



**The 91<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting  
Columbus, OH  
June 5, 2023**

**City Parks: A Smart Investment for America's Health, Economy, and Environment**

WHEREAS, urban parks are now recognized as an important tool for a high quality of life, community health, economic vitality, and environmental improvements; and

WHEREAS, cities are the engines generating our nation's prosperity, keeping America competitive in the rapidly changing global market, and the most economically sound cities are the ones with ample and healthy parks and open spaces; and

WHEREAS, parks provide enormous physical and mental health benefits; residents with safe, accessible parks are more likely to exercise regularly, and as a result have increased rates of overall health, including lower rates of obesity, Type 2 diabetes, and heart disease; and

WHEREAS, residents within a short walking distance of a safe park are significantly less likely to suffer from stress, anxiety or depression than residents further from a park; and

WHEREAS, children living near parks have greater opportunities to be physically active by running, walking or participating in other recreational activities, thereby helping to combat the problem that one in three children in the U.S. are overweight or obese; and

WHEREAS, research shows that time spent in parks reduces attention deficits in children and the effects of a walk in a park are even similar to the effects of common ADHD medication; and

WHEREAS, parks provide tremendous economic benefits by creating jobs, generating economic activity, and increasing property tax revenue for cities; and

WHEREAS, a key factor in business expansion and location decisions is the quality of life for employees, with a premium placed on adequate parks and open space; and

WHEREAS, as cities become more densely populated, and concern about the impact of climate change increases, planners, elected officials, and community advocates are turning to parks to help address critical urban infrastructure and public health issues; and

WHEREAS, parks provide enormous green infrastructure benefits; parks and green spaces absorb carbon and clean the air, soak up and slow stormwater, limiting the severity of flooding, and make cities cooler; and

WHEREAS, investment in mixed-use infrastructure projects -- those that include both parks and green space -- is building a strong track record of leveraging public funds with private capital to address many urban challenges, including those relating to transportation, stormwater management, and access to recreation; and

WHEREAS, urban parks take on different forms, from signature downtown parks to reclaimed industrial railways and corridors, and are now recognized as an important part of modernized transportation systems, connecting neighborhoods to businesses; and

WHEREAS, low-income communities, which have fewer trees and parks and more paved surfaces, are often hit hardest by the impact of climate change, such as flooding, extreme heat and reduced air quality; and

WHEREAS, the pandemic demonstrated overwhelmingly the necessity of parks to a community's health and well-being as the first public amenity that re-opened during that period, serving as a vital lifeline to families whose children needed an outlet and a place where frontline emergency services could be offered; and

WHEREAS, even though pandemic precautions have eased, park usage continues to increase; and

WHEREAS, despite the enormous economic, physical, mental, environmental, and community benefits and cost savings that parks provide, public funding for parks—especially in distressed communities where their multiple benefits are most needed—is limited and not keeping up with demand; and

WHEREAS, the last few years have provided an unprecedented amount of potential funding for parks and trails through the Great American Outdoors Act, the American Rescue Plan, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the U.S. Conference of Mayors views urban parks as essential infrastructure for 21st century cities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the U.S. Conference of Mayors believes in equitable access; that everyone living in urban areas should have equal access to parks, green spaces and recreational opportunities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that U.S. Conference of Mayors urges mayors to raise awareness of the need for greater public and private investment in parks and green space to create healthy, walkable and sustainable cities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the U.S. Conference of Mayors urges Congress to provide robust federal investment for our nation's urban parks and trails; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the nation's mayors stand ready to work in partnership with the President, all members of the Administration and Congress, and the American people in this important effort to keep our cities strong and competitive.