

Public Access Work Group
March 3 4:00 – 6:00 PM
Minutes – APPROVED

Attendees: Hugh Carola, Hackensack Riverkeeper; Margaret Flanagan, Guardians of Flushing Bay; Liz Balladares, HEP & UWFP; Sara Eichner, Pratt SAVI; Kara Meyer, + POOL; Danny DiMarino, Friends of Governors Island; Scott Dvorak, Trust for Public Land; Michael Marrella, NYC Dept of City Planning; Chrissy Word and Luis Gonzalez here from City Parks Foundation; Shino Tanikawa, , NYC Soil & Water Conservation District, SWIM Coalition & HEP CAC & WQWG; Allan Zaretsky with Department of City Planning, Waterfront and Open Space; Rob Pirani from NYNJ HEP; Sherrise Palomino from New Yorkers for Parks; Jason Smith, Sherman Creek Park; Karen Argenti from the Bronx Council for Environmental Quality; Alyssa Bement, Pratt SAVI; Christopher Girgenti, Randalls Island Park Alliance; Lisa Bloodgood, HEP CAC NY CoChair & North Brooklyn Neighbors; Chris Bowser NYSDEC Hudson River Program; Rosana Da Silva, HRF/HEP; Graeme Birchall, Downtown Boathouse; Clay Sherman NJ DEP; Terri Carta, BGI and NYC Greenways Coalition; Karen Imas, Waterfront Alliance; Chris Boyd, Bob Balder, Cornell University,

- 1. Welcome and Agenda Review** **4:00 - 4:05 PM**
- 2. Approval of Minutes from November 2021 Meeting** **4:05 - 4:10 PM**

Minutes were approved unanimously

- 3. Hackensack River Greenway** **4:10 - 4:20 PM**

Priority PA-A-1: Increase Access Advance opportunities for increasing public access, particularly in areas of higher need.

Hugh Carola from Hackensack Riverkeeper provided an update on Hackensack River Greenway planning. The greenway would run along the western coast of Hudson County. North Bergen, Secaucus, Jersey City, and Bayonne. Its an opportunity for creating more access sites. Information available at <https://www.hcnj.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Hackensack-River-Greenway.pdf>

- 4. Managing Swimming in the Hudson and Harbor** **4:20 – 4:25 PM**

Priority PA-A-2: Contact Recreation Assess prospects and refine goals for increasing direct access for boating, swimming, and wading, incorporating associated water quality consideration and **Priority PA-C-1: Safety** Increase understanding of the safety and risks associated with direct contact with the water.

The Hudson/Harbor swimming committee met to discuss its agenda for the year, following up on Work Group and conference discussions. Our focus will be on clarifying process and elevating initiatives for permitting new bathing beaches, in particular around water quality parameters and testing requirements. Work Group members are welcome to join the committee.

5. Paddling Guide Update

4:25 - 4:40 PM

Priority PA-C-2: Public Participation Encourage and support public participation in water-based activities.

Sara Eichner and Can Sucuoglu from Pratt Institute provided an update on their work to create an accessible database and map of public access sites. Work Group members are asked to join a committee to provide stakeholder input and user testing later this spring.

Pratt has put together the initial databases and looking at ways of getting data out there to look at accessibility. They will be looking at NJ and other NY areas. Categorical fields plus photos would be used to document. Pratt is particularly interested in understanding who the audience is for the database and what attributes do the people need?

Some comments from the Committee discussion:

A source of that information NYC DCP waterfront access map – formalized parks and open spaces. Available from City Open Data Portal. <https://waterfrontaccess.planning.nyc.gov>

<https://www.graemebirchall.com/kayakers-guide> - has accessibility constraints

A key question is how to treat quasi-public sites – publically owned but not really managed for public access – the city’s comprehensive waterfront plan identifies this as a need. Can we display sites where informal access is happening?

From chat:

I would add that ferry landings focus on transportation and commuting, not exactly access, to separate them out. It is now very rare for the NYC to allow other access uses at ferry landings

We should also include the access to public and other constructed pool swimming as part of the equity assessment to document that open waters may be the only option for the vast majority of people

Great to make the fishing access more integrated, thanks!

6. Identifying Public Access Indicators

4:40 - 5:05 PM

HEP is starting the process to update our Action Agenda which will begin with [environmental monitoring](#). To update the interactive map, we are taking the time to reflect on existing indicators that were included in the 2018 CCMP and whether there are other indicators we should be considering. We will review the indicators we used for public access and discuss additions.

Need to define community science. Clarify nomenclature vs citizens science.

Explain meta nature of the project – especially for

Add Carbon footprint as an indicator

Park user data – origin, demographics, who is using the data, parks do not generally have this data. BGI is doing a comprehensive user data study looking at this – can this be a model. Data like this would be super useful – eg for USACE, others, grant applications – eg how many will benefit?

Park values as per USFS work? Looking at motivation / interests in waterfront access

From chat: I lean towards "community" science and we try to use this whenever possible. Some of our student participants have a range of citizenry and legal status, so the term "citizen" can come with more or different weight than what we are trying to express with the idea of shared science.

7. Public Access Priorities for Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Funding 5:05 - 5:25 PM

HEP is developing a workplan for the funding from the BIL and will review approach and solicit considerations for how best to utilize this funding.

- *Being on top of community displacement / gentrification. Better tools for community engagement. Sherman Creek – trying to develop a community council to enable on going participation/build community knowledge for long term effort/valuing feeling about the waterfront/a funded stakeholder forum that has longevity/*
- *Looking at jobs and work force training for GI /*
- *Easy GI projects - DIY*
- *Notion of neighborhood adaptation process/bottom up planning process – on the ready and well informed on climate resiliency planning in support of NYC Climate planning process/how equipped where these neighborhoods will be. Existing stakeholder groups/toolkits of options/what constitutes GI, The city resources are not there*

- *Waterfront access infrastructure – this is the last thing that would be elevated. EG Flushing Bay restrooms. Why are BBP and HRPT are able to do this? Eg Dundee Island was able to build it – but had to find an elevated spot. \$\$ is a big part of it*
- *How can it build capacity for getting projects ready to be implemented – concept plans/move it towards to help implement these / eg restrooms – generic is the perfect restroom/deals with floodplain/generic model for people to implement.*
- *So much land is publicly owned – state owned property that community are trying to get control of this. Can this be part of the process.*
- *Agree with Chris' point about adding capacity for comprehensive / inter-agency / collaborative approaches to building infrastructure. This definitely relates to the greenway network as well -- many city/state/fed agencies involved in planning, design, construction and maintenance of greenways. Without a designated agency or entity to drive intersectionality. Some private players as well in few cases.*

8. Partner Updates

5:25 – 5:45 PM

Jason just completed a social assessment on Sherman Creek. Looking at how to distribute this work.

Next Meetings

Thu 6/2/2022 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Thu 10/6/2022 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Thu 12/1/2022 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM