

CRAIN'S

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NEW YORK BUSINESS

GETTING READY FOR 9 MILLION

As the city approaches a population milestone, top innovators share their visions for the future of New York

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URBAN RENEWAL

EL OF AN OPPORTUNITY

HUNDREDS OF MILES of elevated highways, bridges, subway and commuter rail lines cut across New York City neighborhoods, and the areas beneath them are often poorly lit and unappealing—and sometimes dangerous. But rather than gritty barriers that divide neighborhoods, like the Brooklyn Queens-Expressway in Sunset Park or the elevated No. 2 and No. 5 lines in the Bronx, the Design Trust for Public Space sees these millions of square feet of publicly owned land as an enormous asset. The nonprofit envisions green, brightly lit pedestrian plazas that would knit neighborhoods and residents together. Storm-water runoff from highways could feed lush plantings below—which would have the dual benefit of absorbing CO₂ pollution from the traffic passing above. The trust has already tested out its idea with several pilot projects, and is currently working with the city to develop a municipal El-Space Program that would help communities across the five boroughs replicate their results.

DESIGN TRUST FOR PUBLIC SPACE

BIG IDEA: Transforming unused space under elevated infrastructure into public plazas
ESTIMATED COST: N/A

“The possibilities are endless.”

—ÖZGÜR GUNGÖR, DTPS communications manager

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