



**Report to Hudson River Park Advisory Council
September 29, 2020**

Environmental Initiatives:

The biggest event of the month was SUBMERGE, the Park's day-long marine science festival. You received materials about it from Chair LeFrancois, but in case you weren't able to participate in it, we hope you will spend some time visiting our website and watching some of the videos that were prepared for it: <https://hudsonriverpark.org/the-park/parks-river-project/program-recaps/highlights-river-projects-submerge/>.

This was the Trust's seventh year of producing SUBMERGE, and this year, due to COVID, we embraced the challenge of converting a festival that normally attracts 7,000 or more people to a Park pier to a fully digital experience. We are more than pleased to share that the event was a phenomenal success. We had 6,000 people tuning in through Facebook, Zoom and our website combined. Within that total, there was strong student and teacher engagement with 2,000 students participating throughout the day. We had so many thoughtful questions that our experts were able to answer in real time, which was a really special aspect of the festival.

Many Park partners took the time to produce custom video content and lectures – we'd like to give shout-outs to BioBus, Billion Oyster Project, Clearwater Sloop, Gotham Whale, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Randall's Island Park Alliance, Bronx River Alliance, Cafeteria Culture, Jamaica Bay Terrapin Research, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University and Marine Biological Lab of Woods Hole, Massachusetts, for their contributions! Among the many innovations for this year's event was the inauguration of the Student Vision Challenge. Students in grades K-12 were invited to identify an environmental issue impacting the Hudson River and to design a solution for it. The winners presented their solutions live during the festival. One was a GPS-operated robotic system to monitor the extent of pollution in the Hudson River!

Producing this event involved a large group of Trust employees who solved many logistical issues including ensuring that teachers and schools were aware of and could participate in the event. Staff reached out to teachers that frequently engage with the Trust during the planning phase to test the timing and the content units that could best serve children, especially given the remote setting. In addition, extensive outreach was conducted to the Department of Education and individual schools and administrators. The whole event included either closed captions or live ASL translation to provide accessibility. We are very proud of our River Project staff's efforts, as well as those of all of our partners.

Since our last meeting is that the Trust has resumed and even expanded its Community Compost Program to include three new locations. People can now bring their compost to the

Pier 25 playground, Dog run at Leroy St., Pier 46, Pier 51, 14th St. Park, Chelsea Waterside Park, Pier 66 Habitat Area, 33rd St. along esplanade, Pier 84 Community Garden and near Pier 96 in Clinton Cove. The new locations are at the overlook at Charles St., the Pier 66 Habitat Area and by the boathouse in Clinton Cove. Our composting operation is open seven days each week from 7 am to 7 pm and we have installed new educational signs at each location to better inform the public about what is or isn't eligible to compost. Our staff collects the food scraps and brings them to our Compost yard located at 33rd Street where it is processed and turned into compost for the Park's plants. HRPT is especially happy to be able to reinstitute this program, which was paused at the start of COVID, now that NYC has had to discontinue its efforts because of budget concerns.

Now that composting has resumed, we are also making plans to resume the annual Pumpkin Smash. The Trust is tentatively planning to host the in-person event on Saturday, November 7th from 11am – 3pm at Chelsea Waterside Park. In order to control crowds and maintain social distance practices, the event will require pre-registration. As in past years, the smashed pumpkins will be converted to compost.

As requested at the last Advisory Council meeting, a diagram showing the Tribeca Habitat Enhancements project area is attached. We have been asked by Chair LeFrancois to do a detailed presentation at next week's meeting which we will do.

Staff members at NYSDEC are currently reviewing a draft of the Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan. The document will need to be shared with the Board's Sanctuary Committee once we receive and are able to incorporate feedback into the draft.

We are pleased to share that we received a 2.5 year National Institute of Health grant in partnership with a science education group called Killer Snails. Dr. Mande Holford, co-founder of Killer Snails and chemist at Hunter College and the American Museum of Natural History, has spoken on our SUBMERGE Science Stage previously and was a panelist at [the STEM Diversity and Inclusion panel](#) that the Trust co-hosted with The NY Academy of Sciences in August (see below) which has seen over 2,800 views since the virtual event in July. The Trust was invited to be a key partner in this grant after learning about our ongoing Pier 32 oyster wrap research project. Ultimately, the goal of this project is to create Artificial Reality (AR) resources that teach about the importance of water quality and impact of environmental pollutants, potentially by study of the Eastern oyster. The AR tools will be trialed by students and community members who connect with the Sanctuary through the Park's programming. The funding covers personnel and supplies for some of our oyster programs.

The Stem Diversity and Inclusion Panel mentioned above is one of a number of initiatives that the Park's River Project conducts to support and increase participation by students that are from communities historically underrepresented in STEM. Our summer research internship program, which concluded in August, invited local students to participate in authentic research on the Hudson River with our partners from the Intrepid Museum (Advisory Council member) and Columbia University. During this summer research internship, students learn about science

leadership and communication through a tiered mentorship program that continues into college for interested students. The Trust has been working on this program for several years.

Design and Construction:

Pier 26 is about to open! As you know, the Trust has invited members of the Advisory Council to tour the pier on Tuesday, 9/29 at 4 pm. Covid means that we can't have the traditional big public celebration we would love to have for the first public park pier to open in Hudson River Park in 10 years, but this is still a moment for celebration. It has been exciting to see the pier that emerged from community conversations several years ago come to life. At the outset, it seemed almost impossible to imagine that we could achieve a design that provided for both the recreational and environmental features that representatives for the community both advocated for. In the last couple of weeks, the sports netting, grass and environmental interpretives have been some of the final elements to be installed, and we can't wait to share this pier with the public. We encourage all of you to make time to visit the pier while the weather is still pleasant this fall.

As reported at the last meeting, James Corner Field Operations and melk! continue to advance construction documents for the Gansevoort Peninsula and Pier 97 and its associated upland area, respectively. Toshiko Mori Architects has incorporated refinements to the design of the park building near Pier 97 in response to comments by the Public Design Commission and Community Board 4. We expect both locations to start construction next year.

HRPT has been in touch with Community Board 4 to request the opportunity to provide an updated presentation on the dog run planning for the Chelsea Waterside Phase 2 reconstruction project. We are planning to present at the October 8th meeting. As noted in the last report, construction funding for Chelsea Waterside Phase 2 is from air rights sales to the properties on Block 675 so it has not been affected by State and City budget freezes due to COVID. We are currently reviewing a number of proposals for a construction site manager in response to an RFP and expect to have a selection ready for the December Board meeting. We expect to bid for the construction work in early 2021.

We continue to work with the State and City with respect to budgets but are still optimistic that we will be able to start construction on both projects in early 2021.

At Pier 57, staff is working on planning content for the environmental classroom that will be constructed as part of the facility. Construction continues on the Google office spaces, and we are hopeful that we will be able to come to the community soon with the development team to provide an update on the public market and other aspects of the project. We are expecting City Winery at Pier 57 to open in a very limited capacity in early October. Capacity would be limited in accordance with the State and City's Covid restrictions.

Most Advisory Council members know that pile and building repair at Pier 40 is underway thanks to funding from the \$100 million sale of air rights as part of the "St. John's" property

transaction, a contribution of \$5.5 million from the developer of the property at Leroy and West streets, and a \$14.1 million commitment by the City for building infrastructure work. Thus, \$105.5 million of Pier 40 repairs are to be funded from non-governmental sources and \$14.1 from government.

For those of you who were not here at the time, or for anyone who needs a refresher, Pier 40 is the Park's largest pier, and under the Hudson River Park Act is designated as one of the locations where "park/commercial" uses can be located to generate funding for Park operations while also having the equivalent of at least 50% of its footprint as public open space. The Trust inherited the pier in poor structural condition, and the sale or air rights and other funding was intended to address some of the extremely costly repairs needed to keep the pier in operation for its current uses.

As part of the public process required for the air rights sale, the Trust identified a number of infrastructure needs and provided engineering reports and cost estimates for the biggest concern – the deteriorated 3,463 steel piles that support the pier. Following ULURP and the Trust's Significant Action process, the Trust sold 200,000 square feet of development rights for \$100 million dollars and restricted these funds to Pier 40 pile and building repair.

The Trust is now several years into the pile repair program, and some good news is that we have not had to close portions of ballfields during construction as was originally anticipated. The pile repair works has been divided into seven phases of roughly similar size. The first two phases are complete, and four additional phases are currently in contract and under construction. The third phase is approximately 61% complete, the fourth phase is about 23% finished, the fifth phase is nearly 60% done, and the sixth phase is roughly 40% complete. While construction work is still subject to potential change orders and cost escalations, the Trust has thus far contracted for approximately \$63.5 million for the first six phases of work. We anticipate that the seventh and final phase of pile work will go out to bid early next year with an anticipated cost of about \$10.5 million. The possibility of supplemental work to replace fender piles on the south side of Pier 40 is currently being considered.

In addition to Pier 40 pile work, the Trust has finished or is currently under contract for approximately \$23 million of building repairs. These repairs include replacement of the courtyard field (complete), reconstruction of the southern roof (under construction), rebuild of the ramp to the roof (complete), and repairs to the building façade (construction starting). Roof work is scheduled for completion by next May or June. We anticipate applying the remaining \$8.5 million of non-governmental funds to a series of Pier 40 repairs including reconstructing the rooftop fields and for partial funding of the eastern roof.

Approximately \$4.4 million of the City's \$14.1 million commitment has thus far been spent on building sprinkler repairs and the reconstruction of a roof top walkway giving access to the rooftop fields. The remaining \$9.7 million is anticipated to be spent on repairs to the eastern roof. This final phase of the roof work will occur after completion of the southern roof and restoration of the passive field.

As building conditions at Pier 40 are evaluated in the future, additional repairs not currently identified with matching funding sources will likely become necessary.

Public Programming:

It may be Fall but public programming is continuing. Virtual Healthy on the Hudson, Backyard Bioblitz, Hudson RiverKids Story Hour, Virtual Science Walks and Bollywood and Bhangra dancing are among the ways you and your loved ones can stay happy and engaged in Park programming through October.

Hudson River Park's sports fields are their usual busy selves, with schools, leagues and teams all practicing social distancing in accordance with the guidance from New York State.

It's already time for us to start thinking about Park partnerships and sponsors for next year's free public and environmental programs. If any Advisory Council members have ideas or suggestions for us, we would welcome hearing them.

Operations:

We continue to try to support social distancing in the park, and installed dozens of new signs and temporary decals over the past month to try to keep things fresh. PEP still hands out thousands of masks each weekend. Hand sanitizer stations have been installed in several public locations.

The Greenwich Village Park section continues to host one or more protests each week. The protests have been peaceful.

HRPT has received approximately 2 dozen recycling cans from the Department of Sanitation in response to our request. This is part of a parkwide initiative to increase the amount and quality of recycling. Data collection is a key part of the program.

Park officers (PEP) successfully performed CPR on Pier 63 during the week of September 21st, saving a life. PEP also performed a successful water rescue at Pier 51. Five more officers will be receiving bike training from New York City Parks starting on September 30.

At the recent Community Board 1 meeting, the Trust was also asked to provide its opinion on the Battery Park City Authority's planned resiliency project, which would entail building a barrier along the eastern edge of the State DOT bikeway as well as expanded into the water area south of Pier 25. We can provide more information to the Advisory Council as desired as this is a complex project. Our short response to Community Board 1 is that we have told BPCA that we need to see information on coastal modeling to understand whether and how the proposals would affect the park, and that we also need to see more information about the proposed barrier along the bikeway, including hearing from the State and City Departments of

Transportation about any concerns they may have about safety or operational issues associated with this structure.

Staff has spoken with the NYC Economic Development Corporation directly about the concerns that the Advisory Council has discussed with respect to the planned ferry expansion at Pier 79: wakes, bus layovers, pedestrian and bike conflicts, and the desire for a meeting with the non-motorized vessel community. EDC agrees that the meeting among the ferry operators and the boating community would be beneficial. Other issues do not yet have any answers other than that HRPT will keep them on the table as the issues raised by the Advisory Council are important to the Trust as well.

For several years, the Trust has been using Cartegraph, a Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS), to assist with aspects of park care, such as tracking maintenance or repair requests, scheduling preventive maintenance and inspections, and managing inventory. Over the past several months, the staff has been conducting a thorough review of the system. The project team has just issued a number of recommendations to increase functionality for the system. These include acquiring a mobile app for recording information in the field and bar code scanning to better track the stocking and use of inventory. The Trust aims to improve efficiency and performance of certain required tasks through these improvements.

The Trust is seeking a new parking garage operator at Pier 40 through an RFP process. Public procurement requires we do new procurements periodically.

HRPT Board of Directors

Many of you have likely already heard that Governor Cuomo has appointed Basil Seggos, Commissioner of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, to be the Trust's new chair. In addition, Mayor DeBlasio has appointed Aloysee Heredia Jarmoszuk, Commissioner of the NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission and Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer has appointed Lowell Kern to our Board. Commissioner Seggos replaces Diana Taylor as the Board Chair, Commissioner Heredia Jarmoszuk replaces Jon Halpern and Lowell Kern replaces Douglas Durst.

Commissioner Seggos was already an important member of the Trust's Board of Directors given the number and range of Park issues that involve NYSDEC. Lowell Kern has also been a longtime member of the Park family given his involvement with Community Board 4 and the Advisory Council. Commissioner Heredia Jarmoszak brings a wealth of experience in the public and private sectors and is also a Park neighbor. Staff welcomes them all to their new roles, and is eager to work with each as we collectively work to continue advancing and improving the Park.

At the same time, we would be remiss in not acknowledging the extent of volunteer time and passion that Diana, Douglas and Jon all devoted to the Park as Board members. Each provided advice, counsel, financial, real estate, planning and other skills to the Park, and virtually never missed a meeting or important conversation.

Please join us in thanking Diana, Douglas and Jon for their huge contributions to the Park and in welcoming our new leadership.