

# **Hudson River Park Mission Statement and Performance Measurement Report for FY2021-22**

## **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 an environmental and regulatory framework to provide for a wide variety of active and passive recreational opportunities, including children’s playgrounds, recreational fields and courts, comfort stations, 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.

During FY 2021-22, construction of two new park areas commenced based on completed designs at Gansevoort Peninsula and Pier 97 that had both received overwhelmingly support from the community. The design for Gansevoort Peninsula was completed in January 2021 and includes 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 buildings for a public restroom and small concession, and a variety of paths and esplanades. Construction of this approximately 5.5-acre section of the Park commenced in Spring 2021.

The design for Pier 97 was completed at the end of 2020, and the Trust’s Board of Directors approved the construction contracts throughout Summer and Fall 2021. 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. A new public restroom and small concession are also in contract for the immediately abutting section of the upland area bordering Pier 97. Construction of the pier began Fall 2021.

In addition, the Trust's landscape architecture team completed the design of the Chelsea Waterside Park Phase II upgrades in 2021. The design includes a new comfort station with solar panels to reduce the Park's energy footprint, an expanded dog run and picnic area, and a reconstructed synthetic turf field, among other improvements. Construction at the site began Fall 2021.

Design teams working for the Trust also advanced other designs, including for restoring a monumental public sculpture known as *Private Passage* in the Park's Clinton Cove section, commencing final designs for the Science Play Area to be located upland from Pier 26, for which project the Trust's non-profit fundraising partner, Hudson River Park Friends, completed a successful fundraising campaign, and designs for various capital maintenance undertakings.

In January 2022, the Trust released a Request for Proposals for Estuarium Design Services. The Estuarium would be an approximately 10,000-square-foot new environmental education and science building located upland of Pier 26 next to the Science Play Area. The Trust will be reviewing the proposals received and expects to begin the design process in Summer 2022.

## **2. Construct the Park**

Despite the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, construction activity at the Park advanced significantly during FY 21-22, including substantial construction at Gansevoort Peninsula, Pier 97 and Chelsea Waterside Park as described above. Construction of *Day's End* at the Gansevoort Peninsula and Little Island, which replaced the former Pier 54 and now serves as public open space and as a cultural venue, were both completed in Spring 2021. Additionally, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) completed construction of the new interim park space at Pier 76 after completing demolition of the former NYPD tow pound, and then turned the pier over to become part of Hudson River Park.

### **A. *Day's End* and Gansevoort Peninsula**

The Whitney Museum of American Art completed fabrication of the permanent public art installation entitled *Day's End* by artist David Hammons in May 2021. Located at the south edge of the Gansevoort Peninsula – partially in the water -- *Day's End* is an ephemeral stainless-steel sculpture constructed within the same footprint and with the same dimensions as the original Pier 52 pier shed. It derives its inspiration and name from Gordon Matta-Clark's 1975 artwork once located in the same location. *Day's End* was donated by the Whitney Museum to the Trust and is now a permanent part of Hudson River Park.

In FY21-22, the Trust also began the process of converting the Gansevoort Peninsula to public park space. All construction contracts, including for the landscapes, utilities, in-water elements, habitat features and for the new park building, were executed in FY21-22, and construction on many elements began. Among the specific construction activities completed during the year were: installation of virgin fill beneath the new playing fields; compression of

soils to prevent future settlement and grading the installation of the retaining walls and materials needed for the salt marsh on the north edge; construction of the sports field infrastructure, fence posts, and lighting; installation of certain subsurface utilities; and installation of the boardwalk concrete subbase and site furnishing footings. Construction will continue throughout 2022, and the Trust has established a goal of opening the new park space to the public in Summer 2023.

B. “Little Island”

Construction of Little Island, a new 2.7-acre public pier that provides both public open space and performing arts programming, was completed and opened to the public in May 2021, replacing the original Pier 54. The cost to construct Pier 55 was approximately \$250 million, with most of the funding coming from the private donor, Barry Diller and the Diller-von Furstenberg Family Foundation. Little Island hosted a full 2021 season of New York City-based artists to sold-out crowds in its first year of operation and has become a favorite open space destination for New Yorkers and visitors.

C. Tribeca Habitat Enhancements

In conjunction with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), and with input from the science community, the Trust designed an oyster and habitat enhancement project in the portion of the Estuarine Sanctuary between Piers 26 and 32. Specific enhancement features installed by the Trust’s marine construction contractor, with support from its subcontractor Billion Oyster Project, in Fall 2021 included: 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 at Pier 32. The Trust is in the process of engaging an environmental consultant to lead ongoing monitoring over the next several years to inform future habitat enhancement design and decision making.

D. Pier 57

After its original life as a passenger ship terminal, Pier 57 was used for municipal bus parking, which vacated the pier in 2004. Today, it is nearing completion as a privately funded, mixed use, revenue-generating pier being restored in accordance with National Parks Service standards. The public perimeter walkway opened in Fall 2021 and the large landscaped public park on the roof with panoramic views of Manhattan and New York Harbor prepared for opening in April 2022. Despite COVID, one subtenant, City Winery, began operating its new restaurant and music entertainment venue in Spring 2021. Google, the anchor subtenant, completed its fit-out in FY21-22 and began occupying the pier in January 2022, with more employees expected to return in FY22-23. Construction of the public marketplace, an environmental exhibit space and classroom to be operated by Hudson River Park’s River Project, an indoor public seating area known as the “Living Room” and other spaces are expected to be completed in 2022.

E. Pier 76

In March 2021, New York State announced that Pier 76 would open as an interim public open space as part of Hudson River Park by June 2021. The NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, supported by the State Office of General Services, lead this effort to transform the pier from the former NYPD tow pound building into a vast open space. Construction was completed in June 2021 and the new interim park was turned over to Hudson River Park and opened to the public in time for the Summer 2021 season. Given the large space and paved surfaces, Pier 76 quickly became a popular venue for large events, including the Tribeca Film Festival, American Express US Open activation, Fashion Week, and the NYC Food and Wine Festival. The Trust plans to host a significant amount of in-house programming on the pier throughout 2022, including Blues BBQ, participatory salsa dancing, and bike riding lessons.

F. Pier 97

Based on the final designs for Pier 97, construction began in Fall 2021, and by the end of the fiscal year, fabrication of the Pier 97 Shade Structures had been completed as well as on-site work related to installation of concrete retaining walls, mid-pier expansion joint walls, and shade structure footings. The Trust also worked on construction drawings to complete the finishes for the new over-water pedestrian platform between West 58th and 59th Streets and the refurbishment of the adjacent esplanade and bikeway to connect New York City's Riverside South park using funds available from the New York State Department of Transportation. Pier 97 is expected to be open to the public in mid 2023.

G. Chelsea Waterside Park

The Chelsea Waterside Park Phase 2 project involves construction of a new comfort station, replacement of an expanded turf field, and construction of an expanded dog run area and improved picnic areas and walkways. Construction began Fall 2021. By the end of the FY21-22, installation of the comfort station building's foundation and utilities, as well as salvage, removal and earthwork operations, had all been completed. The Trust expects to complete the construction and reopen these areas of the park, with the new dog run expected to be open in Summer 2022 and the new sports field in Fall 2022.

H. Pier 40

At Pier 40, divers from marine construction firms continued to install individual "jackets" and make other repairs to Pier 40's piles and deck as part of the pier's comprehensive structural pile repair program. Collectively, these repairs will ensure that Pier 40 is once again supported by structurally sound piles needed for public recreational and commercial uses that help support the Park's overall care and operations. Repair work to the rooftop parking area was completed, thus restoring the Trust's ability to rent approximately 350 parking spaces at the Pier 40 garage. The Trust is also in the process of installing a new sports turf field on the Pier 40 rooftop to be completed in early Summer 2022; that field will serve as a swing space for displaced users of Chelsea Waterside Park until the Chelsea Waterside field reopens in late 2022.

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

COVID continued to cause operational challenges for Hudson River Park in FY21-22, including loss of income due to its impact on many of the Park's rent-paying tenants and other occupants. Such reduction in income, along with the continuing need for safety protocols, meant that the Trust could not offer a number of its popular free public programs, attract the volunteers we have come to rely on for assisting with care of the Park's horticultural assets, hire its full complement of seasonal staff, and other changes. Additionally, various Park tenants who conduct free or low cost programming, such as free kayaking and historic boat tours, also elected to reduce programming for safety reasons. The Trust's staff succeeded in keeping the Park clean and beautiful despite these challenges, and in all, the Trust continued to operate and maintain the Park at a high level so that it remains a community asset and economic generator while simultaneously serving the millions of New Yorkers and tourists who use it annually.

As restrictions on COVID lifted as the year passed, Hudson River Park Friends was able to start offering in-person volunteer programs again. In the fall, this group, supplemented by the Trust's Horticulture staff, planted nearly 40,000 bulbs planned to beautify the Park in Spring.

With the opening of Little Island, which drew enormous crowds throughout the summer, other members of the Trust's operating team adapted to changes in Park operations in the surrounding area. Managing increased trash and adapting to new public safety challenges were major topics of conversation, and the Trust worked with Little Island's staff, the State and City Departments of Transportation and other stakeholders to manage these new challenges.

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 21-22, the Trust continued to expand its security system by adding new cameras and related infrastructure, including at new Park locations such as Pier 76. The Trust's Public Safety, Facilities, Management Systems and Information Technology Departments work together to support these and other efforts and initiatives, even including the addition of the Trust's first Wildlife Camera on the Pier 26 Tide Deck.

Maintaining the Park includes capital maintenance projects for both Park-specific repairs and replacements, like playground safety surfaces and intermittent pile repairs, and repairs associated with maintaining legacy assets like Pier 40. The Trust's Facilities Department manages many repairs and replacements directly, though certain repairs, such as those to legacy assets, are often complicated and costly. For example, aside from the ongoing pile repairs at Pier 40, there is a continued effort under way to replace the enormous pier's sprinkler system, reconstruct portions of the roof, repair critical areas of the facade and make other life safety improvements. The Trust's Design and Construction helps steward many of these initiatives.

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

Throughout FY21-22, the Park continued to be a refuge during the COVID pandemic with many users walking, exercising and relaxing in public parks and open spaces throughout New York City.

The ballfields were once again heavily used throughout the Fiscal Year by local schools, leagues and the community.

In 2021, the Trust continued to provide its free public events series both in person and virtually. In-person events included jazz performances, Healthy on the Hudson fitness classes and socially distanced participatory dance featuring Bollywood & Bhangra, Batingua Arts and Sunset Salsa. The Blues BBQ Festival premiered as a virtual event featuring the World Famous Harlem Gospel Choir. The Trust staff also worked with schools and non-profit organizations to host safe, outdoor school graduations and charitable walks and runs.

The Trust's River Project also hosted a hybrid season of in-person and virtual programming. Virtual educational events included the "STEM Activity of the Week" series and "Ask a Scientist" program. Staff also posted lessons in the popular "STEM at Home" activity series in Spanish as the Trust continued to translate many of its curricula into multiple languages. In addition, staff launched a series of virtual winter field trips with local schools focused on such topics as local fish populations, plankton ecology, environmental justice and plastic pollution. The River Project also initiated a microplastics study monitoring the adsorption of chemical pollutants in coordination with other scientific partners.

The Pier 40 Wetlab, a research aquarium pioneered by the original non-profit organization called The River Project, reopened to the public in the Summer 2021, this time operated by the Trust directly. The Wetlab includes tanks that use Hudson River water to host such aquatic residents as oyster toadfish, seahorses, diamondback terrapins and horseshoe crabs. Prior to opening the Wetlab, the Trust made a number of cosmetic improvements to the space to better host the public.

With the return of some in-person programming, the Trust's River Project staff also conducted tours of the Pier 26 Tide Deck. The annual SUBMERGE marine science festival was held in October 2021 as both a virtual and in-person event, and included discussions on Harbor Habitat, River Wildlife, Climate Change and Local Water Quality. The River Project, and the Trust closed its summer programming season with the annual Pumpkin Smash on Pier 84 in which 1,115 pounds of pumpkins were smashed and added to the Park's compost.

Little Island hosted an entire summer of in-person performances at the newly opened public park pier, with most of the programming at no cost to the public. For ticketed performances, Little Island offered low-cost tickets through the Theatre Development Fund and discounted tickets of \$25 for seniors and children.

Other Park tenants also provided educational programming throughout the year. For example, the Lilac Preservation Project, Fireboat McKean, Fying Pan and the Intrepid Museum all helped bring maritime history to life for Park visitors. The Trust undertook a "Significant Action" public review process before approving a new lease with the Intrepid Museum which will allow the historic vessels and museum to continue to operate at the piers, while also requiring the Intrepid to assume certain infrastructure maintenance requirements.

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

The Trust continues to take seriously its mandate to protect and enhance existing marine habitat and the approximately 400 acres of Estuarine Sanctuary. Through multiple partnerships as well as independently, the Trust advanced a robust slate of research initiatives, completed a Significant Action process for the the Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan addressed below, and designed and implemented a large physical habitat enhancement project known as the Tribeca Habitat Enhancement Project (see above) in FY21-22.

Another notable operational success in FY21-22 was the continuation and indeed expansion of the Trust's successful community compost program. During COVID, New York City was forced to close composting centers around the City. The Trust was able to keep its 10 collection centers open, serving the inland communities who support this initiative. The amount of collected food scraps increased significantly as compared to the previous year. In Winter 2022, the Trust launched its Community Compost Tracker. This new dashboard, which is posted on the Trust's website, showcases organic food waste collected and allows the public to compare data across time and location. In March 2022, the Trust also hosted a virtual meeting with its tenants and permittees to address Sustainability and the Trust's Park over Plastics program.

## **6. Establish an Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan**

The Act required the Trust to prepare an Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan (ESMP) to guide Park development and operations in and along the Hudson River within the Park's boundaries. The Act specified that this plan should provide for: conservation of marine resources, environmental education and research, public recreational use of the water, and authorized commercial maritime uses and other water dependent uses. The Park's first Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan was created in 2002, just as the Trust was beginning to build the Park.

In FY21-22, the Trust completed its update to the ESMP and a new Action Agenda for the period 2021-2030 which is intended to guide the Trust and its partners in managing the Sanctuary through the current decade. Over a period of several years, the Trust worked closely with a Technical Advisory Committee comprised of experts in three separate but overlapping topical areas -- Public Access and Recreation, Environmental Education and Natural Resources Research and Enhancement – to draft the Plan. After soliciting public comments, the Trust's Board of Directors and the Commissioner of DEC approved the document in Fall 2021. In early January 2022, the Trust hosted its first annual Research & Habitat Enhancement meeting for scientists and environmental partners, which is one of the commitments of the ESMP.

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

Throughout the fiscal year, the Park continued to serve as an open space refuge for the public during the COVID pandemic. The Park was again visited annually by millions of people – both New Yorkers and visitors to the City. The opening of Little Island received considerable news coverage and brought many new visitors to the Park to enjoy the landscapes or to watch the unique outdoor cultural programming. At Pier 57, City Winery attracted audiences for live music and

dining. While visitation for certain Park attractions like sightseeing cruises was still lower than usual because of COVID, the Park's outdoor restaurant concessions attracted good audiences, with people enjoying the outdoor settings.

The in-person events conducted by the Trust's Public Programs and River Project departments also drew substantial audiences as the community and public were very eager to return to outdoor in-person events during the Summer and Fall 2021 peak season for the Park. And Pier 76 has become a much sought-out outdoor event spaces, enhancing local commerce and drawing significant numbers of visitors.

#### **8. 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. In addition, the Trust continues to work closely with Hudson River Park Friends, a non-profit dedicated to raising money for the Park, including its successful initiatives to raise funds for playgrounds, art restoration, composting equipment, volunteering and other important projects. In FY21-22, the Trust adopted a conservative budget in anticipation that COVID would continue to depress operating income. Accordingly, the Trust cut operating expenses as well. By the end of the FY21-22 fiscal year, the Trust's unaudited financial position was more favorable than projected, with the Trust generating an operating surplus.