



**New York City Committee on Transportation  
Hearing on Int. No. 573-A  
January 22, 2016  
Tupper Thomas, Executive Director**

Good morning. I am Tupper Thomas, Executive Director of New Yorkers for Parks. I want to thank the City Council Committee on Transportation for inviting me to speak on this issue. New Yorkers for Parks does not support the current proposal to house carriage horses in Central Park. Int. 573-A, and the statements made by the mayor and City Council, leave us with many unanswered questions and concerns. We ask the city to give a more careful, thorough review of this plan and postpone this legislation until more information is available.

Central Park is the most important open space in New York City and the grandmother of all city parks in the United States. It offers tranquility to the millions of New Yorkers and tourists who visit every year. It is a landmark — and so is the historic stable building where the mayor seeks to relocate the horses.

The city has not released a figure for how much renovating and restoring the existing stables in the park will cost taxpayers, but it will undoubtedly be expensive. Some estimates place the cost at a minimum of \$25 million, to be funded by the city.

Parks are not just vacant city-owned property: They belong to the public. Installing a private business, with public dollars, in a public building on such a large scale is unprecedented and not to be taken lightly. We need to know if this is really the highest and best use of this historic park and facility.

In addition to cost, we need to know how the stables may change a park user's experience, and how it will impact the infrastructure of the park itself. Will the traffic of horses going into and out of the stables affect recreational activities on the surrounding roads? How will the park handle the increased traffic from horse trailers and waste removal?

The city needs to give this proposal a much more careful analysis, and New Yorkers need to be able to ask questions. The answers matter. We hope that the City Council will postpone this legislation until it has undergone a more careful and public review.

Thank you.