

# Streets Ahead

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Call for Action

Released  
May 18  
2021

Due  
June 30  
2021

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## The last year in New York has shown the tremendous capacity of our city streets.

As the City was struck by COVID-19, we saw seismic shifts in the fabric of our neighborhoods. Street life suffered as New Yorkers stayed home, e-commerce soared, businesses and bustling retail corridors shuttered, and transit emptied. Yet neighborhood streets became a site of support for New Yorkers. Mutual aid networks distributed food and activated community fridges. Demonstrators marched in support of the Movement for Black Lives. Artists memorialized friends and neighbors lost.

Our streets also became sites to socialize, dine, exercise, and play. City government responded nimbly to the crisis by piloting Open Streets programs, enabling restaurants, businesses, and people to reclaim street space from private vehicles. As our second summer approaches, many New Yorkers are clamoring to make these temporary programs permanent. Critics have argued that the program should be strengthened so underinvested neighborhoods can target the support and capital they need to transform their streets in sustainable ways.

Now, there is significant opportunity for designers, planners, policymakers, and community members to boldly reimagine how our public realm is designed and managed for the public good, with racial justice and equity at the fore. New York City will need an inspiring strategy to permanently reclaim streets for all New Yorkers.

In our 2021-2022 program Streets Ahead, Urban Design Forum invites architects, landscape architects, planners, developers, public officials, artists, community organizers, scholars, lawyers, journalists, and community developers to advance ideas and proposals to envision a more vibrant, equitable streetscape.

### How can we transform streets to build connected communities?



↑ Image: NYC DOT, modified by Urban Design Forum

## Key Questions ↓

Through the program, we will explore the future of city streets through several lenses. Across these questions, we welcome you to consider how the physical design of streets, including configuration, materials, and the constraints and opportunities of the spaces, can support a more livable city.

1. How might streets help to revitalize our small business community and support the economic recovery of the city?
2. How can street transformation support artists and cultural organizations?
3. How can we retool street design to confront the impacts of the climate crisis?
4. How can streets center safety, care, and healing for New Yorkers of all ages, races and abilities?
5. How can we evolve land use and zoning regulations to support vibrant streetscapes?
6. And critically, how can we support New York City in creating policy and programs that support lively street life for decades to come?

## Timeline ↓

### May 18

Call to Action launch

### June 30

Call to Action submission deadline

### August 6

Announcement of Working Groups

### September 2021 - March 2022

Working Group Activities

### September 2021 - June 2022

Public Programs

### June 2022

Publication Release



↑ Image: NYC DOT, modified by Urban Design Forum

Join a Working Group ↓

## Join a group of leading thinkers to imagine the future of New York City streets.

Our Working Groups will be interdisciplinary groups of 8-12 UDF Fellows, gathered to tackle one challenge related to the future of our streets. Working Groups will focus on one of five key areas:

- 1. Commerce:** How might streets help to revitalize our city's small business community, and support the economic recovery of the city?
- 2. Culture:** How can street transformation support artists and cultural organizations?
- 3. Climate:** How can we retool street design to confront the impacts of the climate crisis?
- 4. Care:** How can streets center safety, care, and healing for New Yorkers of all ages, races and abilities?
- 5. Continuity:** How can we evolve land use and zoning regulations to support vibrant streetscapes?

### Commitments

Participation in a Working Group will require a commitment to attending four 2-hour Working Group meetings, along with one partial day workshop session.

### Submit Your Interest

To submit your interest in joining a Working Group, please submit the following by Wednesday, June 30th at 5pm:

Contact information, statement of interest (250 words), CV or brief description of expertise, and working group topic preference through [this form](#).

### Eligibility

Working Groups are organized to convene Urban Design Forum fellows; members of the general public are welcome to apply, but will be asked to become UDF fellows before the start of Working Group meetings in September 2021.

We aim to welcome every Fellow who submits to participate. However, recognizing we may see a large volume of applications, we may invite fellows to engage in working groups, public programs, or other activities.

Other Ways to Contribute ↓

## Share other thoughts and ideas on the future of New York City streets.

### 1. Share a Project

Submit a transformative design, proposal, or project that leads the way in streetscape design. We welcome your projects or case studies you admire from around the world.

### 2. Nominate a Speaker

Introduce us to leading thinkers and doers who are rethinking streetscape design, use, and management around the world as we foster comparative dialogue.

### 3. Lead a Tour

Share an outdoor project or space that exemplifies new streetscape design.

### 4. Host Us

Open your organization's outdoor or indoor space to host a conversation with our fellows.

### Submission Guidelines

We welcome you to submit no more than 300 words, and up to 5 supporting images, charts, or diagrams (high resolution, .jpeg format, printable at 300dpi, suggested minimum size 12"x18")

### Please direct all questions and inquiries to:

Martha Snow

Program Manager

646-928-0550

martha@urbandesignforum.org



↑ Image: NYC DOT, modified by Urban Design Forum

Sponsorship ↓

## Support our inquiry and promote visionary thinking for the future of the streets.

Levels & Benefits ↓

### Champion (\$5,000)

- Advise Executive Director and key program staff on program activities
- Receive verbal recognition at launch event
- Invite one senior staff member to participate in one of the five working groups
- Name two practice leaders to the Director's Circle, a group of distinguished civic leaders who sustain our programming on the pivotal issues facing our cities.
- Priority access to limited-capacity member tours and events
- Recognition on all programming materials
- Four tickets to Launch Event

### Supporter (\$2,500)

- Invite one senior staff member to participate in one of the five working groups
- Name one practice leader to the Director's Circle, a group of distinguished civic leaders who sustain our programming on the pivotal issues facing our cities.
- Priority access to limited-capacity member tours and events
- Recognition on all programming materials
- Two tickets to Launch Event

### Friend (\$1,000)

- Priority access to limited-capacity member tours and events
- Recognition on all programming materials
- One ticket to Launch Event

### Please direct all sponsorship inquiries to:

Daniel McPhee

Executive Director

646-928-0553

[daniel@urbandesignforum.org](mailto:daniel@urbandesignforum.org)



↑ Image: Street Lab, modified by Urban Design Forum

## About Us ↓

The Urban Design Forum mobilizes civic leaders to confront the defining issues facing New York City's built environment. We are an independent membership organization that empowers professionals of diverse backgrounds, industries, and perspectives to shape a better future for all New Yorkers. We investigate complex challenges in the built environment, study alternative approaches from cities around the world, and advance progressive strategies to build a more dynamic and democratic city.

## Program Committee ↓

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