



Report to Hudson River Park Advisory Council

April 19, 2023

Design and Construction

Science Play Area

The Pier 26 Science Play contractor, Alpine Construction, is installing subsurface utilities. Monstrum, the Danish play equipment manufacturer constructing the centerpiece play sturgeons and related equipment, which is due to be onsite at Pier 26 in early June. Completion of the Science Play Area is scheduled late Fall.

Estuarium

Following the public meeting in February, the design team has been meeting with Trust staff to review the interior requirements of the building and understand how the River Project team runs their programs and cares for the current Wetlab. The team has also been studying options for addressing flood resiliency on site and investigating ways to bring river water to the building.

Tennis Courts

As previously reported, the three repaved tennis courts located just north of Spring Street have been open with temporary striping since November. Installation of the final color surface is scheduled for the week of April 24. We will also be retrofitting the existing court lighting with new LED fixtures that will reduce power consumption by half.

550 Washington Crosswalk

As mentioned in our March report, the project is still waiting for Con Ed to make some required connections before the new traffic light at the new crosswalk south of Pier 40 is operational. We keep hearing that this should be soon but do not have an estimated timeline.

Gansevoort Peninsula

At the Gansevoort Peninsula, work is progressing well. The esplanade, Bloomfield Street, dog run, adult fitness, and salt marsh overlooks are under construction. The sports field is to be installed late May. The construction of the building volumes is complete with cladding and canopy to be installed in May and June. This project is scheduled for completion late summer.

At the kayak landing, the designs called for the ramp to be topped with a revetment mat atop the slope to provide a cushioned surface for boaters to enter and exit the water. Unfortunately, within a very short period of time, the installation began failing at the site due to wake and wave action and due to the product itself.

The Trust required its design team, construction management team, and contractor to assess the cause of the failure in more detail. It was determined that the product vendor had changed the specifications vetted during the design process including with our boating community, but without changing the product name. When the product was ordered by the contractor, the vendor did not alert the contractor that the specifications had changed. Although many alternative soft surfaces were investigated, none met the demanding conditions of the site requirements, including accessibility. Staff will explore, including with our boating community, whether Moby Mats or other similar seasonal applications can succeed atop the cast concrete ramp once the concrete is installed atop the existing slope later this spring. The Trust and design team now believe there is probably a good reason why cast concrete boat ramps are essentially standard operating procedure for water access in many locations including at other points on the Hudson River.

As promised, we are in process of scheduling a meeting with our boating community to discuss the new kayak landing at Gansevoort.

Chelsea Waterside Park

At Chelsea Waterside Park, Alpine, the site and landscape contractor, is placing soil, planting trees, installing irrigation and site furnishings in the central area. The new synthetic turf field is complete and open to the public.

EW Howell, the building contractor, is putting finishing touches on the restroom station building. They are presently wrapping up the installation of architectural finishes, restroom fixtures and accessories, and the solar panel photovoltaic system. Overall, we are on track to reopen a much-improved Chelsea Waterside Park in its entirety this spring.

Pier 97

At Pier 97 work is ongoing in the playscape area with walls and footings for the ship hull play element and raised play mound being installed. All pieces of the granite slide at the Overlook were delivered and installation has started. All concrete unit pavers for the entire project are on site. Following review of the paving mock-up comments were provided by the design team and a new mockup will be installed next week. Finally planting of shrubs and groundcovers across the entire site will start within the next two weeks as will installation of sod at the lawn.

At the accessory building all utility sleeves and rebar for the foundation mat slab and shear walls have been installed and the mat slab will be poured over the next week.

Environmental and Sanctuary Initiatives

CUNY Visiting Scholars

This month, the Park's River Project and City University of New York (CUNY) are piloting an initiative that invites CUNY's accomplished faculty to submit research proposals to help further the Trust's interest in understanding current and emerging issues for the Lower Hudson River

Estuary. This funding opportunity will connect CUNY faculty and students to the Park's science facilities and staff to facilitate research that addresses knowledge gaps and provides focused outcomes that could serve as a catalyst for innovative and ongoing research projects. The Trust shared the Park's Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan to direct CUNY expertise towards established park research goals. Our two institutions' shared interest in furthering STEM education and professional development for youth were also incorporated through a preference to proposals that include CUNY student participation with an emphasis on STEM mentorship. This initiative will ultimately help support two CUNY faculty research projects with \$10K of funding for the 2023 season.

Welcoming New Staff

As we gear up for an exciting season of science and education, we are happy to also share the growth of our River Project department through the addition of three new full-time staff roles. Michaela Mincone is our new Science and Stewardship Coordinator. This is a new role at the Trust, and Michaela will help coordinate the logistics and partners that conduct our long-term research projects associated with Park habitat enhancement work and participate in our visiting scholar program. She will also help lead our Science Leadership Program, a summer internship program that introduces high school and college students to park field science and STEM mentorship. In addition, the Trust has hired two additional full-time Environmental Educators, Sierra Drury and Sivan Gordon-Buxbaum. Sierra and Sivan will work alongside the rest of the River Project Education team to teach a wide range of our field trip and public education programs in the Park, including those at our brand-new Pier 57 Discovery Tank.

Discovery Tank Now Open

The Park's Discovery Tank along with the ground floor of Pier 57 opened on April 1. We look forward to hosting you in this interactive gallery and classroom that invites visitors of all ages to explore beneath the surface of the Hudson River. Since opening, we have been hosting regular Guided Gallery hours where members of the public can join us in this unique learning environment that explores local ecology through immersive tech games. In the coming weeks, we are excited to announce more events in the Discovery Tank for all ages.

Public Programs

Public Programs is days away from announcing the Hudson River Park's 25th Anniversary Event Season. Please make sure you sign up for our newsletter and share with your friends and colleagues. Throughout the season, we are highlighting local talent, extending our long-standing dance series, expanding our Healthy on the Hudson program with a new location in Pier 57 and growing our existing relationship with Bike New York with a new bike education center at Pier 76. We look forward to sharing event details with you at our next AC meeting.

Chelsea Waterside field is currently hosting Spring permittees from Rooftop Fields #1 & #2 while roof work is completed. There may be a short period for punch-list items now that the field has been in use for a short period. Note that the Summer season will begin June 11, and applications were due April 17. Field Permittees may also submit Fall permit applications starting May 1.

Operations

Horticulture

The Horticulture team has been working on restoring the Habitat Garden, including the meadow and path, which runs between W 26 to W 29 Streets. They removed weed contaminated soil and replaced it with clean soil. The meadow area was seeded with a mix of native plants to the northeast that will support native wildlife such as birds, butterflies and other insects, while the path is used for maintenance and tours conducted by the River Project educators. HRPK Friends' volunteers have been instrumental in accomplishing this work, and we appreciate their support.

Spring blooms are beginning to fill up the Park with color. Check out the Park Bloom Guide on the website [here](#) to see what's in bloom and where to find it.

Maintenance

The maintenance staff is currently working on turning on the water to the drinking fountains in the Park and all the dog runs.

Bikeway Resurfacing Project Updates

As reported in last month's report, New York State Department of Transportation (SDOT) began repaving the Route 9A bikeway/Greenway. The repaving work is occurring overnight between 9:00 PM and 5:00 AM and will require bike riders to take detours as SDOT repaves sections spanning several blocks at a time. SDOT has provided contact information for SDOT's Region 11 Community Liaison to local community boards and others, and the Trust has updated its website [here](#) to include the Bikeway repaving project along with this information as well. HRPT will continue to be proactive about coordinating with SDOT and endeavoring to share information with our Park community.

Manhattan Cruise Terminal Sidewalk

Due to a subsurface condition related to an outfall, NYC DEP and NYS DOT have closed the sidewalk in front of the Manhattan Cruise Terminal between W 46 and W 48 Streets. Pedestrians passing through the area will be detoured either on to the Greenway or to the East side of Route 9A. We will share more information about this disruption when it is available.

Real Estate and Planning

Pier 57

April 1 was very exciting for us with the grand opening of new public facing uses on the ground floor of Pier 57. Market 57 is a new dining destination curated by The James Beard Foundation that include kiosks operated by a mix of small businesses, many of which are BIPOC or women-owned, that serve a delightful variety of international cuisines along with a new wine bar and craft beer bar. The pier also includes a huge new indoor public gathering area called the Living Room that the Trust negotiated as part of the lease, and two bookable community classrooms.

As mentioned earlier in this report, the Trust also opened its environmental tech gallery and classroom that we've dubbed the Discovery Tank, which is operated by our River Project team, and it is already in high demand as part of our spring school field trip programming.

Resiliency Projects

USACE NY/NJ Harbor and Tributaries Study: On March 16, 2023, the Trust sent written comments to the Army Corps of Engineers New York District regarding the Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the New York-New Jersey Harbor and Tributaries Study that would generally involve the installation of a variety of Shore-Based Measures in or adjacent to the Park from its southern border to 34th Street. Our comment letter recognizes that the phased nature of the Army Corps' planning, engineering and environmental review process means that they do not have the ability to answer all stakeholder questions at this time. We also expressed appreciation for their staff outreach to local stakeholders including the Trust over the past several months. Our comment letter provides a considerable amount of background information about Hudson River Park, including about the extent of public and private investment that has occurred in it over the past two decades. The letter observes that the proposed measures in the preferred alternative would not provide any protection to the park itself, and suggests that decision makers consider the environmental, public and economic impacts if the Park itself is not protected. We provided many specific comments regarding potential impacts to the Sanctuary, operational and design considerations, most of which probably cannot be answered unless and until the Corps reaches the Tier 2 stage of the environmental review. We encouraged keeping additional alternatives that might better protect the Park on the table including possible alternatives that also address the CSOs along the river.

North/West Battery Park City Resiliency Project: The Trust had sent comments to Battery Park City Authority on December 28, 2022 regarding the Draft Scope of Work to Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the North/West portion of the Battery Park City Resiliency Project. The proposed plan involves construction of a flood barrier system first by extending the northern border of Battery Park City about 17 feet into the area where Hudson River Park's Pier 25 mooring field is located – essentially the esplanade area immediately north of Stuyvesant High School – and a new flood wall that would be installed adjacent to the Route 9A bikeway along a portion of the Park area near Pier 25. We reiterated in writing comments that we had previously provided to BPCA, including requesting a coastal modeling study of a potential storm surge hitting the proposed flood barrier wall with the water flowing back into the Park; a study on the impacts of construction on underground utilities in the Park; an identification of trees and plants that would be removed and any changes to the open space character of the Park as well as numerous maintenance related issues.

BPCA held a community workshop on February 16, 2023 and their presentation is available on the BPCA website. BPCA is currently at 30 percent design and expects to complete the final design in fall 2024 to enable construction to begin in 2025, subject to receiving the required governmental permits and approvals. The February presentation also responds to some of the public comments made on the Draft Scope by offering three possible designs for the proposed

17-foot extension into the Hudson River north of Stuyvesant high school as well as a few alternatives regarding the flood wall located adjacent to the bikeway, including suggesting a smaller wall or locating the wall in the median of Route 9A. Given the interconnected properties and operating needs Trust has been interested in coordinated conversations among stakeholders, including with New York State and City DOTs, and an initial meeting took place last week. We expect there to be more information as BPCA continues its planning process.

Other Park Updates:

HRPK Board approved the FY 24 Budget at its March 28, 2023 meeting and the Budget is posted on the Trust's website [here](#).