

Carrow and Diane Thibault
1007 BLOOMFIELD STREET
HOBOKEN, NJ 07030

May 21, 2024

Director Jennifer Gonzales
Hoboken City Hall
94 Washington Street
Hoboken, NJ 07302

Re: Proposed sculpture at Pier C

Dear Jennifer,

My wife and I have lived in Hoboken for over 35 years and have witnessed the redevelopment of Hoboken's waterfront firsthand. I have volunteered with the Fund for a Better Waterfront since the referendums in the early 90's and am currently on the board. Pier A and C are first rate waterfront parks that in my opinion rank among some of the best in the world. I am writing regarding the recently unveiled proposal for a piece of sculpture to be located on Pier C along the Hoboken waterfront. The proposal troubles me for several reasons. The scale of the sculpture will overwhelm the pier and detract from it's singular design and function. The location is inappropriate given the scale, design and activities for which it was planned and is used. Perhaps most disconcerting is the process by which the proposal has come about.

To us, one of the most enjoyable features of pier C is the curving boardwalk revealing changing views of the river and the New York skyline as one walks along. The river and skyline views are stunning and a huge draw for both residents and visitors. The park itself is intimate with discreet spaces and spots to rest, fish, or play. The details of the boardwalk, plantings, and play equipment are well thought out and constructed. Unfortunately, the proposed sculpture is far too large and dissonant for this more intimately scaled park, and it will distract the views (and maybe even snag a fisherman's line!).

But aside from the scale and functional issues, I am curious as to how this location was deemed in need of a sculpture in the first place. I am all for public art that is appropriately scaled for the chosen location. Battery Park City across the river offers good examples of creative installations that enhance rather than distract from the park and waterfront. Tom Otterbein's whimsical bronze sculptures come to mind as examples of sculpture that works with, not against, the park, enhancing it. The proposed sculpture appears to need a very large space surrounding it to visually and spatially anchor it. On the fishing pier at pier C it looks overwhelming and tenuous at the same time.

Finally, I wonder about the process undertaken to arrive at this proposal. How and why was this site selected? What was the project brief and how was that developed? There are plenty of locations in Hoboken where a sculpture like this might be more appropriate; for example the new northwest resilience park or the southwest park. I am not in favor of this piece of sculpture going further than it already has and I strongly question the proposed site for any sculptural intervention, other than small, intimately scaled pieces that enhance the park's intimate nature while letting the views remain paramount.

Going forward, I hope the city will more carefully consider appropriate sites and requirements for public art. I suggest having a competition to be conducted openly for any significant works of public art, in keeping with competitions for similar public projects around the country and the world, especially for *anything* located on Hoboken's world class waterfront. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Carrow and Diane Thibault