

GETTING YOUR VOICE HEARD IN THE CITY'S BUDGET PROCESS

Each fiscal year, New York City's budget emerges out of a complex dialog among the Mayor, the City Council, the Borough Presidents, City agencies, and the Community Boards. All of these parties, armed with lists of priorities, negotiate the allocation of funds. To secure funding for a project in your local park, you would be wise to get onto one or more of these lists of priorities.

CAPITAL VS. EXPENSE BUDGET ITEMS

The City funds different budget items in different ways. Major physical changes in the parks are paid for with municipal bond issues. These are called **capital projects**. Staff and supplies are paid for with tax revenues. These are **expense items**. You can request funding for both kinds of items. At present, about 80% of capital spending in parks is directly allocated by City Councilmembers and Borough Presidents, rather than appearing as part of the budget for Parks & Recreation.

Capital projects include:

- ✓ park houses (renovation and construction)
- ✓ playground equipment
- ✓ fencing
- ✓ dog runs

Expense items include:

- ✓ Personnel
- ✓ PEP officers
- ✓ Playground Associates
- ✓ tree pruners

Borough Presidents and City Councilmembers, aside from having a voice in the allocation of capital funds, have some money that they can spend on expense items at their own discretion. Because of the way the budget is negotiated, it is best to discuss capital projects with your City Councilmembers in January, and expense projects closer to March. (See the enclosed brochure, "The Road to Adopting New York City's Budget" for more information about budget dates and deadlines.)

BEING HEARD

- ✓ Focus your voice on those parties with whom you and your group have a relationship—perhaps your **Community Board**, your **City Councilmember**, or your **Borough President**. Staff at **Parks & Recreation** can also be important allies in communicating your budget priorities.
- ✓ Be in regular contact with representatives of all of these entities so that they always know what you're doing and what your priorities are. However, there are certain times of the year when you should be especially sure to mention your budget concerns.

<u>ENTITY</u>	<u>TIMING</u>
Community Board	Approach July-September
Councilmember	Approach January-March
Borough President	Approach January-March
Parks & Recreation	Be in regular contact with your Borough Commissioner, who can communicate your concerns to City Councilmembers during the winter

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