

EL-SPACE SUNSET PARK PILOT

Testing a new approach to the space
beneath elevated transportation
infrastructure



Photo: Liz Ligon

EL-SPACE SUNSET PARK

2015-

New York City has millions of square feet of space beneath elevated infrastructure weaving throughout its five boroughs. Together with the NYC Department of Transportation (NYC DOT), the Design Trust for Public Space has developed a series of pilot projects to test strategies for improving this 'el-space.' The first of these projects is located in Brooklyn at the intersection of 36th Street and 3rd Avenue beneath the Gowanus Expressway.

BACKGROUND

In 2013, the Design Trust for Public Space and NYC Department of Transportation (NYC DOT) partnered on *Under the Elevated: Reclaiming Space, Connecting Communities* to investigate the potential of el-space. The project analyzed the hundreds of miles of elevated transportation infrastructure in the five boroughs and documented improvements that could be made to the space beneath. In 2015, the first pilot project in Sunset Park launched with the selection of three Design Trust Fellows with expertise in urban design, landscape architecture, and lighting design.

ACTIVITIES & OUTCOME

The *Sunset Park El-Space Pilot* aims to increase environmental health and enhance pedestrian safety for residents and workers at this busy intersection in Sunset Park and along the waterfront. The design will test replicable strategies for lighting, green infrastructure, and urban design to inform a NYC DOT capital project at the site and application at other el-space locations citywide.

Three Design Trust Fellows worked with students at Sunset Park High School and members of a Community Advisory Board convened for the project to analyze the site and develop practical yet innovative solutions. Based on their feedback, the final design incorporates a new walkway for pedestrians moving between intersections, green infrastructure planters that capture the stormwater runoff and pollutants from the highway, an improved lighting scheme, a rationalized parking layout, and a paint treatment to brighten the space.

The design elements were showcased during a three-day on-site mock-up event in summer 2016. An additional paint test was conducted at the end of 2016 on the columns of the structure. Pending permits and approvals, final construction of the full suite of pilot improvements is slated for Spring 2017.

**MILLIONS OF SQUARE FEET. 4 YEARS OF RESEARCH. 7 TYPOLOGIES.
11 CASE STUDIES. 2 POP-UPS. 3 PILOTS. 1 DESIGN TRUST PROJECT.**

PHASE II

PARTNER



COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR



FELLOWS

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MAJOR SUPPORT



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