

# DESIGN TRUST FOR PUBLIC SPACE

## NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell Silver and Rockwell Group To Be Honored with Public Space Leadership Awards at Design Trust's Annual Benefit on June 15

**Presented virtually, this year's benefit celebration recognizes the leadership of  
Commissioner Silver in building a more equitable city parks system  
and David Rockwell and the Rockwell Group in developing DineOut NYC**

NEW YORK, NY – June 7, 2021 – The **Design Trust for Public Space** will bring together leading urban planners, designers, architects, community organizers, and civic leaders to celebrate the importance and vitality of New York City's public spaces at its 2021 Benefit, held virtually for the first time, on Tuesday, June 15, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. The annual event will be anchored by the awarding of two Public Space Leadership Awards, recognizing visionaries who have been instrumental in creating more dynamic and equitable shared civic spaces, especially in the face of the ongoing pandemic. **NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP**, will be honored with the **Public Space Civic Leadership Award** for his work building a more equitable parks system serving all of the city's communities and for his leadership in keeping the main parks open during the last year's lockdown; and David Rockwell and the **Rockwell Group** will be recognized with the **Public Space Private Industry Award** for its groundbreaking vision in creating DineOut NYC to support restaurants through the challenges faced over the past year and a half.

The Benefit will include introductory remarks from **Design Trust Board Chair Eve Klein**. **Executive Director Matthew Clarke** will then bring guests on a virtual tour to three amazing public spaces throughout New York City, spotlighting the places and people that make our city unique. The first guest to correctly identify Clarke's three "secret" locations will win the evening's grand prize—a luxury suite at a Brooklyn Cyclones game. The festivities will include remarks from honoree **Commissioner Silver**, who will speak to his belief in public parks as critical infrastructure for our cities. **Vice Chair Dominic Ramos-Ruiz** will introduce **David Rockwell of the Rockwell Group** and **Melba Wilson, President of the NYC Hospitality Alliance and owner of Melba's** in Harlem, who will discuss the resilience of the city's restaurant and hospitality industries. The evening will culminate with a **live paddle raise** with Auctioneer Pat Tully of iBidMobile.Net, with all funds raised supporting the Design Trust's mission and programs.

"While the pandemic and related restrictions presented overwhelming challenges for New Yorkers, they also offered an unprecedented opportunity to rethink how we can adapt our public spaces to meet the needs of the many diverse communities that makes up this vibrant and resilient city," said Matthew Clarke, Design Trust's Executive Director. "We are thrilled to take this moment to celebrate the incredible tenure of Commissioner Mitchell Silver, who has overseen more than 800 capital projects designed to improve the city's parks. We are equally honored to recognize the work of the Rockwell Group, which helped guide the city's restaurant industry through the darkest days of the pandemic, and offered a way for diners to safely patronize their favorite local businesses when it mattered the most."

"The pandemic showed us that parks are essential for our physical health and mental wellbeing, and they became 'sanctuaries of sanity' for New Yorkers in need for joy and healing during a difficult time,"

said Commissioner Silver. "As Commissioner, I've prioritized building a more equitable, inclusive, and seamless 21st century park system, and I'm so proud of our work revitalizing and caring for parks across the city. I am deeply honored by this award and grateful to the Design Trust for highlighting the importance of planning, placemaking and experience-building for all New Yorkers."

"I think we've had a chance to observe through the pandemic that our city is defined by people, not hardware. And that it's really the public space—it is the people that use that public space that make it great. As we think about the future, protecting and reinvesting in those spaces is critical to keep the city on the leading edge," said David Rockwell of the Rockwell Group. "New York City has always been defined by the greatness of its public space and its streets."

#### **NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP**

Mitchell Silver became Commissioner of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation in May 2014. Commissioner Silver is also the immediate past president of the American Planning Association (APA). He is an award-winning planner with more than 30 years of experience and he is internationally recognized for his leadership in the planning profession and his contributions to contemporary planning issues. He specializes in comprehensive planning, placemaking and implementation strategies. As Parks Commissioner, Mitchell Silver oversees management, planning, and operations of nearly 30,000 acres of parkland, which includes parks, playgrounds, beaches, marinas, recreation centers, wilderness areas, and other assets.

#### **Rockwell Group**

Rockwell Group is an interdisciplinary firm that emphasizes innovation and thought leadership in every project. Founded in 1984 by David Rockwell and led by partners Shawn Sullivan and Greg Keffer, the firm creates extraordinary experiences and built environments the world over. Based in downtown New York with satellite offices in Los Angeles and Madrid, Rockwell Group specializes in a wide array of work from luxury hospitality, cultural, and healthcare projects, to educational, product, and set design.

#### **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.

For more information about the Design Trust for Public Space, visit [designtrust.org](https://designtrust.org).

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