



An art rendering of the Reinventing Grand Army Plaza Exhibition running from Sept. 12 to Oct. 13.

# New visions for GAP

## Plaza exhibition runs Sept. 12 - Oct. 13

By Stephen Witt

Come next month, travelers to the heart of Brooklyn may be passing through the Snapple Grand Army Plaza.

That possibility exists after the organization that advocates closing off Prospect Park to any automobile traffic – even during rush hour – is holding a month-long outdoor exhibit encircling the Soldiers' and Sailors' Arch and the Bailey Fountain at Grand Army Plaza.

The Reinventing Grand Army Plaza Exhibition exhibit is running from Sept. 12 to Oct. 13. It will showcase the top 30 distinct visions for transforming

the Plaza into an invaluable public space that is functional for pedestrians, motorists and cyclists alike.

The top three winners of the competition will be announced at the opening ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The proposals were solicited by the non-profit Design for Public Space (DPS) and the Grand Army Plaza Coalition (GAPCO).

In order to defray the cost of the exhibition, DPS is selling sponsor banners at the entrance of the exhibit, along the tops of the exhibit's design panels and along the plaza roadsides.

The banners can't be hung on the

top of the arch or the fountain because they are historic landmarks, said DPS Executive Director Deborah Marton.

Marton said the exhibition is also being done in conjunction with the city Parks Department and Department of Transportation.

Sponsorships run from \$100,000 for prime spots at the exhibit and mailings to \$1,000 for smaller logo placement and a listing on the Design Trust website.

Early sponsors include SDS Procida, the developer of the Richard Myer glass building on Eastern

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# Grand Army Plaza plans

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Parkway near Grand Army Plaza, the Brooklyn-based Streb Dance Company and Vespa, which recently opened a scooter dealership on Flatbush Avenue, said Marton.

The month-long event is expected to draw over 200,000 people, including a DPS-organized neighborhood block party for 50,000 people from the surrounding community.

Marton called Grand Army Plaza an underdeveloped public space and said that a re-design will unite surrounding communities much like Manhattan's High Line set off an explosion of activity in West Chelsea.

GAPCO has drawn some criticism from community boards south of

Prospect Park, who have charged that the organization's membership is made up mainly of communities from northern Brooklyn and bicycle advocates, who don't understand transportation issues affecting them.

Both GAPCO and DPS appear to support the idea of extending the pedestrian plaza across the circle to Prospect Park.

This would force automobile traffic to utilize surrounding thoroughfares of the park during morning and evening rush hours such as Flatbush Avenue, Ocean Avenue and Prospect Park West.

Currently, vehicles are allowed to utilize the roadway in Prospect Park during these hours.

"We want the community to understand that Grand Army Plaza could be more user-friendly. There is no reason the plaza should make bikers feel like they take their life in their hands to get across to the park, and no reason why people shouldn't have an easier time seeing the fountain and the arch," said Marton.

"Grand Army Plaza wasn't designed with cars in mind. Right now it has more lanes than the BQE," she added.

For more information on the exhibition, log onto [www.designtrust.org](http://www.designtrust.org).

For more information on re-designing Grand Army Plaza log onto [www.grandarmyplaza.org](http://www.grandarmyplaza.org).