



Report on Operations and Accomplishments in 2020-21

During Fiscal Year 2020-21, the Hudson River Park Trust (Trust) again advanced planning, construction, environmental, programming and operational initiatives that are at the heart of its mission. Despite the enormous budgetary and operational challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Park was able to serve the public with both high quality public open space and accessible environmental, educational, fitness and recreational programming that reached individuals and families from around the world. The Park was even able to open new public open space during the pandemic through the completion of Pier 26.

Construction and New Projects

Pier 26

The Trust successfully opened Pier 26 in September 2020, providing new public space to the public at a time when public space was in greater demand than ever before due to the pandemic. Pier 26's design celebrates the Hudson River estuary and uniquely includes a "Tide Deck" – an engineered salt marsh with tidal pools at its western tip. A small, active sports area supports the recreational needs of the expanding community of children in Lower Manhattan. The local community, represented by Community Board 1, provided strong support for the design vision. Since its opening, the sunning lawn, deck seating, shade pavilions and sports play area have proven to be immensely popular features, and the Trust's River Project staff has been monitoring habitat and offering educational tours of the Tide Deck and plant communities.

Tribeca Habitat Enhancements between Piers 26 and 34

In 2019, Governor Cuomo announced his intention to implement an oyster and habitat enhancement project in the Tribeca portion of the Estuarine Sanctuary located between Piers 26 and 34. In conjunction with the State Department of Environmental Conservation, and with input from the science community, the Trust developed a project to enhance habitat in the area, using existing Park infrastructure where possible. Specific enhancement features include: placement of biohuts around certain existing piles; installing gabions and reef balls with seeded oyster shells in the interpier areas; installing textured piles; and wrapping select existing piles with mesh fabric containing oyster shells. The Trust secured regulatory approvals and selected a marine construction contractor through a competitive procurement process in FY 20-21. In-water work is scheduled to begin in Summer 2021.

Pier 40

Pier 40 is the largest single property in the Park and is home to heavily-used athletic fields, administrative and operating facilities of the Trust, a commercial parking garage, and commercial excursion vessels, among other uses. Revenue generated at Pier 40 from parking and maritime uses is a major source of Park operations funding. Nevertheless, Pier 40 has not reached its full potential for either public open space or revenue generation – a fact attributable both to the pier’s condition and to limitations in the Park’s enabling statute.

When the Park came into existence, Pier 40 was already in poor structural condition, and the Trust has had to implement costly repairs to repair portions of the building’s roof, piles, life safety and other systems over many years, diminishing its intended financial benefit to the overall Park.

In 2016, following an amendment to state legislation and a formal zoning action by New York City among other actions, the Trust was able to transfer 200,000 square feet of unused development rights from Pier 40 to the nearby 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 are now devoted to repairing Pier 40’s deteriorated infrastructure including the approximately 3,600 individual piles that support Pier 40. Pile repair work was organized into seven separate procurements. Repairs to the piles in Phases 1 and 2 have been completed, and in FY 20-21, divers from several marine construction firms installed individual “jackets” and made other repairs as part of the Phases 3, 4, 5 and 6 work. All four of these phases are expected to be completed by Summer 2021. The final phase, Phase 7, will commence and be completed in 2022.

In FY 20-21, the Trust also entered into contracts and commenced work on additional Pier 40 infrastructure projects, including some façade repairs and roof reconstruction.

Gansevoort Peninsula

The Gansevoort Peninsula is an approximately 5.5-acre parcel that was used by the NYC Department of Sanitation until 2018. In 2018, NYC completed the removal of the Sanitation facility, providing a clean slate for a large new park area at Hudson River Park.

In FY 20-21, the Trust and its competitively selected design team, James Corner Field Operations, completed the design for such new public park space with the goal of commencing construction in the next fiscal year. The design includes the construction of a resilient beach, boardwalk and kayak launch on the south side, a salt marsh on the north side, a large synthetic turf ball field, dog run, adult fitness area, lawn for passive recreation, small park building and a variety of paths and esplanades.

The design process for the Gansevoort Peninsula included hearing from the public about the types of uses that were desired for this large area. The final approved design has received overwhelming support by Community Board 2 and the public.

Throughout FY 20-21, the Whitney Museum of American Art continued fabrication of a new, permanent public art installation located on the south side of the Gansevoort Peninsula, entitled *Day's End* by artist David Hammons. *Day's End* derives its inspiration and name from Gordon Matta-Clark's 1975 artwork once located in the same location. Construction is expected to be completed in Spring 2021 and the Whitney will then donate the sculpture to the Trust as a permanent part of the Park.

Little Island (formerly known as Pier 55)

Construction of Little Island, a new 2.7-acre public park pier with arts programming, also advanced significantly in FY 20-21, with the opening scheduled for Spring 2021. In addition to a new formal outdoor amphitheater, the pier includes winding pathways, beautiful lawns and plantings, and restroom facilities. The cost of Pier 55 is estimated at \$250 million, with most of the funding coming from the private donor, the Diller-von Furstenberg Family Foundation. The pier is being constructed and operated pursuant to a lease approved by the Trust. Among other conditions, the Trust requires that the majority of cultural programming at the pier be either free or low cost.

Pier 57

Pier 57 is located within the Park at approximately West 15th Street. The pier, which is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, is currently being redeveloped privately 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. Interior work by the two subtenants – Google and City Winery – continued in FY 20-21 and City Winery opened to the public during the Fiscal Year in accordance with NYS and NYC Department of Health reopening requirements during the COVID pandemic. Pier 57 will also host an environmental education facility being operated by the Trust's River Project staff. During FY 20-21, the Trust staff worked with the Pier 57 team to advance creative interactive exhibit design for a portion of the space.

Chelsea Waterside Park

The Trust's and a design team led by Abel Bainnson Butz continued the design of the Chelsea Waterside Park Phase II upgrades in FY 20-21. The design includes a long-awaited comfort station with solar panels to reduce the Park's energy footprint, an expanded dog run and permanent picnic area, and a reconstructed synthetic turf field, among other improvements. The design has been presented to Community Board 4 and the public and has been well received. Construction is scheduled to begin in late Summer 2021.

Pier 76

In January 2021, New York City removed the former tow pound from Pier 76 and transferred ownership of the pier to the Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). OPRHP began demolition and other construction activities required to transform the pier into interim public park space, and in March 2021, Governor Cuomo announced that the public would have access to Pier 76 in June 2021. Completion of this work will add much-needed outdoor space in time for the 2021 summer season, and the Trust is preparing to operate the pier once construction is complete.

Pier 97

The Trust and the design team led by Imelk completed design plans for Pier 97 and secured approvals for the design from New York City's Public Design Commission given the property is located on city-owned land. Pier 97's design includes a distinctive new playground, multipurpose activity field, sun lawn, belvedere and sunset deck in addition to pathways, lush plantings and other park amenities, including a new restroom and small concession. Community Board 4 has overwhelmingly supported the park design for this pier and the nearby upland area which again benefited from the public's involvement during the design process.

At the northernmost edge of the Park, plans have long called for a modest new over-water pedestrian platform and related upland park construction between West 58th and 59th Streets to help improve circulation and safety. In FY 20-21, construction of the in-water portion was completed and the landscaping portion will be part of the construction of the Pier 97 in the next fiscal year.

Public Recreation

Throughout FY 20-21, the Park became a refuge during the COVID pandemic, with many users recognizing the value of walking, exercising and relaxing in public parks and open spaces throughout New York City. The Park remained open to the public during the entire fiscal year, and the Trust's staff and contractors undertook additional cleaning and other measures to support public safety. Other than a brief required closure in the Spring of 2020, sports fields, tennis and basketball courts, skate parks, and playgrounds remained available for public use throughout the Park in accordance with State and City Department of Health guidelines.

Free Public Events

In 2020, the Trust reimagined and created its free public events series so that it could occur virtually due to COVID. The first virtual *Summer of Fun* included past summer

favorites such as jazz performances, Sunset Salsa lessons, STEM expert lectures, field science exposes, virtual summer camps and Healthy on the Hudson fitness classes. Visitors to the Trust's website and social media platforms came from over the world, demonstrating the value of some continued virtual public programming in the future.

Sports Facilities

The Trust facilitated recreational play for the hundreds of thousands of park goers who participate in organized sports activities on Park courts and fields, including use by soccer and baseball leagues. 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 and mini golf.

Environmental Education, Science and Stewardship

The Trust continues to take seriously its mandate to protect and enhance existing marine habitat and the 400 acres of Estuarine Sanctuary. This is achieved through multiple partnerships and science projects including a robust slate of research initiatives, through work on the Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan, and through direct efforts to enhance the river and Park environment.

Environmental Education

Due to the social distancing guidelines required during the COVID pandemic, the Trust was not able to conduct in-person environmental education. Nevertheless, the Trust maintained its robust science education programming inspired by and focused on the Sanctuary throughout FY 2020-21. The Trust's education staff, known as the River Project, developed a series of digital educational resources for teachers, students and families to engage with the Park's 400-acre Estuarine Sanctuary from home. The resources comprised 25 publicly accessible lessons, and included hands-on experiments and activities where participants could learn about fish ecology, plankton, pollution, human impacts and more. Beyond these lessons, the Trust also offered a wide range of digital public education programs for New Yorkers to learn about the Sanctuary from anywhere. The River Project team reached over 21,000 people in 2020 through its virtual programming.

The Trust's popular SUBMERGE Marine Science Festival was also held virtually in early Fall 2020. While virtual, the event continued to showcase the diversity of research and science taking place in the Park and local waterways. Virtual attendees learned about local wildlife, field science work, and plastic pollution, and over 6,000 people attended, including over 2,000 students and teachers participating in up to four hours of free educational programming.

Science

In 2020, the Trust coordinated with Dr. Alison Fitzgerald (NJCU) and Drs. Jim Lodge (HRF) and Ray Grizzle (UNH) to characterize the benthic and epibenthic communities where the Tribeca Habitat Enhancement Project will occur in order to create a baseline understanding of existing conditions in support of future research. The Trust also continued its work on its Pier 32 oyster research initiative, which involves measuring growth and mortality rates of oysters at 12 locations over a three-year term. In addition, the Trust's River Project team furthered its collaborations with the citywide Billion Oyster Project initiative by supporting 24 oyster research stations throughout the Park, and co-led an environmental DNA research project involving the collection and sequencing of water samples for fish DNA at three Park locations with the renowned Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. Another initiative included the ongoing management of two instruments in the Hudson River Ecosystem Conditions Observing System (HRECOS) network, a group of near real time instruments in the lower Hudson River tracking and sharing water quality measures.

The Trust also continued its summer monitoring work with New York City Water Trail Association and dozens of other partners to collect, process and share data on pathogen levels in New York and New Jersey Harbor. The Trust also prepared to conduct a high frequency enterococcus sampling survey around a future rain event to generate a model that estimates pathogen contamination from CSO discharge within the Park. This model will be incorporated into the Trust's efforts to produce a water quality dashboard with help from human-centered design firm Cantina that the Trust plans to launch in Summer 2021.

The Hudson River Park Act requires the Trust to prepare and maintain an Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan (ESMP) to balance and guide activities and initiatives involving the Sanctuary. In FY 2020-21 the Trust continued its effort to update the ESMP, which will include an action plan for the next decade focused on three management areas: (1) Education, (2) Research and Habitat Enhancement, and (3) Public Access and Resource Management. Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) comprised of experts in these areas supported this effort throughout the year. The Trust will conduct a public hearing process in Summer 2021 to solicit feedback on the Draft ESMP before finalizing it later in 2021.

Sustainability

The Trust's plastics research and education programs inspired the "Park Over Plastic" initiative launched in May 2019. Park Over Plastic is a growing alliance of Park staff, visitors, tenant businesses, and other stakeholders collectively working to reduce plastic pollution in the Park and beyond. Since its launch, the Park has installed 100 recycling and landfill receptacles with biodegradable liners and over 50 indoor and outdoor water fountains with bottle refill function. Park Over Plastic has created a network of 14 tenants

that have joined on as Green Partners committed to the Trust's sustainable goals. The effort has also resulted in a two-year study of the program's impact and a published article in a peer-reviewed scientific journal focused on microplastics concentrations in the Park's Sanctuary waters. Overall, Park Over Plastic has eliminated single-use plastic products at Park-hosted events and the Trust is proactively sharing lessons learned to help other parks and organizations to reduce plastic pollution city-wide.

In addition, the Trust's Community Compost Program also continued to grow in partnership with NYC's Department of Sanitation, Council Member Corey Johnson, and Hudson River Park Friends with the addition of three new compost drop off locations in the Park. In 2020, the Park composted 386,000 pounds (lbs.) of organic waste. This is a combination of community food scraps totaling over 36,000 lbs. plus 350,000 lbs. of horticultural waste. Due to COVID-19, composting in the Park was paused between March 18 and September 14, 2020, a period of time that the Park historically receives high amounts of food scraps. Even with this gap, the total organic waste composted reached 90% of the total in 2019. Trust employees and community members were also educated at virtual workshops, volunteer events and public programming to encourage best practices in composting.

Operations and Facilities Management

From plants to pavement, and from buildings to fountains, virtually every object and corner of the Park needs care and maintenance throughout the year. The Park's Operations and Facilities team removed snow, replaced pavement, maintained marine infrastructure, mowed lawns, and repaired leaks, among countless other long- and short-term projects needed to keep the Park in good and safe condition. In 2020-21, the Trust continued to roll out security cameras in new sections of the Park.

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, Pier 57 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. Many Park tenants and shorter term permittees also conduct important programming serving schools and the general public. The Trust's River Project staff partners on some of these programs, including with staff from the Intrepid Museum, Little Island and Hudson River Community Sailing.

In addition, the Park relies on the financial support and community engagement provided through the Trust's partnership with Hudson River Park Friends. The Hudson River Park Friends virtual gala raised significant private money to support the Park. Further, Friends'

volunteers work alongside the Trust's horticultural staff doing weeding, planting, and other improvements to keep the Park looking beautiful all year long. In FY 20-21, the Park's budget was significantly reduced due to COVID, and the Trust was especially grateful to receive support through Friends that enabled the hiring of seasonal gardeners.