

# **Hudson River Park Mission Statement and Performance Measurement Report for FY 2024-25**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

As set forth in the Hudson River Park Trust’s enabling legislation, the Hudson River Park Act (Act), Chapter 592 of the 1998 Laws of New York, the mission of the Hudson River Park Trust is to encourage, promote and expand public access to the Hudson River, to promote water-based recreation, and enhance the natural, cultural, and historic aspects of the river from north of Chambers Street to West 59th Street in New York City for residents and visitors to the area. The Trust has authority over the planning, construction, operation and maintenance of Hudson River Park.

## **PUBLIC BENEFIT**

While residents and workers in and around the west side of lower Manhattan may be the primary benefactors, the benefits of Hudson River Park (the “Park”) extend to all stakeholders including the people of the City of New York, the State of New York, local employees, and tourists and visitors from across the region, the country and the world.

## **PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT REPORT**

### **1. Plan and Design the Park**

Hudson River Park is being designed within a carefully planned environmental and regulatory framework to provide for a wide variety of active and passive recreational opportunities, including children’s playgrounds, recreational fields and courts, restroom facilities, small food concessions, boathouses, lawns, gardens, public art, cultural events, education spaces, and more. For new public park areas, Trust staff, architects, engineers and landscape architects have historically worked with local community members to identify specific programs and elements for the piers and upland areas in each community. As Park development advances, areas to be designed continue to undergo planning and collaboration with local groups consistent with Hudson River Park practices since inception.

As of the end of FY 2025, the Trust has completed construction of nearly all major, originally planned public components envisioned by the Act. Areas now in design include the Estuarium, an environmental education and science building core to the Trust’s mission, to be located in the upland area near Pier 26 and the Esplanade and upland area between West 29<sup>th</sup> and 44<sup>th</sup> Streets.

In September 2022, the Trust approved a contract with Sage & Coombe to lead a multi-disciplined design team charged with preparing the design for the new Estuarium. Throughout FY 2025, designs for the building, landscape, exhibits, and water intake and mechanical systems continued to progress, and the Trust hosted public meetings to share and solicit feedback on design. Specifically, the design team and the Trust held a meeting with Manhattan Community Board 1 in June 2024 to share updates on the schematic designs. Since then, refinements have continued based on the community and Board feedback and the team continued to identify cost saving measures as the Trust does not yet have full funding for this project.

In January 2024, the Trust selected Marvel Architects, Landscape Architects, Urban Designers, PLLC (Marvel) in response to a Request for Proposals to lead a team to design the unfinished area of Hudson River Park located between West 29<sup>th</sup> and 46<sup>th</sup> Streets – a challenging area due to existing land uses and other occupancies. Marvel has been engaged in planning and design work, and several stakeholder meetings were held throughout FY 2025. The design team was introduced to Manhattan Community Board 4 in July 2024, and then to certain tenants and other occupants operating in that area in August and September 2024. The Trust then organized a community engagement meeting held on January 13, 2025 at the Intrepid Museum. Over 70 attendees participated in an interactive session designed to solicit input from stakeholders and spark discussion among participants on their programmatic interests for the area between W 39<sup>th</sup> Street and Pier 84 – the first area of design focus within this zone.

Throughout the year, the Trust continued to engage with the Battery Park City Authority (BPCA) regarding its proposed Northwest Resiliency project, which aims to install floodwalls and other measures around this portion of Battery Park City to prevent damage from storm surge to that residential and commercial community. A small portion of that project would occur within the southern portion of Hudson River Park and its Estuarine Sanctuary, with other work occurring adjacent to the Park. The Trust staff carefully reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement released by BPCA in late August 2024 and provided comments to address operational and construction related impacts to the Park, inclusive of some concerns raised to the Trust by its Advisory Council. Separately, the Trust also had preliminary discussions about potential habitat enhancements for the Sanctuary area that would be affected. Staff will continue to engage with BPCA as planning continues, including regarding final design to restore the impacted area in the Park after construction by BPCA is complete. Once work on the portion of Hudson River Park that would be affected commences, construction is expected to last several years.

The Trust also continues to work with the New York State Department of Transportation on design and other aspects of review required before the Trust can receive federal funding for completing finishes for the permanent esplanade and bikeway that will better connect Hudson River Park with New York City's Riverside Park South in the vicinity of Pier 97.

## **2. Construct the Park**

During FY 24-25, the Trust formally opened Pier 97 as a new public park pier and conducted other construction activity.

### **A. Pier 97**

Construction of Pier 97 began in Fall 2021 and a large portion opened to the public in late December 2023. The remaining pier work was completed during the 24-25 fiscal year with the formal public opening ceremony occurring in late September 2024. This new park pier includes a playground with water spray features, a granite “all ages” slide, a sports field, gently sloping lawns, an elevated belvedere with integrated seating, and sunset plaza chairs for relaxation.

In addition to the landscaped pier, the Trust has also been constructing a new restroom, maintenance and small concession building on the adjacent upland area. Construction on that structure continued throughout the fiscal year with the expectation that the Temporary Certificate of Occupancy will be issued in Spring 2025.

## B. Gansevoort Peninsula

Construction of the 5.5 acres of new public park at the Gansevoort Peninsula, a former Department of Sanitation facility was fully completed in December 2023. The installation of a salt marsh on the north side with native grasses and plantings coupled with submerged reef balls and oyster gabions provides valuable habitat, improves resiliency and serves as an educational and research opportunity. During the first quarter of the 2024-25 fiscal year, the Trust added additional plantings, signage, lighting and decorative surfacing at the three dog runs as well. Construction of the new maintenance and restroom building was also completed, with the restrooms opening to the public in July 2024.

## C. Other Construction

In July 2024, the Trust entered into a contract with Hudson Meridian to serve as Construction Manager as Builder to plan, oversee and issue construction bids for important capital maintenance work needed at Pier 40, including continuing upgrades of the fire suppression system, repair work to the parking garage required by State and City laws, and addressing the deteriorated loading dock that surrounds the Pier 40 courtyard fields. Subject to funding and other considerations, other capital maintenance projects at Pier 40 are also anticipated. Aside from design, procurement and funding, planning for this work requires extensive coordination with Trust staff given the complexity of keeping the public parking garage, ballfields, Trust's offices and other occupant spaces open while the capital maintenance work proceeds. Actual construction is expected to occur in FY 2025-26.

In January 2025, the Trust selected a new on-call parkwide construction manager to oversee several smaller repair projects throughout the Park, including the replacement of the synthetic turf at Piers 25 and 46, repairs to the roofs at several smaller buildings, and parkwide unit paving. EverGreene Architectural Arts also began repairs to several public art pieces located in the Park.

The Trust also selected a new parkwide marine contractor in January 2025 to make the necessary repairs to piers, docks and bulkheads based on an engineering report prepared by the Trust's marine engineers. Reicon Group, LLC is expected to begin the repair work in 2025 with ongoing parkwide marine repairs occurring throughout the four-year contract term.

Chelsea Piers, the tenant that occupies Piers 59, 60, and 61 and the headhouse, made substantial improvements to the public walkway located adjacent to the Hudson River as required by the lease agreement between the Trust and Chelsea Piers. In addition, as required by its lease agreement with the Trust, the Intrepid Museum located near 46<sup>th</sup> Street completed the removal of an older chiller plant that resulted in an additional 4,000 square feet becoming public open space at Pier 86.

## **3. Operate and Maintain the Park**

The Trust continued to maintain the wide variety of plants and trees throughout the Park in FY 24-25. The Trust's Operations and Facilities Departments continued to provide day-to-day care of the Park, from daily cleaning of park areas, restrooms and office spaces, to trash and graffiti removal, to keeping fountains and other key infrastructure working in good order. Trust staff continued to manage contracts for on-call services, including janitorial, irrigation, elevator inspections, and

upgrading and repairing fire alarm systems, allowing the Park to meet its high maintenance standards.

During the 2024 season, the Trust's Horticulture Department worked with Hudson River Park Friends to host 117 volunteer events with nearly 3,000 volunteers. The Trust also continued its highly successful compost program, combining collections from the public with brown plant matter that would have become horticulture waste to create healthy, nutrient-rich soil used throughout the Park.

Beyond day-to-day care, the Trust routinely reviews the maintenance needs of the Park and updates its security and maintenance plans accordingly based on available budgets. For example, in FY 24-25, the Trust continued to expand its security system by adding new cameras and related infrastructure.

Maintaining the Park includes undertaking significant capital maintenance projects. In FY 24-25, the Trust completed the resurfacing to a water spray area at the Pier 25 playground, repaired the wood decking at Pier 45, and replaced or repaired several docks.

#### **4. Provide Free and/or Low-Cost Public Recreational, Educational and Cultural Opportunities**

Throughout FY 24-25, the Park was used by millions for walking, exercising and relaxing. The park's multiple ballfields were once again heavily used throughout the year by local schools, youth and adult leagues, and by the community more broadly during open play hours. The recently constructed sports fields at Gansevoort Peninsula and Chelsea Waterside Park provide much needed space for youth and adult leagues alike, with the Trust issuing more than 22,000 permitted field hours to more than 100 groups in FY 24-25.

During the 2024 summer season, the Trust organized and hosted over 400 free events throughout the Park footprint, including Pride weekend at Piers 45 and 46, Bollywood and Bhangra dance at Pier 63, Sunset Salsa and Dance is Life at Pier 76, Jazz at Pier 84, a new Broadway by the Boardwalk series at Clinton Cove, Tide Deck tours and science programming at Piers 26 and 57, plus a full range of fitness classes throughout the Park. Over 11,000 people attended the annual Blues BBQ festival at Pier 76 on August 10, and the Trust saw robust attendance at its other performances, festivals, educational programming, dance classes and more. In September, the Trust partnered with the New York Latin Food Festival in which 45 vendors offered savory dishes while listening to Latin music at Pier 76. The annual Pumpkin Smash event in November 2024 attracted nearly 2,000 patrons and resulted in the smashing of over 6,000 pounds of pumpkins in support of the Trust's composting program. The Trust continued its partnership with Bike New York for a second year to teach over 1,000 New Yorkers -- both adults and children -- how to ride a bike or enhance their biking skills at Pier 76. Additionally, various Park tenants continued to provide free or low-cost programming, such as free kayaking and historic boat tours, expanding the Park's reach and breadth of offerings.

The Trust's River Project once again hosted hundreds of in-person educational programs throughout FY 25, including a wide variety of enriching STEM programs, camp field trips and public drop-in programs throughout the year. Over two-thirds of available field trips hosted by the River Project hail from Title 1 Schools, and staff conducts significant outreach so that teachers

and administrators from across New York City are aware of the Park's affordable or free educational offerings. The annual Release of the Fishes at the Pier 40 Wetlab held in late October 2024 attracted a record number of community members to the event.

The Park continued to work closely with many permittees and tenants to facilitate additional free and low-cost recreational, educational and cultural opportunities. At the Park's four purpose-built boathouses and Pier 40, permittees continued to provide safe, accessible, free and low-cost on-water boating opportunities for the public, serving over 50,000 people. Collectively, the boating permittees within the Park form the largest on-water boating program in the region. In addition, the Trust has partnered with the US Coast Guard Auxiliary and the Nautical School to provide free and low-cost boating education programs in recognition of the Sanctuary's value for recreational boating and the Trust's commitment to public safety.

### **5. Promote Environmental Stewardship and Enhance the Estuarine Sanctuary**

The Trust continues to make significant advancements in its mandate to protect and enhance existing marine habitat and the approximately 400 acres of Estuarine Sanctuary.

Environmental education has been a longstanding Trust priority, and efforts in FY 24-25 built on prior successes. Field trip programs hosted by the River Project team served over 5,000 NYC students. These programs take place at locations throughout the Park including the Pier 26 Tide Deck, Pier 40 Wetlab, Gansevoort Peninsula and the Pier 57 Discovery Tank. Field trips offer hands-on opportunities for students to explore fish, plankton, shoreline ecology, pollution, climate change and more. During the 2024 summer programming season, the Trust offered over a range of public education programs including catch & release fishing, Wetlab aquarium open hours, science lectures, early childhood STEM programming, park tours and more. The River Project also held its second annual Crab Week in mid July 2024 to promote the role of crabs in the Hudson River environment.

The Trust's annual SUBMERGE Marine Science Festival occurred May 17 and 18, 2024 at Pier 84, attracting 1,000 students and over 3,000 members of the public. Guests at the festival were able to engage with over 20 organizations including New York State, New York City, federal and non-profit partners providing unique and interesting opportunities to learn about marine science. The event also showcased a wide range of local wildlife including raptors, owls, turtles, terrapins, seahorses and crabs.

Since 2021, the Trust has installed over 35 million oysters into the Park's Sanctuary waters -- a third of New York City's total restored oyster population as of 2024. During Summer 2024, the Trust continued the third year of a five-year research program designed to assess the health and habitat of the enhancement structures located as part of the Tribeca Habitat Enhancement Project. The Trust also received a \$750,000 grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration through Congressionally Directed Funding for a multiyear research project on the 300 submerged habitat enhancement features that were installed north of the Gansevoort Peninsula's salt marsh as part of the Gansevoort Peninsula park construction project. The Trust retained an environmental consultant in June 2024 and the research began at that time.

Throughout the year, the Trust had meetings with and consulted with members of its Technical Advisory Council (TAC) as provided for in the adopted Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan (ESMP). The Trust held its fourth annual ESMP Science Sanctuary meeting in January 2025,

inviting members of the TAC along with local university and college faculty members and other environmental partners. During the meeting, the Trust provided updates on the seven research projects conducted by the River Project, including on fish ecology, eDNA, plastic pollution, water quality, pathogens, and studies focused on Park habitat enhancement efforts. Visiting scholars were also invited to share findings related to the Gansevoort Peninsula salt marsh including regarding oyster recruitment and genetics, the effects of Combined Sewer Outfall impact on microbial community assemblages, and images of the aquatic life in the Hudson River. The Trust also held the annual ESMP Technical Advisory Council meeting in February 2025 to provide a comprehensive review of the Sanctuary and plans for upcoming programs and projects.

## **6. Promote economic development and tourism in the state of New York**

Throughout the fiscal year, the Park was again visited annually by millions of people – both New Yorkers and visitors to the City. The Trust continues to work with a wide range of partners on promoting New York City as a premier destination.

In 2024, New York City announced that The Macy's July 4, 2024 fireworks display and celebration would be held along the Hudson River, with public viewing and Macy's operations occurring in Hudson River Park. The Trust coordinated extensively with Macy's, New York City's Office of Citywide Event Coordination and Management, New York City Police Department and Chelsea Piers on logistics for this massive public event that attracts enormous crowds of New Yorkers and tourists for in-person fireworks viewing while also serving millions on national live TV. Due to the extensive advance planning and engagement, the event was a noted success.

Notably, Little Island continues to receive considerable news coverage and brings many new visitors to the Park and New York City through its unique combination of iconic architecture and innovative cultural programming. Little Island's amphitheater events were sold out for the entire summer 2024 season, and the maximum ticket price was once again \$25. At Pier 57, the public park rooftop and its thrilling views continued to be a significant attraction, and the ground level Market Hall, City Winery, and Google's community classrooms all also continued to thrive. Planned construction of additional new restaurants at Pier 57 also began in FY 25. Nearby, the sunning beach and other amenities at Gansevoort Peninsula have also become a destination for New Yorkers and tourists alike.

The Intrepid Museum remains an essential attraction for many students, New Yorkers and visitors from around the world, while also honoring and serving members and former members of the United States military branches including through annual traditions like Fleet Week. Circle Line continues as perhaps New York City's most iconic maritime recreational activity.

The Trust is a founding member of the West Side Cultural Network, a collaboration between cultural institutions on the West Side to promote collective offerings occurring in the neighborhoods adjacent to the Park. Through this partnership, institutions including the Whitney Museum, the Shed, Poster House, and Highline, among others, join together to produce the Westside Festival, a daylong celebration of the vibrant cultural hub that has emerged between the Meatpacking District and Hell's Kitchen. The second Westside Festival took place in July 2024.

Throughout the year, many tenants and permittees, including but not limited to Chelsea Piers, the Intrepid Museum, Circle Line, City Winery and Vineyard, Grand Banks, Drift Inn, and the Park's carousel, miniature golf and trapeze school continued to provide significant and sometimes unique

employment opportunities while attracting and serving significant numbers of visitors. Similarly, the Trust hosted film and television shoots, fashion shows, and a wide range of non-profits for walk/run fundraisers. Nearly all these events enhanced both local employment and brought visitors to New York City.

### **7. Operate on a model of economic self-sufficiency**

The Trust seeks to ensure the Park's future financial self-sufficiency by growing its annual revenue, currently generated principally through commercial leases at certain piers as well as parking fees, shorter term occupancy permits, field fees, sponsorships, and grants and donations through its fundraising partner, Hudson River Park Friends. In FY 24-25, a new competitively procured concessionaire, New York Water Tours, began providing sightseeing cruises from Pier 40. The Trust continues its active management of the Pier 40 Parking Garage, with the result that income from the garage grew as compared to the previous year. In addition, the Trust continues to work closely with Hudson River Park Friends, a non-profit dedicated to raising money and other support for the Park; through support provided by Friends, the Trust has been able to undertake many initiatives ranging from building new playgrounds to art restoration to purchasing composting equipment over the years. Friends also provides thousands of volunteer hours that support Park care.

The Trust also negotiated and entered into a new Collective Bargaining Agreement with Local 30 of the International Union of Operating Engineers effective as of April 1, 2024 for a four-year term. Members of the union include the Trust's operations, maintenance and facilities staff who are responsible for maintaining the Park throughout the year.

Finally, while the Trust continues to face challenges long-term with respect to the continual costs of capital maintenance that were not anticipated during the Park's early planning process, the Trust continues to operate on a financially self-supporting basis, even generating modest excess operating revenue that can be used in support of the capital maintenance needs. By the end of FY 25, the Trust's unaudited financial position was more favorable than budgeted – the result of a combination of prudent spending, delays in undertaking certain necessary projects and therefore deferred expenses, and a continual and focused effort to improve the Park's financial position through optimizing revenue generating or cost offsetting opportunities.