessible for all.**
- **\$6M to restore 80 Parks Enforcement Patrol officers citywide to make sure our parks are safe.**

## **Waste Management**

In the FY21 budget, the City also made substantial cuts to Sanitation. We were already behind schedule on meeting our Zero Waste goal of reducing the amount of waste we send to landfills 90% by 2030 before these cuts, so it is imperative that the City take bold action to drastically reduce waste over the next 9 years.

First, we must ensure that the Department of Sanitation receives \$4M to fully fund the staff, consultants, and data management needed to implement Commercial Waste Zones. This program will reduce emissions and improve safety for workers and pedestrians by requiring commercial carters to operate within well-designed waste zones instead of rushing to cover long and circuitous routes.

The FY22 budget must also include \$14M in funding for composting programs across the city that will start to bring us back towards our Zero Waste goal. This \$14M will double the current funding for New York's food scrap drop off program, provide additional funding to large scale compost sites such as BigReuse and the LES Ecology Center, reinstate the in-school composting educational program, and explore a multi-family building collection pilot program.

This funding will position us to take aggressive waste reduction actions to create a citywide curbside composting program. Intermediate steps toward this goal should include legislation like [Intro 1942](#), which seeks to establish community composting drop off sites across the city and [Intro 2250](#), which requires the Department of Sanitation (DOS) to report on our progress toward Zero Waste. These bills, along with a curbside composting mandate, will ultimately save the city money, put organic materials back to use as fuels and soil amendments instead of treated as waste, reduce emissions from landfills, and put us back on track with our waste reduction goals.

## **Clean School Buses**

We also can no longer allow dirty diesel school buses to pollute our air, contribute to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and put the health of our children at risk. Therefore, we ask for \$3 million to be added to the FY22 budget for the purchase of electric school buses. This funding, along with grants from the NY Truck Voucher Incentive Program (TVIP), will cover the



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difference in the cost of replacing 15-17 diesel buses with type A electric school buses along with the necessary charging infrastructure.

In addition to the current investment needed to start transitioning away from dirty diesel buses to clean buses, we urge the council to pass legislation, such as Intro 455 of 2018, to mandate that all school buses be electrified by the year 2040. We also support the American Jobs Plan which proposes to fund electrification of 20% of the school buses in the country.

The majority of school bus depots are located in environmental justice communities, where lower-income communities and communities of color face higher rates of air pollution and bear the brunt of the impacts of climate change. These communities would benefit the most from the implementation of electric school buses and we urge the city to prioritize the routes and depots in these areas for these buses.

### **Buildings Emissions**

Last, we would like to highlight the need for increased staffing at the Office of Building Energy and Emission Performance (OBEEP). The buildings sector in New York City accounts for a whopping two thirds of our total emissions. Thankfully, the building emission reduction targets set by Local Law 97 of 2019 (LL97) will ensure that roughly twenty thousand buildings in the residential and commercial sectors do their part to fight climate change. However, we are concerned that OBEEP is currently understaffed when it comes to tackling LL97 implementation, and could see additional cuts due to the COVID-19 budget crisis. We ask that the City Council fully fund OBEEP so that it can effectively implement LL97 and help us drastically reduce emissions from the building sector.

The COVID-19 crisis is still placing stress on our economy and communities. This was apparent in the FY21 budget but does not need to be the case again this year now that the federal government has provided relief. We urge the City Council to have foresight and prepare for the next crisis that we are already amidst, the climate crisis. Combined, our asks are less than 0.1% of the total FY22 budget and will help us protect New Yorkers from climate change in 2021 and in years to come.