

Request for Proposals

The Restorative City

DESIGN TRUST
FOR PUBLIC SPACE

Introduction

The Design Trust for Public Space unlocks the potential of New York City's shared, civic spaces through the advancement of new research and collaborative projects. This work aims to improve the well-being of residents throughout the city. Central to our mission and program is our request for proposals (RFP), which solicits ideas to realize projects that address a key public space concern in New York City.

Organized around a central theme, each RFP cycle is grounded by extensive community outreach and engagement, ensuring an alignment with community needs and interests. Final proposals are implemented with the guidance and

support of the Design Trust alongside a range of partners, including city agencies, stakeholder groups, and private sector experts. Over the course of its 25-year history, the Design Trust has completed 32 projects across the five boroughs, impacting thousands of New Yorkers.

This cycle, the Design Trust RFP—The Restorative City—is dedicated to exploring how public space and the built environment can be used as a tool to advance health equity, a concept which means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible.

We invite New York City community groups, non-profits, design firms, advocates, activists, public agencies, and individuals across the five boroughs to submit proposals for research, design, and planning projects to unlock the

What issues are you or your organization passionate about?

potential of NYC's shared spaces in ways that can improve health outcomes for everyone, but especially for communities who have been historically marginalized or under resourced.

Using our unique problem-seeking, and power-sharing model of project delivery, The Restorative City will support projects that seek to influence public policy, design practice, or development decisions and bring about powerful, city-wide changes. Projects may be site-specific but must have the potential to change the way we develop and manage public space citywide and or influence the way we practice design. An independent jury will choose between two to four proposals to become Design Trust projects.

An open call for project ideas to build community wellness through public space

Within the health sector it is well known that the greatest predictor of one's health is their zip code, not their genetics or lifestyle choices. Only 20% of health outcomes depend on access to and quality of medical care. 80% of

health outcomes depend on our physical environment and socio-economic factors, in other words, the world and people around us shape our wellbeing. While access to hospitals is important, communities with access to parks, transportation, well-resourced schools, adequate housing are more likely to be healthy.

Why do you want to work with the Design Trust for Public Space?

In New York City, an individual living in the South Bronx has a life expectancy of 69.5 years; a resident of the Upper East Side has a life expectancy of 89.5 years, 20 years longer. Where we live matters, and where we live is too often governed by exclusion, racism, and discrimination.

This is a call to action for urban planning, design, and public policy professionals and all those involved in shaping the physical environments in which we live, work and play. This cycle, the Design Trust is looking for projects that shape New York shared spaces and environment in ways that

How will your project use public space to address health equity in your community?

can make us healthier. Even more, we're looking for projects that lift up tools, investments, and innovation in communities of need, that recognize the need to direct resources to those in need.

The Design Trust encourages applicants to consider:

How do we design New York for the health and wellbeing of all communities?

How can public spaces support healthy lives?

How can our streets and sidewalks be reimaged to help our communities thrive?

How can neighborhood design improve mental health?

How can we reduce the environmental injustices affecting marginalized communities?

How can we frame climate resiliency as an urgent health crisis in our neighborhoods?

How do we reckon with systemic racism present in urban planning and policy in order to build more just communities?

How can we use art, culture, and heritage to lift up all definitions of wellbeing?

Overview

The Design Trust invites prospective project partners (that's you!) to complete a statement of interest (SOI) by May 24 at 5:00 PM. The guidelines for submitting this statement can be found at restorativecity.com. This brief statement includes the following questions (at right).

For all potential applicants, we will host free virtual workshops on May 3, May 7, and May 14. These workshops will offer help in developing your project ideas and in connecting your project to the larger theme of health equity. Please find more information and sign up for one of the workshops at restorativecity.com.

The Design Trust will contact you if we would like you to submit a full project proposal. These full proposals will be evaluated internally and by an independent jury. The Design Trust will select a limited number of projects to develop and move forward.

What issues are you or your organization passionate about?

Why do you want to work with the Design Trust for Public Space?

How will your project use public space to address health equity in your community?

Eligibility

Proposals must address issues raised in the Open Call (*The Restorative City: Building Community Wellness through Public Space*) and relate to the design or use of public space in New York City. Projects may be proposed by:

- Individuals, contingent upon the partnership of a related community group or public agency stakeholder. A letter of support from the stakeholder must be submitted with the full (second round) proposal.
- Non-profit public advocacy or community groups that are based in or provide services in New York City.
- City, state, or federal agencies concerned with New York City design policy, implementation, or review.

Project Requirements

We are looking for projects that examine the ways in which we plan, design, and build the public realm. Specifically, we are looking for ideas that center the improved health and well-being of individuals and communities in our city. If invited, full project proposals should outline how targeted expertise and the project results could affect policy, programming, or design decision-making. Projects situated at the early stages of planning, with strong community support and/or city involvement, will receive preference. Although Design Trust efforts may eventually lead to built work, projects should, first and foremost, demonstrate broad policy or programming goals, not an end in itself, and create impact by:

- Changing the system.
- Producing a replicable model.
- Creating a catalyst.
- Building a constituency.

Design Trust projects culminate in the dissemination of ideas that are intended to influence design or public policy.

Typical deliverables include publications, prototypes, conferences or seminars, and websites or videos.

Application Instructions

1. Statement of Interest

Please complete your statement of interest by May 24 at restorativecity.com. Information about the SOI is listed above in the overview section.

2. Full Proposal

The Design Trust will notify groups that have been selected to submit full proposals by email and will provide more detailed information about what needs to be included in that proposal at that time. The full proposal will include a project abstract, project description, budget and resource information, a project timeline, and letters of support.

The Design Trust will offer “office hours” to all applicants invited to submit full proposals. This time will be used to help guide applicants on preparing their proposal.

3. Proposal Review and Jury Selection

The Design Trust board and staff will review all full proposals and select a group of finalists that meet the selection criteria. Finalists will be presented to an independent multidisciplinary jury for selection. Information on the jurors will be made available on our website. Prospective partners will be asked to make a brief presentation of their proposal to the jury.

4. Project Launch

After the projects are selected, the Design Trust will work with partners to determine the expertise that is required to successfully complete the project and will advertise and award fellowships as appropriate and allowable within the budget. The Design Trust will work with the partner to create a realistic project timeline and budget.

The Design Trust staff act as project managers, to produce the highest quality deliverable, while adhering to budget and schedule. Project partners will work collaboratively with DT staff to define and build project content. DT will act as a resource for partners to navigate City government and policies. We will also be available to assist with engaging stakeholders and to facilitate innovative, yet feasible solutions to problems that may arise. The Design Trust will coordinate project-related programs and production of deliverables and supports ongoing advocacy and public awareness of selected projects.

Project Funding

The Design Trust is not a granting organization. However, we provide limited seed funds for the selected projects so they can commence immediately. These funds will be administered by Design Trust and may be used to support Fellow stipends, partner stipends (on a case by case basis), project activities, and final deliverables. We anticipate that 50-100% of the final mutually agreed upon project budget will be covered through these funds. We encourage partners to match these funds or identify possible funding sources. The Design Trust will work with project partners to create a mutually agreeable budget that recognizes the core components of the project as well as components that would be beneficial, should the Design Trust and project partner secure additional funds. The Design Trust will engage in project fundraising with the project partner for a limited period of time, schedule permitting.

Design Trust Fellows

The Design Trust will advertise and award fellowships as mutually determined with the partner for each project. Our Fellows work with Design Trust staff and project partners to generate innovative, equitable, and sustainable design solutions that have a lasting impact on New York City's public space. The partner may also choose to serve as a Fellow or provide a Fellow from their organization. Past Fellows—both emerging and established professionals—have included architects, landscape architects, planners, economists, transportation experts, journalists, preservationists, ecologists, and artists, among others. Fellowships include a stipend and, in most cases, an opportunity to publish project findings.

Key Dates

May 24
Statement of interest due

Mid-August
10 finalists announced

May 25
Opening event and
speakers' series launch


Mid-August
Jury selection

May – June
Workshops and office hours
with the Design Trust

Mid-August
Announcement of winners
and public event

July 12
Full proposals due

Information Workshops
Monday, May 3
Friday, May 7
Friday, May 14



Contact the Design Trust for Public Space at programs@designtrust.org with questions

**DESIGN TRUST
FOR PUBLIC SPACE**

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