



Report - March 2026

## Creating and Capturing Real Estate Value to Generate Dedicated Funding for NYC's Parks

As New York City confronts a widening budget deficit, identifying smart, sustainable ways to fund its parks is critical. This report shares five ideas for generating new, dedicated revenue for NYC's parks through capturing the value parks create for one of the city's wealthiest sectors: real estate.

by Tim Tompkins, John Surico, and Eli Dvorkin

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As New York City confronts a widening budget deficit, identifying smart, sustainable ways to fund its parks will be more important than ever. The city's parks system requires significant new investment to address mounting maintenance and operations needs across the five boroughs. But with the city facing a \$2.2 billion shortfall in the current fiscal year and a \$10.4 billion budget gap in FY 2027, even maintaining previous funding levels may be difficult.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the mayor's FY 2027 preliminary budget reduces funding for NYC Parks by roughly \$33 million compared with last year's adopted budget.<sup>2</sup>

To give New York's parks the level of investment that is needed—and that has long eluded the parks system—Mayor Mamdani and the City Council should take steps this year to develop new, dedicated revenue streams to help pay for parks. They should start by capturing a small share of the value generated in one of the city's greatest sources of wealth: real estate.

Today, New York is leaving significant value on the table. The city's investments in parks, infrastructure, and land use generate billions of dollars in real estate value, but it lacks a consistent strategy to capture and reinvest a share of that value in the public assets that help create it. Investing in parks makes neighborhoods more livable, supports public health and community well-being, and helps attract residents, retain families, and strengthen the city's tax base over time. Those benefits are reflected in higher property values. Capturing a small share of that value would allow the city to reinvest in the parks and public spaces that help sustain it, especially in communities that have long been underserved.

New York City already captures a portion of this value, but only in limited and uneven ways. Development revenues fund most of the operating budget for Brooklyn Bridge Park, while Business Improvement Districts help steward public spaces in commercial corridors. Yet these efforts remain one-off and geographically constrained, rather than part of a coordinated, citywide strategy. As a result, the city captures only a fraction of the value its investments generate, leaving significant untapped potential to support its parks system.

"New York City is a real estate town—the big money is in real estate," says Chris Rizzo, partner at Carter Ledyard and an expert in environmental law. "We need to figure out a way to harness that money for parks, because we haven't even

scratched the surface of the mechanisms available—from zoning incentives to tax increment financing to park improvement districts.”

Harnessing real estate revenues to fund parks is an obvious choice in part because parks and open spaces play a major role in driving property values across New York City, yet the parks that help generate this wealth rarely receive a direct share of it. Research shows that homes located within 500 feet of a park enjoy an estimated \$15.2 billion in additional property value, generating roughly \$101 million in additional annual property tax revenue.<sup>3</sup> It’s a reality well understood by real estate investors and apartment hunters alike: proximity to great parks makes property more valuable.

New York is behind several other American cities in capturing value from real estate to help fund parks. Chicago’s parks system relies heavily on development-related fees, while cities such as Seattle and Minneapolis dedicate portions of property taxes to parks funding—generating roughly \$120 million annually in Seattle and more than \$80 million a year for Minneapolis’s park system.<sup>4</sup>

Now is the time to ensure that a fair share of the value parks create for real estate is reinvested in the parks system. The city’s parks system is feeling the strain of chronic underinvestment. Staffing cuts have left key positions unfilled, and many parks struggle to keep up with basic maintenance needs such as trash removal, landscaping, and repairs. Among city residents, 44 percent rate the condition of their local parks as fair or poor, including 63 percent in the Bronx.<sup>5</sup> Care for the city’s natural areas has declined in recent years, while recreational programming—from youth sports leagues to community fitness classes—reaches only a fraction of the New Yorkers who want to participate. Climate change is placing new pressures on park infrastructure, while rising usage is accelerating wear and tear across the system.

This report proposes five achievable ways to convert a small portion of the economic value generated by parks, real estate, and infrastructure investment into reliable funding for New York City’s parks system. Supported by a grant from the NYC Green Fund, the report outlines practical strategies—from zoning incentives and transit value capture to targeted surcharges and parks improvement districts—that could generate significant new resources for park maintenance and operations while directing those investments equitably across the five boroughs.

## **THE FIVE IDEAS INCLUDE:**

1. Tie new development from upzoning to dedicated funding for park maintenance, operations, and programming.
2. Capture value along the Interborough Express (IBX) to fund existing parks and create new ones.
3. Create a modest real estate surcharge—or dedicate a share of existing real estate revenues—to fund parks.
4. Make it easier to establish Parks Improvement Districts (PIDs).
5. Establish a Parks Improvement Trust to allocate new park revenues equitably.

## **1. TIE NEW DEVELOPMENT FROM UPZONING TO DEDICATED FUNDING FOR PARK MAINTENANCE, OPERATIONS, AND PROGRAMMING.**

In recent years, New York City has enacted zoning reforms and land use changes that have allowed greater density to boost housing supply and chip away at the city’s housing crisis. But one critical piece of neighborhood infrastructure has been left largely unaddressed: the ongoing funding needed to operate and maintain the city’s parks. As new housing is delivered, demand for parks will only intensify. Yet rezonings have not yet delivered a reliable new stream of funding to keep parks

clean, safe, green, and in a state of good repair.

To address this gap, the city should establish a Parks Improvement Trust that captures a portion of the value created by upzoning to fund park maintenance, operations, and programming. Parks are essential neighborhood infrastructure, and when zoning changes enable additional development capacity or increase allowable density, a portion of the value created should help sustain them.

The most straightforward approach would allow developers to access additional density beyond existing zoning limits through a bonus in exchange for contributions to a citywide Parks Improvement Trust dedicated to park maintenance, operations, and programming—supporting both parks near new development and parks in neighborhoods with the greatest needs.

Contributions could be calculated based on the market value of the additional development rights or the estimated cost of maintaining parkland needed to accommodate increased use. Similar contributions should also be incorporated into future neighborhood rezonings. Policymakers could also explore other tools to direct a small portion of the value created by new development toward parks, such as a modest development linkage fee applied to large projects.

For developers, this approach would create a consistent and predictable mechanism for contributing to park maintenance, reducing the uncertainty that often surrounds unenforceable negotiations over community benefits. Better-maintained and -programmed parks would also help protect the long-term value of nearby real estate investments. By allocating contributions between nearby parks and a citywide fund, the policy would both address local impacts from new development and harness projects in higher-value markets to support improvements in parks serving neighborhoods with the greatest needs.

"There was a clear sense amongst the developers that a well-maintained public space is good for them. Their property values go up, so there's a vested interest in the work we do," says Eric Landau, president of Brooklyn Bridge Park. "It has to be about operating dollars—how the park looks each day, and how well it's cared for."

New York City already uses several zoning mechanisms that link additional development capacity to investments in public infrastructure and public space. For example, the city's Zoning for Accessibility program allows developers to receive a density bonus within a certain distance of a subway station if they fund accessibility improvements such as elevators or ramps. In East Midtown, developers can purchase additional development rights through the sale of transferable development rights (TDRs), generating tens of millions of dollars for a dedicated Public Realm Improvement Fund. In Hudson Yards, developers can purchase additional floor area through a District Improvement Bonus, with proceeds supporting parks, streets, and other public infrastructure serving the growing neighborhood. Similar mechanisms support cultural investments through the Special Midtown Theater Subdistrict, while waterfront zoning rules require developers to build and maintain publicly accessible waterfront spaces.

Crucially, New York has ample precedent for agreements that fund upkeep, not just capital investment. Numerous subway stations receive dedicated, ongoing maintenance through agreements with private developers—including the bathrooms in the Times Square station, which are maintained in perpetuity through an agreement with the developer.

New York City also offers a powerful precedent for using development value to support parks operations. At Brooklyn Bridge Park, payments generated by adjacent residential development—structured through payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTs) and other revenues—cover roughly 90 percent of the park's operating budget. Those funds support maintenance, programming, and security for one of the city's most heavily used parks. However, this model is limited to a single waterfront park supported by high-value development. A Parks Improvement Fund would build on this example by enabling additional density across the city to help sustain parks not only near new construction, but also in neighborhoods where parks have long been under-resourced.

"As we tackle the housing crisis in our city and as development is happening across our city, why don't we look at ways for developers, as part of their development, to invest in park space," says City Council Member Shekar Krishnan. "Our city code

right now does things like pair parking requirements with development. And honestly, in a district like mine in Jackson Heights, we don't need more parking—we need more parks.”

A Parks Improvement Fund would build on these precedents while addressing two key limitations. First, unlike programs that require developers to directly construct or maintain public spaces—such as privately-owned public spaces or waterfront access areas—this proposal would generate dedicated public funding for parks maintenance and operations. Contributions would flow to a dedicated fund administered by the city or a public-private partnership, ensuring that the responsibility for maintaining parks remains with experienced park managers rather than being outsourced to individual property owners. Because parks operate as part of a citywide system that sees demand grow as population increases, the fund could allocate resources both to parks near new development and to parks serving communities with the greatest needs.

Second, for such a mechanism to succeed, the process must be clear and predictable. Some existing zoning incentive programs have seen limited uptake because approvals can be lengthy or requirements ambiguous. A Parks Improvement Fund should establish transparent formulas, clear eligibility rules, and defined timelines so that developers can reliably access additional density while the city secures a steady stream of funding for park care.

Cities around the world use similar tools to capture value created by development and reinvest it in parks and other public infrastructure. In San Diego, developers pay impact fees on new construction, which help fund parks, libraries, and transportation improvements. In London, boroughs require new developments to contribute to a Community Infrastructure Levy that supports local infrastructure and public space. And in fast-growing cities such as Austin, Toronto, and Lexington, developers are required either to dedicate land for parks onsite or pay parkland fees based on the scale of development, with funds used to expand park systems or support parks in underserved areas.

Building on these precedents, the mayor and City Council should work together to establish a Parks Improvement Fund, while directing the Department of City Planning to develop zoning tools that link new development capacity to dedicated, citywide investments in park maintenance and operations.

## **2. CAPTURE VALUE ALONG THE INTERBOROUGH EXPRESS (IBX) TO FUND EXISTING PARKS AND CREATE NEW ONES.**

The Interborough Express (IBX) represents the most significant expansion of New York City's mass transit network in decades—and a once-in-a-generation opportunity to harness the value created by new transit investment to strengthen neighborhood infrastructure. When it opens, with completion anticipated in the 2030s, the IBX is expected to accelerate growth along a crosstown corridor stretching from Bay Ridge to Jackson Heights, much of which remains relatively low-density today. Understandably, some residents have raised concerns that local infrastructure, including parks and open space, could struggle to keep pace with that change. New stations will enable new transit-oriented development and greater density, putting additional strain on local parks as populations grow. But policymakers can get ahead of these pressures now by adopting smart value-capture tools that dedicate a portion of the growth spurred by the IBX to creating much-needed new green space and sustaining nearby parks.

City Hall should work with its counterparts in Albany to establish a value-capture district along the IBX corridor that dedicates a portion of the new property tax revenue generated by development near IBX stations to creating and sustaining nearby parks. As improved transit access drives new housing, businesses, and investment along the corridor, property values and tax revenues will rise. Rather than allowing all of that new revenue to flow into the city's general budget, a share of the additional tax revenue created by this growth could be reserved to maintain and improve the parks and open spaces serving nearby neighborhoods. To ensure an equitable distribution, some of the funds could support parks within walking distance of IBX stations and create new ones, while the remainder could be directed to parks in need across Brooklyn and Queens.

New York City has already used value-capture tools to help finance major transit investment. To extend the 7 subway line to Manhattan's Far West Side, the city created a financing district in Hudson Yards that captured a portion of the new tax revenues generated by development in the area. Those revenues helped repay the bonds used to fund the subway extension while also supporting new parks and public spaces in the neighborhood, including Bella Abzug Park.

But these benefits should not be confined to wealthy neighborhoods with exceptionally high land values. The IBX presents policymakers with a significant opportunity to apply similar revenue-capture tools across a 14-mile corridor of working- and middle-class communities where investment in parks and the public realm has long lagged local needs, and where significant open space gaps remain.

For example, several areas along the proposed IBX route are among the New York City neighborhoods with the fewest acres of parkland. These include parts of Borough Park, Midwood, East Flatbush, and Elmhurst. At the same time, many parks along the route have significant ongoing maintenance needs or opportunities for revitalization, from the bathrooms at Evergreen Park in Ridgewood to the blacktop at Railroad Playground in East Flatbush.

With 17 stations connecting neighborhoods from Bay Ridge to Jackson Heights, the IBX corridor is likely to unlock significant new transit-oriented development in the years ahead—especially as recent zoning reforms begin to enable more housing near stations. As new housing and commercial development are built around IBX stops, they will generate new property tax revenues for the city each year. Dedicating even a portion of those additional revenues through a value-capture mechanism could generate millions of dollars annually—and potentially tens of millions over time—to support parks and open space serving communities along the corridor and deliver new play and recreation facilities located next to transit stations, like the highly popular StationSoccer program in Atlanta that co-locates soccer fields with MARTA transit stations.

“If this concept works for the 7 line and pays for parks and public space in Hudson Yards, why not use it to support a vibrant parks corridor along the IBX?” says Michelle de la Uz, executive director of the Fifth Avenue Committee in Sunset Park, which sits at the project's planned terminus.

Although the local context is very different, the city's 7 line extension offers a window into the revenue potential along the IBX. Development in the Hudson Yards financing district—enabled by the 7 line extension and rezoning—is now generating roughly \$490 million annually in dedicated value-capture revenues, including payments in lieu of taxes and a share of growing property tax revenues from new development.<sup>6</sup> Even with lower densities, a 14-mile transit corridor like the IBX has significant potential to unlock substantial new revenue through value-capture strategies.

Cities elsewhere are leveraging similar mechanisms to reinvest the value created by infrastructure projects into public space. To fund the BeltLine, Atlanta's renowned 22-mile greenway and park corridor, the city created a tax allocation district that captures new property tax revenues generated by development along the corridor. Since its creation in 2005, the BeltLine district has generated hundreds of millions of dollars in funding—generating just under \$100 million in 2024 alone—and is projected to produce more than \$1 billion by 2030.<sup>7</sup> In London, value-capture mechanisms—including a business rate supplement and development levies—have raised billions of dollars to help finance Crossrail, now known as the Elizabeth Line.

New York should pursue a similar strategy for the Interborough Express. In 2023, then–State Assemblymember Zohran Mamdani introduced legislation that would expand the state's ability to capture incremental tax revenues around transit investments to support the MTA. As mayor, Mamdani should work with the City Council and state leaders to build on that concept by establishing a value-capture district along the IBX corridor that dedicates a portion of the additional property tax revenues generated by development near stations to parks and open space. Even without new state authorization, the city has the ability to capture and allocate a portion of these incremental revenues through its budget process, as it did with the 7 line extension. Doing so would ensure that, as the IBX strengthens neighborhood connections across Brooklyn and Queens,

a portion of the value created by new development is reinvested in the parks and public spaces that make those communities vibrant and livable.

### **3. CREATE A MODEST REAL ESTATE SURCHARGE—OR DEDICATE A SHARE OF EXISTING REAL ESTATE REVENUES—TO FUND PARKS.**

New York City's parks help drive the value of the city's real estate, but currently receive little direct return from the wealth they help create. Well-maintained parks increase the value of nearby homes and businesses, which in turn generates additional tax revenue for the city. Yet despite this relationship, parks see little direct reinvestment from the real estate value they produce.

The city should harness this relationship by dedicating a small share of real estate-related tax revenues to parks. One promising option would be to establish a modest "community parks surcharge" on the Real Property Transfer Tax (RPTT), which is applied to sales of residential and commercial properties across the five boroughs, or the Mortgage Recording Tax. The RPTT currently generates about \$1.4 billion annually for New York City.<sup>8</sup> An additional 0.25 percentage point on property transaction values could generate roughly \$250 million to \$300 million each year for parks maintenance, operations, and programming.

"One of the few approaches to generating new operating revenue is attaching to a source of value that you can ascribe to parks and, in New York City, logically that's with real estate," says Candace Damon, Partner and Board Chair at HR&A Advisors. "However, with a citywide tax or surcharge, you can achieve greater equity. Many creative value capture solutions have the disadvantage of being easier to realize in high value locations. With a citywide surcharge, you can spread the peanut butter around in terms of who pays and who benefits and tell the story about why that's the right thing to do. In this moment in New York, a model that only benefits high-value neighborhoods is neither just nor palatable."

New York has ample precedent for dedicating real estate-related revenues to public infrastructure. In 1982, the state authorized a surcharge on the Real Property Transfer Tax to support New York City Transit, recognizing the strong relationship between a well-functioning transit system and real estate values. More recently, the state expanded the so-called "mansion tax," which applies a graduated surcharge to residential property sales above \$2 million and helps fund New York City Transit. Similarly, New York State's Environmental Protection Fund dedicates a portion of the statewide real estate transfer tax to environmental protection and conservation projects, generating roughly \$400 million annually.

Most relevant is the MTA surcharge on the Mortgage Recording Tax, enacted in 1987. It reflected a clear link between real estate values and a well-functioning transit system—and the limits of relying on fare hikes alone, which had led to decades of deferred maintenance. A similar rationale applies to a modest parks surcharge, especially if the rate varies by proximity to parks and revenues are shared between nearby parks and those with the greatest needs citywide.

Cities across the country have adopted similar mechanisms to support parks and open space. Seattle's Metropolitan Park District generates roughly \$50 million annually through a dedicated property tax levy to fund park maintenance and programming. In Minneapolis, voters approved a park levy that has generated hundreds of millions of dollars for the city's park system. These examples demonstrate that dedicating a small portion of property-related revenues to parks can provide a stable and equitable funding stream for park care.

Adjustments to the Real Property Transfer Tax are already part of the city's policy conversation. Mayor Mamdani has proposed adding a 1 percent transfer tax on cash purchases of real estate above \$1 million, a measure estimated to generate roughly \$161 million annually. At a mayoral candidates' forum hosted by New Yorkers for Parks in April 2025, Mamdani also expressed support for dedicating a portion of real estate-related tax revenues to sustaining the city's parks.

In New York City, revenues generated through a parks surcharge or allocation could flow into a dedicated parks fund and be

distributed through a formula that supports both parks near the properties generating the revenue and parks serving neighborhoods with the greatest needs. This approach would reinforce the virtuous cycle between parks and real estate while helping ensure that all communities benefit from well-maintained and well-programmed public spaces.

While the State Legislature would need to authorize the creation of a community parks surcharge on the Real Property Transfer Tax, the city does not have to wait to act. The mayor and City Council could begin by dedicating a portion of existing or incremental real estate-related revenues to parks through the budget process, while working with leaders in Albany to advance legislation enabling a more robust and permanent funding stream. Once authorized by the state, the City Council could establish a dedicated Parks Improvement Fund to receive these revenues and allocate them to parks maintenance, operations, and programming. To ensure these new revenues strengthen—rather than replace—existing city support for parks, the legislation should include a maintenance-of-effort provision requiring that city funding for the Parks Department remain above a set baseline before the fund can be used.

#### **4. MAKE IT EASIER TO ESTABLISH PARKS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS (PIDS).**

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) have proven to be effective and enduring partners with government in managing public space. Today, New York City's 78 BIDs spend over \$200 million annually on sanitation, maintenance, public safety, and programming in commercial corridors and surrounding public spaces.<sup>9</sup> Across the country, similar districts support parks and open spaces—from Midtown Manhattan's Bryant Park to Boston's Rose Kennedy Greenway, where a district helps fund maintenance and programming for the linear park created by the "Big Dig."

The city's BIDs are typically initiated by local stakeholders, with assessment rates set locally, reflecting both a shared understanding of their value and a direct say in how funds are used. And despite early skepticism, the City Council voted unanimously 168 times between 2002 and 2022 to approve BID expansions or budget increases.

New York City should build on this successful model by making it easier for neighborhoods to establish Parks Improvement Districts (PIDs): self-levy districts dedicated to supporting parks and open spaces. Although existing state law permits their creation under the framework governing BIDs and special assessment districts, current processes—overseen by the Department of Small Business Services—are not well suited to park-focused entities, particularly in residential neighborhoods outside commercial corridors. The city should instead create a streamlined, facilitated process led by NYC Parks or another public space-focused entity, enabling property owners or businesses within a defined radius of a park to voluntarily establish districts that levy a modest annual assessment for park maintenance, stewardship, and programming.

Several communities in Brooklyn are already exploring this model. In North Brooklyn, the North Brooklyn Parks Alliance is helping spearhead the creation of a new BID that would place a major emphasis on supporting nearby parks and open spaces. In Gowanus, the Gowanus Canal Conservancy has been working with local stakeholders to explore a similar district focused in part on sustaining neighborhood parks. And in Fort Greene, local leaders have also begun exploring the creation of a park-focused district. These ongoing efforts highlight both the growing interest in self-levy districts for parks and the opportunity to support them more effectively.

However, the BID model has historically been far easier to establish in wealthier commercial areas than in neighborhoods with fewer resources. Although roughly two-thirds of New York City's BIDs now exist in low- to moderate-income communities, many operate with very limited budgets, often supporting only one full-time or part-time staff member. Meanwhile, many neighborhoods with the greatest park maintenance needs have no BID at all, as property owners in underserved areas often lack the resources to support meaningful assessments on their own.

To address this challenge, the city should launch a pilot matching program that pairs neighborhood self-assessments with public investment. Under this model, the city could match locally-generated PID revenues at a multiple—such as two-to-one

or three-to-one—based on neighborhood need or fiscal capacity. This approach would allow residents and property owners to demonstrate local commitment while ensuring that communities with fewer resources can still generate meaningful funding for park care.

For example, if a PID were established in Brownsville and local property owners collectively generated roughly \$225,000 annually—similar to the annual assessment supporting the Pitkin Avenue BID—the city could match those contributions three-to-one. This would yield roughly \$900,000 annually to support maintenance, programming, and stewardship for parks and open spaces across the neighborhood while keeping individual assessments relatively modest.

To advance this opportunity, the mayor and City Council should work together to develop a streamlined framework for establishing Parks Improvement Districts and launch a pilot matching initiative in several neighborhoods with high park needs. NYC Parks, or another designated public space-focused entity, should be tasked with developing clear protocols for creating park-focused districts and supporting communities interested in establishing them. By combining local stewardship with targeted public investment, Parks Improvement Districts could become a powerful new tool for sustaining parks and open spaces across New York City.

## **5. ESTABLISH A PARKS IMPROVEMENT TRUST TO ALLOCATE NEW PARK REVENUES EQUITABLY.**

All of the revenue strategies proposed in this report would benefit from a common mechanism to ensure that new funds are invested equitably across New York City's parks system. To achieve this, the city should establish a Parks Improvement Trust responsible for receiving and allocating revenues generated through value-capture mechanisms, surcharges, and other park-related funding streams.

New York City has already created a number of special-purpose funds tied to neighborhood rezonings and development subdistricts. In some cases, revenue-sharing agreements also allow private contributions from nearby property owners to support public spaces. But these arrangements have largely been case-specific and geographically limited, often directing resources to parks in high-value areas while doing little to address needs elsewhere in the system.

A Parks Improvement Trust would help ensure that new revenues benefit both the neighborhoods generating them and parks in communities with the greatest needs. Funds could be allocated according to a transparent formula that balances local reinvestment with citywide equity.

Under one possible model, parks would be categorized into three tiers based on measures such as neighborhood income levels, park condition as rated by residents, and land values. Contributions generated in areas with the greatest needs would remain entirely within those communities. Revenues generated in middle-tier areas could be split between nearby parks and parks in higher-need neighborhoods. And revenues generated in the city's highest-value areas could be directed primarily toward parks serving lower-income communities.

To ensure transparency and accountability, the Trust could be overseen by a hybrid board of public and private representatives, including agency representatives (25 percent), citywide and local elected officials (25 percent), and appointees representing community groups, park partners, and property owners (50 percent). The Trust would hold and distribute to NYC Parks or qualified nonprofit partners, with clear reporting requirements tied to measurable outcomes such as maintenance standards, staffing, and programming. Eligible partners could include both local organizations, such as the Bronx River Alliance and the Alliance for Flushing Meadows–Corona Park, and citywide groups, like the City Parks Foundation and the New York Restoration Project.

The Trust could also attract additional investment by allowing private, philanthropic, and nonprofit contributions to match public dollars. Funding sources could include property owners, concessionaires, foundations, and government entities at the

city, state, or federal level.

Finally, to ensure that new revenues supplement—rather than replace—existing city support for parks, funds would only be disbursed if the city maintains baseline funding for the Parks Department at a set level. This safeguard would help ensure that new revenue streams strengthen the parks system rather than substitute existing public investment.

These design choices reflect lessons from decades of experience with special assessments and public-private funding models. While new fees can face resistance, support grows when contributors see a clear connection between what they pay and the results, when funds are used transparently and effectively, and when trusted local partners play a meaningful role alongside government. Ensuring that a portion of funds supports parks with the greatest needs can further strengthen buy-in and avoid widening disparities.

Together, these elements can help ensure that a Parks Improvement Trust delivers not just new resources, but a more equitable, accountable, and sustainable model for investing in New York City's parks.

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**Capturing Real Estate Value to Generate Dedicated Funding for NYC's Parks** is a publication of the Center for an Urban Future. Researched and written by Tim Tompkins, John Surico, and Eli Dvorkin. Edited by Dorian Block and Alejandra Díaz-Pizarro. Additional research by Bella Hung. Photo by James Andrews.

**Center for an Urban Future** (CUF) is a leading think tank focused on building a stronger and more equitable economy in New York City, and expanding economic opportunity for all New Yorkers.

This report is supported by a grant from **NYC Green Fund** administered by **City Parks Foundation**. General operating support for the Center for an Urban Future has been provided by **The Clark Foundation** and the **Altman Foundation**.

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