

The Design Trust for Public Space Launches Two-Month Initiative Amplifying the Power of Public Space in New York City

***Trust by Design: A Campaign for NYC's Public Space* Convenes Experts from Public and Private Sectors to Advance Conversations on Role of Shared Space in Creating a Healthy, Equitable, and Resilient City**

New York, NY – July 16, 2020 – The [Design Trust for Public Space](#) announces the launch of a new, two-month initiative dedicated to raising awareness of the role of public space in creating a healthy, equitable, and resilient city. Coinciding with the Design Trust's 25th anniversary, ***Trust by Design: A Campaign for NYC's Public Space*** spotlights the importance of public space in New York City, which is especially vulnerable as it adapts to the post-COVID environment, and envisions its future by advancing conversations across sectors. The campaign convenes a range of voices—among them New York City Council Speaker **Corey Johnson**, architect **Deborah Berke**, writer **Adam Gopnik**, as well as leaders of New York City agencies and trailblazers of the public space movement—through a range of online programs, virtual panel discussions, and exclusive meet-and-greets investigating the far-reaching impact of shared, civic spaces. Launching this July, *Trust by Design* builds on the organization's mission to foster an appreciation for, and investment in, New York City's public spaces and serves to amplify support for the Design Trust's future projects and initiatives.

"*Trust by Design* sparks a dialogue on why public space is fundamental to building and sustaining communities that are safe, inclusive, and dynamic," said **Design Trust Executive Director Matthew Clarke**, who joined the organization in May 2020. "Over the past 25 years, the Design Trust has built the public space movement into what it is today by unlocking the potential of New York City's shared spaces and advancing new projects around the city. As the movement enters its next phase, we look forward to engaging a broad public, including those in the City and beyond, in the timely and relevant discourse on public space through this ambitious initiative."

"New York City was due for a reimagining of how we use our public space before the pandemic hit, and now the issue is even more urgent," said **New York City Council Speaker Corey Johnson**. "We need to improve our public space to make our city more livable and more equitable, and I thank the Design Trust for moving this important conversation forward. The City Council looks forward to engaging with the *Trust by Design* campaign as this critical work continues."

Trust by Design's programs have been conceived to advance a number of key goals in support of public space, including generating awareness of public space as a driver of health and racial equity, building economic resilience through investment in civic assets, and securing equal access to public space for all city residents. Upcoming digital programs include:

- **Keynote Conversation:** To kick off *Trust by Design* and frame the key goals of the campaign, Clarke moderates a conversation on July 29 with **Mitchell Silver**, Commissioner of **New York City Department of Parks and Recreation**; **Chantel Rush**, the Managing Director of the **Kresge Foundation's American Cities Program**; and **Kate Orff**, Founding Principal of the

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landscape architecture firm **SCAPE**, for a far-reaching discussion about how public commons serve as tools for community improvement.

- **Public Space Forums:** A series of virtual panel discussions, moderated by Clarke, convening New York City agency leaders to exchange views on the role of public space in shaping the future of the city. Fostering collaboration across municipal agencies, representatives from various NYC departments—including **City Planning, Health and Mental Hygiene, Housing Preservation and Development, Small Business Services, and Transportation**, as well as the **New York City Housing Authority** and **Public Design Commission**—participate in public space forums hosted throughout August and September.
- **Instagram Live with Design Trust:** A series of live conversations investigating the intersection of public space and cities, moderated by Design Trust Vice Board Chair Eve Klein and Board Member Suchi Reddy. Held every Wednesday, from July 22 to September 9, the program includes such guests as **New Yorker Journalist Adam Gopnik**, Former **Executive Director of the Chicago Architecture Biennial Todd Palmer**, and **Prospect Park Alliance President Sue Donoghue**.
- **Five Borough Videos:** A five-part video series launching in August and exploring how the Design Trust’s current and previous projects—such as the [Brooklyn Public Library’s Design Guidelines](#), [Five Borough Farm](#) in the Bronx, [Times Square Streetscape Improvement](#) in Manhattan, [Future Culture](#) on Staten Island, and [Under the Elevated](#) in Queens—have acted as a catalyst for changes across the five boroughs of New York City over the course of the organization’s 25-year legacy.
- **TxD Blog:** A compilation of op-eds and key recommendations for the public space movement written by Design Trust fellows and released throughout the campaign.

In addition to these public offerings, the Design Trust is organizing exclusive opportunities for its Council Members and supporters to join a series of more intimate conversations and virtual meet-and-greets with thought leaders in the field and New York City policymakers including NYC Council Speaker Corey Johnson. The Design Trust is also presenting a special conversation with Deborah Berke, renowned architect and Dean of the Yale School of Architecture, for members of the [Design Trust Council](#), a leadership circle of civic-minded professionals who support the Design Trust’s mission.

A **complete program schedule** can be found [here](#). More information about *Trust by Design* as well as how to contribute to the campaign and support the Design Trust and its ongoing work can be found [here](#).

About the Design Trust for Public Space

The Design Trust for Public Space is a nationally recognized incubator that catalyzes change and transforms New York City’s shared civic spaces—streets, plazas, parks, public buildings, transportation, and housing developments—to create a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable city. Established in 1995 by Andrea Woodner, the nonprofit brings design expertise and systems thinking to the public realm to make a lasting impact. Founded on the tenet that New York City’s cultural and democratic life depends on viable public space, the Design Trust focuses on social justice and equity, environmental sustainability, design excellence, and public engagement. Its innovative model brings together government agencies,

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community groups, and private-sector experts, utilizing cross-sector partnerships to deliver creative solutions that shape the city's landscape.

With projects throughout the five boroughs, including critical foundational work for the conversion of the High Line, founding of the Community Design School in Queens, partnering with the Taxi & Limousine Commission in designing the Taxi of Tomorrow, launching Under the Elevated and El-Space to reclaim and transform aging elevated transportation infrastructure and the spaces associated with it, and creating the *Design Manual for 21st Century Parks*, Design Trust's work presents a methodology and replicable models for urban issues around public space that inspire other cities.

For more information about the Design Trust for Public Space, visit designtrust.org.

For media inquiries and requests, please contact:

Juliet Sorce / Jill Mediatore / Alexander Droesch

Resnicow and Associates

jsorce@resnicow.com / jmediatore@resnicow.com / adroesch@resnicow.com

212.671.5158 / 212.671.5164 / 212.671.5154