

THE
CAMPAIGN_{FOR}
PUBLIC
SPACE

30 YEARS OF DESIGN TRUST

DESIGN TRUST
FOR PUBLIC SPACE

OUR BIRTHDAY WISH

\$1 MILLION FOR PUBLIC SPACE

The future of New York City is
the future of public space.

The shared and public resources of New York, our “commonplace civilization,” needs renewal on many fronts. In a city of 8,000,000—growing daily—access to and preservation of space remains a premium concern. We believe that the world and environment around us should be universally excellent. At the same time a lack of trust and collaboration across sectors, expertise, power, and interests has limited our ability to tackle big problems like climate change or social resilience, or even small ones at the neighborhood level.

In celebration of the Design Trust for Public Space’s 30th Anniversary and in recognition of public space’s importance in building New York’s next great chapter, the organization is raising \$1,000,000 over the next two years to ensure that future generations can gather together in community, fully participate in New York’s cultural life, and benefit from the many impacts of high-quality public space.

There’s never been a more important moment to be this champion, when our civic future needs your partnership. This investment is a commitment to the future of New York. Here’s what we can accomplish together.



BROUGHT TO YOU IN 1995



The 30th Anniversary Campaign for Public Space ensures that a spirit of innovation and progress continues to influence the public space movement in New York and beyond. It extends the legacy of Design Trust for Public Space into the next three decades, building on its commitment to inclusive partnerships and catalytic projects.

MISSION

The Design Trust for Public Space is a non-profit organization that unlocks the potential of New York's public spaces. Our unique model catalyzes design ideas into action for a more just and equitable city.



ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

- 1 Definitions of public space are broadened, redefined, and reimagined to encompass and include the needs of all New Yorkers.
- 2 Urgently-needed solutions for climate change, social justice, and economic opportunity are introduced into systems that can help them achieve scale.
- 3 New partnerships and coalitions, that wouldn't ordinarily exist, have the space to do so, and are acting on important public space opportunities for New York.
- 4 Agency is seeded to new forms of leadership across the city, especially young people, persons of color, and others who have been excluded from city-making conversations.

50 PROJECTS
125 FELLOWS

35 PARTNERS
30 PUBLICATIONS



1995
THE DESIGN TRUST FOR PUBLIC SPACE is established by Andrea Woodner in NYC with the mission of bringing design expertise and design thinking to the public realm.

2002

The publication of "RECLAIMING THE HIGH LINE" concludes a collaborative process to preserve the derelict elevated railway running alongside the west side of Manhattan. The feasibility study leads to the City's decision to preserve and transform the High Line into a world class public space.



2010



With its multi-media MADE IN MIDTOWN project, the Design Trust effectively shifts the debate about the Garment District. This results in the City delaying its rezoning plan for the District, which would have forced garment production out of the district and eliminated thousands of jobs in the middle of the city.

2015

The Design Trust issues the groundbreaking policy and research program, UNDER THE ELEVATED unleashing the tremendous potential of space beneath elevated infrastructure, making up millions of square feet across NYC.



THE TAXI OF TOMORROW becomes NYC's yellow cab standard in a groundbreaking partnership with the Taxi and Limousine Commission.

2021



The Design Trust launches TURNOUT NYC, opening access to arts infrastructure in public space across all five boroughs. The project supported hundreds of emerging artists.



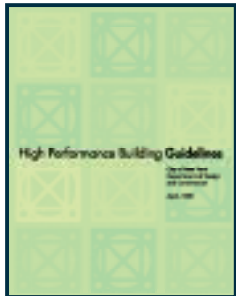
2024



In partnership with Macaulay Honors College, NY: CITY DESIGNED begins, helping to open pathways to the design, planning, and preservation fields for students from underrepresented backgrounds.

1999

The Design Trust publishes the HIGH-PERFORMANCE BUILDING GUIDELINES to make public buildings more energy efficient and environmentally responsible. The QUEENS BOTANICAL GARDEN VISITORS AND BUILDING would be designed according to these standards as the greenest building in NY state.



2004



The Design Trust produces a pedestrian mobility plan for TIMES SQUARE, outlining practical solutions to the chaotic conditions and traffic congestion plaguing the world's crossroads. The effort spurred a substantive renovation of Times Square as a truly pedestrian space.

2012

The publishing of FIVE BOROUGH FARM a comprehensive study on urban agriculture, establishes the nation's first set of metrics to measure the benefits of urban agriculture. The report contributes to the creation of the NYC Mayor's Office of Urban Agriculture.



2016

The Design Trust launches the EQUITABLE PUBLIC SPACE FELLOWSHIP to grow the pipeline of underrepresented individuals in the planning, design, and policy sectors.



2018



The Design Trust receives NYC City Council funding to build OPENING THE EDGE, a community-designed open space in NYCHA's Lillian Wald Houses in the Lower East Side. The project becomes a model for resident-driven open spaces.



2023

Design Trust helps to lead ALFRESCO NYC, a coalition that leads to a permanent outdoor dining program in NYC and one that is more accessible, responsive, and creative.



OUR IMPACT

THE HIGH LINE

Built in 1934, the High Line carried freight trains of food and merchandise into the city on an elevated track to avoid dangerous street crossings. Fifty years after it was built, the elevated 1.5-mile-long railway fell into disrepair, sitting unused and abandoned.



The Challenge - A local group of property owners lobbied heavily for its removal—they considered it a blight on the neighborhood and expected their property values to rise as soon as it was demolished. Friends of the High Line formed in 1999 with the goal of preserving the structure, and approached the Design Trust that same year proposing a design competition. The Design Trust hired fellows, worked with community groups, and led an intensive research and engagement process.

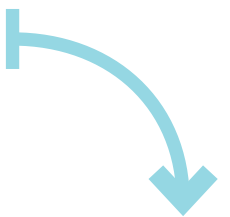


If you look at the planning study now, it's remarkable how much it described what would happen in the years to come. It created a kind of road map for the High Line's transformation."

- Joshua David, Co-founder,
Friends of the High Line



What Happened - The resulting study, Reclaiming the High Line, determined that reuse outweighed demolition, the design should focus on pedestrians, commercial potential existed alongside the High Line, and a walkway atop of the High Line would cause values of adjacent properties to rise due to the proximity to this open public space. With our study, Friends of the High Line was able to convince the Bloomberg administration that the elevated railway should be preserved, enabling them to move forward with their goal of turning the railway into an elevated park.



Outcome - The High Line Park opens to the public in 2009, incorporating many of the recommendations outlined in the Design Trust's feasibility study. After fifteen years in operation, the park becomes a model for innovative use of dilapidated infrastructure, inspiring a generation of projects around the country to do the same. The project has put on countless community events and artistic installations, forming an indispensable anchor to the health and vibrancy of the West Side community of Manhattan.

OUR IMPACT

FIVE BOROUGH FARM



In 2010, NYC was already a national leader in the urban agriculture movement with more than 700 food-producing farms and gardens throughout the five boroughs. However, as an economic sector, urban agriculture didn't have a clear strategy or sense of its impact.



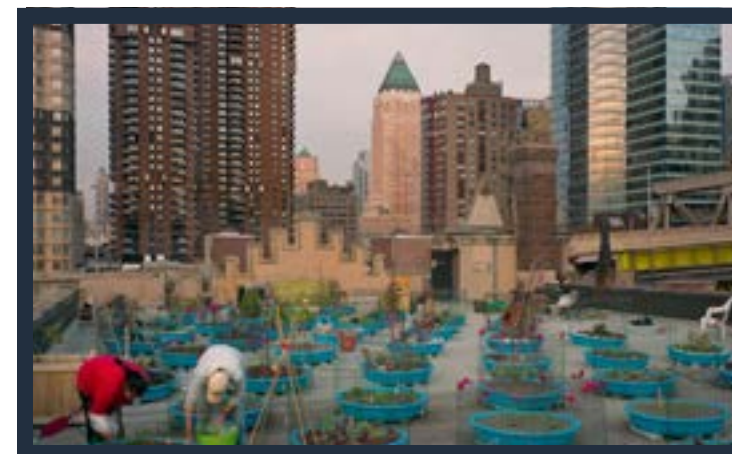
The Challenge - There were numerous critical issues that needed to be addressed in order for urban agriculture to achieve its full potential in New York City. This included access to city-owned land, the availability of funding, and access to agricultural supplies. But, two key obstacles played an outsized role in preventing government officials from developing a long-range, citywide urban agriculture plan or making large-scale resource commitments: 1) a lack of evidence demonstrating urban agriculture's value to the city, and 2) the absence of a structure or process to coordinate decision-making across multiple agencies.

“Urban agriculture engages people in initiatives to strengthen and improve the social, ecological and economic well-being of their communities and, by extensions, the city as a whole.”

- Nevin Cohen, Associate Professor,
Director, CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute



What Happened - The project was led by a group of cross-disciplinary Fellows and an Urban Agriculture Task Force. After months of research, inclusive workshops, interviews, and data collection, the team established a framework to understand how the broad range of activities happening at the city's farms and gardens contribute to social, economic and ecological outcomes, and introduced a set of indicators that can be used to measure the multiple benefits of urban agriculture. These tools were the first of its kind in the nation to understand the full range of urban agriculture activities.



Outcome - The publication of *Five Borough Farm II: Growing the Benefits of Urban Agriculture in New York City* marked the culmination of the two-year partnership with the NYC Department of Parks. It framed urban agriculture and its many benefits as an essential industry for New York City. Doing so directly contributed to the passage of Local Law 2018/046, which created an urban agriculture database for New York City. In turn, this spurred the development of the Mayor's Office of Urban Agriculture, launched in 2022, which is having enormous impacts across New York farms and gardens.

OUR IMPACT

UNDER THE ELEVATED

A massive transportation system was built in New York City in the 20th century, creating a multi-layered city with highways, subway tracks, and rail lines. While this major investment contributed positively to the growth of New York City, it also divided and isolated communities.

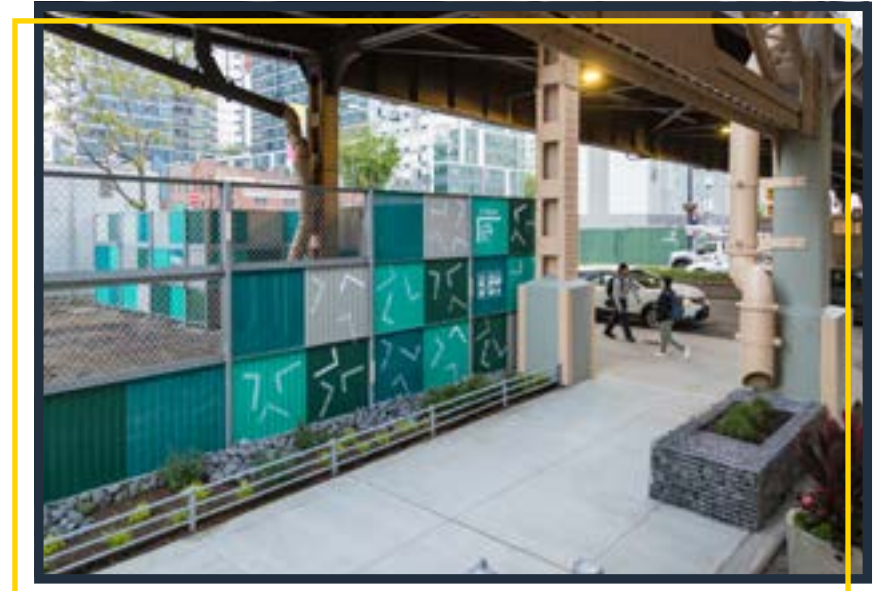


The Challenge - In a dense city like New York, these residual spaces can no longer be an afterthought. The millions of square feet of these sites (nearly four times the size of Central Park) arguably encompass one of the most blighting influences on the city's neighborhoods, yet also constitute one of the last development frontiers. This substantial inventory represents an untapped public asset that has the potential to radically transform New York's urban fabric.



“Under the Elevated puts New York City at the forefront of the growing national and international trend of addressing and reclaiming aging elevated transportation infrastructure.”

- Polly Trottenberg, Former NYC DOT Commissioner



What Happened - Working in partnership with the NYC Department of Transportation, the agency responsible for managing and maintaining New York City's streets and the majority of space under elevated transportation infrastructure, and our interdisciplinary team of Fellows, we: 1) surveyed the inventory of land under infrastructure; 2) conducted participatory workshops at sites throughout the city; 3) designed and produced four temporary, site-specific installations to learn about the technical and social challenges of el-space projects; and 4) developed realistic, context-specific designs and programming recommendations.

Outcome - Two major publications were released at the end of the project, including the “El-Space Toolkit,” which features 21 case studies from 11 cities across North America. The Toolkit highlights the range of potential of el-space, from enhanced infrastructure to destination parks and trails. This toolkit has helped NYC DOT to elevate the practice locally and seeded new permanent projects. New, visionary, and permanent projects are in all stages of development across this city. This includes existing efforts such as Gotham Park under the Brooklyn Bridge in Manhattan and the Underline in Long Island City.



THREE PRIORITIES

CAMPAIGN FOR PUBLIC SPACE

The future of the Design Trust.

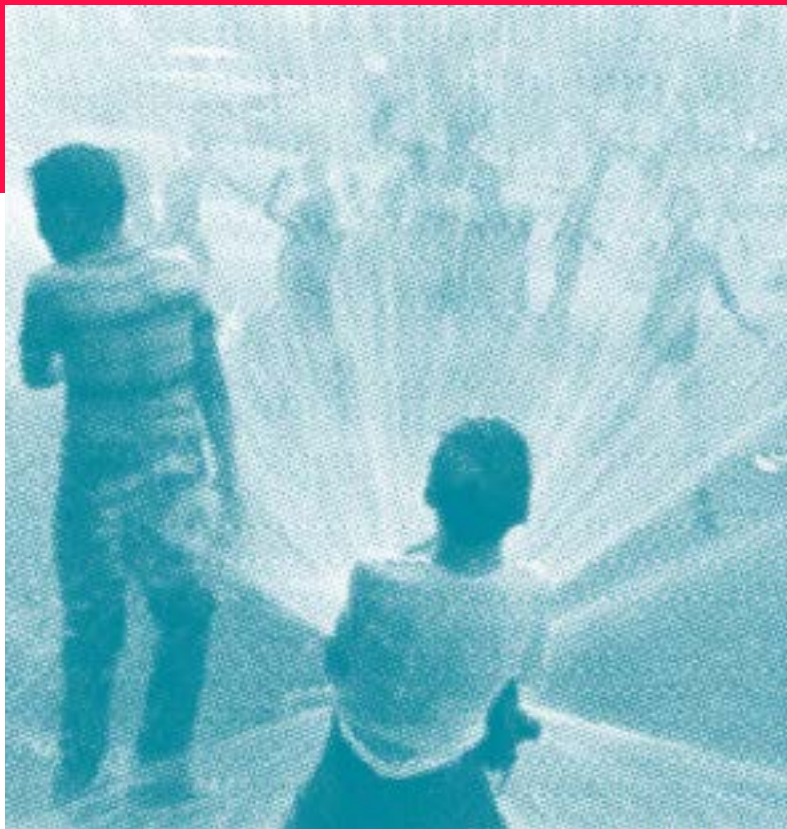
- 1 Water RFP
- 2 Future Leaders
- 3 Innovation



PRIORITY ONE

Water RFP: Launch the 12th, and most ambitious, call-for-projects in the organization's history, "Water." This initiative will interrogate the relationship between New Yorkers and water, one of our most important and impactful assets.

The "Water" Request for Proposals (RFP) recognizes that the health of the city's public life depends on managing the risks of—and benefits of—New York as a water city, including commitment to innovative green infrastructure, well-planned coastal resilience, sustainable buildings, and cultural vibrancy. For many people, this topic can feel overly complex, driven by hydrological models, civil engineering, and expensive infrastructure. As a result, this initiative will focus its attention on the human and social impacts of water. It will elevate the many intersections water has with our public space, understanding that every facet of the city will need to be redesigned to accommodate our water future: streets that can absorb more water, playgrounds that store large amounts of rainfall, and parks that buffer our fragile shorelines.



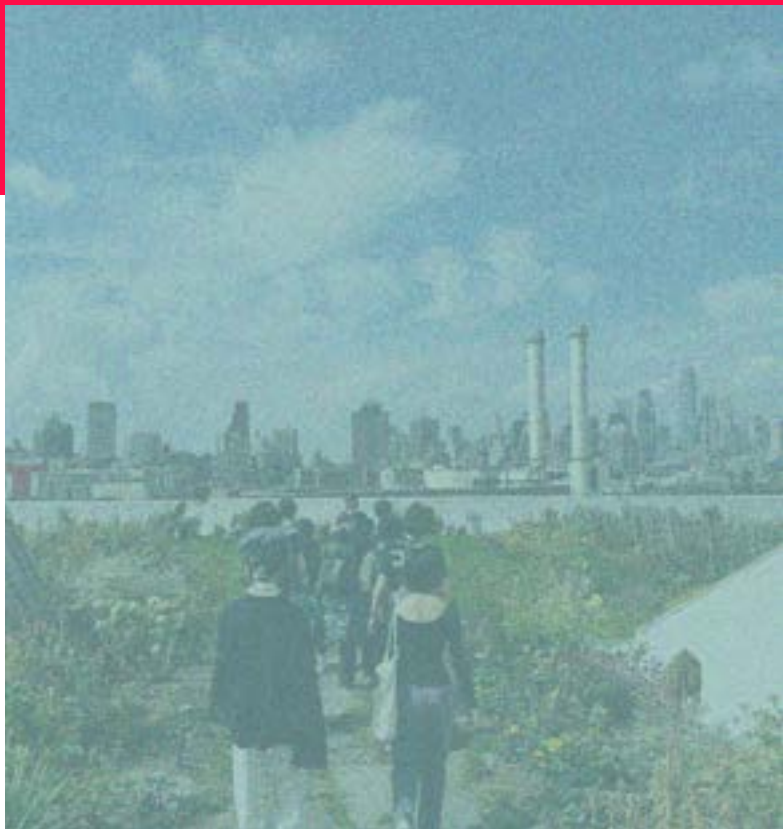
- 1 Identify, select and incubate five community-driven projects themed around water, leading them from the kernel of a big idea into a fully formed project, driven by the Design Trust project model.
\$250,000 goal
- 2 Host a national conference focused on NYC's many relationships to water, featuring a mixture of sectoral experts, community voices, and Design Trust partners.
\$75,000 goal
- 3 Create a coalition of city agencies, community groups, and partners dedicated to water solutions that can advance key solutions well into the future.
\$25,000 goal



PRIORITY TWO

Future Leaders: Expand the Design Trust's longstanding commitment to building the next generation of diverse leaders and elevating underrepresented voices into positions of power in city-making conversations.

Planning and design professions need to reflect the diverse fabric of identities that New York City serves. The Design Trust is actively creating new opportunities to access careers in the public realm sector. This means our thirty year tradition of offering Fellowships to professionals who in turn lead our projects with their range of expertise. It also means newer programs such as the Equitable Public Space Fellowship, where emerging professionals from underrepresented backgrounds join the Design Trust team as a full-time, paid staff member. Our latest effort to level the playing field is a new program with the Macaulay Honors College aimed at providing students with interest in the planning, design, and preservation fields paid internship placements with city agencies, non-profits, and private-sector design and architecture firms.



- 1 Hire and mobilize a dozen new Design Trust Fellows in the next three years while also strengthening the program's powerful alumni network.
\$150,000 goal
- 2 Fund two cohorts of Equitable Public Space Fellows to give young professionals transformational career opportunities.
\$100,000 goal
- 3 Expand and strengthen the Macaulay Honors College Partnership to include additional worksite placements, a new workshop program, and greater networking opportunities.
\$100,000 goal



PRIORITY THREE

Innovation: Create innovation funding to provide ongoing support to the most important public space projects facing New York City. Do so in celebration of the next thirty years of Design Trust, while honoring the first thirty.

The Design Trust provides New York City with the space to dream about the future and to protect those most vulnerable. To do so, the organization needs resources to create innovation and to renew itself. In a time of great uncertainty, especially in regards to public support for our mission, the Design Trust needs the flexibility to support the next big ideas, and do so with the tools needed to do so. This priority establishes two important funds: one, to create a small reserve fund that gives the organization a stronger footing while creating resources for our new projects. Second, it creates a fund to tackle organizational projects, such as a new website backend, that are not recurring expenses. These resources will help the Design Trust thrive in the following years and decades to come.



- 1 Grow and sustain a novel Public Space Innovation Fund, which will provide renewable capital for supporting the most urgent public space projects in the city, involving anything from housing, transportation, public space, economic development, and the arts.
\$200,000 goal
- 2 Establish a Design Trust organizational renewal fund to tackle important priorities, such as its IT infrastructure, communication assets, capital equipment, and training tools.
\$100,000 goal



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