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DESIGN TRUST FOR PUBLIC SPACE LAUNCHED AN OPEN CALL FOR PROJECT IDEAS:
PUBLIC FOR ALL: RETHINKING SHARED SPACE IN NYC

The nonprofit that jumpstarted the High Line seeks the next big ideas to transform New York City as community needs evolve.

NEW YORK, NY (Wednesday, April 26, 2017) – Last night at a civic forum in the Bronx, the Design Trust for Public Space unveiled Public for All: Rethinking Shared Space in NYC, an open call for project ideas to ensure New York City’s public realm remains truly public. The Design Trust seeks innovative ideas for creating more accessible, resourceful public spaces and sustainable models for their operation and maintenance to strengthen the voice of communities and enliven neighborhoods.

“Public space is vital for a more equitable city. With Public for All — the Design Trust’s 10th Request for Proposals in 22 years—we’re building on our decades of rigorous work to improve city life with community groups and public agencies together. Over just two decades we produced 29 projects that have changed the ways New Yorkers live, work, and play, harnessing the power of collective design thinking, diverse stakeholder coalitions, and deep community engagement. Today we are a nationally-recognized incubator that creates impact by changing the system, producing replicable models, creating a catalyst, and building a well-informed and compassionate constituency,” said Susan Chin, FAIA, Hon. ASLA, Executive Director, Design Trust for Public Space.

An independent jury will choose up to two proposals in mid-July to be developed and executed with the Design Trust. Our highly collaborative model will connect project partners with Design Trust staff, a team of Fellows, and community collaborators. The jury includes: Kitty Hawks, Kitty Hawks Interiors, Design Trust Founder’s Circle; Walter Hood, Hood Design Studio; Patti S. Lubin, Office of U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand; Kerry A. McLean, Women’s Housing and Economic Development Corporation; Zack McKown, Tsao & McKown Architects, Design Trust Board [non-voting]; Justin Garrett Moore, NYC Public Design Commission; José Serrano-McClain, NYC Mayor’s Office of Tech + Innovation; Claire Weiss, WXY Architecture + Urban Design, Design Trust Founder’s Circle; and Andrea Woodner, Design Trust Founder and President Emeritus.

In today’s political climate, we must affirm and ensure that New York City’s public realm provides places of refuge and play, congregation and demonstration, and dialogue and exchange. Keeping these spaces thoroughly public poses challenges and opportunities at every turn—be that site selection, funding, design, governance, or operations. The Design Trust for Public Space—the nonprofit that jumpstarted the High Line, pioneered a model Community Design School in Queens, helped bring about New York’s first custom-built Taxi of Tomorrow, and developed the sustainability guidelines that paved the way for PlaNYC—is dedicated to catalyzing public space to better serve people, and create a vibrant and sustainable city.
We invite NYC community groups, City agencies, and individuals across the five boroughs to submit proposals for research, design, and planning projects to unlock the potential of NYC’s shared spaces, including underutilized and under-resourced community assets. Projects may be site-specific but must have the potential to change the way we develop and manage public space citywide. Project selection is a two-step process, beginning with a short online expression of interest due June 6, 2017, and full proposals due June 20, 2017. To see the application guidelines, please visit: http://designtrust.org/rfp/

Selected projects will rethink how NYC public space is planned and used. Although Design Trust efforts may eventually lead to built work, projects should, first and foremost, demonstrate broad policy or programming goals, not an end in itself. We encourage projects that consider some of the following questions:

- How can we design with and for all people, regardless of age, ability/disability, gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language, sexuality, and geographic location?
- How can we ensure that all who use public space—especially those who lack access to other places of rest, recreation, and connection—have substantial roles in decision-making and clear, readily accessible paths to civic participation?
- How can public space and related processes adapt as needs and communities change?
- How do we alter our perception of collective responsibility and broaden our understanding of the term ‘resource’ to explore new models for partnership, stewardship, governance, management, and maintenance of public space?
- How can atypical shared spaces (i.e. privately owned, virtual, or unused space) be claimed and developed as community assets?
- How do we meaningfully and realistically evaluate public space performance?

“When I proposed a project for the Design Trust’s last open call for ideas in 2014, I had my own goal for the project: I wanted to take down the fences around a green space on a New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) campus, and to make that a prototype for other similar spaces. Working with the Design Trust, I realized pretty quickly that engaging the community and finding out what they want mattered the most. The Design Trust cultivated NYCHA as our project partner and put together a team of fellows. I am now collaborating with the members of the community and with the other Design Trust Fellows who have skills that I don’t have. I could not have done this project without the kind of institutional support the Design Trust offers,” said Jane Greengold, Artist and Design Trust Fellow for Opening the Edge: Reimagining Green Space at Wald Houses.

“After Hurricane Sandy we were interjected in many community-planning activities and the North Shore in Staten Island has been developing very rapidly. As artists and residents, we were trying to better understand and hone our role in this process. We needed more expertise and people with skill sets complementary to the network that we had built. We approached the Design Trust with a complex project that involved bringing a lot of people together with a goal to affect and shape the City policies and plans ensuring equitable neighborhood development. As we’re gearing up for testing design and policy recommendations through pilots across the North Shore, it’s incredible how far we’ve come,” said Monica Valenzuela, Deputy Director of Staten Island Arts—Design Trust Partner for Future Culture: Connecting Staten Island’s Waterfront.

Information sessions will be held in all five boroughs, including Stapleton Branch Library in Staten Island on May 2, Queens Central Library in Jamaica on May 4, Tompkins Square Library in Manhattan’s East Village on May 8, New Lots
Library in East New York, Brooklyn on May 9, and Kingsbridge Branch Library in the Bronx on May 10. Further details on the information sessions will be available at: [http://designtrust.org/events/](http://designtrust.org/events/)

**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. Our work can be seen, felt and experienced throughout all five boroughs—from parks and plazas to streets and public buildings. The Design Trust [saved the High Line structure](http://designtrust.org/), jumpstarted NYC’s first custom-built [Taxi of Tomorrow](http://designtrust.org/), developed the [Community Design School for Flushing Meadows Corona Park](http://designtrust.org/), and created the city’s first comprehensive [sustainability guidelines](http://designtrust.org/) that became the precursor to Local Law 86 and PlaNYC, now OneNYC. [http://designtrust.org/](http://designtrust.org/)

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