Op-Ed: Revitalizing New York’s Aging Parks Infrastructure

With more than 100 million parks visitors each year and the city’s population at a record high, New York’s 1,700 public parks have never been busier. But age and underinvestment in basic maintenance in has taken a toll. By investing wisely in parks’ revitalization, these essential open spaces can continue to thrive into the next century and beyond.

by Eli Dvorkin

New Yorkers are familiar with the consequences of aging public infrastructure. Exhibit A: the subways. But another vital piece of public infrastructure is also several decades old, years behind on basic maintenance, and nearing a breaking point: New York City’s parks system.

In this Gotham Gazette op-ed, CUF Managing Editor Eli Dvorkin asserts that age, record usage, and underinvestment in basic maintenance are taking a toll on New York City’s public parks. Parks have benefited countless New Yorkers for well over a century; by investing wisely in their revitalization, these essential open spaces can continue to thrive into the next century and beyond.

Read the op-ed here.

This op-ed is a continuation of the Center for an Urban Future’s extensive research on aging infrastructure in New York, including the recent study, A New Leaf: Revitalizing New York City's Aging Parks Infrastructure.

Photo Credit: John Surico

This study was made possible by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

The Stavros Niarchos Foundation is one of the world’s leading private, international philanthropic organizations, making grants in the areas of arts and culture, education, health and sports, and social welfare. Since 1996, the Foundation has committed more than $2.5 billion, through more than 4,000 grants to nonprofit organizations in 124 nations around the world.
The SNF funds organizations and projects, worldwide, that aim to achieve a broad, lasting and positive impact, for society at large, and exhibit strong leadership and sound management. The Foundation also supports projects that facilitate the formation of public-private partnerships as an effective means for serving public welfare.

General operating support for the Center for an Urban Future has been provided by the Clark Foundation, the Bernard F. and Alva B. Gimbel Foundation, and the Altman Foundation. CUF is also grateful for support from Fisher Brothers for the Middle Class Jobs Project.

Center for an Urban Future (CUF) is a leading New York City–based think tank that generates smart and sustainable public policies to reduce inequality, increase economic mobility, and grow the economy.

**RELATED PRESS**

Queens parks with a new-car smell

*Queens Chronicle*, by Michael Shain, April 04, 2019

Average NYC Parks bathroom costs taxpayers roughly $3.6M to complete, report says

*6sqft*, by Devin Gannon, April 04, 2019

Invest in City Parks to Improve Our Public Spaces and Save the Environment

*Gotham Gazette*, by Julie Tighe, April 08, 2019

New Yorkers Need to Invest in Their Parks

*State of the Planet, Columbia University*, by Steve Cohen, April 15, 2019

The upside down: inside Manhattan’s Lowline subterranean park

*The Guardian*, by Jake Nevins, April 06, 2019

Opinion: Mr. Mayor, it’s Time to Play Fair for Parks

*City Limits*, by Lynn Kelly, May 22, 2019