



**Report to Hudson River Park Advisory Council
November 12, 2024**

Design and Construction

Pier 26 Science Playground

The Pier 26 Playground is complete and continues to be popular. Monstrum returned to the site last month to complete warranty repairs and Alpine construction replaced and augmented plantings and completed other minor punch list items.

Pier 40

Hudson Meridian has started their initial task of reviewing all of the work at Pier 40 in detail. The primary scopes of work include fire suppression work, garage area structural repair per New York City's new regulations, and courtyard perimeter walkway structural work, as previously reported. The Trust will be working with Hudson Meridian to develop phasing scenarios that minimize the disturbance to Pier 40 operations.

Gansevoort Peninsula

Final punch list work at Gansevoort Peninsula is being completed during the beginning of November, including plant replacements and paving repairs. The final building Certificate of Occupancy is pending, and we are in the process of closing out remaining construction contracts.

Chelsea Waterside

The surfacing of the large and small dog parks from last year's renovation were not performing as expected, and the at the end of October and early November the Trust worked with the contractor to resurface both spaces to make the pavement less porous and thus easier to clean and maintain.

29th – 46th Street Landscape and Esplanade Design

The design team is continuing its information gathering and site analysis efforts. The team is preparing public engagement materials to meet with the public soon, focusing on the portion of the project area between the northside of Pier 79 and Pier 84. We will share information when the meeting is scheduled.

Pier 97

Pier 97, including the playground and elevated belvedere, were opened with a formal ribbon cutting on October 15th. It was great to see many of our elected officials and community partners come out to celebrate! The ribbon cutting received great coverage, and we are thrilled to see so many New Yorkers enjoy the All-Ages slide.

Work continues east of the pier where we have finally been able to make our utility connections to electricity, water, and sewer. Work in this area was continuously hampered by old, abandoned foundations and inaccurate plans of existing utilities installed haphazardly decades ago. Now that the underground work is complete, we should see speedy progress on the top side with final paving, railings and seating areas to be completed in the coming months. The utility work was also delayed the building completion, but we are now on track to also complete the building this winter.

Environmental and Sanctuary Initiatives

Release of the Fishes & End of the Wetlab Season

At the end of October, we hosted the annual “Release of the Fishes” in our Pier 40 Wetlab research aquarium. This family-favorite event attracted a record 500 community members as guests helped us shut down our tanks by bidding farewell to the wildlife ambassadors as they were released back into the Hudson River for the winter months ahead. This event concludes our 2024 Wetlab season, and the release of all the animals is an important task before our team begins to shut down tanks for the winter months.

This year’s Release of the Fishes celebration highlighted the work of one of the Trust’s Visiting Scholars, Dr. Theodore Muth of CUNY Brooklyn College who used DNA sequencing technology to monitor harmful microorganisms in River water and study the presence of bacteria with antibiotic resistant genes on microplastics in the Park. Cathy Drew, the founder of The River Project, also joined the event to celebrate another successful season of education and science in our Wetlab. Many environmental partners also joined Release of the Fishes including Randall’s Island Park Alliance, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and NYC Park Rangers. We concluded the night with sharing findings from the Community Water Quality Testing Program and also celebrated the 2024 season’s pathogen testing program in partnership with Billion Oyster Project.

Annual Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan Update to HRPT Board

At the Trust’s Board meeting on September 26, 2024, River Project leadership provided an annual update on the Park’s Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan (ESMP). This management document and its accompanying Action Agenda identify needs and objectives in the areas of public access and resource management; environmental education; and research and habitat enhancement. During the HRPT Board meeting, staff highlighted progress in those three management areas including the use of new educational spaces like Gansevoort Peninsula and the Pier 26 Science Playground, the launch of the Gansevoort Research program, and expansion of the Park’s Visiting Scholars Program with the HRPT / CUNY Research Alliance. Looking ahead, this upcoming January we will host the annual Science Technical Advisory Committee meeting which engages local research and restoration experts, followed by the annual meeting of the ESMP’s full Technical Advisory Committee in February to discuss progress in all management areas and identify and discuss areas of focus for the coming year.

Winter Field Trip Programs Now Live

We’re excited to share that we’ve opened bookings for our winter field trip season, which include indoor hands-on STEM lessons in our Pier 57 Discovery Tank classroom. With the addition of this digital gallery and classroom, our River Project team has the ability to serve NYC students year-round, including during the winter months where it’s typically not possible to host fully outdoor programming. Teachers can book programs focused on a wide range of themes including local ecology, plankton microscopy, climate change, human impacts and environmental justice. As always, Title I schools are eligible for a full fee waiver. There’s still space to sign up, please feel free to share with your networks or visit HUDSONRIVERPARK.ORG/fieldtrips.

Public Programs

Events

Our fall season of free programming delivered both new and exciting experiences, as well as beloved traditional favorites for parkgoers of all ages!

The Bollywood and Bhangra dance series at Pier 63 attracted hundreds of participants, who enjoyed getting fit to lively Bollywood tunes. Additionally, over 500 people attended the Festival of Lights event celebrating Diwali on Saturday, October 26. Matinee Music at 14th Street Park offered soulful jazz sessions on Wednesday afternoons throughout September.

We also celebrated Chelsea Waterside Park in collaboration with the Chelsea Waterside Park Association on Saturday, October 5th. This event featured interactive opera performances, Bollywood dance, arts and crafts, and bubbly fun! Not to be outdone, Pier 84 hosted its own celebration with the West 44th Street Block Association, showcasing a series of musical performances that included Japanese Taiko drumming, Brazilian drumming, and two parades, along with a hugely popular Double Dutch activation.

Pier 84 also hosted Pumpkin Smash, our annual composting bash! This year's record-breaking event saw more than 2,000 people smashing, bashing, and chopping over 6,000 pounds of pumpkins! The pumpkin pieces will be composted, enriching our lawns and flowerbeds for seasons to come. A new highlight this year was a hay bale maze at the top of the pier, which was a hit with kids and parents alike!

Programming continues into the winter with great offerings from the River Project team including guided gallery tours, Painting Nature workshops, and Science Stories at the Pier 57 Discovery Tank. For more information on events in the Park, please visit hudsonriverpark.org/events.

Sports Fields

Additionally, our fall field permitting season saw 88 permits issued between August 26 and December 1, providing valuable practice and play time for more than 75 organizations. The Winter field season kicks off on December 2 and runs through March 16.

Applications for the spring field season will be open on December 9 with a due date of January 13, 2025 for a season that will start on March 17. Visit hudsonriverpark.org/fields for more information and to apply.

Operations & Facilities

Lighting

HRPT Operations staff conducted a Parkwide and bikeway light audit on October 22nd. HRPT's Facilities' team is actively working to correct lighting issues on the park side. Bikeway lighting issues were shared with City and State DOTs. City DOT's lighting contractor is actively working to repair lights on the bikeway, working from Chambers St. up to 59th St. Thus far, contractors have addressed lighting issues from Chambers to Canal Streets and will continue North over the course of the next few weeks.

Christopher Street Entrance

State DOT's design team has begun work on the Christopher St. area safety upgrades. Upgrades include removing the existing concrete Jersey barriers and replacing with steel bollards, as well as adding a raised plant bed adjacent to the Eastern buffer.

Pier 45 and Pier 84 Water Taxi Docks

In the mid-2000s, small docks were purchased and installed at Pier 45 and Pier 84 by for a privately operated water taxi service which eventually ceased, leaving the docks unused for many years. Over the years the Trust had conversations with various commercial boat operators and others about the docks and service to no avail; among other reasons, the docks were sized for specific vessels. This past summer, the docks began to list, and Trust hired a contractor to secure the gangways to the tops of the docks to prevent unauthorized access. The listing also caused the fasteners connecting the gangways to the docks to warp and then loosen. The contractor retained to secure the gangways recommended the docks be removed due to their deteriorating condition. The Trust has been advancing a procurement for a parkwide marine contractor that we expected to do the work. However, in late September, the Pier 45 dock began to take on water, and the Trust had both of the unused docks removed in October.

Horticulture

New York has received extremely limited rain in October and September. The Horticulture staff has been dealing with near drought conditions and have been busy trying to keep plants healthy and new plants alive. Plantings in new areas of the Park, along with Fall plantings, are particularly in need of water as the become established.

We will also be winterizing our irrigation lines at the end of November – with miles and miles of lines throughout the park it requires significant staff mobilization.

With Friends, our Horticulture team hosted the annual Bulbtoberfest on Saturday October 26th to kick off the bulb planting season. Hort staff and volunteers planted just over 10,000 bulbs in October with many more being planted in November. So far this year we have hosted 77 volunteer events including 9 Green Teams totaling over 2000 volunteers helping to maintain the park.

We were awarded and received \$10,000 in funding for plants from the Greenacre foundation. The funding was used to purchase 1300 flowering perennials that were planted throughout the park this fall.

Public Safety

We are happy to report that year to date, crime in Hudson River Park is down, however, the park is not immune to citywide trends. There have been additional chain snatches that have occurred in the park and on the bikeway and we recently experienced break-ins and thefts from tenant boats moored in the park.

We previously reported a surge in bag thefts at our Pier 40 fields. Since then, we have been proactively working with permit holders and have conducted onsite meetings and walkthroughs to educate our Pier 40 users about safeguarding their valuables. Additional PEP and NYPD resources were deployed to Pier 40 during peak times, and we have caught some perpetrators. Consistent unattended belongings create an attractive environment for thieves. We are happy users feel safe here – but need everyone's help by securing their own belongings to keep it that way.

On October 24 we attended and spoke at the 6th Precinct Build the Block Meeting held at the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe at St. Bernard. This was a meeting of concerned citizens and businesses focused on police related concerns in 6th Precinct. Most of the concerns that were raised are similar to the concerns we have in the park, chain snatches, petty thefts, emotionally disturbed people and quality of life issues.

PEP conducted a joint bikeway operation with the NYPD in late October, and we continue to seek additional joint efforts in the future.

Real Estate and Planning

Heliport - Southern Pier Tab

In the early morning hours of November 2, one of two small overwater platforms within the heliport premises partially collapsed into the river. Because of their poor structural condition, access to both platforms including by helicopters has been prohibited for many years. HRPT staff inspected the site the day of the collapse and confirmed that the platform that collapsed was structurally independent from the bulkhead. Initial inspections have determined that neither the bulkhead nor other nearby structures have been affected by the collapse. The Air Pegasus, the heliport operator, and the Trust are both conducting more detailed inspections which must occur prior to removal. Staff will work with regulatory agencies on the removal details as soon as they are available.

Battery Park City Resiliency Project

Since our last update, the Trust has submitted comments to the Battery Park City Authority (BPCA) on its Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the “North/West Battery Park City Resiliency Project” and shared a copy of the submission with the AC. The Trust continues to work with the BPCA as it plans the connection to Hudson River Park, and we are awaiting additional information as designs come together.

Another Award for Pier 57

On Monday, the Municipal Art Society awarded Pier 57 its MASTERworks award for best adaptive reuse. This is the fourth award for this public-private partnership that restored a unique historic structure.



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October 4, 20204

Battery Park City Authority
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New York, NY 10281
ATTN: North/West Battery Park City Resiliency Team
and Claudia Filomena, Senior Director of Capital Projects
Email: nwbpcrinfo@bpca.ny.gov

Re: Hudson River Park Trust Comments on the Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement for the “North/West Battery Park City Resiliency Project”

Dear Ms. Filomena:

The Hudson River Park Trust (“HRPT” or “the Trust”) has reviewed the *North/West Battery Park City Resiliency Project: Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement* (the “DEIS”) as released by Battery Park City Authority (“BPCA”) on August 28, 2024 and has the following comments on the Proposed Project. Overall, the DEIS addresses many of the comments previously raised by HRPT, beginning with BPCA’s early planning of the Proposed Project several years ago and continuing through current planning meetings with respect to construction that would occur within Hudson River Park and within the Park’s Estuarine Sanctuary.

HRPT is an involved agency and, as acknowledged in the DEIS, BPCA will need a construction permit from HRPT for the work that would occur in the southern portion of Hudson River Park – on both land and in the Estuarine Sanctuary. As currently contemplated, an Easement will also be required for BPCA’s permanent use of a portion of the Sanctuary area and for certain below-ground infrastructure in Hudson River Park and required for the Proposed Project. HRPT writes these comments to reiterate previously discussed commitments required of BPCA, including mitigation of impacts where feasible, that should be reflected in the final design of the Proposed Project as well as in the corresponding permits and approvals needed from various other involved agencies for construction and operation of the Proposed Project.

HRPT's Comments regarding Design and Construction Impacts on the Land Portion of Hudson River Park

First, pursuant to HRPT's early concerns about the Proposed Project's impacts to Hudson River Park ("HRP"), HRPT is pleased that BPCA's preferred alternative for its "Proposed Action" is to locate the flood protection measures on the eastern side of Route 9A and to cross Route 9A near Harrison Street as opposed to earlier plans that would have had the project extended further north into HRP while hugging the adjacent Route 9A bikeway that runs parallel to HRP. HRPT is also pleased that Chapter 1 of the DEIS (Project Description) acknowledges that HRPT will be involved in detailed inter-agency design coordination in the area where the two parks meet as it is important that the aesthetics and pedestrian experience for those entering HRP meets the design standards of HRPT and works logistically for both public benefit corporations and their patrons. Further, Chapter 3.11.1 on Construction also acknowledges that BPCA and its community liaisons will need to work closely with HRPT during construction, particularly related to utility replacement and other disturbances that will affect HRP's operations temporarily.

Nonetheless, BPCA has acknowledged to HRPT that HRP patrons will likely have to endure four to five years of construction in this area in order to construct the Proposed Project. In addition, the Proposed Project will result in permanent impacts to the southern portion of HRP that may affect HRPT's decisions regarding the future use and design of the southern portion of HRP. That said, HRPT also understands the difficult decisions required to balance the impacts to the Park's many users, as well as the residents, businesses and cultural and educational institutions located within and adjacent to Battery Park City with the important long-term goal of protecting lives and property from future storm surge events.

With regard to the specific impacts to HRP, the Figures of the Proposed Project included in the DEIS show that a 48-inch diameter sewer main will be installed below the surface of HRP to connect to an existing combined sewer outfall in HRP's Estuarine Sanctuary (the "CSO") as part of the proposed new pump station. HRPT understands that BPCA is still coordinating with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection ("DEP") regarding the new pump station and below-grade chambers and flood gates associated with the pump station such that the full extent of infrastructure to be built below-grade within HRP may change. HRPT expects that the southern portion of HRP that is currently landscaped with plants and trees will need to be redesigned based on typical DEP restrictions and that such DEP requirements are likely to include limits on planting trees or building permanent structures above and within a buffer zone around the new infrastructure. As previously noted, HRPT requests that BPCA keep HRPT informed so that HRPT can effectively engage with BPCA on the permanent design in this area where the two parks meet.

The Trust appreciates BPCA's efforts to engage the Park's statutorily required Advisory Council (the "AC") about this project. A representative from the AC recently attended the DEIS public hearing to share the group's concerns. Specifically, regarding the pump station infrastructure, the AC requested that BPCA address potential impacts to the Estuarine Sanctuary from the additional flow of stormwater through the CSO from the larger sewer main system. Reducing CSO discharge is an important environmental goal of the federal, state and city governments. If outflow volume is unable to be reduced, the AC has asked that alternatives be considered, such as having the flow be released at a different CSO that is not within the Sanctuary. The planned CSO is located at a point that is surrounded by two bulkhead walls which could result in less dispersion of the stormwater out into the River. HRPT supports the AC's comments and accordingly also requests that potential impacts from the increased outflow and possible mitigation be considered as part of the FEIS.

As HRPT had previously requested, the DEIS qualitatively addresses impacts to bicycle riders on the adjacent Route 9A bikeway and to pedestrians entering the southern end of HRP during construction. Based on the analysis, the DEIS has identified the impacts to pedestrian and bicyclists in the area where the two parks meet as significant and unmitigated during the construction of the Proposed Project (See Chapter 3.11.4 on Construction Impacts and Chapter 4 on Mitigation). As mitigation, BPCA states that bikeway and pedestrian detours will be established through permits issued by New York State Department of Transportation ("NYSDOT") and New York City Department of Transportation ("NYCDOT"). To the extent that detours are proposed on or touching HRP property, HRPT will also need to approve through its construction permit. HRPT requests that BPCA consult with HRPT early in the process and in coordination with the transportation agencies regarding the location, size and design of the proposed detours. It is important that HRPT be involved in decisions on how the public will have access to the southern portion of HRP. HRPT has historically worked well with NYSDOT and NYCDOT on such planning prior to mitigation measures being included in the required NYSDOT permits.

Further, HRPT reminds BPCA that the City of New York installed a commemorative plaque honoring the two Americans whose lives were lost in the terrorism attack that occurred on October 31, 2017 in the landscaped portion of the southeastern border of HRP right next to the Route 9A bikeway. HRPT, New York City, the Belgium and Argentinian Embassies along with members of the Department of Justice and FBI hold an annual memorial procession each October 31st to remember the victims of this horrific crime. The memorial procession along the Route 9A bikeway begins at Houston Street and ends adjacent to Stuyvesant High School with stops at each of the three locations where plaques have been installed to honor the Belgium, Argentinian and American victims. The DEIS does not directly address this important consideration, neither the construction activity on the site nor the operational impact to the annual procession. HRPT knows that BPCA is aware of the sensitivity of this site and that it has flagged this issue for the design teams. HRPT strongly suggest that BPCA reach out to the

families as well as to New York City and HRPT to address plans for this area both related to construction and permanent design.

HRPT's Comments regarding Design and Construction Impacts on the Water Portion of Hudson River Park

The Proposed Project also involves construction of permanent infrastructure within and over the Estuarine Sanctuary, increasing platform coverage into the Sanctuary and reducing HRPT's ability to use a portion of that water area for park purposes, such as boating. While HRPT agrees that the expansion would create a wider pedestrian area and would improve the connection between the two parks, the Proposed Project still results in a permanent impact to the water portion of HRP.

As requested by HRPT, the DEIS does address the multitude of uses at Piers 25 and 26 that may be impacted during construction in Reach 2. HRPT appreciates BPCA's recognition of the public and commercial uses in this area that include beach volleyball and minigolf, non-motorized boating, children's playgrounds, restaurants, marine uses and an upland basketball court and a skatepark. However, the DEIS is unclear on the potential economic impacts of these uses during the Proposed Project's construction. For example, the DEIS states that most of the moorings in the Pier 25 Marina would be temporarily inaccessible during construction of Reach 2 for an approximate 35 months (Chapter 3.11.1, Construction Overview). HRPT and the operators of various businesses will need more clarity on the extent and timing of this construction in order to make important business and operational decisions. For example, if construction is expected to begin in fourth quarter 2025, a key question is whether the moorings south of Pier 25 will be able to operate during the full 2025 season which ends in November. A second question is whether the construction work would impact the transportation vessel operated by Citigroup, or other vessels that use the town dock at Pier 25. Grand Banks, a historic vessel with a food concession, is also located on the southwest side of Pier 25 and may be impacted due to noise and visual impacts during construction. Accordingly, HRPT requests that BPCA commence consulting with us and potentially with all impacted HRP tenants so that the economic impact to the Pier 25 businesses and HRPT along with possible mitigation are considered during the permitting discussions between HRPT and BPCA.

Summary

In sum, HRPT appreciates the many meetings BPCA has scheduled to keep HRPT up to date on project planning and to hear the Trust's concerns. Overall, HRPT believes the DEIS addresses impacts to HRP during construction and operation of the Proposed Project and understands that certain details cannot yet be communicated until BPCA's design and construction plans are further progressed. Two areas that could be addressed however in the FEIS as recommended above includes the potential impacts to the area where two terrorism attack victims are

remembered inclusive of consideration of the October 31st annual memorial procession, and the additional rainwater and sewer flow into the CSO and Estuarine Sanctuary resulting from the new proposed pump station.

HRPT acknowledges that some of the concerns it has raised above and in earlier meetings are best addressed as part of the final design and permitting processes. First, as noted above, HRPT requests to be engaged in the detour plans for the adjacent bikeway and pedestrian accessways when BPCA seeks permits with NYSDOT; HRPT requests to be engaged when BPCA learns of the DEP requirements for the new proposed pump station, particularly as related to the infrastructure to be located in HRP; and HRPT requests to be engaged in the final designs related to the expanded walkway connecting the two parks. Second, plans for long term maintenance and compensation related to BPCA's encroachment into HRP must be addressed in the future easement to be issued by New York State and the construction permit to be issued by HRPT. As BPCA expects to begin construction in late 2025, it is important that the engagement and negotiations begin now so that the permits with planned mitigation that protect HRP are all in place in a timely manner.

HRPT appreciates BPCA's ongoing partnership and looks forward to continuing to work together on this project and others.

Sincerely,



Robert Atterbury
EVP Park Relationships and Programs

Cc: HRPT Board of Directors
Noreen Doyle
Christine Fazio
Kim Quinones
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