

DESIGN TRUST FOR PUBLIC SPACE

Design Trust Selects Two New Public Space Projects to Advance Health Equity across New York City as Part of its 2021 RFP “The Restorative City”

Winning Projects to be Implemented Collaboratively with Design Trust, Investigate How Public Space Can Better Serve All New Yorkers Including Neurodiverse and Homeless Populations

New York, NY—September 27, 2021—The Design Trust for Public Space today announced the selection of two major public space projects to be implemented as part of ***The Restorative City: Building Community Wellness through Public Space***. Launched as an open call for proposals in spring 2021, *The Restorative City* is a major Design Trust initiative dedicated to connecting health equity with the built environment throughout New York City. The winning projects were selected by a jury of city government officials and industry leaders from a short-list of eight finalists, drawn from an initial group of more than 90 proposals. They include:

- ***The Neurodiverse City***, a collaboration between **Verona Carpenter Architects** and **WIP Collaborative** with the support of Center for Independence of the Disabled-NY, Bronx Independent Living Services, INCLUDenyc, and P.S. 42. The initiative advocates for public spaces in our city that offer inclusive zones where all of us, including those with “invisible disabilities” and sensory sensitivities, can come together and find common ground.
- ***Healing Hostile Architecture: Design as Care***, led by **Design as Protest**, a collective of BIPOC designers and advocates. The initiative supports the development of community-driven design policies and new regenerative, design models to replace hostile environments and provide care for unhoused populations.

Honorable mention was given to ***Forest Avenue COMEUnity Fridge Fellowship Program***, which creates opportunities for local youth to support a mutual aid network targeting food insecurity through the transformation of an underutilized space in Staten Island. The winning projects are being recognized at a special ceremony held this evening, September 27, 2021, in Prospect Park.

“We are proud to support the important work that will be accomplished through both of these visionary public space initiatives that seek to create a healthy, just, and equitable city,” said Matthew F. Clarke, Design Trust Executive Director. “Through their advocacy for strong communities, each project reflects the mission of Design Trust by promoting public space and the built environment as key determinants in what makes us healthy and happy.”

The winning projects will leverage the Design Trust’s unique problem-seeking, power-sharing model of project delivery to bring about powerful, citywide change over the course of their development and realization. Next steps will include continued scoping, planning, and fundraising for each project facilitated by the Design Trust, as well as the appointment of Design Trust fellows with expertise in relevant areas to support each project. *The Restorative City* is the latest iteration of the organization’s triennial request for

proposals (RFP), which over the past two decades have focused on such pressing issues as increasing accessibility to public space, developing connectivity and community through the built environment, and advancing urban agriculture.

For more information on the Design Trust's 2021 RFP, please visit www.restorativecity.com. This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

About The Neurodiverse City

The Neurodiverse City advocates for a built environment that supports the city's entire population and the full range of their physical, neurological, and emotional needs—an issue that has taken on new urgency in the wake of the isolation and trauma of the pandemic. Recognizing the importance of access to public space to support physical and mental health, the initiative seeks to develop inclusive spaces through a three-phase, community-driven process, beginning with an audit of potential sites for spaces such as playgrounds, streetscapes, and pocket parks; the development of prototypes; and the proposal of recommendations, promoting dialogue about policy changes with key agencies and individuals. With nearly 1 in 5 New York City students diagnosed with a disability, 1 in 10 adults diagnosed with a cognitive disability, and many more going undiagnosed, access to resources and to welcoming and equitable public spaces becomes a critical factor in public health.

The Neurodiverse City is spearheaded by [Verona Carpenter Architects](#)—a full-service, women-owned architecture and interiors firm whose work centers humanity, resilience, and inclusion in recognition of the neurodiverse world we live in—and [WIP Collaborative](#), a shared feminist practice of independent design professionals focused on research and design projects that engage community and the public realm. Their work on this initiative will be supported by the Center for Independence of the Disabled-NY, Bronx Independent Living Services, Include NYC, and P.S. 42.

About Healing Hostile Architecture

Healing Hostile Architecture: Design as Care addresses the ongoing issue of hostile architecture within the urban landscape. Through mounted spikes, barred corners, surveillance, and pay-to-use public restrooms, urban design has long targeted the city's homeless population as it created unwelcoming spaces for all New Yorkers. Through this initiative, Design as Protest posits another approach that ceases the use of hostile architecture and reclaims public space through anti-racist policy that imagines spaces of care, designed through community input and leadership. *Healing Hostile Architecture* will support the development of new design guidelines and policy measures that will abolish hostile architecture and promote investment in affordable housing and BIPOC cultural spaces.

[Design as Protest](#) is a collective of BIPOC designers working to mobilize strategy to dismantle the privilege and power structures that use architecture and design as tools of oppression, and champion the radical vision of racial, social, and cultural reparation through the process and outcomes of design. Their work on *Healing Hostile Architecture* will be supported by a secondary partner to be selected at a later date.

About The Restorative City and Jury List

Part of the Design Trust's triennial request for proposals, *The Restorative City: Building Community Wellness through Public Space* marks a call to action to urban planning, design, and public policy professionals to support health equity from within public space and the built environment. Announced in April 2021, with a call for letters of interest, the Design Trust selected a [finalist group of eight leading projects](#) from over 90 proposals submitted. The following leaders participated as jury members working in collaboration with the Design Trust team in the selection of the winning projects:

- Michael Blaise Backer, Deputy Commissioner, NYC Department of Small Business Services
- Arturo Garcia-Costas, Environmental Program Officer, New York Community Trust
- Claudie Mabry, Strategist and Consultant, Independent
- Mary Miss, Founder & Artistic Director, City as Living Laboratory
- Suzanne Nienaber, Partnerships Director, Center for Active Design
- Delma Palma, Deputy Director, New York City Housing Authority
- Jose Serrano-McClain, Principal, HR&A
- Laura Starr, Principal, Landscape Architect
- Chat Travieso, Artist and Past Design Trust Fellow

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, 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.

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