

DESIGN TRUST FOR PUBLIC SPACE

Design Trust for Public Space Advances Health Equity in New York City Through Open Call for Projects Launching Today

2021 Request-for-Proposals Cycle to Support Community-Based Initiatives Connecting Urban Public Space with Improved Health Outcomes

New York, NY – April 21, 2021 – The Design Trust for Public Space today launched a major initiative dedicated to connecting health equity with design and the built environment throughout New York City—an urgent issue that has been exacerbated by the ongoing pandemic and disproportionately impacts marginalized communities. As part of the Design Trust’s mission to advance collaborative public space initiatives, ***The Restorative City: Building Community Wellness through Public Space*** will solicit new ideas through an open request for proposals (RFP) that will empower community action across NYC’s five boroughs and elevate public health to a central precept of public policy and urban design. *The Restorative City* opens today with a [call for letters of interest](#) due by May 24, 2021. Final projects will be selected this August and implemented over the course of the coming years.

For over 25 years, the Design Trust has served as an incubator for new projects and research that unlock the potential of NYC’s shared spaces. Its triennial RFP is central to its mission and program, and previous iterations have focused on increasing accessibility to public space, developing connectivity and community through the built environment, and advancing urban agriculture, among other pressing issues over the past two decades. Participants have ranged from local citizens with minimal design experience, to designers and urban planning professionals with backgrounds working in public space. The selection and implementation of final projects are facilitated by the Design Trust and realized through a network of collaborative support, including fellows appointed by the Design Trust with expertise in relevant areas.

“There could not be a more urgent time to confront health inequity in New York, a city that has been one of the hardest hit by the pandemic. *The Restorative City* considers the potential for public space to increase health equity in meaningful and sustained ways,” said Design Trust Executive Director Matthew Clarke. “Marking our nonprofit’s 11th RFP cycle, we look forward to supporting and assisting with the implementation of project ideas that will improve health outcomes for New Yorkers and effect citywide change.”

Concurrent to the RFP selection process, the Design Trust is organizing a series of monthly virtual conversations with designers and health professionals that invite the public to explore issues of urban design, public space, and health equity further. The series will kick off on **May 25, 2021**, with a conversation between architect, researcher, educator, and newly appointed Director of the Master of Urban Design program at UNC Charlotte **Sekou Cooke** and Director of Equitable Health System Integration at the American Medical Association **Denard Cummings**. Additional dates and speakers will be announced shortly.

The Restorative City is being led by the Design Trust together with an Advisory Committee of leaders from public and private sector groups, including the NYC Department of Health, CDC/Healthy Schools Division, and Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, among others. Social sector strategist Claudie Mabry will lead a series of public workshops for participants to help hone their ideas and proposals. The finalist 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. Deliverables include the generation of new research, community-supported project implementation, and policy development, as well as two major public convenings. Upon their conclusion, each project in *The Restorative City* will undergo a long-term evaluation of its overall impact to assess the project's ability to effect lasting change in NYC.

For more information on the Design Trust's 2021 RFP, including a video introducing the initiative, please visit restorativecity.com.

This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. To find out more about how National Endowment for the Arts grants impact individuals and communities, visit www.arts.gov.

***The Restorative City* Advisory Committee**

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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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