

# **Hudson River Park Mission Statement and Performance Measurement Report for FY 2022-23**

## **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 a carefully planned environmental and regulatory framework to provide for a wide variety of active and passive recreational opportunities, including children’s playgrounds, recreational fields and courts, restroom facilities, 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.

In September 2022, the Trust approved a contract with Sage & Coombe as the lead designer to prepare the design for the new Estuarium. 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 began public engagement on the design of the new building in December 2022 and February 2023.

Trust staff advanced work on a new Request for Proposals for the design of the unfinished area of Hudson River Park located between West 29<sup>th</sup> and 46<sup>th</sup> Streets (the “RFP”), which will be a very challenging area to design and construct due to existing land uses and tenant occupancies. The Trust expects to release the new RFP in Summer 2023. The Trust also commenced planning for an expansion of the Tribeca Habitat Enhancements Project further described below.

## **2. Construct the Park**

Construction activity on new open space areas advanced significantly during FY 22-23, including substantial construction at Gansevoort Peninsula, Pier 97 and Chelsea Waterside Park.

### **A. Gansevoort Peninsula**

Construction began in Spring 2021, and in FY 22-23, the Trust's numerous construction contractors completed substantial work on converting the Gansevoort Peninsula, a former Department of Sanitation facility, into 5.5 acres of new public park space. Some of the specific construction activities undertaken during the fiscal year included: installation of pavers and boardwalk decking, installation of the south edge ledges and non-motorized boat landing, planting of trees in the new Pine Grove area, installation of the salt marsh on the north side, installation of lighting and other utility conduits, completion of the new vehicular entrances and exits, and construction of a large portion of the new park building that will serve as a restroom, maintenance, and small concession. The Trust also installed several hundred oyster gabions and reef balls with more than 20 million juvenile oysters immediately north of the new salt marsh located on the north side of the Peninsula, which will provide significant enhancement to the local habitat for river wildlife while also increasing resiliency. The Trust aims to open the new park space to the public in late Summer 2023.

### **B. Pier 97**

Construction of Pier 97 began in Fall 2021 and will result in the creation of 2.5 acres of new public park space in the Clinton Cove area at the northern end of the Park. Specific work undertaken during FY 22-23 included: installation of the Shade Structures, installation of the sun lawn and granite veneers for the Sunset Deck seat steps, installation of the new bleacher seating area, installation of trees and other plants, completion of lighting and other utility conduits, substantial completion of the new overlook, and substantial work on the new restroom and maintenance building. The Trust also continues to provide the necessary construction drawings and environmental review materials to the New York State Department of Transportation as precursors to receiving federal funding for completing finishes for the new over-water pedestrian platform between West 58th and 59th Streets and the construction of a permanent esplanade and bikeway that will better connect to New York City's Riverside Park South. Pier 97 is expected to be open to the public in late Summer 2023.

### **C. Pier 26 Science Play Area**

The Trust hosted a ground-breaking ceremony marking the commencement of construction on the new Science Play Area in Tribeca adjacent to Pier 26 in mid-December, 2022 and excavation of the site for subsurface utility installation began in February 2023. This project is being funded primarily by the Trust's non-profit fundraising partner, Hudson River Park Friends, with additional support from the Manhattan Borough President and City Council. When completed, the new Science Play Area will include unique play equipment including a 90-foot-long Atlantic sturgeon and 49-foot-long Shortnose sturgeon, along with slides, climbing nets and other features designed as aquatic organisms. The sturgeons and other

marine oriented play equipment are being fabricated off site with delivery commencing in Early Summer 2023. The new Science Play area is expected to open to the public in late 2023.

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 for historic buildings. 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 opened in April 2022. City Winery and Google, the anchor subtenant, have been occupying the pier since January 2022. In late March 2023, construction of the public marketplace that hosts a dozen small businesses specializing in various international foods, an environmental exhibit space and classroom to be operated by Hudson River Park's River Project, other classrooms that can be reserved by community groups, and an indoor public seating area known as the "Living Room" were completed. The opening of these spaces to the public on April 1, 2023 was well received with positive reviews in the New York City media and from community members.

E. Chelsea Waterside Park

Substantial construction also occurred during FY 22-23 to complete Chelsea Waterside Park Phase II upgrades, which include a new restroom facility with solar panels to reduce the Park's energy footprint, an expanded picnic area, and a reconstructed synthetic turf field, among other improvements. Construction at the site began Fall 2021, and a greatly expanded and enhanced dog run opened in November 2022. All uses at the Chelsea Waterside are expected to fully open in Spring 2023.

F. 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, with all work nearing completion at the end of FY 2023. The Trust also installed a new sports turf field on the Pier 40 rooftop that was completed in Summer 2022 and which has served as a valuable swing space for displaced users of Chelsea Waterside while that turf field was reconstructed. Work continues to progress on replacing the new sprinkler system and other infrastructure projects.

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

The Trust continued to maintain the wide variety of plants and trees throughout the Park in FY 22-23. During the 2022 season, the Trust's Horticulture Department worked with Hudson River Park Friends to host 108 volunteer events with over 2,100 volunteers. The staff also processed over 155,00 pounds of compost, combining collections from the public with brown plant matter that would have become horticulture waste to create healthy, nutrient-rich soil used throughout the Park.

The Trust's Operations and Facilities Departments continued to provide day-to-day care of the Park, from daily cleaning of park areas, restrooms and office spaces, to trash and graffiti removal, to keeping fountains and other key infrastructure working in good order. In the Summer 2022, the Trust maintenance team spent over 893 hours removing graffiti, with a goal of a 24-hour removal response time from when graffiti is reported. To support ongoing maintenance, in FY22-23, the Trust entered into new multi-year, on-call agreements with contractors to fix loose and cracked pavers along the Park's esplanade and paths, as well as to provide parkwide asphalt paving services. On-call services like these expedite the ability to address emerging issues, allowing the Park to meet its high maintenance standards.

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 22-23, the Trust continued to expand its security system by adding new cameras and related infrastructure. The Operations Department also undertook an assessment to add more lighting in areas of need, including installations with energy-efficient LED, to enhance safety and aesthetics. Further, the Trust began negotiations with New York City Parks Department regarding an expanded contract for Parks Enforcement Patrol and expects a new contract to be completed in 2023.

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. In FY 22-23, the Trust restored the three tennis courts located to the south of Pier 40, which work included new concrete foundations, resurfacing and restriping. The Trust is proud to be one of the few entities that allows the public to play on tennis courts free of charge and without requiring a permit. The Pier 84 dog run was restored, and reopened in September 2022 with a new surface, water feature, and seating. When combined with the Chelsea Waterside run noted above, the Trust provided two renovated dog runs for canines and their owners.

The Trust also undertook the restoration of two public art pieces within the Park. *Private Passage* by Malcolm Cochran was removed for a full restoration and was safely returned to its home in Clinton Cove. One of the cast bronze formations of the LGBTQ Memorial, by artist Anthony Goicolea, which recognizes those lost in the Orlando Pulse nightclub shooting that occurred in June 2016, as well as all victims of hate, intolerance and violence, was removed for repair and redesign.

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 pile repairs at Pier 40, there is a continued effort under way to replace the enormous pier's sprinkler system and reconstruct portions of the roof. In FY22-23, the Trust's Design and Construction Department began a new series of inspections for in-water assets, including piles and bulkheads, to provide for the identification of emerging and future issues with Park structures.

The Trust also advanced planning on upcoming projects, including repairs and resurfacing for the

Pier 26 Water Spray Area and replacing the wood decking at Pier 45, which has reached the end of its useful life. The Trust expects to undertake both projects in 2023.

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

Throughout FY 22-23, the Park was used by millions for walking, exercising and relaxing. The ballfields were once again heavily used throughout FY22-23 by local schools, youth and adults leagues, as well as the community during open play hours.

During the 2022 season, the Trust hosted over 260 events, including the Hudson River Dance Festival, sunset salsa lessons, Tide Deck tours and science programming, plus a full range of fitness classes. Over 13,000 people attended the annual Blues BBQ festival, and the Trust saw robust attendance at its performances, festivals, educational programming, dance classes and more. Additionally, various Park tenants also fully reopened to provide free or low-cost programming, such as free kayaking and historic boat tours. An incredible 68,000 people participated in free and low cost non-motorized boating in the Park through the Trust's support and partnership with boathouse operators and permittees. The Trust also hosted Bicycle Skills 101 in collaboration with Bike NYC once a month in May through August at Pier 76 so that children and adults alike could learn to ride a bike.

The Trust's River Project hosted many in-person educational programs in FY 22-23. In 2022, the Trust received a five-year grant award from the New York State Zoos, Botanical Garden and Aquarium program to support staff in the Wetlab, a research aquarium which continues to be one of the Trust's most inspiring educational venues for both students and members of the public. With that additional support, the Trust was able to expand public hours including weekends and saw a meaningful increase of visitors. The Trust also hosted its popular *Ask a Scientist* series at the Wetlab over the Summer 2022. The Trust's River Project staff also continued its informal education efforts in the Park, including tours of the Pier 26 Tide Deck and the ever-popular Big City Fishing, which allowed adults and children to fish alongside the Trust's environmental educators to learn more about what lives in the Hudson River.

The annual SUBMERGE marine science festival, which features science-themed entertainment, wildlife touch tanks, and more, was held in October 2022 for the first time as a two-day event with over 5,000 attendees. The first day of the festival was reserved for field trips, with 1,000 NYC students and teachers attending, 75% of which came from Title I schools, split between elementary, middle and high school grade levels, with a few college students as well.

Little Island hosted an entire summer of in-person performances for a second year, 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, including the Lilac Preservation Project and the Intrepid Museum, which helped bring maritime history to life for Park visitors.

During the last quarter of FY 22-23, the Trust staff were hard at work to develop the programming for Pier 57, which is expected to open just as the fiscal year concludes. This included an expansion of the education and science team known as the Park's River Project, as well as the creation of new curriculum, teaching modules and engaging partners to support the educational programming about the Hudson River.

### **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 and held meetings with its Technical Advisory Council (TAC) as provided for in the Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan (ESMP). The Trust held the first annual meeting of the full TAC in January 2023 to address the successes of the first year of the ESMP's Action Plan and to discuss what areas should be the focus of the TAC for the upcoming year.

In 2022, the Trust also completed a \$1.2 million construction contract to install submerged habitat features off the northern edge of the Gansevoort Peninsula and began a research trial to investigate less invasive oyster monitoring methods to understand how those methods may translate to other locations. Together with the Tribeca Habitat Enhancement Project, which installed habitat features between Piers 26 and 32 in late 2021, these two projects have contributed an astounding 31 million juvenile oysters to Park waters, with Gansevoort being the largest single installation in NYC waters to date. In FY 22-23, the Trust engaged an environmental consultant to lead ongoing monitoring over the next several years to inform future habitat enhancement design and decision making.

Overall, in the past year, nearly 30,000 people were engaged in the 350 educational programs offered by the Trust's River Project, including over 5,000 NYC students who joined the Trust in person for school and summer camp field trips. In FY22-23, schools were still adjusting to the return to in-person learning and seemed to favor field trips within walking distance, or limited travel to short distances. Despite those challenges, almost 40% of the groups have visited from the outer boroughs and half of the schools that the Trust served held Title I status. The TAC has historically expressed a strong interest in connecting programs to diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, which aligns with the Park's internship programs for high school and college-aged students, including the Trust's growing partnership with the City University of New York. In 2022, in addition to providing annual paid employment for young environmental professionals, the Trust grew its high school internship program, providing 36 high school students from communities historically underrepresented in STEM with an immersive internship experience and mentoring.

Research on the Park's seven long-running studies on fish abundance and diversity, water quality, plastic pollution, pathogens, environmental DNA, and oyster health all continued, contributing to stronger baseline data for understanding river conditions and estuarine community utilization. Since 1988, more than 13,000 individual fish have been collected, identified, measured and released, mostly due to the original River Project's efforts but now through the Trust's own commitment to continue this research. In 2022, the Trust began a collaboration with a SUNY Stony

Brook lab to standardize the data, develop a statistical model and analyze the dataset to better understand fish abundance and distribution.

In FY22-23, the Trust expanded its effort to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels. Although a significant portion of the Trust's in-park vehicles have long been electric, advances in technology have allowed the Park to begin investigating replacing heavier machinery and vehicles with electrically powered versions. The Trust also began testing various electric light-duty equipment, such as leaf-blowers and hedge trimmers. Further, the Trust began working with the New York Power Authority on identifying ways to better track, analyze and ultimately reduce the Park's utility usage and carbon footprint.

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

Throughout the fiscal year, the Park was again visited annually by millions of people – both New Yorkers and visitors to the City. Notably, Little Island continued to receive considerable news coverage and brought many new visitors to the Park and New York City with its iconic architecture. At Pier 57, the new rooftop provided amazing views of the Hudson River and New York Harbor, and the ground level Market Hall had growing excitement about its opening. The construction of Gansevoort Peninsula made international news, raising awareness of the exciting offerings New York City has for tourists.

In 2022, Park tenants and permittees, including Chelsea Piers, the Intrepid Museum, Circle Line, restaurants like Grand Banks, Drift Inn, City Winery and Vineyard, and more continued to provide significant employment opportunities while attracting significant numbers of visitors. Similarly, the Trust hosted film and television shoots, fashion shows, events like New York City Wine and Food Fest, iHeartRadio + Modelo, Bike MS and a wide range of non-profits for walk/run fundraisers. Nearly all these events enhanced both local employment and brought visitors to New York City.

In September 2022, the Trust was pleased to support and welcome colleagues from New York State including the Olympic Regional Development Authority, Empire State Development Corporation and the Adirondack Sports Council for a reception to build awareness of the Winter World University Games in Lake Placid. This event connected outdoor sports and economic development across the State.

## **7. 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 FY 22-23, following a public process, the Trust entered into a new lease agreement with Chelsea Piers, the tenant that runs a sports and recreation facility on Piers 59, 60, and 61 that will bring more revenue to the Trust as well as additional public amenities to the community. 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 FY 22-23, the Trust adopted

a conservative budget in anticipation that COVID would continue to depress some of its operating income. By the end of the FY 22-23 Fiscal Year, the Trust's unaudited financial position was more favorable than projected, with the Trust generating an operating surplus to fund its reserves. The Trust also expanded its efforts to seek grant funds, particularly from the federal government, and secured a commitment for additional funds to support the River Project's habitat enhancements monitoring program and the Operations Department's ongoing program to improve pedestrian safety and security throughout the Park.