

PIER 40 FOR ALL

Dear *Pier 40 For All* supporters:

Last night, New York State passed legislation amending the Hudson River Park Act regarding Pier 40.

Without your activism, we never could have gotten this far. You helped move the dialogue and keep the pressure on to get us as close as possible to the rehabilitation of the decrepit structure. It is still unclear from **the legislation that passed** whether Hudson River Park will be able to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to rehabilitate Pier 40 successfully, provide sufficient income for the Park and expand the sports fields and open space as demanded by the community.

But, WE ARE NOT DONE YET! Your voice and actions helped us get closer than ever to a possible new Pier 40. We need to keep going and make sure that we get the Pier 40 we deserve.

Over 5,000 emails were sent to elected officials by parents, Youth Sports League participants, park users from throughout the west side, small businesses and you!

Nearly 1,000 residents and dozens of organizations signed up to support *Pier 40 For All*. You testified at public meetings, wrote and called your elected representatives because – like all of us – YOU love Hudson River Park.

We also encourage you to **call or write** to say thank you to our local elected officials for helping accomplish so much.

Read the **New York Times editorial** in support of the plan to redevelop Pier 40 (text included below).

We will update you on future public meetings and more details on the future of Pier 40. And, we will need you to come out again and weigh in when any new proposals go before a public review.

Please feel free to contact us directly if you have any questions about the legislation or the process moving forward.

Thank you!

Pier 40 For All Team

Pier 40 For All is a coalition for neighbors and community groups who are working together to make sure that as Hudson River Park is finished, Pier 40 is transformed into a beautiful, environmentally conscious space that fits the needs of our local community, expands and improves our sports fields, and supports the park with appropriately scaled commercial uses.

Pier 40 For All has garnered the support of 800 plus residents and Park users and over 40 organizations that has sent over 5,000 letters urging our elected officials to save Pier 40.

The New York Times

Opinion

Hudson River Park Needs Help

A plan to put office space on a West Village pier may be the answer.

By The Editorial Board

The editorial board represents the opinions of the board, its editor and the publisher. It is separate from the newsroom and the Op-Ed section.

June 6, 2019

Hudson River Park, a leafy, breezy stretch along Manhattan's lower shore, has offered a blissful respite from crowded streets for the better part of two decades.

Tranquil thoughts can't keep it lovingly manicured, though. For that, the Hudson River Park Trust, the public corporation that built and runs the park, hopes that transforming an unappealing eyesore can help.

The trust wants the State Legislature to amend the [1998 law](#) establishing the park so

that it can offer developers a 99-year lease on worn-out Pier 40, a former passenger ship terminal within the park at the end of West Houston Street. **The pier now houses** two stories of offices, a parking garage and well-worn and well-loved playing fields.

Trust officials hope changing the law will help them attract a developer to build up to 880,000 square feet of office space, with expanded and improved fields. The new development would be as much as 88 feet tall, or about eight stories. The officials believe that it could bring in \$12.5 million in revenue each year, a substantial step toward what they predict will be a \$64 million annual operating budget for the park within a decade. They say it is unlikely that developers would be interested without a change in the current 30-year limit on a lease to 99 years, the industry standard needed to finance larger projects.

Plans to develop the pier have been stalled for years. Little League groups and soccer clubs have expressed support at public forums for developing the pier as a way to expand and improve the playing fields they use. Others have expressed fierce opposition. In April, the local Community Board passed a **resolution** saying the development would “cast a privatized aura over the park.” Board members have also said they are concerned the park couldn’t handle the people the offices would bring.

Yet the plan would not develop parkland. The pier is already home to office space and a parking garage. The proposal would create a somewhat taller building with bigger and better space for the community.

More pertinent, the state **created** Hudson River Park, along a stretch of what was once decaying piers and warehouses, with the stipulation that it would be largely self-sustaining, using revenue from development within the park to fund its operations. No one has proposed a detailed alternative plan for funding the park, although some opponents of development say they would like the state or city to pick up the cost.

Assemblywoman Deborah Glick, who represents the area, has proposed allowing a somewhat smaller plan — about 700,000 square feet of development, along with additional space for the trust’s offices. Ms. Glick said she wants more information from the trust about the financial assumptions underlying its plan, which is reasonable. She said she would support development that “doesn’t turn it into a Google or Amazon pier.”

But her **proposal** for amending the law that created the park would provide only a 49-year lease with an option for a 25-year renewal. In an interview, she said of a 99-year lease, “It isn’t a lease, it’s a sale.” She wouldn’t say whether she was open to longer leaseterms.

Park officials say it would be virtually impossible to find an appropriate developer without a 99-year lease. Developers say it can be difficult to find a bank to assume risk for financing large projects on city or state land without one.

Given the history, the neighborhood's skepticism toward development is understandable. In the 1970s and 1980s, the area surrounding what became Hudson River Park was slated to be consumed by **Westway**, a monstrous mega-highway and development that was stopped when community activists balked and fought a long legal battle.

Now, after nearly two decades of breakneck growth and soaring real estate prices, many New Yorkers are again in no mood for development. Community opposition has impeded other proposals for the site, including one to build two 22-story residential towers.

But the trust's plan for Pier 40 is no Westway. Instead, it's a sensible way for the park to fulfill its mission. It seems as if the trust and Ms. Glick, along with other local officials, should be able to reach an agreement on making it happen.