

## **Report on Operations and Accomplishments in 2015-16**

During Fiscal Year 2016-17, the Hudson River Park Trust (HRPT) was able to advance several important initiatives that have been years in the making. Among the most notable of these achievements was New York City and HRPT Board approval of the air rights transfer from Pier 40 in exchange for a \$100 million payment to HRPT to be used to repair the pier's badly deteriorated piles. Programmatically, the Trust also continued to expand the reach and caliber of its environmental, educational and public programming, reaching hundreds of thousands of residents and visitors.

### **Construction and New Projects**

#### ***Pier 26 and Adjacent Upland Area***

In 2016, the Trust secured a \$10 million appropriation from the City, a \$10 million commitment from the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, and \$10 million as a donation from Citigroup (\$30 million in total) to fund the design and completion of the Pier 26 park finishes, significantly advancing the Trust's completion goal for the Tribeca portion of the Park. The Concept Design for Pier 26 was presented publicly in December 2016 and received broad support. Design Development is advancing, with start of construction planned for 2018.

Plans for the Tribeca park section also include an "estuarium" – a river research and education facility identified in the Act. The estuarium will be operated by Clarkson University, in association with the Trust and several participating not-for-profits. The consortium of operators was selected pursuant to a Request for Expressions of Interest. Given its location, the estuarium has enormous potential to serve children from across New York City and the entire region, as well as young adults and regular park users. Clarkson is working to identify the balance of the capital funding needed to construct the estuarium building, which is being design pro bono by renowned architect Rafael Vinoly.

#### ***Pier 40***

Pier 40 is the largest property in the Park and home to athletic fields, administrative and operating facilities of the Trust, a commercial parking garage, and commercial excursion vessels. Parking and other revenue generated at Pier 40 nets the Trust approximately \$5.9 million annually, but this is before consideration of growing capital maintenance costs for this deteriorated structure.

In 2016, a City Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) process was completed that allowed the Trust to transfer 200,000 square feet of unused development rights from Pier 40 to the St. John's Terminal Building site. The Trust entered into a \$100 million sales contract with the St. John's developer and the proceeds from that agreement will be devoted to pile repair. An additional \$14.1 million was also made available to HRPT by the City to address other Pier 40 building infrastructure deficiencies over the next three years. This additional City funding will help sustain existing recreational and revenue generating uses until private redevelopment can be initiated as intended under the Act. HRPT has begun conversations with the local

community board and elected officials regarding the future commercial and recreational use program; amendments to the Act to allow a broader array of uses and a longer lease term will be necessary in order to redevelop the pier successfully.

### ***Leroy Dog Run***

In May 2016, the Leroy Street Dog Run was officially re-opened following a complete renovation which included resurfacing, a new water feature and a doggy pool. The new doggy pool eliminates unnecessary water waste, thus saving countless gallons of potable and costly water, because it has an automatic, time-controlled shut off system. Councilmember Corey Johnson funded the restoration.

### **Morton Street Esplanade**

In 2016, HRPT began working on a large project to restore a length of historic bulkhead centered near Morton Street. The project entails stabilizing the historic bulkhead wall, followed by restoration of the adjacent paved esplanade and landscaped areas. Governor Cuomo provided the funding.

### ***Pier 54 Connector***

In 2016, the Trust continued to advance construction of the widened new pedestrian esplanade in the area between the Gansevoort Peninsula and 14<sup>th</sup> Street that is being funded largely through the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program. The Trust has been working closely with the New York State Department of Transportation to design and implement this important project, which will also improve the adjacent bikeway and create a new bus stop for future public transit service in this area.

### ***Pier 54***

During 2016-17, construction began on “Pier 55,” an exciting new public park open space and cultural performance venue thanks to a groundbreaking donation from Barry Diller and Diane Von-Furstenberg and their family foundation. Unfortunately, construction was halted following a suit against the Army Corps of Engineers, but permits have now been reissued, with construction commencing again shortly.

### ***Pier 57***

Pier 57 is located within the Park at approximately West 15<sup>th</sup> Street. The pier, which is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, is currently being redeveloped privately by through a partnership between Young Woo & Associates and RXR Realty. Pursuant to the lease, the developers are creating more than 3 acres of new public open space at the pier, while also incorporating office space for Google as well as space for a new public market and other cultural, entertainment, retail and maritime uses. The lease will generate critical new income for Hudson River Park’s operations, but it will also enhance an area of the park that has long been inactive. Construction of the in-water portions of two new pedestrian paths that will form part of the Hudson River Park esplanade was completed in 2016.

## ***Superstorm Sandy***

Superstorm Sandy caused tens of millions of dollars of damage throughout Hudson River Park, and the Trust has continued to work on a recovery plan that will make the park more resilient while simultaneously completing the needed repairs.

## **Public Recreation and Events**

### ***Summer of Fun***

In 2016, the Park continued to provide a variety of free recreational programming for New Yorkers, families and visitors as part of the “Summer of Fun” series. The 2015 series hosted more than 200,000 people attending scores of free and low-cost events.

Among the many highlights was the inaugural Hudson River Dance Festival. Paul Taylor Dance Company, Parsons Dance and Ballet Hispanico performed on an open air stage with the setting sun as a backdrop. This free event was presented in conjunction with the SHS Foundation, with support from the Joyce Theater and funding from the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation.

Also memorable was the 16th annual Blues BBQ was held at Pier 26 -- the crowd of 12,000 people was the event’s largest ever. Clear sunny skies matched the summer soundtrack provided by the Otis Taylor Band, Naomi Shelton & the Gospel Queens, Jarekus Singleton, Vaneese Thomas and the Ed Palermo Big Band. Fantastic food was served by Dinosaur Bar-B-Que, Mighty Quinn's Barbeque, Brother Jimmy’s BBQ and Butcher Bar.

Many other free events took place throughout the park’s four miles during the summer of 2015: Sunset Salsa, Healthy on the Hudson Fitness classes, Riverflicks, the Hudson RiverKids family entertainment series, and the Riverrocks Concert Series all appealed to different audiences and were all free and programmed directly by the Trust’s staff. In addition, the Trust partnered with Live Nation to program the JBL Live series of paid concerts at Pier 97.

### ***Guest Events***

Every year, the park is host to many other exciting events programmed by various park partners. Here are just a few examples from 2016:

- Pier 25 and Pier 26 again hosted the Association of Volleyball Professionals New York City Open. The competition kicked off with an open qualifying tournament and concluded with the finals, which were televised live on national television. The tournament, which offered free general admission, brought thousands of beach volleyball fans to the park.
- The world’s fair experience for dogs and their people came to Pier 97 In May 2016. BarkFest, presented by park-wide partner Bark Box, featured music, the latest in doggy tech, instagram “celebridogs”, a ball pit, an agility course and an art lounge.
- Coach returned to the Park on September 13, 2016 for their second fashion show at Pier 76. They unveiled their Spring Ready to Wear 2017 line featuring their new vintage inspired Coach 1941 Collection, which Vogue magazine described as rebellious, tougher and more embellished than ever. In attendance were Serena Williams, Courtney Love, Winona Ryder and Anna Wintour.

- Citigroup brought the excitement of the 2016 Rio Olympic Games to Pier 26 with “Rio on the Hudson.” The free, week-long event allowed New Yorkers to experience the Olympic spirit firsthand while supporting Team USA. Highlights included authentic Brazilian cuisine and entertainment; appearances by US Olympians and Paralympians including Mia Hamm, Jackie Joyner-Kersey, Rudy Garcia-Tolson and Scout Basset; a race along a virtual wall in a ten meter dash against track and field sensation Allyson Felix, a four-time Olympic gold and two-time silver medalist; celebrating the return of golf to the Olympics by testing a swing in a golf simulator; and the opportunity to learn about the Paralympic movement by trying out a sport featured in the Paralympic Games like Wheelchair Basketball or Goalball.
- Hudson River Park again hosted the annual “Heritage of Pride” celebration, along with other formal and informal celebrations associated with Pride Week. Together, these events bring many thousands to locations along the four-mile-long park. Park staff works closely with festival organizers, the NYC Police Department and the local community to make sure the events are successful and safe.

### *Sports Facilities*

Aside from cultural and event programming, our Public Events staff facilitated recreational play for the hundreds of thousands of park goers who participate in organized sports activities on Park courts and fields, hosting soccer, baseball, lacrosse, rugby, basketball, tennis and more. Thanks to quality programming provided by the Park’s wide range of for-profit and non-profit tenants under the Trust’s oversight, tens of thousands more also played beach volleyball, mini golf, rowed, kayaked, dared the trapeze, swam or cycled.

### **Environment and Education**

#### *Education*

Hudson River Park offers free and low cost environmental education programs for school groups, summer camps and the general public, using the Hudson River waterfront as its classroom.

In 2016, our Environmental Education Department had another great summer educating New Yorkers about our local waterways, including the launch of two new programs: Senior Fishing and the instant success, “Shell-ebrate Oysters.” Staff hosted 460 school and camp programs throughout the year, which together with other environmental programs, served 27,000 children and adults.

This amount of quality education programming would not occur without our Student Conservation Association interns. HRPT staff provides valuable training to these AmeriCorps interns who then go on to serve as environmental educators in parks and non-profits throughout the region.

In September 2016, Hudson River Park and the New York Hall of Science hosted SUBMERGE NYC Marine Science Festival, a free, day long science extravaganza at Pier 26. SUBMERGE was produced by our Environment and Education Department to advance public awareness of our local waterways and bring together dozens of organizations to share in this mission.

In 2016, attendance doubled from 2014 with 7,000 attendees. Participants could steer an underwater remote operated vehicle, tour a marine science research vessel or watch a live SCUBA dive in the Hudson River. SUBMERGE participants had many opportunities to engage with marine wildlife, including dropping in a line to try and catch one of the 70 fish species that thrive in Hudson River Park's waters. Budding marine scientists also put on their thinking caps to become "H2O Data Detectives" and helped solve questions about water quality throughout the Hudson River and assess impact that seasons and storms have on our waters. Chris Duffy, host of NPR's *You're the Expert*, made science dynamic and funny as he interviewed three accomplished scientists on the festival's Science Stage. Dynamic science entertainers like *Mad Scientist* and *Arm of the Sea* also performed and kept audiences on the edge of their seats with larger than life experiments and storytelling.

Last year, the Park's compost program expanded and became a city-wide collection site for food scraps at Chelsea Waterside and Pier 40. The Park's compost initiative has helped keep all organic waste generated in the Park stay in the Park, converting 350,000 pounds of organic waste into "black gold" compost and helping the Park's plants flourish. Hudson River Park is setting the new standard for large urban parks and waste management.

Another new initiative for 2016 was the expansion of our programming partnership with Hudson Guild Community Center to include senior talks at the senior center, evening programming for families such as Family Fun Night, and winter/spring school break programming called HR Maker for 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> graders. HR Maker connects marine science to STEM principles to bring basic river concepts to life and increases local environmental awareness through engineering challenges. Upon completion of the program, over 70% identified as Makers and 80% of the students said that they enjoyed hands-on science even more!

### *Environmental Monitoring Initiatives*

With its lush greenery and estuarine waters, Hudson River Park provides a much needed habitat and travel corridor for numerous fishes, birds, crustaceans and insects. The Park monitors local wildlife populations and water quality conditions to understand the health of our sanctuary and inform restoration and management efforts. In addition, these environmental monitoring projects provide an interactive, hands-on way for the Park's Environment & Education Department to engage student groups and the general public. The data from these projects also support larger research initiatives that help protect and restore wildlife and natural resources on local, regional and national levels.

- Oyster Restoration

Historically, oysters have played a major role both ecologically and economically in the Hudson River Estuary. However, oyster populations began to see a significant decline in the mid- 19th century from over exposure to toxic chemicals, over harvesting and habitat loss. The Trust has been a key Billion Oyster Project partner since its conception in 2014 and today is the largest host of BOP oyster cages. In 2016, the Trust monitored three Oyster Restoration Stations and supported 12 teachers and non-profits their cage

deployment and student research projects within the park. Collectively, these initiatives support the environment but also build awareness and stewardship of NYC waterways.

- Marine Debris Monitoring

Hudson River Park participates in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Marine Debris Program. Marine debris constitutes one of the most widespread pollution problems in the world's waters today. Marine debris monitoring programs are necessary to compare debris sources, amounts, locations, movement, and impacts across New York, the US and internationally. Park staff and volunteers collect, categorize and weigh marine debris on Hudson River Park's soft shoreline at Gansevoort Peninsula. This information helps the Park examine the spatial distribution and variability of debris, and investigate temporal trends in debris types and concentration. Hudson River Park in partnership with Brooklyn College led a microplastic research project to obtain baseline microplastic concentration data for Park waters. Throughout the summer of 2016, samples were collected from channel and nearshore sites at both midtown and downtown locations. The study found an average microplastic concentration of 188,657 pieces/km<sup>2</sup>. Notably, a significant difference in microplastic concentrations was found between Channel and Near Shore sites, but not between midtown and downtown waters. The vast majority (70%) of the plastics identified were fragments and nurdles, nearly all of which were under 5mm. These data, while limited to sixteen samples, seem consistent with that of other local monitoring initiatives. This study contributes to the growing body of regional microplastic data and supports efforts for policy reform.

- Other Environmental Initiatives

In addition to these projects, Hudson River Park partners with NYC Water Trail, The River Project and Village Community Boathouse to involve citizen scientists in tracking Enterococcus bacteria levels within the river; Hudson River Park staff also records information about fish caught (and released back to the river) during our Park programs and from Park traps; and is part of a network of partners gathering real-time water quality data about the Hudson River through the Hudson River Environmental Conditions Observation System (HRECOS) network.

### **Private Sector Partnerships**

Hudson River Park was conceived as a public-private partnership. Since the Trust's inception, the Park has worked with partners ranging from large scale commercial tenants like Chelsea Piers and Circle Line to non-profit boating and community organizations to help activate and enliven the park while also generating income in the form of rent to support park operations.

In addition, the Park relies on the financial support and community engagement provided through our partnership with Friends of Hudson River Park. This collaboration has continued to expand, in particular through the successes of its Playground Committee, which in 2016-17 secured the private funding needed for an ambitious redesign and renovation of the Chelsea

Waterside Playground. The Hudson River Park Gala in October 2016 raised significant private money for horticultural programs and operations and brought attention to the park's accomplishments and goals for the future. In addition, Friends hosted the second annual Hudson River Park Games, filling the park with athletic challenges for competitors and spectators alike to enjoy, all while raising critically-needed funds for Hudson River Park.

In 2016, Friends again worked side by side with park staff to recruit and manage a host of volunteers from corporations, schools and other organizations. Volunteers work alongside the Park's horticultural staff doing weeding, planting, and other improvements, and the Park has come to rely more and more on their contributions.

In late July 2016, the City Vineyard restaurant and wine garden located at Pier 26 at North Moore Street as the result of a public bidding and significant action processes conducted by the Trust for a restaurant tenant. The 50-seat interior restaurant space is all glass walled and the second story rooftop and outdoor seating area is a significant part of the operation. The indoor/outdoor design is connected to the Park theme of green living plant life.