



**Report to Hudson River Park Advisory Council
April 8, 2021**

Pier 76:

On April 24, Governor Cuomo announced that the public will have access to Pier 76 as an interim public open space by June 1. State Parks has been leading this effort, including overseeing the initial abatement and now the demolition. The design retains the metal columns and roof members while removing the walls and ceiling to open views to the water. There is wide spacing between the columns so there will be a lot of flexibility for creative interim uses. Work has been occurring very quickly and is being performed by Galvin Brothers which also worked for State Parks on Shirley Chisholm Park along the waterfront in Brooklyn. We await the discussion about Pier 76 at the April 13th meeting.

Environmental and Sanctuary Initiatives:

The Park's River Project staff has begun offering some in-person science field trips to NYC schools while also continuing virtual tours. The Park's education team also just finished hosting a number of teacher professional development courses focused on water quality and other research data. This month, staff worked with the Intrepid Museum to offer a two day training during the DOE Spring Break, and next month will partner with Math for America a second workshop series. Both these workshops aim to increase data literacy by blending Park research with STEM education and utilizing many of the digital resources on the Park's website.

In the summer, staff is planning to open the River Project Wetlab on the south side of Pier 40. The space features a flow-through aquarium that houses native Hudson River fish that was built by the original River Project. Over the winter, our team made a number of improvements to the space including adding a Learning Lab that will now host the test processing we perform for the Park's environmental DNA research and the Citizens' Water Quality Testing program. The River Project aims to open the Wetlab for both virtual and socially-distant public tours starting in mid-July.

Starting in the late spring, our River Project team will also be offering a number of virtual programs. Among this year's highlights, we are looking forward to bringing back Live from the Field, a weekly behind the scenes look at Sanctuary science on Instagram Live, and Ask a Scientist, a monthly series that invites local scientists to share their work with a live Q&A session on Facebook Live.

We also aim to conduct some in-person programming, including through tours that can be managed safely with appropriate social distancing. Tour themes will include the Pier 26 Tide Deck, maritime history and local biodiversity, and we will again be using the iNaturalist app to invite the public to help catalog flora and fauna in the Park.

This month Siddhartha Hayes with the Park's River Project will be presenting at two conferences, The National Monitoring Conference and the Atlantic Estuarine Research Society and New England Estuarine Research Society's joint meeting. The presentations will focus on our collaborative Citizen's Water Quality Testing Program (CWQTP) with NYC Water Trails Association and many other environmental and boating groups. Since 2011, CWQTP has amassed a database on New York Harbor pathogens comprising of nearly 10,000 separate test results, and the Park's River Project is a key lab for processing city-wide samples. The data are then used for safety advisement, education, and advocacy purposes and shared publically each week from May through September. Our presentations will highlight how community scientists help fill New York Harbor sewage contamination data gaps.

Since the last meeting, staff has received some feedback from the Trust's Board of Directors to the preliminary Draft Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan. We also heard from a few members of the Technical Advisory Committee with some suggestions related for the science and restoration area. We are incorporating feedback now and will circulate the proposed 2021 – 2030 Action Agenda, which is intended to guide the Trust and its partners in managing the Sanctuary through the current decade, to the Advisory Council prior to the April 13 meeting, We will also provide a presentation at that meeting. We request that the draft not be circulated beyond the Advisory Council. As we have presented previously, staff began the process of updating the ESMP in 2017.

Design and Construction:

At our March 25th meeting of Board of Directors meeting, the Trust approved two major contracts for the Gansevoort Peninsula and the first contract for Pier 97. Gansevoort will soon be a very busy construction site. After some unexpected contractor delays the clean fill material that will compress existing soils in the area where the ballfield will be located has arrived on site. The fill will prevent future settlement and will be reused on site once the compaction is completed. In May, work associated with the Marine Construction and General Construction Phase 1 contracts approved in March will begin. Together, these contracts include the salt marsh and beach with boating launch, boardwalk, lawn for passive recreation, synthetic turf field, esplanades, paths, plantings and general park amenities. We have also issued an RFP for electrical construction at Gansevoort, and will later release additional RFPs for the park building and other public amenities including the dog run and outdoor fitness area. New York City is approving all of the funds for Gansevoort. Approved contracts thus far total approximately \$28 million including contingency.

Also at Gansevoort, the Whitney Museum expects the final phase of the Day's End sculpture to occur in April and be completed in early May. We are working together to coordinate our construction activities to avoid conflicts. The Whitney expects to host a ribbon cutting in early May.

Little Island, also known as Pier 55, is also expected to open in May. Trust staff in multiple departments is working with staff at Little Island on various planning and logistical issues,

information sharing protocols and more. Separately, Little Island is working on their cultural programming schedule, which is of course informed by continuing Covid safety protocols.

Progress continues on construction documents for Chelsea Waterside Phase II, which includes the long awaited comfort station, expanded field and dog run areas, picnic area and more. We expect to issue the first RFPs in late spring.

For Pier 97, the Trust Board approved a contract in March for fabrication of the unique shade structures which have a long lead time with respect to fabrication. We have also released the general construction and electrical RFPs for Pier 97 and plan to bring them to our June Board meeting. New York State will be providing the funds for Pier 97.

Fabrication of gabions, reef balls, and textured piles for the Tribeca Habitat Enhancements project is well under way. Based on Billion Oyster Project's schedule for oyster cultivation, we believe initial deployment will start in July. The Park's River Project team has worked with scientists at the Hudson River Foundation, University of New Hampshire, Monmouth University and New Jersey City University on baseline benthic and epibenthic surveys to support the science commitments that the Trust has also made as part of this project.

Staff was contacted in mid March about the Gateway Tunnel project – also known as the Amtrak tunnel replacement project. HRPT had provided comments on the DEIS a couple of years ago, and then the project was put on pause during the prior federal administration. The project has now been revived and is a high priority for the federal administration. As currently planned, the tunnel would enter the park at about 29th Street and there would need to be construction through the historic bulkhead, ground freezing, soil removal and other activities. This is obviously a high priority for the region and the Trust has been supportive of it while still identifying issues that would affect the park's users, operations and infrastructure during construction and in the long term. We know that Community Board 4 provided input on the planning to Amtrak and the other project sponsors during the earlier planning effort as well.

Public Programming:

For the summer, our Public Programs department plans to conduct a hybrid program of virtual and in-person program offering. For instance, we expect the Hudson RiverKids series to be offered online only. Sunset on the Hudson will be pre-recorded in the Park using the pop-up approach the State and City are using, and then streamed to our larger audience with live introductions from our talent.

Building on the success of our participatory dance programs, in 2021 our team will be including Afro-Caribbean dance and instruction as well as salsa, Bollywood and bhangra. Jazz at Pier 84 will be offered in person, as will Healthy on the Hudson fitness classes. Our signature Blues BBQ event will become a one-day virtual festival, celebrating the history of this beloved event. Staff has also been working with several arts organizations that may be interested in conducting programming in the park in partnership with the Trust. None of these have been finalized yet

as again, organizations are considering what they can do within the context of Covid constraints.

All in-person events will either require advance registration or will have other controls to ensure capacity is aligned with social distancing and COVID 19 safety guidelines.

The Trust maintains regular communication with the State and City about evolving regulations for events and gatherings in the Park due to COVID. Staff is receiving many requests from schools, charitable organizations and others about the possibilities of conducting programs in the park this year. At present, we are permitting charity walks and runs with staggered start and finish times and attendance numbers in line with regulations set by the State and City. Staff is also working with a number of public and private schools who have reached out to us to explore hosting graduation ceremonies in the park. Some are still hoping to host their events indoors at their schools and no one has formalized their plans with us yet, but we believe it is likely the Park will host at least some ceremonies. Sports programs are also continuing with Covid protocols in place.

Operations:

The Trust's Board approved the FY22 budget at its March meeting. The budget is posted in the lobby of Pier 40 and has been placed on the website:

https://hudsonriverpark.org/app/uploads/2021/04/HRPT_Approved_Budget_2022.pdf. At the same meeting, HRPT's Board also approved the Intrepid lease.

Lighting replacement around the Pier 40 courtyard fields has been completed.

With the legalization of marijuana, staff is anticipating an uptick in smoking in the Park. Smoking is not permitted in the Park pursuant to the adopted Park rules and we will be ordering signage to reinforce this. We also expect to do a lot of education this summer and beyond on this topic.

SDOT has posted signage prohibiting motorized vehicles, bikes and scooters. SDOT is also readying the new 13th Street crosswalk for opening. HRPT is working with the local precincts to educate about motorized vehicles being prohibited on the greenway as there is some confusion on the new laws. HRPT has received a number of complaints about the law from the public, but we have also heard from those very supportive of it. PEP is also doing education about illegal ebikes etc. SDOT is also repositioning some temporary safety barriers at several locations and is coordinating some long-term safety features near Pier 57. Some of this work will require overnight closures, but on the positive side, many of the bulky sugar cubes can be removed after the work is done.

With spring comes the planned opening of many park tenants, ranging from the Trapeze school to food concessions to boathouses and larger tenants, like Circle Line, the Intrepid and City Winery. All still face operational and other challenges related to Covid, but the Trust is very

happy to welcome them back and hope that weather is kind to all of them as they enter the busy 2021 season.

Planning:

HRPT is continuing discussions with BPCA regarding their resiliency project. BPCA was in touch with the Trust recently to alert us that they now plan to do a progressive design build contract. They have committed to work with us and other agencies that HRPT needs to hear from, including both the State and City Departments of Transportations, as they progress their design so that the Trust can ensure that it has a full picture of how the Park could be affected as discussion continues.