

February 14, 2023

From:
Michael J. DeMarco
Jeremy Farrell
Andy Siegel

Dear Craig Dorsett,

We are writing to you to propose a gift to the State of New Jersey Parks Department. We represent the executive officers of the Exchange Place Special Improvement District. Our organization is charged with the physical improvement and continued maintenance of a large section of Downtown Jersey City. We are the largest SID in the state with a capital raise of \$4 million per annum. As an example of our larger capital improvement projects, we are building a one-and-a-half acre park at Exchange Place in Jersey City. This is an over eight million dollars project that we designed and constructed. It was a gift to the City of Jersey City from our organization. Our Board of Directors consists almost entirely of professionals from the real estate industry with a great deal of experience in construction and dealing with governmental agencies. If you were to make enquiries to Jersey City officials you would find that we perform like a high level property consultant or first level construction manager.

We would like to propose a similar gift to Liberty State Park in the form of a complete renovation of what we call locally Peninsula Park, at 158 Washington Street in Jersey City. As you well know this is a neglected piece of Liberty State Park, with no physical connection to the main park. This area was very damaged by Hurricane Sandy with a massive amount of soil erosion. As a resident of Jersey City going back as long as 50 years, Liberty State Park is a tremendous and treasured place. However, it has a never ending list of capital needs.

Our proposal is to take this small area off of your plate. We would like to do three simple things. First, steel bulkhead the entire area to its original measurements adding the appropriate walkway. Second, landscape the park and provide the appropriate sprinkler systems and connect it to the existing Waterfront Walkway. Third, program the area with a playground.

Our board members have been active in the local community and on statewide issues. Given our experience and combined networks, we would be happy to reach out to any community leaders or elected officials to demonstrate support for our proposed project, if you think it is necessary or helpful.

Sincerely,

Michael J. DeMarco
President
Exchange Place Alliance

Jeremy Farrell
Secretary
Exchange Place Alliance

Andy Siegel
Treasurer
Exchange Place Alliance



About the Exchange Place Alliance

The Exchange Place Alliance (EPASID), formed in 2017, is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote and guide economic revitalization, to promote social growth, and to make the greater Exchange Place area cleaner, safer, and greener. This is accomplished by providing a high level of supplemental management, maintenance, and improvements to the EPASID special improvement district (SID). We strive to make the Exchange Place area and downtown Jersey City a better place to live, work, and visit.

The EPASID, Jersey City's sixth SID, is formed by property owners, businesses, residents, and other stakeholders within its boundaries. The EPASID is funded primarily through assessments on property within its boundaries and receives neither tax dollars nor funds from philanthropic donors. The district itself is irregularly shaped, covering roughly 1/2 square mile from Thomas Gangemi Drive to the Morris Canal Basin, and from the Hudson River waterfront to parts of Greene Street, Washington Street, Warren Street, and Marin Boulevard.

The Work of the EPASID

The EPASID engages in a broad spectrum of programs and services to enhance the quality of life within the SID. We aim to clean and beautify the district year-round, providing supplemental landscaping and snow removal along with routine maintenance and repairs. The EPASID has also been focusing on a public safety element during the warmer months by providing uniformed JCPD Off-Duty waterfront security patrols. In tandem with these activities, the EPASID aims to better activate the district for its residents, businesses, and visitors alike through various forms of community and social programming.

On the whole, the EPASID seeks to engage in activities that attract new businesses and improve the environment for existing ones, usher the activation of public spaces to promote a cohesive community, and serve as the leading advocate for the greater Exchange Place area.

Focusing On Transforming Parks and Open Public Spaces

In 2021, the EPASID completed the installation of two new public playgrounds at Paulus Hook Park along with absorbing its maintenance and landscaping needs. The following summer, the EPASID broke ground on the Exchange Place Plaza renovations, with the goal of transforming a derelict, former bus depot and a de facto parking lot into a beautiful, multi-use open public space.

The plaza has been undergoing an \$8 million+ renovation and will be completed this spring. This includes the installation of crash-rated security bollards to protect and ensure the safe pedestrian use of the space, new site lighting, resurfacing, new landscaping complete with irrigation lines, the buildout of a proper reflection area around the Katyn Memorial, and a massive new playground.

In addition to this, the EPASID is exploring the possibility of rehabilitating Colgate Park and a number of other spaces along the waterfront to make a cohesive and seamless waterfront.





**EXCHANGE PLACE ALLIANCE
REPORT ON FY22:**

JULY 1, 2021 - JUNE 30, 2022





Letter from our Executive Director

We are excited to share with you our Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Report. Over the past year, the Exchange Place Alliance has made significant headway on key initiatives intended to elevate the quality of life for those who visit, live, or work in our special improvement district.

The following pages detail our efforts to achieve our mission. From our teams on the ground keeping the district clean, attractive, and free from snow, ice, and litter to our coordination for major events and permanent installations, we are passionate about the continued development and improvement of the waterfront in Jersey City.

We take great pride in our work for our community on the Jersey City waterfront. While taking some time here to reflect on our work from this past year, we are looking forward to the year ahead and the opportunities to further advance the waterfront enhancements and position it as one of Jersey City's most valuable assets.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Brown", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.



GOALS OF THIS REPORT

The purpose of this document is to comply with the annual filing requirements for the Exchange Place Alliance Special Improvement District, hereafter “EPASID” or “EPA,” as set forth in §69-78C of Jersey City Ordinance 16-176. This document serves as the annual report of EPASID and summarizes its activities for the preceding fiscal year for the Mayor and Municipal Council.

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW AND MISSION

EPASID’s work is to maintain and improve the area through capital improvements, repairs and maintenance, landscaping, cleaning, and community-building programming. We aim to promote and guide continued economic revitalization and social growth and strive to make the greater Exchange Place area cleaner, safer, and greener. This is accomplished by providing a high level of supplemental management, maintenance, and improvements to our special improvement district. We strive to make the waterfront and Exchange Place a better place to live, work, and visit.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE



DISTRICT MAINTENANCE & UPKEEP

This past fiscal year, the EPA continued one of its primary initiatives to maintain and beautify the district through the deployment of its Clean Team. EPASID provides a year-round, daily presence in our waterfront community to ensure timely trash and litter removal, street cleaning, general repairs, and special projects. The Clean Team worked seven days per week, from 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM during the warm months of May-September and from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM for the colder, off-season months of October-April. In the off season, the Clean Team provides 154 hours of service per week and in the warm season that number rises to 216 hours per week to accommodate increased activity in our public spaces.

These streetscape repairs and maintenance duties are critical functions of the EPA, as reflected in our roundup of key metrics:

- ✓ **11,613 hours of service put in to keep our district maintained and clean**
- ✓ **9,921 trash bags hauled, amounting to over 347,000 lbs. of trash and debris removed out of our district**
- ✓ **1,600 instances of poster and sticker removal**
- ✓ **397 instances of graffiti removal**



Additionally, our Clean Team undertook special projects and other streetscape repairs as necessary. This included the regular and ongoing pressure washing of high-traffic pedestrian areas in our district, especially around J. Owen Grundy Pier, the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway, and Exchange Place. The Clean Team has more flexibility with this now that it has added an in-house pressure washer unit for the EPA's exclusive use. Now, on demand and where needed, the Alliance offers this service to the district. The Clean Team also dedicated a significant portion of time to specially pressure wash the sidewalks and streets of adjacent properties who have mobile food trucks nearby. We have also engaged the City to make a critical repair to the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway where pavers were starting to collapse, creating a trip and fall hazard in a high-pedestrian area. The EPASID has also worked with the City to document abandoned bikes throughout the district and ultimately remove them from our streets, helping to keep bike parking cleared up. The EPA has also continued to engage the City on other types of repairs through See Click Fix including light pole repairs, street signage maintenance, pothole repairs, and tree stump removal.

LANDSCAPING AND SNOW REMOVAL

The EPASID continued its seasonal landscaping program, covering all seasons, in order to green the district and add aesthetically pleasing plants. In Fall 2021, our landscaping team planted a hearty mixture of colored mums, cabbage, and millet, and in the winter, our planters were covered over with spruce branches. This Spring 2022, our landscaping crew started to incorporate a larger percentage of perennial plants so that we can begin to build up certain areas into healthy and vibrant spaces year after year. We are always working to identify fun and creative ways to integrate more plants in the district, as the benefits of this are manifold. Our snow removal crew also worked hard over the winter to clear away snow and ice 24/7 to always keep our high pedestrian traffic areas clear, even in the overnight hours.



HOLIDAY DECORATION INSTALLATION

We continued our holiday decoration program this past fiscal year and note that the decorations have become a popular picture opportunity, especially our 30' Sequoia tree. We always observe people gathering around the tree to admire not only its size but location with sweeping views of the city skyline across the river.





SPECIAL PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES



EXCHANGE PLACE PLAZA

This past fiscal year the EPA continued to make significant headway toward breaking ground on the new Exchange Place Plaza. We have navigated through the various processes for bidding, easements, approvals, and permitting, and including in May, the City Planning Board Section 31 review and approval. In July 2021 we also held an open public meeting solely dedicated to the discussion and feedback on the plaza's designs and plans. EPASID will begin work on this project this July and it will likely continue through the end of the calendar year.

SUMMER 2021 POLICE PATROLS

Last summer the EPASID continued its waterfront public safety patrols utilizing Off-Duty Police Officers from the Jersey City Department of Public Safety. The officers patrolled the area of the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway between 2nd Street and Van Vorst/Dudley Streets. Four officers covered each shift: on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 8:00 PM to 2:00 AM and Fridays and Saturdays from 8:00 PM to 4:00 AM.

WAYFINDING SYSTEM

The EPA has continued to work with Two Twelve, a Jersey City-owned company, to develop wayfinding signs and historic kiosks to appear around the special improvement district. Currently the designs are finalized and final amendments are being made to content. The EPASID will be sending out a public bid for sign fabricators/installers shortly through the issuance of construction intent documents.



PUBLIC ART INSTALLATIONS

This year, the EPA was able to bring some delightful installations to the waterfront. *Continuity*, by Perry Flash Fong, appears in Morris Canal Park. In coordination with Liberty State Park, Perry painted the benches with beautiful color gradients. *Beacon*, by Michael Alfano, was installed at the end of Warren Street, where it meets the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway. Alfano writes, "In *Beacon*, a profile of a child's face represents the flame of a candle. The base of the sculpture forms a stylized candle and the child's face rises from it, driving out the darkness with their light. The hard, bronze material is designed to form a light, wispy profile almost blowing in the wind. The sculpture is inspired by the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. quote: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.'" *Jekyll and Hyde* by Raphael Pangilinan is currently installed on Grundy Pier. Pangilinan writes about his dual pieces, "During the past year we have gotten to learn more about ourselves than anytime of our lives, both the positive and negative side of us. We don't know who we are until we are pushed to the limit...[used in reference to a person or thing that alternatively displays two different sides to their character or nature]." Also near Grundy Pier, Heidi Howard installed *Portrait Banners*. Finally, in May-June, the EPASID worked again with Liberty State Park to bring Zaq Landsberg's *Reclining Liberty* to Liberty State Park. More information on these installations and a self-guided tour can be found at: www.exchangeplacealliance.com/public-art-guide



MARKETING

Current Marketing Statistics:

EPASID currently has **764** subscribers for its periodic newsletter, along with **1,100** Facebook followers, **7,730** Instagram followers, and **507** Twitter followers. We continue to support local publications with advertising to promote the district.

EVENTS IN FY22



Paulus Hook Park Playground Ribbon Cutting

In summer 2021, the playgrounds at Paulus Hook Park were officially opened following a ribbon cutting ceremony attended by Mayor Fulop, other elected officials, and stakeholders.



Drive-In Movie Nights 2021

EPASID continued this popular event that was started during the pandemic into September 2021.

Zumba On the Pier

During this past summer, the EPA sponsored Zumba classes on Grundy Pier twice per week through October 2021. This was an especially popular event.



Pier Fest

Partnering with Riverview Jazz Organization, the EPASID brought world class music to Grundy Pier on four consecutive Fridays in August 2021. This event drew over 3,000 people.



Jazz Fest 2021

Working again with Riverview Jazz Organization, the EPASID was the lead sponsor for this annual event which pulled in a crowd over 5,000 people. This took place on September 25th.

63rd Army Band on Grundy Pier 2021

The EPA worked with event organizers to coordinate this annual concert that always brings a crowd of listeners to the waterfront. This took place on September 11th.



Boys & Girls Club Halloween Event

We worked with the Boys and Girls Club of Hudson County and staff from Veris Residential to put on this fun seasonal event on October 31st.



Public Art Walking Tours

The EPASID offered two public tours in the Fall to showcase its collection of art throughout the district..

Movies on the Pier 2022

We took this popular event and tweaked it a bit to bring it to Grundy Pier. This weekly (Fridays) event started in late May and will continue through the end of this summer. Large crowds have attended each movie night, which always feature family-friendly films.

Downtown Community Church Volunteer Day

We worked with volunteers to identify areas in need of service around Grundy Pier. On June 11th, the amazing team of volunteers worked to paint railings and pressure wash some of the decking.

Jazz Fest 2022

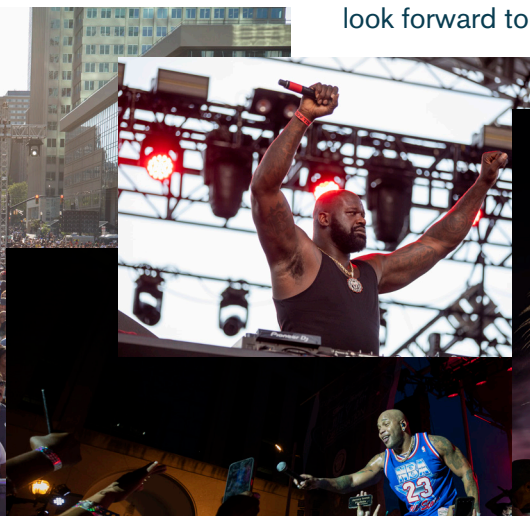
This year's event took place on June 4th and June 5th.

63rd Army Band on Grundy Pier 2022

This summer's event took place on Friday, July 1st.

July 4th

Last, but certainly not least, the EPASID worked in tandem with the City of Jersey City and a large number of stakeholders to produce New Jersey's largest 4th of July celebration. The event was safe and successful, and saw crowds pushing close to 200,000 people. We were thrilled to welcome so many visitors to our district and look forward to many more.



NEW BUSINESS

We were excited to have seen so many retail level businesses come into our district in FY22. This included Ondo, Canard Cafe, Maman NYC, A-Yo Tea Shop, and Smorgasbar.

2022-2023 GOALS



EPASID plans to work on the following projects for the 2022-2023 fiscal year:

- Complete the Exchange Place Plaza renovation project;
- Engage with the City and other relevant stakeholders to examine the potential for a public pedestrian plaza on Grand Street, east of Hudson Street and execute a pop up;
- Continue to invest in Paulus Hook Park to elevate its aesthetic appeal and functionality;
- Explore the acquisition of Morris Canal Park and examine the ways that this parcel can be preserved and improved upon;
- Explore the acquisition of Colgate Park and any rapid aesthetic interventions that may be implemented;
- Implement a pedestrian wayfinding system that includes but is not limited to area maps and historical informational panels;
- Continue to invest in a landscaping and beautification program that elevates the waterfront's appeal and natural assets;
- Explore the integration of targeted and efficient seasonal security patrols;
- Produce, sponsor, and support a variety of events, cultural, historic and educational opportunities for the community's enjoyment and improvement of quality of life.

EXCHANGE
PLACE
ALLIANCE

ExchangePlaceAlliance.com

 [exchangeplacealliance](https://www.instagram.com/exchangeplacealliance)

 [epasid_jc](https://twitter.com/epasid_jc)

 [exchangeplacealliance](https://www.facebook.com/exchangeplacealliance)