



Report to Hudson River Park Advisory Council

October 10, 2023

Gansevoort Peninsula Opening

The biggest recent news has been the successful ribbon cutting of the new park area at Gansevoort Peninsula on October 2. We had perfect beach weather for this long-awaited day, and it was great to see so many people turn out for the event. We were thrilled to be joined by Governor Hochul, Deputy Mayor Joshi who represented Mayor Adams, Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine and many other happy people, including healthy representation from the AC.

The bikeway, sports field, 13th Ave promenade, boardwalks, lawn, sand bluff, kayak landing, salt marsh, and esplanade is now open to the public. The dog run and Bloomfield Street paving will be complete later this month due to some August and September rain delays, and the building and adjacent rain garden will be done later this year. The concession will need to go through the RFP process, and we expect it to open in Spring 2024.

There are a lot of people to thank for making this possible. Credit goes to the design team led by Field Operations, to the Architects to Gilbane and Invictus, our construction managers, to the Whitney Museum that brought us Day's End, to our many government partners including DEC and State and City Parks, to our elected officials, Community Board 2, Advisory Council, Hudson River Park Friends and all the individual people and organizations that have advocated for the Park for decades, every individual on our staff, especially Kevin Quinn and Tom Adams from Design and Construction.

We would like to thank Friends for sponsoring a 115-ft long photo exhibit on the fence at Gansevoort Peninsula. As we celebrate a quarter-century milestone, the exhibit shares a look back at how we got there, through archival Trust photos, some credited to the Hudson River Park Conservancy, and the personal and evocative photos from three longtime local residents. This esplanade-facing exhibit is already attracting many visitors and will be on display for approximately one month.

Also launched on Monday were six online galleries where you can glimpse our piers when they were part of the country's busiest working waterfront and explore the Park through decades of aeriels and additional photographs from local residents and artists.

SUBMERGE Marine Science Festival

On September 30, we hosted our 10th annual SUBMERGE Marine Science Festival on Pier 84. Though it is ordinarily a two-day event, we unfortunately canceled the first day of the festival due to heavy rain and flooding. That first day of the festival was scheduled to welcome over 1,000 NYC students from all five boroughs of NYC for field trips, but we look forward to engaging those schools in the future with field trip programming.

Despite the Friday cancellation, we were able to move forward with the public-facing portion of the event on Saturday and welcomed 4,000 attendees to the festival. Each year, SUBMERGE is an event that brings regional partners together. This year, over twenty organizations joined us on Saturday including our New York State, New York City, federal and nonprofit partners. During the event we also showcased a wide range of local wildlife as part of the event including raptors, owls, turtles, terrapins, seahorses, and crabs.

Design and Construction

Science Play Area

With play equipment installed Alpine is focusing on fence footings, completing site furnishings and installing safety surfacing later this month, with an opening of late fall projected.

Estuarium

The design team continues to work on building concepts and strategies for using Hudson River water in the exhibits. The Trust and design team staff recently met with DEC to address the water strategies as well and we will be returning to meet with the community shortly to catch people up on the work that has been underway since we last met. We are in the process of scheduling the next community engagement meeting in conjunction with CB1.

Pier 97

Construction at Pier 97 is also continuing to progress for a planned opening later this year. Field netting and lights are currently being installed around the Activity Field with synthetic turf installation planned to start over the next few weeks. Safety surface will also be installed in the playscape during this period. Footings are being installed for decking at the Sunset Deck and Belvedere. Installation of concrete unit pavers is continuing along the east half of the pier. Work on the new restroom/maintenance building is progressing with 75% of the structural concrete walls complete and waterproofing being installed around the building envelope. The building will open later than the pier open space.

34th Street Interim Pickleball Courts

Construction of four pickleball courts in a section of HRPT's storage yard commenced in July. The courts paving and fence installation is complete. The court surfacing system and netting will be installed over the next few weeks with completion expected for mid-autumn 2023.

Pier 45 Boardwalk Repair

After many years of service and heavy use, the Pier 45 wood decking has reached the end of its useful life and needs to be replaced. The repair along the south and west sides of the pier is going to begin in late-October and should be complete by May 2024. New decking will provide a safer, more resilient boardwalk surface. We will be removing the existing decking, repairing the substructure framing, and reinstalling salvaged boards while replacing any damaged ones. We will also be making repairs to the mid-lawn shade structure and are looking at adding power to reduce reliance on generators for events. Work will be done in phases, so the majority of the pier, including the lawn, will remain open to the public during construction.

Pier 25 Playground Improvements

As the Spray Area Season ends, we are undertaking some repairs & improvements at the Pier 25 Playground. As part of the repairs of a broken underground pipe that serves one of the water features, we are taking the opportunity to enhance the current safety surfacing which has become worn. We will be replacing the worn safety surface in the swing area with a newer, more robust safety surface tiles in earth-toned colors and will be replacing the spray area surface which has collected mold with a more decorative, exposed aggregate concrete surface that will be easier to keep clean. We are timing this effort as late as possible in the warm weather season while leaving enough time to complete the work before cold winter weather would require a pause. The spray & swing areas of the Playground will be closed and secured through December, while the remainder will have intermittent closures when dust, noise and disturbances from construction activities are active. We are working with the contractor to limit the amount of downtime for the climbing and sand areas.

Environmental and Sanctuary Initiatives

Climate Week

Climate Week was in September, alongside the UN General Assembly, and is an annual event that brings together partners from across NYC with the aim to raise public awareness and drive climate action for a greener more sustainable future. To support this citywide initiative, we hosted a climate-focused program in the Discovery Tank and participated in a large-scale climate showcase on the High Line as part of Emerson Collective's Climate Science Fair.

The fair was a four-day showcase of climate solutions, featuring a series of exhibitions, demonstrations, workshops and talks from notable climate changemakers. From sustainable aviation to climate-friendly farming, there was a wide range of global organizations that participated alongside the Park. During the course of the multiday event, we were able to engage tens of thousands of people and shared how Hudson River Park protects river habitats and builds environmental stewardship.

Within the Park, we hosted a special climate themed Ask a Scientist event with our partners Secret Science Club. This talk at the Pier 57 Discovery Tank welcomed two local climate researchers who discussed emissions, air pollution, urban heat islands and environmental justice. These talks continue to be one of our most popular events, and we look forward to continuing to host these during the fall and winter in the Discovery Tank given its temperature-controlled environment.

Public Programs

Our sports fields continue to be as popular as ever with schools, summer camps, and leagues of all sorts making use of every available moment to host practices and games. The addition of the sports field at Gansevoort Peninsular couldn't have come at a better time! We are leaving the field open for a short while as we work out some final details with the lights and allow the public to explore the whole peninsula and expect Gansevoort to be fully permitted for the Winter season.

Public programs also permitted several hundred events from picnics and weddings, to run walks, photo shoots, commercial activations and even the penultimate leg of long-distance swimmer Lewis Pugh's epic swim of the Hudson River.

As mentioned earlier in the report, the annual SUBMERGE Marine Science Festival at Pier 84 was a huge success despite the weather this past weekend where 4000 people, children and adults alike were able to engage with marine wildlife, raptors, science experiments, entertainers, food and take a selfie with the iconic shark arch. September 30 also coincided with the inaugural West Side Fest, a collaboration of 19 arts and cultural institutions, including the Park.

The last events to round out the season are the New York Wine and Food Festival scheduled for October 14 and 15 at both Piers 76 and 86. And please join us for Pumpkin Smash scheduled for November 4 – come monster-mash up your pumpkin to help our composting program!

Operations

Gansevoort Peninsula

With Gansevoort Peninsula now open, the Operations team is in full swing studying how people use the new areas of the park and caring for the site, including implementing the necessary procedures and trainings required for the maintenance and security of the new amenities.

Parkwide & Bikeway Lighting

A Parkwide light audit was performed last month, including an inspection of the bikeway light outages. Parkwide light outages will be repaired internally, and any bikeway lighting issues will be communicated with City DOT.

Bikeway Resurfacing Project

State DOT's bikeway resurfacing project is complete. The Operations team will be joining SDOT's team on a final walkthrough to ensure both parties are aware of any persisting issues that need to be addressed.

Facilities Maintenance

The sports field lighting at Pier 40 has recently been repaired, with any burned-out light bulbs and ballasts replaced. A 100-foot lift was rented to reach the lights.

Winterization of the water systems including water spray features, display fountains, irrigation systems, dog park water features, and drinking fountains will begin in mid-October and continue through mid- November.

Horticulture

Our team has planted 7 new trees and 2400 shrubs and perennials this fall and has hosted 2261 group volunteers so far this year giving 6150 total hours. Thank you to Friends for organizing so

many volunteers! Our maintenance staff spent 111 hours cleaning graffiti since August 1, and our education and prevention efforts continue.

Public Safety

It has been a busy end of summer in Hudson River Park. As reported at our last meeting, we have experienced an increase in people climbing over the safety rails along the river throughout the park and that trend continues. We will continue to closely monitor the waterline to address safety issues. We have added an additional five life rings since our last meeting when we reported adding an additional six life rings. We now have a total of forty-four life rings installed throughout the Park.

Since Gansevoort Peninsula opened to the public Monday, October 2, we have been actively working with PEP on the new challenges of the area. We will closely monitor ongoing conditions at Gansevoort Peninsula and take any necessary steps to address safety concerns that may arise.

Real Estate and Planning

Pier 76 Task Force

Our recently established Pier 76 Task Force has been meeting since July to consider the long-term future of this huge site. The conversations have been very constructive and respectful, with the group certainly interested in the Trust's stated dual missions of achieving great public open space while also generating the revenue the Park needs to help support the overall Park from this park/commercial pier as intended by the Act. The Trust has updated its projected financial needs, Community Board 4 presented on its affordable housing white paper, Kevin Quinn has updated the group on the pier's existing condition, and the whole group has begun discussing revenue generating uses that could co-exist with high quality open space that exceeds the minimums established in the Act. We look forward to the discussions continuing.