



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
INDEPENDENT BUDGET OFFICE

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December 13, 2006

The Hon. Helen Diane Foster
Council of the City of New York
250 Broadway, Room 1770
New York, NY 10007

Dear Council Member Foster:

This letter is in response to your request of August 29, 2006 for IBO to undertake an analysis of the private funds spent on public parks in order to help you and your staff prepare for public hearings on Resolution No. 294.

At this time it is only possible to account for a small share of the private funds spent on public parks. In the attached review, we do provide information on the types and amount of private support for public parks provided directly to the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York in fiscal year 2006. We also describe the information that is currently available on private funding for public parks and its limitations.

In general, detailed annual reporting on the amounts and purposes of private spending on city parks and recreation programs is not readily available. The largest source of funds—between \$60 million and \$70 million annually—is provided by partnership organizations, about which only limited and out-of-date information is available in a report prepared by DPR.

Since the City continues to rely on private funding for support of its parks and recreation programs, a more thorough annual accounting of private support would be beneficial in helping the City Council and others determine whether the total resources available for parks and recreation are sufficient and appropriately allocated.

We hope this information is helpful to you. If we can provide additional information on this or other topics, we would be happy to do so. The IBO staff contact is Preston Niblack, Deputy Director, who may be reached at (212) 442-0220, or prestonn@ibo.nyc.ny.us.

Sincerely,

Ronnie Lowenstein

Copies: A. Benepe, Commissioner, DPR
M. Sheekey, Mayor's Fund to Advance New York

Review of Private Funding Available for New York City Parks and Recreation

The following provides an overview of the types of private support provided for public parks and the total amount provided by type in fiscal year 2006. We also describe the sources of information currently available on private funding for parks and their limitations.

Contributions of private support for parks and programming are generally made in one of three ways: a direct donation, corporate sponsorship, or partnership organizations.

Direct Donations. Direct donations are contributions made either to the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) or to the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City, the private, not-for-profit corporation established to develop partnerships between the city and the private sector. These donations usually have a designated purpose, either for a program or a specific park. In fiscal year 2006, the city received approximately \$773,000 in direct donations through the parks department and \$1.8 million through the Mayor’s Fund. Note that the year in which donations are received may not necessarily be the year in which they are spent.

In general, private funds donated to DPR are tracked in the city’s revenue budget. DPR’s budget shows \$14.4 million in private grant funds spent in 2006. However, DPR considers the bulk of these funds to be “pay for service” grants, while about \$1.0 million were direct and corporate donations for general support. This distinction is not apparent in the agency’s budget. The information in the following tables on private dollars and in-kind gifts received in fiscal year 2006 to support public parks was provided to IBO by DPR and the Mayor’s Fund.

Department of Parks and Recreation: Direct Donations, Fiscal Year 2006	
Grant	Amount
21st Century Community Learning Center	\$84,757
<u>Adopt-A-Park</u>	
Bronx	\$1,200
Pelham Bay Park – Bronx	\$13,530
Van Cortlandt Park – Bronx	\$17,500
Brooklyn	\$7,710
Manhattan	\$1,350
Queens	\$157,029
FMCP – Queens	\$4,500
Forest Park – Queens	\$500
Ft Totten – Queens	\$13,111
Staten Island	\$1,040
Subtotal, Adopt-A-Park	\$217,470
<u>Central Recreation</u>	
Songmasters	\$71,669
Healthfirst - Teen Program	\$100,000
Subtotal, Central Recreation	\$171,669
Junior Rangers	\$31,324
Turn 2 Foundation	\$267,334
Total	\$772,554
SOURCE: New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.	

Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City: Donations for City Parks and Parks Programming, Fiscal Year 2006	
Grant	Amount
After-School Fund	\$356,228
Bleeker Street	\$300
Coenties Slip Sculpture	\$35,000
General Parks Projects	\$23,500
Star Track Cycling	\$32,905
Tennis Programming	\$25,000
Tree Census	\$75,000
Urban Park Rangers	\$415,000
Van Cortlandt Park	\$45,097
Washington Square Park	\$750,000
Total	\$1,758,030
SOURCE: New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.	

DPR also received direct donations in the form of in-kind gifts, not included in the amounts shown above. A list of vehicle donations received in 2006 as provided by DPR is shown in the table below.

Department of Parks and Recreation: Vehicles In-Kind Donations, Fiscal Year 2006	
Donor	Description
Major Chevrolet	351 Ford utility; 6 months lease/donation
Avery Pix Inc	Vendor - Showdown Hotrods; Staten Island; 968 Trailer
Hoops in the Sun	Bronx - Pelham Bay Park; 4992 John Deere Gator; 2008 & 2011 Ferris Tractors
NY Hospital Queens	2535 Toro tractor
CPF purchases	369 & 372 Ford Utilities; 7118 Ford Van
Central Park Conservancy purchases	468 & 477 Ford Utilities; 5965, 5982 & 5984 Ford Pickups; 2278 Toro Tractor; 965 Trailer
Prospect Park Alliance purchases	6081 Toro Workman; 2475 Case Tractor; 966 Trailer
Randalls Island Sports Foundation	3692 Ford Water Tank Truck; 6083 Toro Workman; 4038 & 4048 Yamaha Golf Carts; 2670 Toro Tractor; 5891 Dodge Pickup; 3611 Tennant Sweeper
Friends of Morningside Park	2040 Toro tractor
SOURCE: New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.	

Corporate Sponsorship. Corporate sponsorship programs are contributions from businesses to support special events such as a concert or holiday event. In fiscal year 2006 there were 15 corporate sponsors who donated a total of \$229,000. See table below.

Department of Parks and Recreation: Corporate Contributions, Fiscal Year 2006		
Sponsor	Purpose/Event	Amount
Hormel Food Corporation	2005 Bocce Tournament	\$5,000
Tracey Real Estate Inc	2005 Bocce Tournament	\$3,000
Just Born Inc	2005 Great Halloween Party	\$2,000
Naked Juice	Adventures NYC	\$3,000
Thomas J Paul Inc.	Eggstravaganza 2006	\$10,000
Signature Brands (PAAS)	Eggstravaganza 2006	\$10,000
Classic Media	Eggstravaganza 2006	\$6,000
NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets	NYC Rail Jam	\$5,000
Health Expo	Starbucks Great Halloween Party 2005	\$10,000
Starbucks	Starbucks Great Halloween Party 2005	\$85,000
NY Presbyterian	Trees Count	\$10,000
Hunter Public Relations LLC	Trees Count	\$20,000
Rodale Inc.	Trees Count	\$15,000
New York Olympic Regional Development Authority	Winter Festival 2006	\$20,000
Burton Snowboarding Company	Winter Festival 2006	\$25,000
Total		\$229,000

SOURCE: New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.

Partnerships. Some organizations have contracts with DPR that outline the service or in-kind donations that they will provide to support public parks. However, not all donating groups have contracts, especially smaller neighborhood groups that may offer several days of volunteer service or in-kind donations. Consequently, the city budget does not capture a substantial share of private funding for city public parks.

Partnership organizations provide either general support or funding for a specific park or program. There are more than 20 partnership organizations which raise roughly \$60 million to \$70 million annually through their organizations. Examples of such organizations include Partnerships for Parks, the Central Park Conservancy, City Parks Foundation, Prospect Park Alliance, the Riverside Park Fund, Friends of Van Cortlandt Park, and the Historic House Trust.

DPR produces a biennial report that includes a list of most of the corporations, organizations and individuals who donate money and in-kind gifts to support public parks. The list does provide an idea of the number of contributors and the amount of support provided to parks from various sectors. However, the list is not all-inclusive and therefore does not represent all sources of private funding for parks. Detailed information on the purposes and location of spending supported by contributions is not provided. The most recent bi-annual report available was for fiscal years 2002/2003.

Donor Tax Forms. Tax forms for non-profit organizations, called Form 990, provide information on how money is allocated among various functions or services. For organizations whose mission it is to serve parks, they often present how much money is dedicated by function, like maintenance for parks or recreation programs and administrative costs. However, not every organization chooses to outline their donations by function on their tax forms. Also important is the fact that it is not always clear what is counted as private spending for parks, that is whether administrative costs are included or only programming costs are included. Therefore, the sole use of 990 forms for this analysis would be problematic.

Limitations of the available information. As is clear from the foregoing, the total amount of private funding available for City parks and recreation is not readily determined. The available information is often not current, or not publicly available. DPR's biennial report does not provide a full accounting of private funding, and does not show contributions by borough or purpose. Finally, it is not possible to determine if and how the department re-allocates public spending in response to private contributions, or to what extent private funding may have substituted for city spending in public parks.