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DESIGN TRUST FOR PUBLIC SPACE ANNOUNCES THE WINNERS FROM ITS OPEN CALL TO BUILD CONNECTIVITY IN THE PUBLIC REALM

NEW YORK, NY (July 31, 2014) – The Design Trust for Public Space announced yesterday the winners of The Energetic City: Connectivity in the Public Realm, a request for project proposals from individuals, community groups and public agencies to redefine NYC’s public space. The winning initiatives, selected from over 90 submissions, will develop new ways of connecting diverse people, systems, and built, natural and digital environment of New York City. Each project, which will receive seed funding to begin immediately, will respond to the needs and aspirations of community users.

The winning proposals, selected from seven finalists, are (in alphabetical order):

• Proposal title: Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Retail
  Proposer: The New York City Department of Housing, Preservation & Development (HPD)

  The NYC Department of Housing, Preservation & Development needs design guidelines to achieve successful mixed-use developments that include high-performing ground-floor spaces. The resulting manual will generate immediate changes to HPD’s development process for mixed-use projects, but also for other entities focused on creating vibrant local economies through design.

  “With this Administration’s ambitious affordable housing agenda, we also want to see vibrant stores, community facilities, and streets going hand in hand with these developments. All New Yorkers deserve great public space,” said Susan Chin, FAIA, executive director of the Design Trust. “We have an amazing opportunity and an obligation to design world class developments.”

• Proposal title: FMCP Creative / Reconnect the Park
  Proposer: Queens Museum and the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR)

  Queens Museum and the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation will investigate new ways of connecting public parks to communities through a pilot study that will analyze Flushing Meadows Corona Park (FMCP). Envisioned as an active learning framework for park users, the project will support community participants in developing proposals to improve FMCP’s connectivity with surrounding neighborhoods, focusing on the park entrances, wayfinding system, and new uses for the World’s Fair infrastructure.

  “We all remember how magical and visionary the two World’s Fairs were. The United Nations started here. This proposal recaptures that spirit. It creates a new way of connecting with the park’s energetic, diverse and international community,” said Susan Chin, FAIA, executive director of the Design Trust. “The stewardship that develops here will last for generations to come.”

• Proposal title: Future Culture: Connecting Staten Island’s Waterfront
  Proposer: Staten Island Arts

  Staten Island Arts seeks to establish a replicable model of inclusive development through public art to link neighborhoods, starting with Staten Island’s North Shore. The project will provide planning and policy recommendations to stabilize the cultural assets of neighborhoods.

  “Staten Island Arts’ proposal offers a great opportunity for the City and developers to draw on untapped community resources—the local artistic talent of St. George. And it will create a unique destination, similar to how DUMBO developed, while retaining that talent,” said Susan Chin, FAIA, executive director of the Design Trust. “We’ll have a mixed-use waterfront, infused with public art and ingenuity. What an exceptional way to connect with the energetic city.”

• Proposal title: Opening the Edge
  Proposer: Jane Greengold with the support of New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)

  Brooklyn artist Jane Greengold aims to activate underused public spaces surrounding public housing
developments with the residents. The project will develop new ideas and a prototype to transform inaccessible landscapes around NYCHA developments into lively places to gather for residents and visitors alike.

“We’ve all dreamt of a better use for that fenced in grassy knoll in front of the ‘such & such’ Houses, where residents and visitors are able to play ball or picnic. Now we’ll be able to connect with each other and the neighborhood,” said Susan Chin, FAIA, executive director of the Design Trust. “I’m so excited to transform these ‘towers in park’ to make them a valuable part of peoples’ daily lives and the potential impact all over the city.”

The jury included: Theodore S. Berger (non-voting), Design Trust Board member and Joan Mitchell Foundation; Paul Herzan, Lily Auchincloss Foundation; Kemi Ilesanmi, The Laundromat Project; Natalie Jeremijenko, xDesign Environmental Health Clinic at NYU; Jeff Merrit, NYC Office of the Mayor; Damon Rich, City of Newark; and Tim Tompkins (non-voting), Design Trust Board member and Times Square Alliance.

The winning projects will produce a design prototype, pilot intervention, publication, video, or public artwork, among other possible formats—or be structured as the initial stage of research, planning, or public outreach stage of a potentially larger project, where the process will determine the final product.

“We’re tremendously excited about the vast scale of possibilities each of the winning proposal has to offer. They address the critical public space challenges across the city—emphasizing a broad need for public information systems, creating greater social networks and community engagement, and developing strategies for neighborhood stabilization. I’m confident that the resulting projects will become important models for urban design in cities around the globe,” said Susan Chin, FAIA, executive director of the Design Trust.

“Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Retail” and “FMCP Creative / Reconnect the Park” will proceed in full immediately, including the selection of Design Trust Fellows to join the project team and lead research, design and planning work. The other two proposals—“Future Culture: Connecting Staten Island’s Waterfront” and “Opening the Edge”—will begin an exploratory phase to further define each project’s scope.

Follow the development of each project on www.designtrust.org. Join the conversation by using #EnergeticCity.

About The Design Trust for Public Space
The Design Trust for Public Space is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the future of public space in New York City. Our projects bring together city agencies, community groups and private sector experts to make a lasting impact—through design—on how New Yorkers live, work and play.

Design Trust’s projects jumpstarted the High Line’s conversions from derelict railway to a green corridor of open space, activated innovation for the first custom-built Taxi of Tomorrow, and developed the sustainability guidelines that became the precursor to New York City’s Local Law and PlaNYC.

The Energetic City is made possible in part by the Design Trust Founder’s Circle, including Agnes Gund, Kitty Hawks, Sophia W. Healy, Lily Auchincloss Foundation, Camila Pastor & Stephen Maharam, and Kelly Posner, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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