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## Pier 57 certification process to begin soon

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**BY WINNIE McCROY** | As part of the continuous expansion of the Hudson River Park Trust, architects Youngwoo & Associates will soon submit certification paperwork for a proposed redevelopment of Pier 57. Upon completion, it would create more than 114,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space, a marina and public parkland. Construction is set to commence in mid-2013.

“We are drafting the Environmental Impact Study [EIS] now, and then we will have that certified to enter into the ULURP process, which will probably happen in December,” said Greg Carney, a partner at Youngwoo & Associates. “The certification process takes some time, so it will be about March or April when we get that certification. Then we go into [Uniform Land Use Review Procedure] ULURP. There are regulatory time frames for each step of that process, so it is pretty well-scripted.”

Madelyn Wils, President and CEO of Hudson River Park Trust, recently took Chelsea Now on a tour of the parks along the West Side Highway. She said that the park draws an estimated 17 million people per year.

“The Hudson River Park is the second largest waterfront park in the entire country. It’s the longest park there is, and it has completely transformed the West Side,” noted Wils. “It’s given families a chance to stay in New York, because they are able to have the activities they need.”

Wils said the Park hosted more than 100 free events last summer, which attracted some 150,000 people. Some examples include a two-day skate workshop with Tony Hawk, free concerts, a free Sunday night dance series, the River Flicks series and free classes for yoga, acting and Pilates. There was even a trapeze school atop Pier 40.

For longtime residents to watch the transformation from buckling piers to this beautiful, continuous bypass and piers is amazing, said Wils. She pointed to the redevelopment of Pier 54 and Gansevoort Park — which will feature almost six acres of lawn. One of the big changes planned for the Hudson River Park is the creation of the Pier 57 complex, with an open-air market comprised of shipping containers on the bottom, topped by a public park.

“With the transformation of the Meat Market area, you can see now the possibility of transforming the waterfront and what that can do for the community. It bridges the Village, Meat Market and Chelsea, making it a continuous, important strip,” said Wils. She pointed to the popularity of similar open-air markets in London.

“On the roof of Pier 57 will be a public park, and the Tribeca Film Festival will be able to use it,” said Wils. “What’s exciting is the kind of interesting, cutting-edge urbanism that Urban Space

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Management and Youngwoo want to bring to that pier. It has worked elsewhere around the world and would be a great asset for New York.”

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According to Carney, the location was in part chosen because the pier's existing caissons will not need to be replaced. “The effect will be minimal, because we don't need to do any external work to the caissons, so far we have found them to be in good shape,” said Carney.

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“We think it's positive because it generates jobs — on the front end with construction in operating the pier,” said Carney. “But we have not commissioned a formal study, and have no plans to.”

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“It may be proposed that certain signal and crossing terms are altered; traffic experts are looking to deal with that. As part of the public scoping process, people will have an opportunity to comment,” said Carney. An overpass is part of the LIS as an alternative. We looked at it, and in fact the analysis says that there will be too much pedestrian traffic concentrated there or too many conflicts with vehicle traffic, we have suggested a number of ways that we can deal with it, and an overpass is one alternative.

The architects have also explored tapping into the mass transit system or private shuttle routes, said Carney — but there is currently no plan for bus parking, aside from a loading/unloading zone. Freight unloading will be done during off-hours.

Plans for the Pier 57 project include a pier with 115 boat slips. “There is a huge amount of boating activities, from sailing schools and free sailing lessons. It's really a dream for people who want to be active not only at the water, but in the water,” said Wils — who noted that since the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Water Act, water quality has improved. People can and do safely swim in the river. Wils said that next spring, the park would feature 40 new moorings at Pier 25 for community boaters.

Carney added that plans for Pier 57 would not ignore the impact that the river has on these parks, including that of global warming. “I think analysis was done by engineers looking at this,” said Carney. “There is a zone between the caissons and the floor of the pier, and another distance above that level. So far, the analysts have looked at what's historically happened as far as sea level and flooding, and I don't think we need to do anything in addition to what's there.”

Wils said that each portion of the Hudson River Park Trust addressed the adjacent community differently, from the commercial feel of the Intrepid Museum down by 42nd Street to the green spaces for the community to hang out and have a picnic in Chelsea and Tribeca. The Pier 57 plan will be well suited to the Chelsea area, which is currently experiencing an influx of visitors to the High Line Park.

“The unique thing about the park is that you can spend all day there and find a dozen different things to do. It's really a New Yorker's park,” said Wils. “The importance of the Hudson River Park in people's daily lives in the Downtown community really has become what Central Park is to midtown. It's an extraordinary culture on the West Side.”

For more information, visit [hudsonriverpark.org](http://hudsonriverpark.org).

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