NYC Leaders Will Convene to Confront Health Inequity through City Planning & Urban Design

The one-day Restorative City event calls for building community wellness by utilizing public space and the built environment

New York, NY – The Restorative City is a one-day convening that will bring together urban planners, city officials, neighborhood advocates, and public health experts to center health equity in the design and planning of New York City. Hosted by the Design Trust for Public Space, this special event will elevate important conversations about community health, environmental justice, social resilience, and design excellence as core drivers of how New Yorkers, especially those most vulnerable, can thrive. It is an open, inclusive call to action for New York City’s next chapter.

What: The Restorative City Convening: Designing New York City with Health at the Center

Who: City officials, public health experts, and advocates, including:

- Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice
- NYC Department of City Planning
- NYC Department of Transportation
- NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
- Design Trust for Public Space
- National Black Theatre
- Make the Road New York
- Groundswell NYC
- Public Design Commission
- Public Housing Community Fund
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- And more! View all confirmed speakers and panel sessions here.

When: Thursday, May 11, 2023 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. EST
Where: Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice 320 East 43rd Street New York, NY 10017

In New York City, an individual living in the South Bronx has a life expectancy of 69.5 years, while a resident of the Upper East Side has a life expectancy of 89.5 years, 20 years longer. 80% of health outcomes depend on our physical and social environment—the world and people around us shape our well-being.

“Where we live matters, equal access to green space, transportation, adequate housing, and other basic resources can drastically change the quality and longevity of our lives,” said Design Trust for Public Space Executive Director Matthew Clarke. “The Restorative City shows the potential of how responsible urbanism and city planning can be a frontline tool for well-being and thriving communities.”

“Smart, active and climate-conscious urban design helps communities thrive, activates our public realm, lengthens lives, deepens social connections, and protects against environmental risks and hazards,” said Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of Climate & Environmental Justice Kizzy Charles-Guzmán. "City teams across many agencies must continue to work with other urban planners to advance environmental justice in New York City."

“The New York City Department of Transportation approaches our projects by prioritizing safety, equity and environmental sustainability,” said Chief Strategy Officer of the NYC Department of Transportation Julie Bero. “By enhancing public space citywide, working to reduce emissions, protecting the most vulnerable road users, and facilitating alternative modes of transportation such as cycling we are confronting health inequality every day. We look forward to being part of this collaborative effort and conversation.”

“Urban planning and design is at the heart of health equity, and meaningful community engagement is the cornerstone of good planning,” said Director of the Department of City Planning, Dan Garodnick. “We’re excited to join the conversation with leaders and practitioners from across New York City at the Restorative City Convening, and to continue our work with communities across New York City with our new Community Planning and Engagement division.”

“A collaborative approach to planning that considers the health and wellness of individuals, communities, and ecosystems is vital to the equitable future of our public realm,” said New York City Public Design Commission Deputy Director, Urban Design & Policy, Jenna E. Miller. “The Restorative City demonstrates the great value of embracing community engagement and cross-sector collaboration as we work to build a better city for all.”

“The pandemic clearly amplified the presence and impact of health inequities in New York City,” said Dean of William E. Macaulay Honors College Dara Byrne, PhD. “At Macaulay Honors College of the City University of New York, we are deeply invested in preparing our students to shape the future of New York City through a lens
of equity and justice, and when they participate in an event like this they are further inspired to lead efforts to redress the widening gap of opportunity that prevents our city from thriving.”

The Restorative City is generously sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Mellon Foundation, W Architecture and Landscape Architecture LLP, Curtis Ginsberg Architects LLP, HKS, Perkins +Will, Nelson\Nygaard, and HOK.

Learn more about joining the Restorative City.

If you are interested in attending the Restorative City as a member of the press, please email Design Trust Communications Manager Alexa Mauzy-Lewis amauzy@designtrust.org to register.

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About the Design Trust for Public Space
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. Founded in 1995 by Andrea Woodner on the tenet that New York City’s cultural and democratic life depends on viable public space, today, the Design Trust is a nationally recognized incubator and thought leader that 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. In our 28-year history, we’ve taken on over 40 projects across all five boroughs with project partners including city agencies, community groups, and private sector experts, inspiring replicable models for urban issues and advancing the role of public space as a driver of long-term equity and social justice globally.