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# UNION SQUARE 14TH STREET DISTRICT VISION PLAN

JANUARY 2021

UNION  
SQUARE  
PARTNERSHIP

DESIGN PARTNER  
MARVEL

*In dedication to the Union Square-14th Street community, and all who contributed to the Visioning process. This is just the beginning. We look forward to future engagement with our neighborhood and agency partners as we move forward in our planning, programming, and design initiatives to bring this vision to reality.*

**Lynne Brown**

President + Co-Chair

**William Abramson**

Co-Chair

**Jennifer Falk**

Executive Director

**Ed Janoff**

Deputy Director

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Photo:  
Jane Kratochvil

# A NEW ERA FOR UNION SQUARE

## DEAR FRIENDS,

For 45 years, the Union Square Partnership has been improving the neighborhood for our 75,000 residents, 150,000 daily workers, and millions of annual visitors. Our efforts in sanitation, security, horticulture, and placemaking have sustained and accelerated growth for decades. But our neighborhood's growth is not over. With more than 1 million square feet of planned development underway, it is time to re-invest for tomorrow.

The projects and programs detailed in the Union Square-14th Street District Vision Plan will not just focus on the neighborhood's competitive advantage but continue to make the area a resource for all New Yorkers for generations to come.

***This plan is a jumping-off point for collaboration with our constituents. At its center, the vision proposes a dramatic 33% expansion of public space. And there is much more.***

We look forward to fostering a dialogue that will guide our investments and set future priorities. It is my hope that as you read, you will feel the impact of our collaborative community process and continue to share feedback as we move forward to the next stage.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Falk

# INTRODUCTION

Union Square is the beating heart of New York. It's where the east side meets the west side, and downtown meets midtown. It's where boroughs cross, cultures collide, and lives intersect.



The Union Square-14th Street neighborhood is a vibrant tapestry of residents, visitors, businesses, and institutions. And it reflects the uniqueness and diversity of New York itself by welcoming people of all ages, races, nationalities, religions, and orientations.

***USP, in collaboration with community members and Marvel, proudly presents this vision for the future of Union Square and the surrounding neighborhood.***





Photo: Christopher Payne

Union Square’s legacy is that of physical, social, and cultural crossroads. It is a focal point of free expression and a rich community space for all New Yorkers.

Our goal at Union Square Partnership [USP] is to foster the connections built by this unique place. To connect Union Square Park to the neighborhood; the neighborhood to the city; and citizens to one another.

## ORIGINS

We began this effort in 2018, at a very different moment: when the impending shutdown of the L train was looming over the neighborhood

and the City was planning massive changes to 14th Street. This was long before COVID-19 and social distancing changed our relationship to public space. And before the growing Black Lives Matter movement brought renewed urgency to large-scale public protest. Although this vision plan is not a response to the massive changes brought on by events in 2020, its central focus on openness, access, and increased public space are well-suited to this moment.

## TEAM

This effort was led by the staff at USP, working in close partnership with Marvel, Sam Schwartz Engineering, and community stakeholders.



USP led the community engagement process, while Marvel conducted a neighborhood analysis and generated the conceptual designs. The team from Sam Schwartz Engineering conducted a basic traffic study that provided baseline data for the analysis.

## PROCESS

### Outreach

In September 2018, we launched a visioning and planning initiative to collect community input about the future of the Union Square-14th Street district. The scale of this outreach was, by far, the largest such effort USP has undertaken in its 45-year history.

For nine months, our team connected with more than 1,000 community members through public forums, pop-up kiosks, stakeholder working sessions, and online surveys to hear what was most important to them [a detailed overview of these activities can be found in the Appendix].

USP made a concerted effort to meet the public where they are: our representatives could be found gathering community input at the Greenmarket, in bus stops, at subway entrances, and in building lobbies. This plan is the culmination of this unprecedented outreach effort.

***Community input was especially critical because the Union Square we see today is the product of a multitude of urban design programs, serving many different constituencies, constructed over decades and generations.***

These programs include:

- the oval-shaped interior park spaces,
- the statue gardens on the periphery,
- the south plaza where most demonstrations take place, and
- the north and west plazas that are home to the Greenmarket and other vendors.

Preserving these design programs was a strong concern expressed during the community engagement process. Other feedback fell across travel, seating and recreation, green space, and specific functions.



USP and Marvel teams engaged community members at outdoor pop-up events and public forums held around the neighborhood.

Community members expressed a desire for:

- Improved pedestrian connectivity between various areas in and around the square
- Shared streets [i.e. a street shared by pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles with no physical distinctions, like curbs, between the uses]
- Additional seating, including movable street furniture
- Better trash and recycling options
- Beautification projects such as public art, more trees, and greenery
- A commitment to maintaining space for spontaneous performances and free expression



## Design Development

Using community insights, inspiration from other urban infrastructure projects, and knowledge of ongoing citywide developments, we created a series of goals and strategies that drive the specific design recommendations in the plan.

A few significant City projects include the NYC Department of Transportation's (NYC DOT) plaza program, the 14th Street Busway and Broadway pedestrianization projects, and NYC Department of Parks and Recreation's (NYC Parks) Parks Without Borders initiative, to name a few. Many of the recommendations that emerged from this effort emphasize openness as a core design feature.

***Prioritizing openness in such a bustling location serves to showcase New York City's character as a place of creativity, self-expression, and freedom — both literally and figuratively.***

Making this space as open as possible offers access to the essential features of civic life: access to open space, food, culture, education, community, health, and justice; access to a shared sense of purpose and belonging.

From these goals and strategies, we arrived at a series of concrete recommendations, including:

- four major streetscape projects requiring large-scale capital reconstruction;
- pursuing the first new master plan of Union Square Park since the 1980s; and
- a “toolkit” of smaller-scale public realm improvements to implement throughout the district.

Together, these projects will radiate public space benefits from the park outward into the neighborhood at large and increase open space around Union Square by more than 33%.

## THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19

This visioning project began well before COVID-19 upended the world and our relationship with public space. At the time of this plan's release, we cannot predict how long the effects of COVID-19 will be felt. Nevertheless, we are confident in the long-term value of the recommendations that follow because they are based on robust community engagement and timeless urban design principles.

**Community needs — of both individuals and businesses — lie at the heart of this plan.** More open space, safer pedestrian and cyclist travel, better transit, and more outdoor seating and greenery — all of these changes will benefit everyone, even if COVID-19 continues for longer than we hope. The large-scale projects recommended in this document will take many years to fully implement, so the plan's outlook is decades ahead. Although we only sparingly reference COVID-19 in this document, the goals remain consistent.

## OUR PARTNERSHIP AT WORK

USP was born out of a time when New York City faced financial struggles like those confronting us today. The organization was founded in 1976 during a fiscal crisis to serve as a steward for the neighborhood and help provide a long-term vision for its future. In the early 1980s, USP established Manhattan's first Business Improvement District (BID), and since then, our work has expanded beyond sanitation services and public safety coordination to play a critical role as an advocate for infrastructure enhancements throughout the district.

From 1985 to 2001, USP spearheaded park upgrades including the construction of the south plaza in conjunction with new subway entrances, redesign of the park's interior pathways and lawns, and renovation of the park's southwest corner. Beyond the park, USP supported the East 14th Street Armory 2001 redevelopment into residential towers and a community facility, and the organization continues to promote community-oriented, mixed-use projects.



Rendering of Union Square Park's North End reconstruction, which was completed in 2010.



More recently, USP collaborated with NYC Parks to upgrade Union Square Park's north end, including a reconstructed plaza, creation of a world-class playground, and the rehabilitation of the park's historic Pavilion that serves as the backdrop of a wildly popular seasonal restaurant.

In collaboration with City and community partners, USP is well-positioned to carry out this new vision for the Union Square-14th Street district's next chapter, further strengthening the neighborhood's quality-of-life and ensuring it remains a safe, clean, and highly accessible public space for all to enjoy.

Organizations across New York City today are tackling the unprecedented challenge of keeping our City running through a global pandemic. USP's work is just as crucial now as when we were first founded, addressing quality of life issues such as safety and security while beautifying our public spaces. Our commitment to this work is unwavering as we chart this path forward to continued prosperity for all.



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# **UNION SQUARE: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE**

# HISTORY + LEGACY

Union Square has been a focal point of New York City culture, commerce, and recreation since its designation as a public park in 1835.

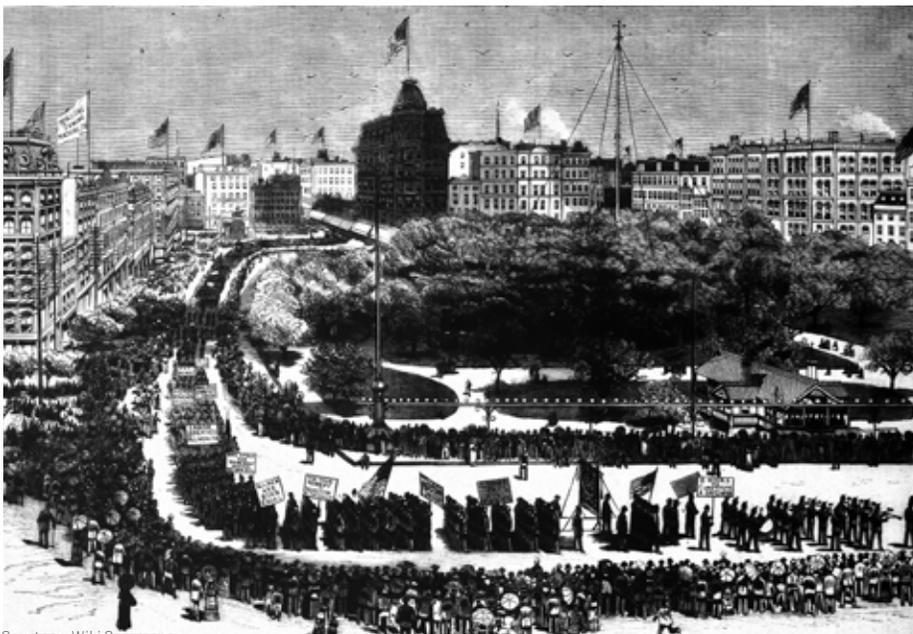
Throughout its history, Union Square Park has been an important and favored rallying site for free thinkers and activists who found it a welcoming forum in which to exercise their rights of public assembly. As early as 1861, thousands rallied in Union Square to support the Union cause in the Civil War, and in 1882, the first Labor Day parade took place on the north end of Union Square Park, where the Greenmarket now operates four days each week, year-round.

A place of many firsts, Union Square also hosted the first Earth Day event on April 22, 1970, kicking off an annual event that is now celebrated across the globe.

Over the next decades, Union Square would continue to serve as the primary place of assembly for New Yorkers and visitors alike to share mass expressions of celebration or grief. In 2001, mourners gathered at Union Square to grieve and reflect following the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center.

Most recently, Union Square has been a central meeting place for peaceful protest and demonstration for the Black Lives Matter movement, calling for racial justice and greater equity and inclusion for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities.

This plan celebrates the historical and cultural significance of Union Square and aims to honor its legacy through a new vision for the district's future which physically reflects its past.



Courtesy: Wiki Commons

On September 5, 1882, the first Labor Day march brought a group of over 13,000 parading laborers to the north end of Union Square Park. This marked the true beginning of the Park's use as a gathering place and prominent site for public assembly.



Photo: Bettman Archive/Getty Images

*Union Square has been an important and favored rallying site for free thinkers and activists, a welcoming forum in which to exercise their rights of public assembly.*

The first Earth Day took place in Union Square on April 22, 1970. This event marked the first of many gatherings in Union Square calling for climate action and environmental justice.

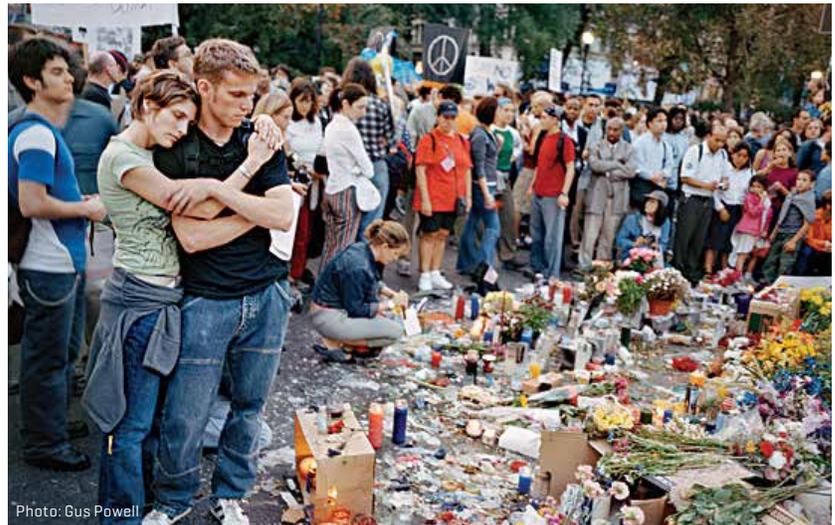


Photo: Gus Powell

Union Square Park became an important gathering place for the entire city after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center. Mourners gathered to remember those fallen in the tragedy and contributed to a collective memorial on the South Plaza.



Photo: 28Entertained

Beginning in 2013, the Black Lives Matter movement gathered in Union Square to protest police violence and call for racial justice. The killing of George Floyd in 2020 brought renewed urgency to the movement, and Union Square again served as one of the City's primary venues for large-scale protests, gathering, and expression.

# EVOLUTION OF THE SQUARE

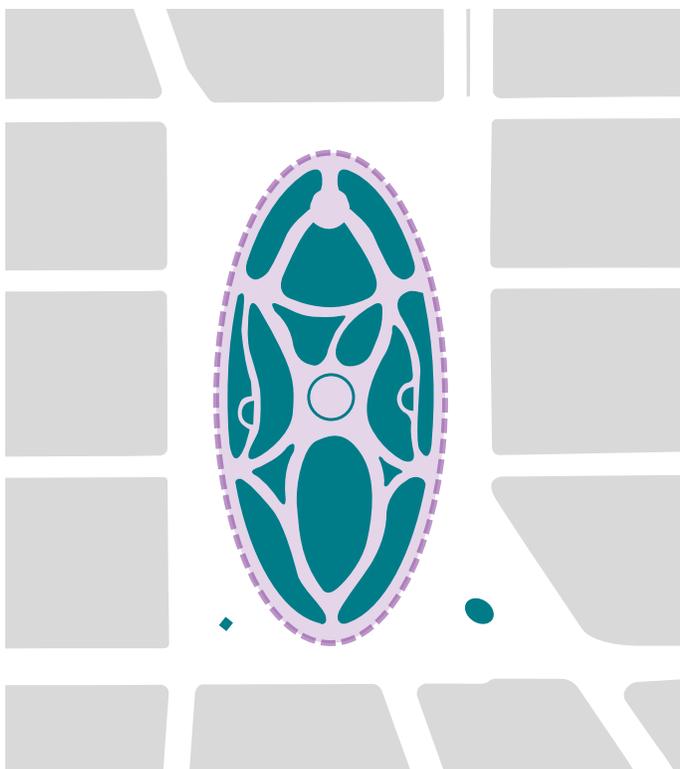
Union Square first emerged as a distinct public place in the Commissioner’s Plan of 1811, originally known as Union Place because of its location at the juncture of Boston Post Road, now 4th Avenue, and Albany Post Road, now Broadway.

Since its opening in 1839, Union Square Park has undergone significant transformations. First designed as a fenced-off oasis of green space, the park has been reconstructed over the years to accommodate a growing neighborhood and

new forms of transportation, including the first cable car, new streetcar and subway lines, and increasing automobile and bus traffic.

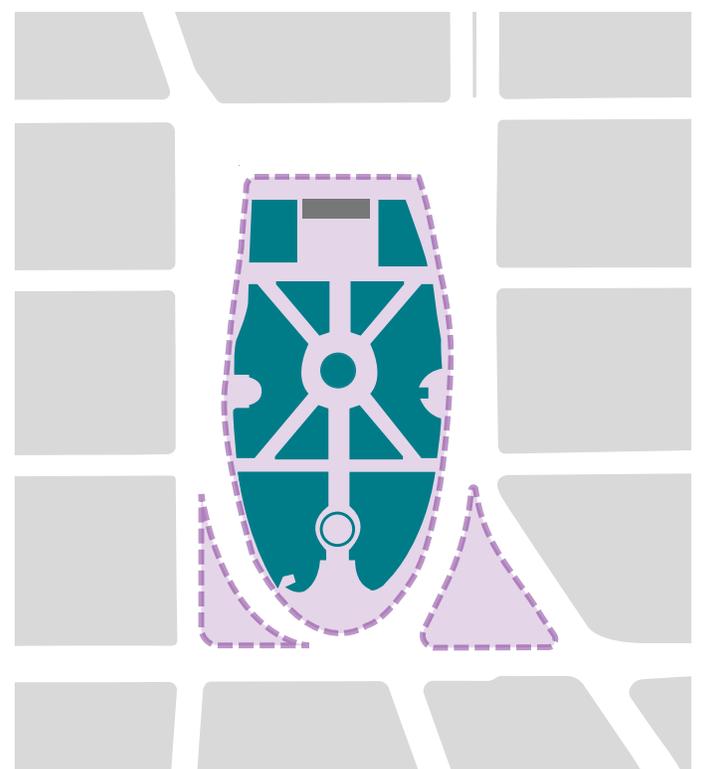
As its physical form evolved — with more dedicated pedestrian space, public plazas, and programming including New York’s flagship farmers market and annual holiday market — Union Square Park became the welcoming, dynamic public square we know and love today.

## 1890’s



The perimeter fence was removed and interconnected pathways are introduced to create an inviting park.

## 1930’s



The south islands were created for vehicular and pedestrian safety; sculptures and monuments are relocated and a new pavilion added to the North End.



Courtesy: The New York Public Library

1815-39: Union Square is born, named for the union of streets where Broadway and the Bowery intersect. A park is constructed with a large fountain at the center.

1850-90: The neighborhood builds up around the park and streetcar lines are installed. Statues of Lincoln and Washington are added. Calvert and Vaux redesign the park with new fencing,



Courtesy: Museum of the City of New York

**KEY**

 Park

 Public Space



Courtesy: New York Daily News

1920-40: The park is reconstructed and elevated to accommodate subways. Statues are moved to the interior and raised islands built to divide the growing vehicle traffic around the periphery which is increasingly used for parking.

## 1985-PRESENT

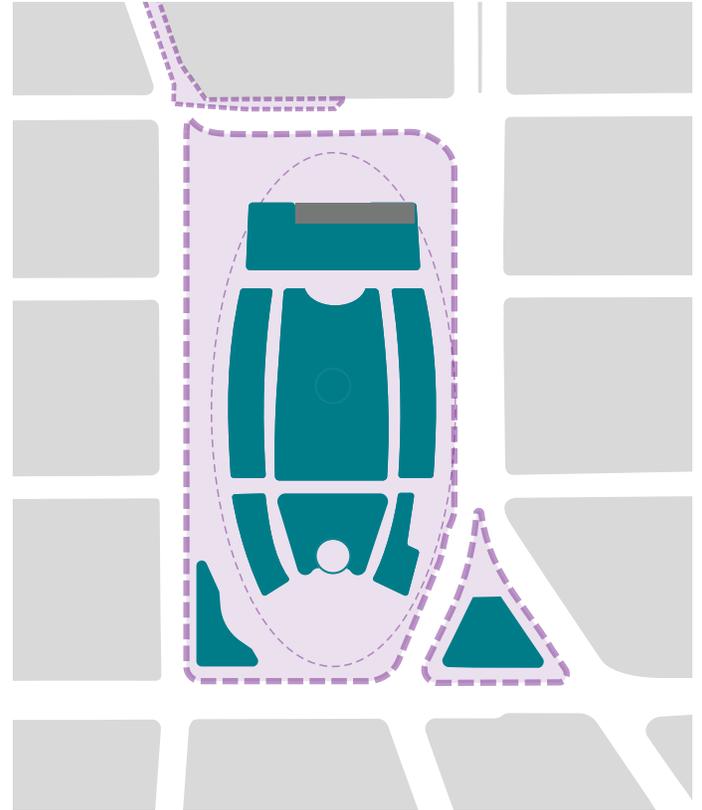
### KEY

 Park

 Public Space



1976-1986: The Union Square Greenmarket is born, utilizing the parking spaces around the park on a recurring basis. A series of park master plans create plazas around the park with more public space for gathering and programming.



In 1985 the island was incorporated into park space at the southwest corner and the South Plaza was created. The North Plaza and new playgrounds were constructed between 2008-2010, followed by the pedestrian plaza installation at Broadway and 17th Street in 2010.

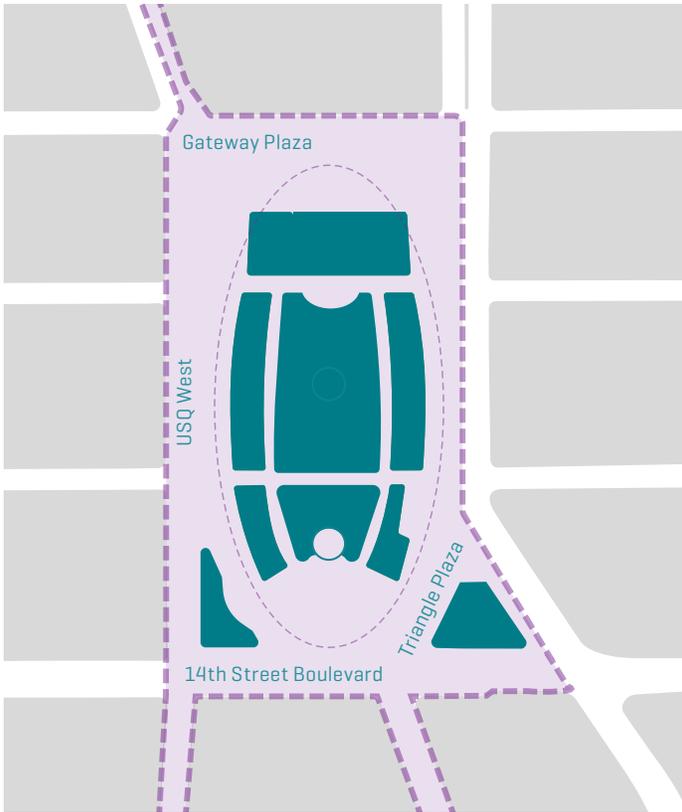


2008-2010: Union Square Park North End Project, including renovation of the north pavilion, plaza, and playground.



2010 - 2019: Pedestrian plazas, shared streets, bike lanes, and a new busway on 14th Street are installed around the square using temporary materials.

## PROPOSED



*A vision for the future extends Union Square's park features outward into the neighborhood and significantly expands its usable public space.*

This plan proposes that park character be expanded to the building edges around the square, connecting temporary pedestrian plazas and adjacent roadways with consistent paving at sidewalk grade to create a unified, cohesive space.

The plan envisions elements from Union Square Park extended across 14th Street outward into the neighborhood.



# NEIGHBORHOOD VITALITY

*The name “Union Square” refers to both the neighborhood and the public space — a vibrant site of free expression, a green oasis, and a multi-modal transit hub.*

Home to an incredible array of businesses, culture, and services, Union Square-14th Street continues to be among New York’s busiest neighborhoods.

2019 saw a large increase in pedestrian foot traffic, along with transit ridership across subway, bus, and bike share.

At the busiest hours of 5 PM - 7 PM on weekdays, some 70,000 people walk through Union Square [BFJ Pedestrian Study, September 2019]. That is the equivalent of a Madison Square Garden sporting event emptying every 30 minutes for 2 consecutive hours.



## SOARING FOOT TRAFFIC



**375,000 WEEKDAY\***  
**+12%** From 2016  
**290,000 WEEKEND\***  
**+17%** From 2016



**9.4M RIDERS ON THE M14 LOCAL/SBS BUS**



**32.4M RIDERS PASSING THROUGH 14 ST UNION SQ STATION**



**94% INCREASE IN MONTHLY CITI BIKE RIDERSHIP SINCE 2018**

\*Visitors over a 24hr period [BFJ Planning, September 2019]

## DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHICS

**890+**

**GROUND FLOOR BUSINESSES**

**73,000**

**RESIDENTS**

**38.5%**

Owner-occupied Housing Units (of 42,000)

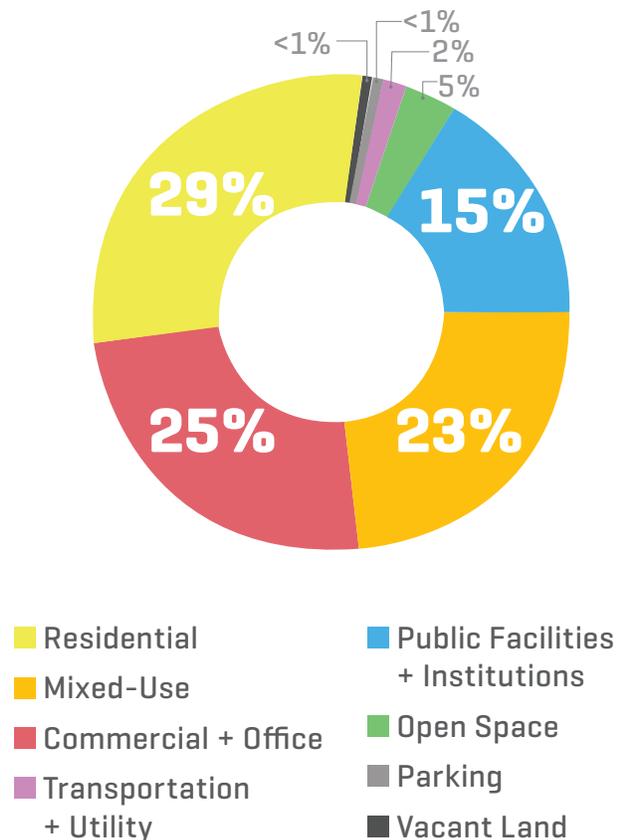
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**RATIO OF WORKERS TO RESIDENTS**

**35**

**MEDIAN AGE**

## DIVERSE LAND USE MIX



# DYNAMIC DEVELOPMENT

Commercial, residential, mixed-use, and institutional facilities comprise the Union Square Special Zoning District. Right now, significant development projects with investments totaling more than \$850 million are underway.

Representing hundreds of jobs, leading-edge tech, and expanded healthcare services, these projects will bring distinctive retail, commercial, and residential developments to the neighborhood.

**45-Unit Condo**  
101 West 14th Street  
Image: Binyan Studios via ODA New York

**88-Room Boutique Hotel Development**  
16 East 16th Street  
Image: BKS Architects

**15,000 Square Foot Commercial Renovation**  
348 West 14th Street  
Courtesy: JBS Project Management

**25-Unit Condo**  
251 West 14th Street  
Image: Pizzarotti Group / HTO Architect

**'Förena' 50-Unit Condo**  
540 Sixth Avenue  
Courtesy: Field Condition

**16,000 Square Foot Retail Leased (Name TBA)**  
19 Union Square West  
Photo: Liz Ligon

UNION SQUARE PARK

BROADWAY

PARK AVENUE SOUTH

17TH STREET

14TH STREET

6TH AVENUE

5TH AVENUE

*Innovation and dynamism is part of what makes Union Square-14th Street a world-class destination.*

**Commercial and Community Facility**  
31 East 17th Street



**Revitalized Landmark**  
**Tammany Hall**  
44 Union Square



**50-Unit Condo**  
**Mixed-Use Development**  
110 East 16th Street



IRVING PLACE

3RD AVENUE

2ND AVENUE



**33,000 Square Foot**  
**Target Superstore**  
10 Union Square East  
(Image of Kips Bay Court)



**Zero Irving**  
**175k Square Foot Tech Center**  
124 East 14th Street



**Mount Sinai**  
**Downtown Hospital**  
310 East 14th Street



**'Eve' 114-Unit** --->  
**Mixed-Use Development**  
432 East 14th Street

**KEY**

-  Business Improvement District Boundary
-  Greater Union Square Area
-  New Development Sites (2020)

# CRITICAL TRANSIT HUB

Union Square sits at a central juncture for north-south and east-west travel routes across New York City. Below ground, more than 32 million visitors pass through the Union Square subway station annually, making it the fourth busiest station in the entire system (after Times Square, Grand Central, and Herald Square). Above ground, two of the most transformative surface transportation projects Manhattan has seen in generations — Broadway Visioning and the 14th Street Busway — have further cemented Union Square as a key axis for city travel.

## BROADWAY VISIONING

NYC DOT is implementing a series of “slow blocks” (minimizing vehicle traffic and prioritizing walking and biking), shared streets, and public plazas to turn a two-mile stretch of Broadway into a pedestrian and bicycle-friendly pathway.



Image: NYC Department of Transportation

A rendering of the NYC DOT Broadway Visioning initiative.

The Broadway Visioning Initiative begins at Columbus Circle, continues south through Times Square, Herald Square, and Madison Square, and terminates at Union Square. Much of the corridor has already been pedestrianized using temporary materials, including Broadway between Union Square and Madison Square, and further improvements are anticipated in the coming years as part of NYC DOT’s next iteration of Broadway Visioning.



Photo: Liz Ligon

An express M14 bus on the new 14th Street busway, Fall 2019.

## 14TH STREET BUSWAY

Launched as a pilot in 2019, the 14th Street Busway provides a dedicated bus lane with faster M14 service going east-west. The project resulted in a 24% increase in weekday M14 ridership and a 36% improvement in weekday bus travel times. For crosstown travelers, the busway is now a permanent piece of transportation infrastructure riders have grown to rely on.



***Union Square lies at the junction of the two most transformative surface transportation projects Manhattan has seen in generations.***

# SHARED MOBILITY

Union Square-14th Street's residents, workers, and visitors rely on a varied mix of interconnected transportation options to get around. Car and bike-sharing services cater to visitors of all ages and abilities, providing more direct access to specific destinations than subways and buses alone.

## CITI BIKE

NYC's shared bicycle system, Citi Bike, has seen explosive growth in use in the Union Square-14th Street area in recent years.

Citi Bike stations throughout Union Square-14th Street are full by mid-morning and empty in the early evening. This demonstrates the vast unmet demand for Citi Bike stations in and around the district. The expansion of public space in this plan provides ample room for new stations or dock expansion.



Citi Bike station on East 17th Street near Broadway.



Oonee bike pod at Atlantic Terminal in Brooklyn.

## BIKE PARKING PODS

Along with bike racks and bike corrals, bike pods will maximize bicycle accessibility for Union Square. These secure bicycle parking structures provide longer-term storage for personal bicycles.

*Cyclists often cite a lack of secure bicycle parking as the number one reason they choose not to commute by bike. Like a coat check in a restaurant, bike pods can provide an extra convenience that makes a big difference to the service level of a neighborhood's bike network.*



Yellow cabs in front of the W New York - Union Square. Photo: Mariela Lombard

Bike pods are proving to be wildly popular at both Atlantic Terminal in Brooklyn and Journal Square in Jersey City. They can be subscription-based or advertising-based [no fee to the user]. A single 20'x20' structure can hold approximately 20 bikes or scooters, which can be enough capacity for 150-200 users.

## TAXIS AND FOR-HIRE VEHICLES

Taxis and for-hire vehicles [such as Uber and Lyft] are vital to many of Union Square-14th Street's constituents, and not only when it's raining. Many bar, restaurant, and theater-goers prefer taxis, as do visitors to hotels who may be unfamiliar with the city and/or carrying heavy luggage.

Thousands of neighborhood residents, including senior citizens and people with impaired mobility, rely on taxis and for-hire vehicles as well. There are also several medical facilities on 14th Street,

including Mount Sinai Union Square at Union Square East, and New York Eye and Ear Infirmary at Second Avenue, where taxi access is critical.

In addition to maintaining taxi access on the streets surrounding Union Square Park, the plan calls for installing curbside taxi stands at strategic locations throughout the neighborhood.

## ACCESS-A-RIDE AND ON-DEMAND TRANSIT

Metropolitan Transit Authority's [MTA] Access-A-Ride is a critical transportation service, particularly for hospitals, seniors, and individuals with mobility impairments. These vehicles are reserved in advance and vary from personal cars and vans to small buses.

Access-A-Ride vehicles can have designated parking and pick-up areas. We recommend expanding these areas to the locations where they are most needed.



Access-A-Ride vehicle on 14th Street. Photo: Tdorante10



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# THE VISION

# VISION STATEMENT

This Vision Plan reflects USP's broader objectives to:

*Foster a transit-rich, dynamic and inclusive urban space that encourages walking and gathering;*

*Celebrate the diverse communities of New Yorkers and visitors;*

*Make Union Square the most welcoming and accessible place in New York.*



Photos: Liz Ligon

# GOALS

We distilled the feedback from our community engagement efforts and our research and analysis of the district into these eight specific goals for the Vision Plan:



**Increase overall pedestrian space throughout Union Square-14th Street**



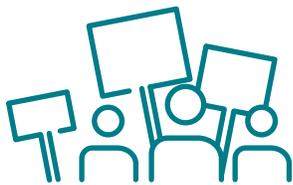
**Sustain the variety of organic activities that make this New York's town square**



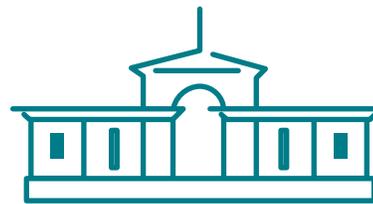
**Support environmental and public health with greening and active design**



**Improve access and connectivity across the greater Union Square-14th Street area**



**Promote free expression and the interweaving of diverse populations**



**Preserve and enhance the neighborhood's historic elements**



**Expand open space and extend the benefits of the park to the neighborhood**



**Enliven ground floor retail and encourage restaurants with outdoor seating**

# DESIGN VALUES

The approach in this vision promotes urban design that is rooted in a community context and public engagement.

We focused on projects that will have the broadest impact with the lowest investment, and on pilot projects that can be tested and refined before becoming permanent.



Existing (2020):  
14th Street  
Looking North



## SUSTAINABILITY

- Build more resilient and adaptable streetscape features [such as tree planters, porous paving, etc.] to withstand shocks and stresses, and be cost-efficient for the long-term.
- Promote sustainable modes of transportation.
- Encourage waste reduction.

## LIVABILITY

- Provide high-quality public amenities [such as seating, plantings, bike parking, updated restrooms, etc.] for current and future Union Square residents and visitors.
- Reinforce Union Square’s function as a bustling hub for commerce and culture.
- Improve and maintain elements like greenery, lighting, and street furniture.

*Every concept in the Vision Plan is designed to enhance the best qualities of Union Square and embraces a unified set of values.*



Existing (2019): 14th Street Looking West



Proposed

## MOBILITY

- Make the neighborhood safe, comfortable, and interesting to experience on foot.
- Enhance safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and all modes of mass transit users.
- Improve accessibility for people of all ages and abilities, including those with mobility devices and strollers.

## VITALITY

- Develop cohesive, vibrant, and multi-functional public spaces for diverse constituents.
- Create greater physical connections between the buildings and the public space.

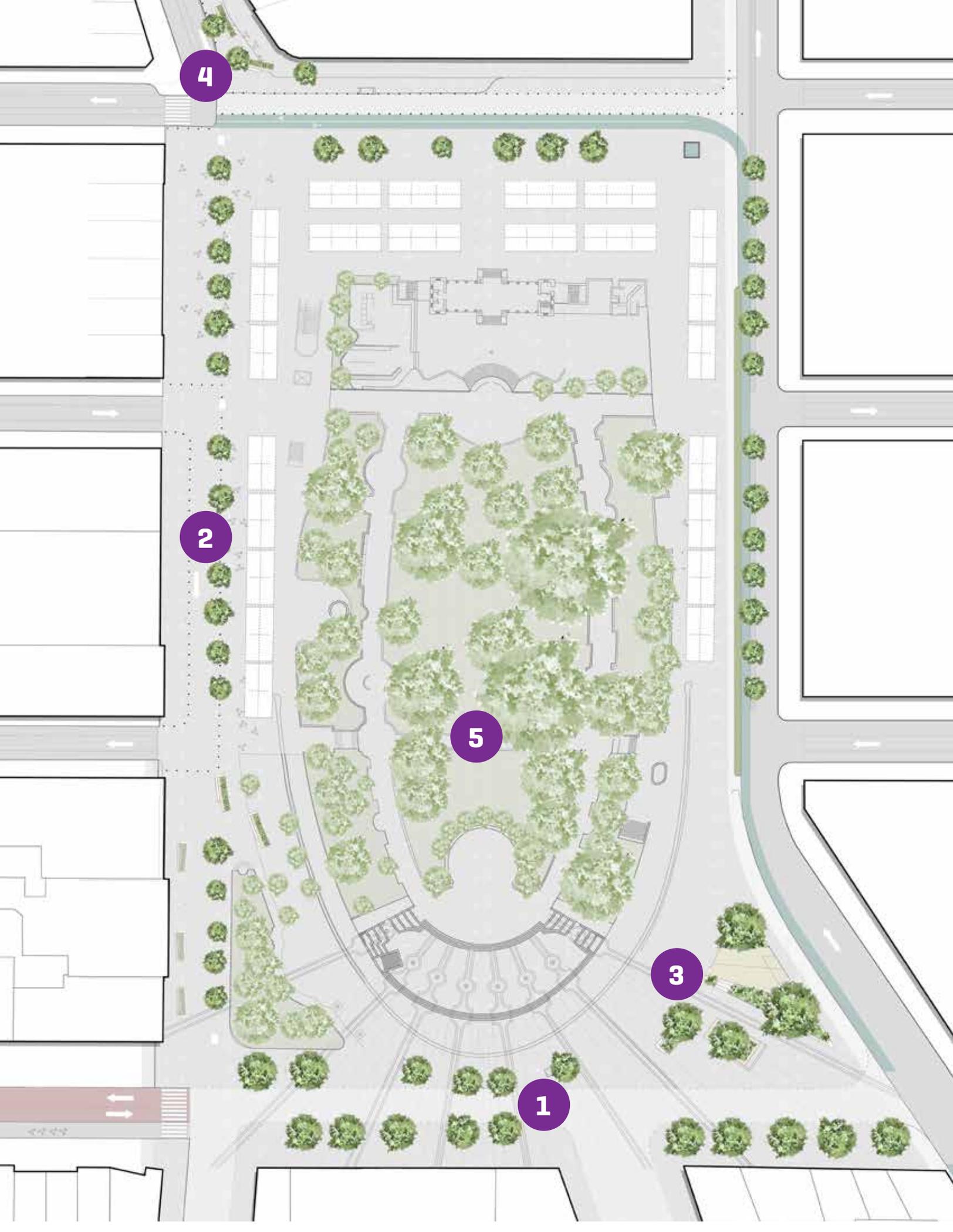
# MAJOR PROJECTS

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The recommended improvements in this plan are captured in five major projects. Each of them offers benefits in walkability, transit, public space, and general beautification to create an overall environment — both in the park and the surrounding neighborhood — that is open, welcoming, and connected. These projects are large-scale in nature and consider multiple layers of design across four key zones within the Union Square-14th Street district.

***Together these projects will increase the open space around Union Square by at least 33%.***

- 1 14TH STREET BOULEVARD**
- 2 UNION SQUARE WEST**
- 3 TRIANGLE PLAZA**
- 4 BROADWAY GATEWAY PLAZA**
- 5 PARK INFRASTRUCTURE**



4

2

5

3

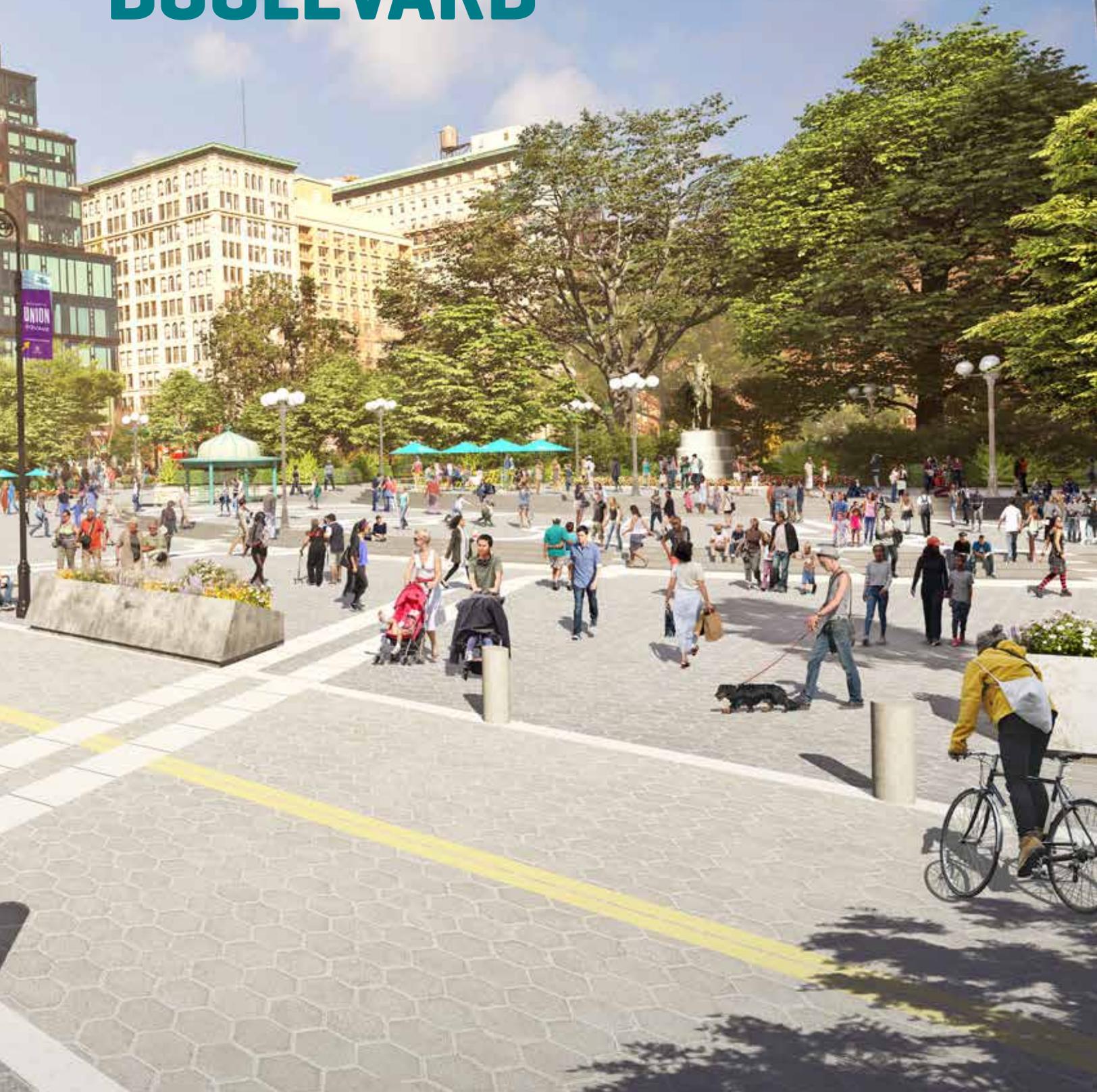
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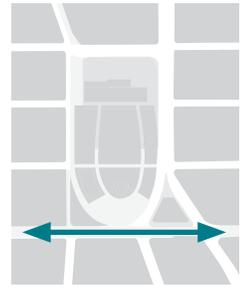
## MAJOR PROJECTS

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# 14TH STREET BOULEVARD



# 14TH STREET BOULEVARD



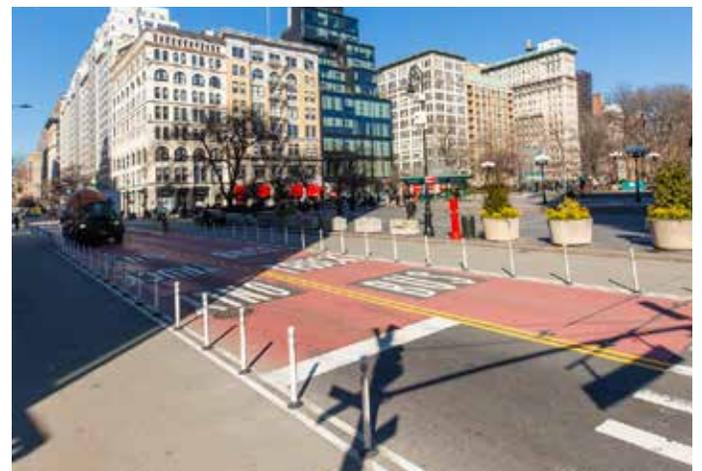
Union Square is a singular destination, with 14th Street anchoring its southern edge. Pedestrian counts exceed 3,000 per hour along 14th Street at rush hours, with people arriving via subway, bus, taxi, PATH, bike, car, and on foot. Home to diverse retail, familiar street vendors, and the best people-watching in New York, 14th Street presents an extraordinary opportunity for improvements at the street level.

***This vision plan prioritizes pedestrian access and connectivity, supporting the park and surrounding businesses.***

When the busway was implemented along 14th Street in fall 2019, the positive effects were felt immediately. Our goal is to leverage these effects and amplify them with complementary investments. The busway's expanded pedestrian areas and designated boarding zones support the other street-level improvements envisioned for this critical crosstown artery.



Sidewalk congestion at 14th Street between University Place and Broadway stems from the enormous foot traffic produced by multiple transit connections, retail destinations, and large institutions nearby.



14th Street Boulevard today. Changes that came with the added busway created more pedestrian areas, but the highway-style demarcation between roadway and walking space continues to foster higher travel speeds than desired for pedestrian safety and comfort.

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The following principles guided the design of 14th Street Boulevard:

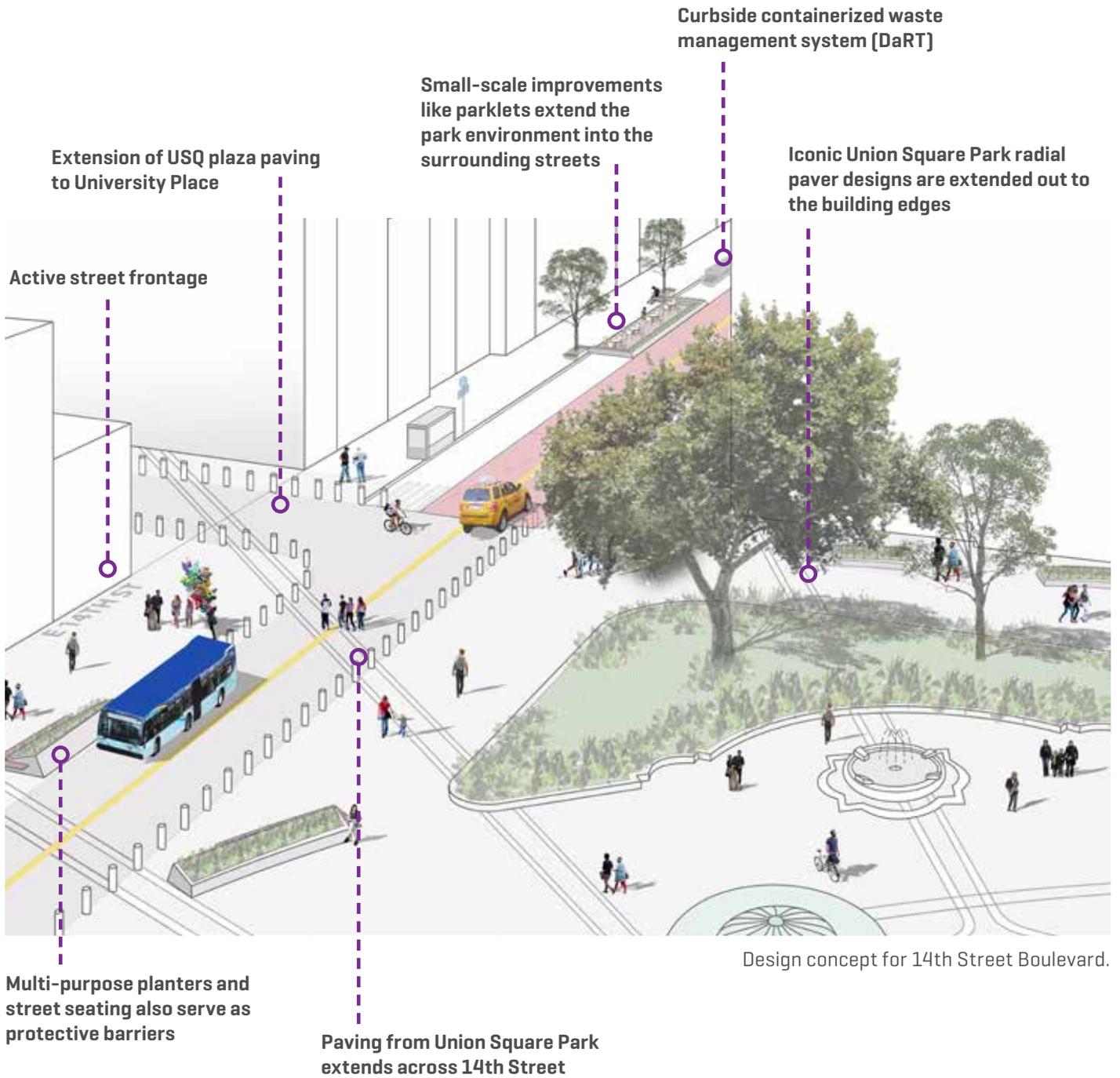
- Extend Union Square’s footprint outward along 14th Street, University Place, and Broadway.
- Promote a vibrant and active streetscape that supports ground floor businesses.
- Widen sidewalks to provide additional space for pedestrians and retail activity.
- Foster street-level connections between the north and south sides of 14th Street to improve accessibility and extend the South Plaza.
- Provide safe pedestrian crossings and a shared street concept.
- Increase plantings along 14th Street, drawing from the natural elements found in Union Square Park.
- Provide additional seating of varied types.
- Implement smaller-scale interventions on 14th Street east and west of Union Square.



Restaurants on 14th Street will benefit from increased outdoor seating areas, particularly in sections with busy sidewalks.



# DESIGN FEATURES

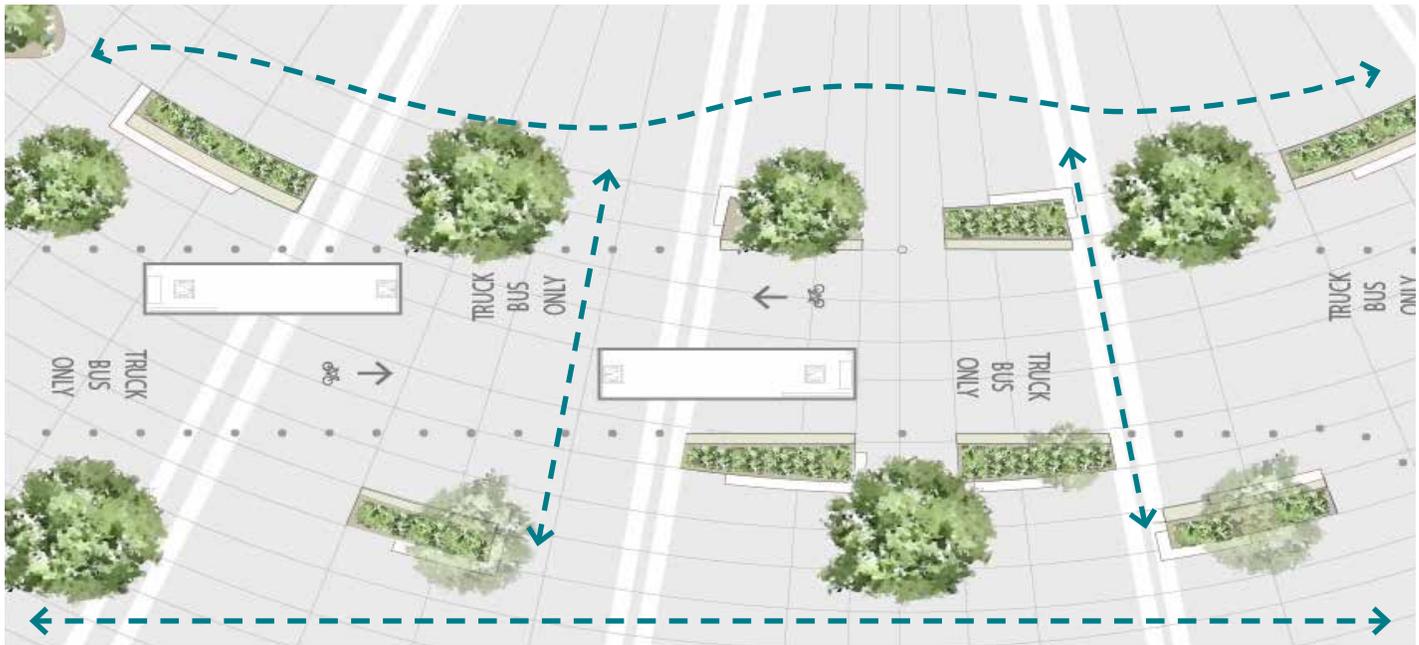


Design concept for 14th Street Boulevard.

## Proposed Pedestrian Flow



Pedestrian activity on 14th Street east and west of Union Square.



Proposed concept showing pedestrian activity on 14th Street between 4th Avenue and University Place.

**KEY**

← - - → Paths of pedestrian circulation

## INSPIRATION

Our inspiration for the 14th Street Boulevard derives from some of the great transit streets around the globe, incorporating several key elements informing the design and program.

### Multi-purpose parklets

Parklets by Ogrydziak Prillinger Architects in San Francisco (below) and SHIFTSPACE in Philadelphia (right) provide a seating amenity and sidewalk greenery to support pedestrians and adjacent restaurants.



## Multi-modal transportation

The strategic use of paving materials and elimination of curbs at Alexanderplatz in Berlin illustrates how pedestrians may successfully share public space and coexist with transit.



## Sharing the road

Market Street in San Francisco combines a dedicated transitway with a high-volume bike lane, wide sidewalks, and pedestrian amenities on a major downtown thoroughfare.



*Using shared street principles we envision safer streets for pedestrians and cyclists, along with more sidewalk space to alleviate congestion on 14th Street.*

Photo: PeopleForBikes



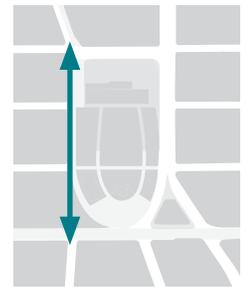
MAJOR PROJECTS

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# UNION SQUARE WEST



# UNION SQUARE WEST



Around the world, generous, walkable public squares integrated with storefronts are common — but they are relatively rare in New York City.

***We envision transforming Union Square West into a seamless pedestrian plaza extending from the park up to the building facades.***

This plan addresses two key concerns raised during our community engagement process. First, local residents desire more cafes and restaurants along Union Square West, especially since the closing of beloved, longtime anchors

like Coffee Shop, Blue Water Grill, and Heartland Brewery. And second, local businesses would like to see more of a balance between the intense crowding during Union Square Greenmarket days [Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday] and the more open feeling at other times.

Enlarging the pedestrian area along the full length of Union Square West will enable more cafe seating and seamless retail access. It will also help reduce pedestrian overcrowding along the western edge of the park. Meanwhile, enlarging the subway entrance at 16th Street to add escalators and elevators will improve accessibility and aid navigation for visitors.



Photo: Liz Ligon

The Greenmarket is a major destination for New Yorkers and draws a large number of pedestrians to the west and north sides of Union Square Park during market days.

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES

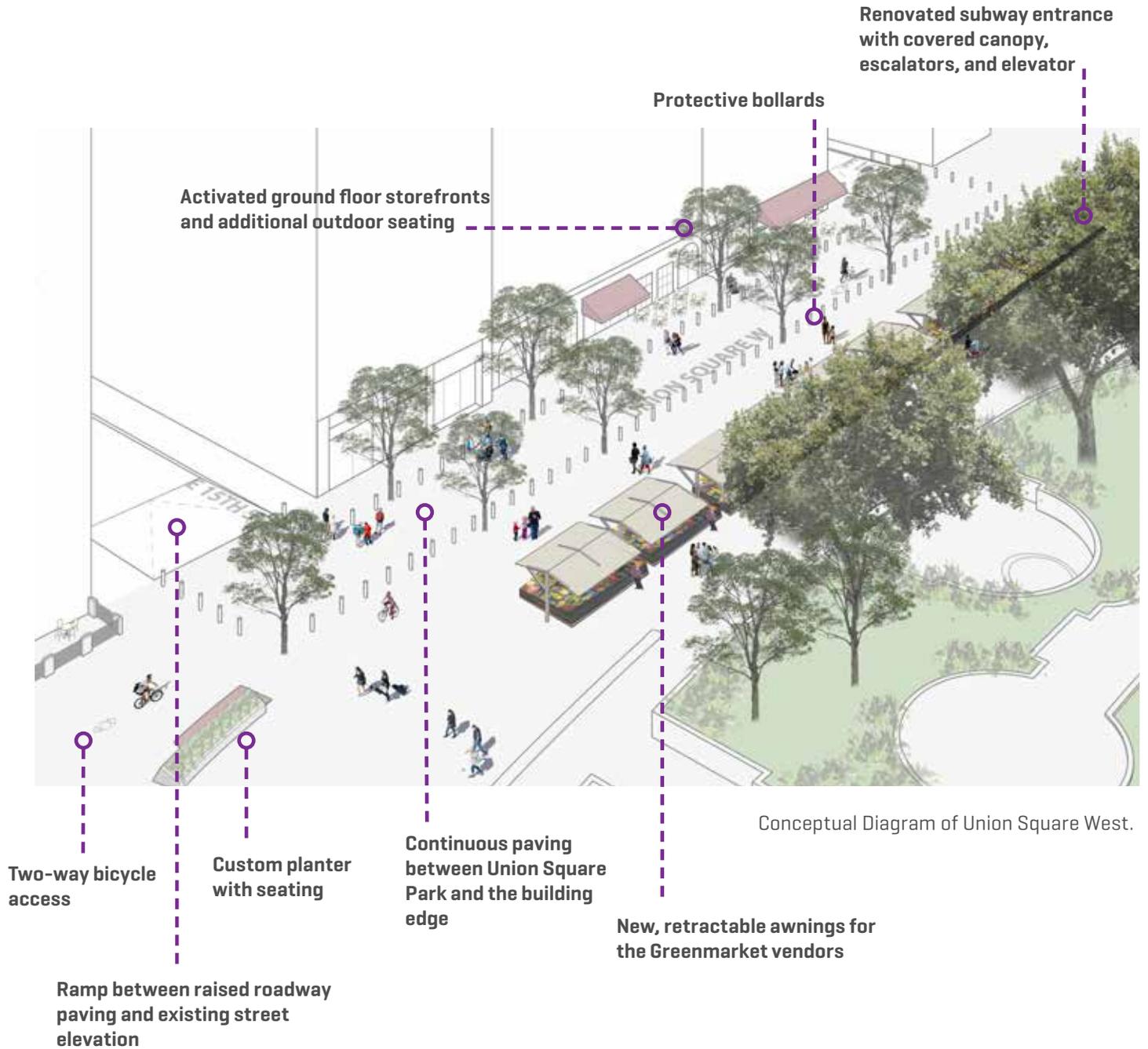
The following principles guided the designs for Union Square West:

- Extend the west plaza to the building facades with consistent paving and street furniture that echoes the park.
- Provide more seating of varied types along Union Square West.
- Encourage active ground floor uses, such as restaurants and cafés.
- Enhance the Greenmarket experience with permanent infrastructure.
- Promote pedestrian activity on non-market days.
- Ensure street design allows emergency vehicles to access Union Square West between 14th and 17th Streets.
- Improve ADA accessibility of the 16th Street subway entrance.



Union Square West today. Temporary street closures are in place between 14th-15th Streets and 16th-17th Streets, and the Greenmarket uses the roadway for truck parking during market days. Ground floor businesses are primarily large-scale retailers or banks, and few actively engage with pedestrians or have an outdoor presence.

# DESIGN FEATURES



## Creating a Cohesive Corridor

The design for Union Square West builds on the street operations implemented by NYC DOT, with the north and south blocks fully closed and the middle block allowing vehicle circulation from 16th to 15th Streets. This integrates the two street sections by maintaining a consistent feel and flow throughout all three blocks.

The creation of a pedestrian promenade along Union Square West provides a critical north-south link along Broadway towards Madison Square to the north, and along University Place towards Washington Square to the south.

***This corridor is key to strengthening Union Square's connection to its neighboring open spaces.***

In the fully pedestrianized north and south blocks, fixed seating and planters create a verdant edge while the roadway functions as a flexible shared street with a two-way bicycle lane, allowing for emergency and service vehicle access.



Plan diagram showing pedestrian movement.

## INSPIRATION

The vision for Union Square West is inspired by plazas and pedestrian promenades where building edges are activated with cafes and public markets. In addition to creating a safer pedestrian environment, we envision an enhanced subway entrance at 16th Street with improved accessibility from the Union Square-14th Street station.



### Global Outdoor Markets

Las Ramblas in Barcelona [above] is one of the world's great market streets. Cafe-lined promenades are a common sight in Italy [right] where walking is heavily prioritized.

***Synergy between the ground floor and the public realm will be critical to creating a vibrant and active pedestrian corridor***





Photo: Bebo2good1

## Accessible Public Transportation

Example of an accessible subway station with an elevator and escalators at South Ferry, New York.

*Enlarging the subway entrance at 16th Street to add escalators and elevators will improve accessibility and aid navigation*



Photo: David Williams

## Brooklyn Waterfront

Along the DUMBO waterfront, park space, pedestrians, cyclists, and ground-floor retail (such as sidewalk cafes) seamlessly co-exist at Brooklyn Bridge Park.



MAJOR PROJECTS

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# TRIANGLE PLAZA



# TRIANGLE PLAZA



*The vision for Triangle Plaza is to make it a natural extension of Union Square Park — a place for gathering, programming, and free expression.*

Triangle Plaza is the physical and visual gateway to Union Square from the southeast and serves as a transition point between the bustling 14th Street corridor and the natural environment of the park.

Triangle Plaza has undergone several changes over past reconstructions. As traffic patterns

and park programs evolved, it has become what it is today: a constricted green space set within a large traffic island. Because of its isolated setting, the plaza is sparsely utilized and feels disconnected from the vibrancy of Union Square-14th Street as a whole.

In terms of materiality, the current design of Triangle Plaza mimics Union Square Park: they share similar features like their plantings, fencing, granite curbs, and furniture. But making an explicit, physical connection between these separate spaces would create an uninterrupted, cohesive experience for Union Square.



Photo: Liz Ligon

Triangle Plaza today. View north to Union Square East and Park Avenue South. Vehicular traffic divides the triangle from Union Square Park.

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The following principles guided the designs for Triangle Plaza:

- Solidify Triangle Plaza’s connection to Union Square while maintaining its distinct identity.
- Orient seating outward to engage with the pedestrian and retail activity of 14th Street and Union Square East.
- Design the plaza to better accommodate pedestrian desire line circulation between 4th Avenue and Union Square Park.
- Use a mix of paving and plantings to soften the transition between 14th Street and Union Square Park.
- Use the expanded plaza area for seating, plantings, and public art.



Triangle Plaza today. The park has an existing mature tree canopy that provides ample shade, but perimeter plantings block sightlines to the interior. Limited entrances, narrow pathways, and benches surround a “dustbowl” lawn that struggles to thrive without proper sun and irrigation.

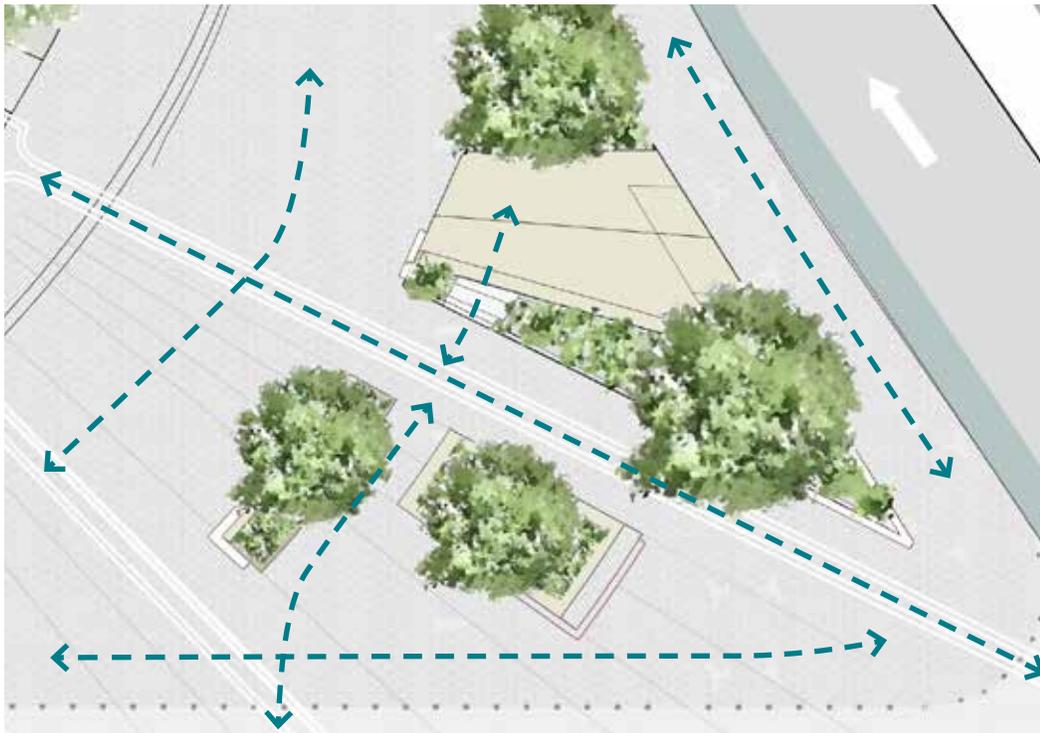
## DESIGN FEATURES

Opening the southbound side of Union Square East to pedestrians would create a unified experience between Triangle Plaza and Union Square Park, and also increase open space surrounding Union Square. This would require limiting or restricting vehicle traffic on southbound Union Square East between 17th and 14th Streets.

Similar changes to traffic patterns on Broadway as part of larger pedestrian projects in Times Square and Herald Square suggest that this is

a reasonable proposal based on the available traffic data. However, a more detailed traffic study and public outreach will be required to assess the impact and feasibility of this change to the traffic network.

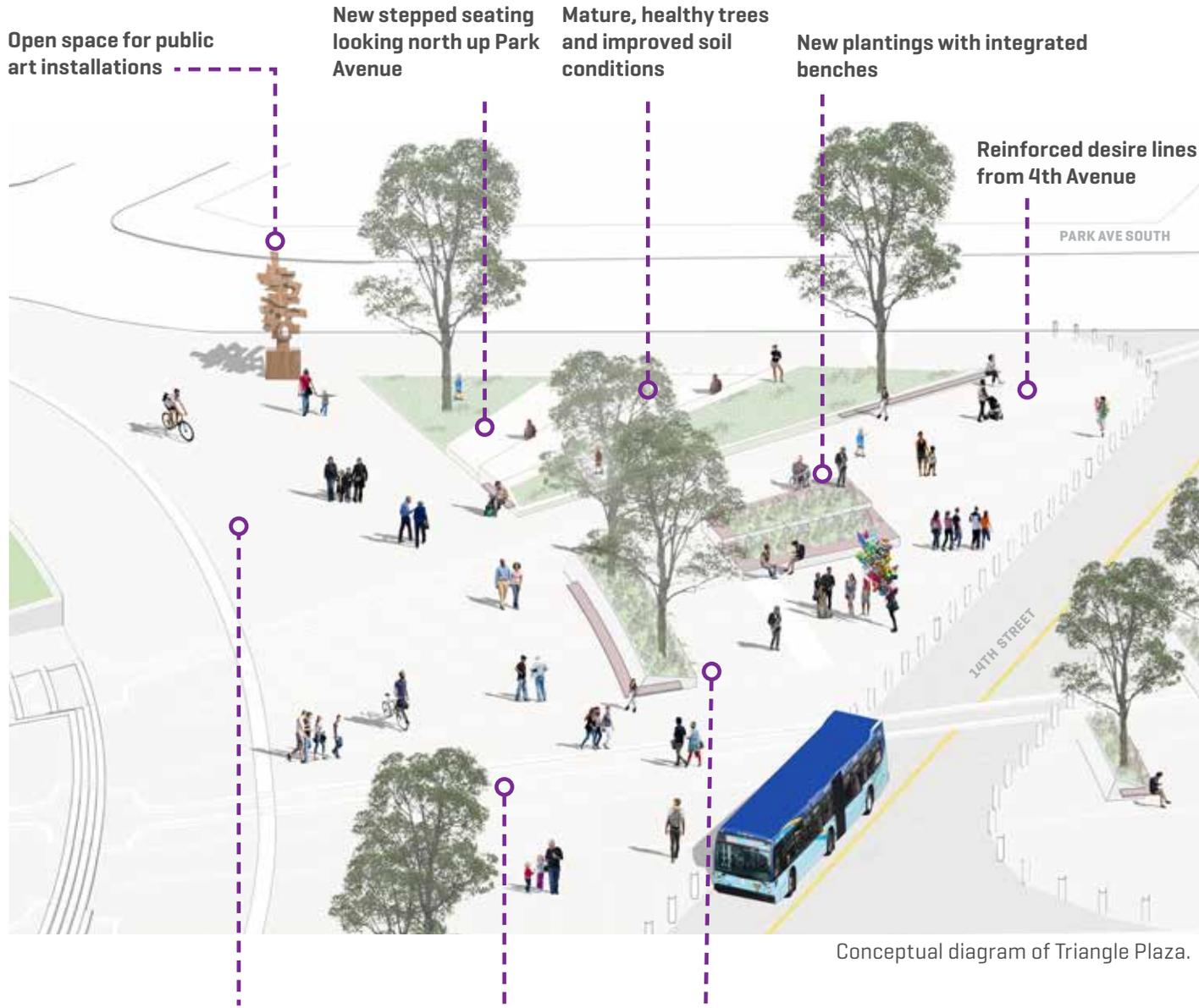
As a shorter-term solution, a shared street or flexible street concept could be tested to encourage slower speeds along Union Square East, and better integrate Triangle Plaza with Union Square as a whole.



Plan diagram showing pedestrian movement.

### KEY

← - - → Paths of pedestrian Circulation



Conceptual diagram of Triangle Plaza.

**Union Square East opened to pedestrians creates a stronger connection between Triangle Park and Union Square Park**

**Extended pavers and radial design from the South Plaza out to the south and east**

**New fixed benches and movable tables and chairs, oriented towards 14th Street and Union Square Park**

## INSPIRATION

The vision for Triangle Plaza is one that provides both permanent and flexible seating opportunities, reflecting successful examples in Union Square Park. A new design for the plaza will reinforce visibility throughout the space, taking advantage of key view corridors for art or alternative programming.



Photo: Ty Cole Studio

### Flexible + Integrated Seating

Example of tiered public seating at the Harlem RBI Dream Charter School.

***A new design for Triangle Plaza will improve pedestrian circulation and will create a range of environments for people-watching, or passing through.***



Photo: CYNTHIA-REEVES

## Memorable Public Art

With its high visibility from three sides, Triangle Plaza is an ideal site for temporary public art installations, such as this sculpture by Lionel Smit entitled *Morphous*, from 2016.

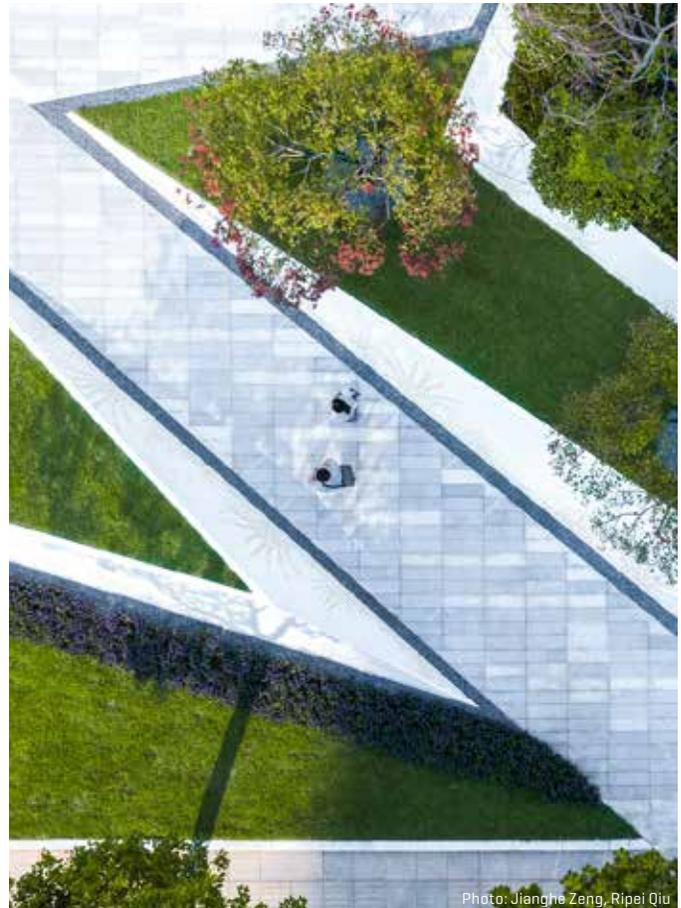


Photo: Jianghe Zeng, Ripei Qiu

## Material Cues

A mix of hardscape and softscape elements announces the transition between thoroughfares and passive use areas.



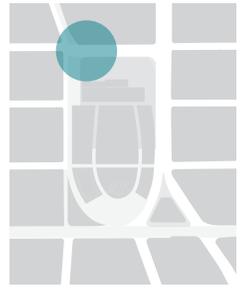
## MAJOR PROJECTS

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# BROADWAY GATEWAY PLAZA



# BROADWAY GATEWAY PLAZA



*Broadway Gateway Plaza will become a permanent physical extension of Union Square Park, and serve as the formal gateway to Union Square from the north.*

In 2011, NYC DOT implemented a temporary plaza at the point where Broadway widens to meet Union Square. As a plaza partner, USP maintains this space with movable tables and chairs, granite bollards, and an abundance of movable planters. The plaza is extremely popular with visitors and residents alike and has successfully supported the businesses on Broadway and 17th Street.



## DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The following principles guided the designs for Broadway Gateway Plaza:

- Celebrate arrival in Union Square from Broadway
- Provide a strong visual connection to the North Plaza and Greenmarket activity
- Create a seamless connection to Union Square Park across 17th Street
- Balance fixed seating with flexible space for public programming and art installations
- Support future design projects as part of the City's Broadway Vision Initiative



Photos: Liz Ligon

Broadway Gateway Plaza today. The temporary NYC DOT Plaza is furnished with movable tables, chairs, and planters.

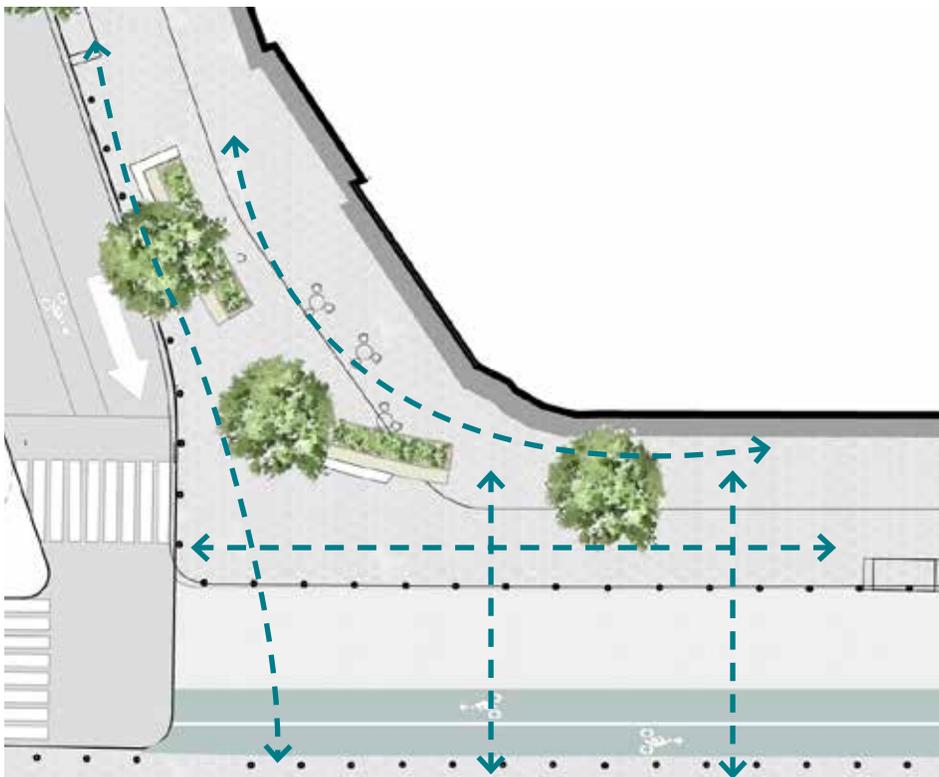
## DESIGN FEATURES

The Broadway Gateway Plaza is a heavily trafficked pedestrian pathway.

***Elevating the roadway to sidewalk level will create a seamless connection between Union Square Park and Broadway Gateway Plaza, with pavers extending from Union Square Park's northern plaza.***

Continuous paving (i.e. one seamless surface between road and sidewalk) has multiple benefits, including safety, accessibility, and aesthetics:

- it serves as a visual and physical signal for drivers to slow down and prioritize pedestrians;
- it improves accessibility for people with mobility devices or strollers; and
- it makes Union Square more expansive and aesthetically unified.



Plan diagram showing pedestrian movement.

## A Permanent, Connected Plaza

Implementing continuous paving will also improve pedestrian flow at the congested intersection of Broadway and 17th Street.

Integrated raised planters to protect the plaza from vehicles along Broadway also add greenery, and provide seating.

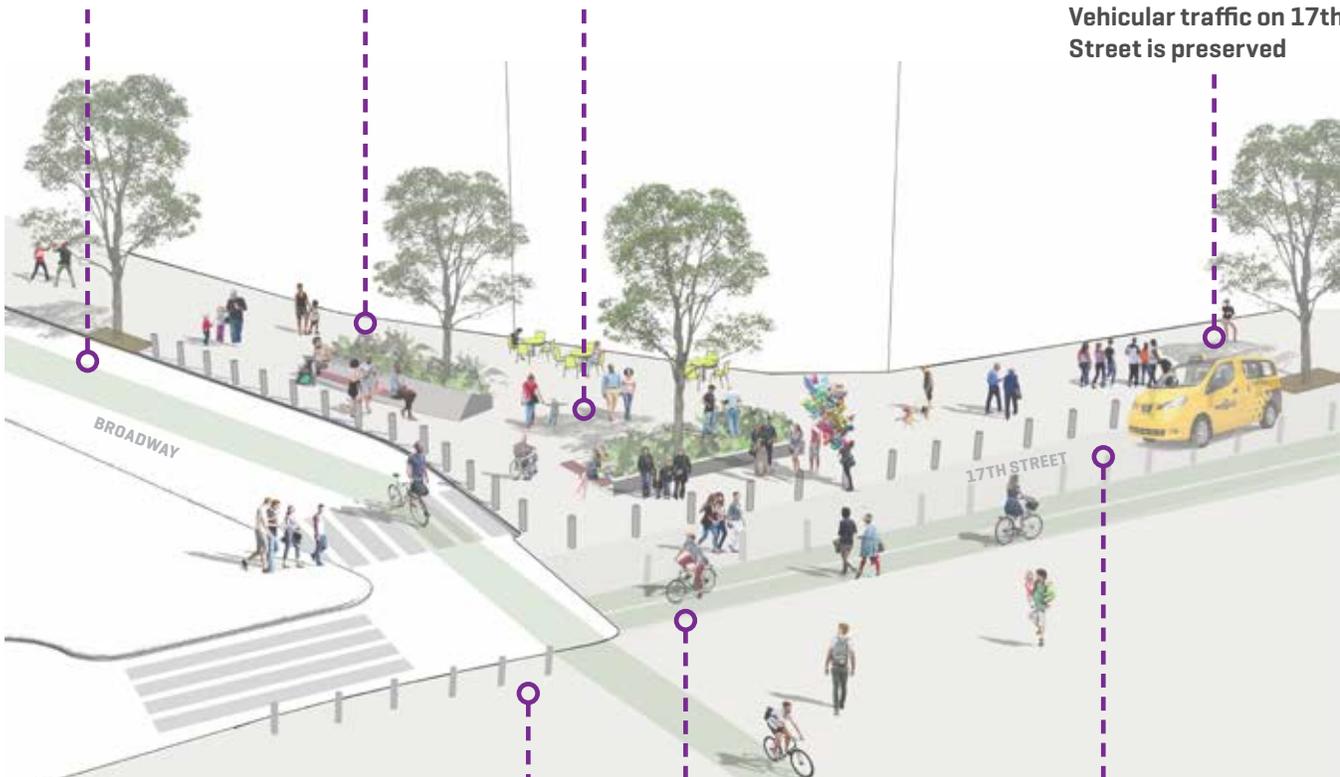
Existing bike lanes along Broadway will remain in place, and extend through Union Square West. 17th Street will become a shared street, allowing for vehicular traffic traveling west, as well as a two-way bicycle lane.

Existing bike lanes on Broadway and 17th Street are preserved

Custom planter with seating

Space for programming and temporary artwork in the plaza

Vehicular traffic on 17th Street is preserved



Conceptual diagram of Broadway Gateway Plaza.

Security bollards

A two-way protected bike facility on 17th Street remains in place

Continuous at-grade paving on 17th Street

## INSPIRATION

Where linear plazas border a pedestrian corridor, blended designs combine seating and greenery with ample space for through movement.



Photo: John Gollings

### Streetscape Greenery

Street trees and planters soften the transition between the plaza and roadway edge at Lonsdale Street in Dandenong, Australia [above], and The Porch at 30th Street Station in Philadelphia [right].



Courtesy: University City District

## Safety and Continuity

Continuous paving materials create a strong visual cue for drivers to slow down and allow for pedestrian crossings at Pitt Street Mall in Sydney, Australia.

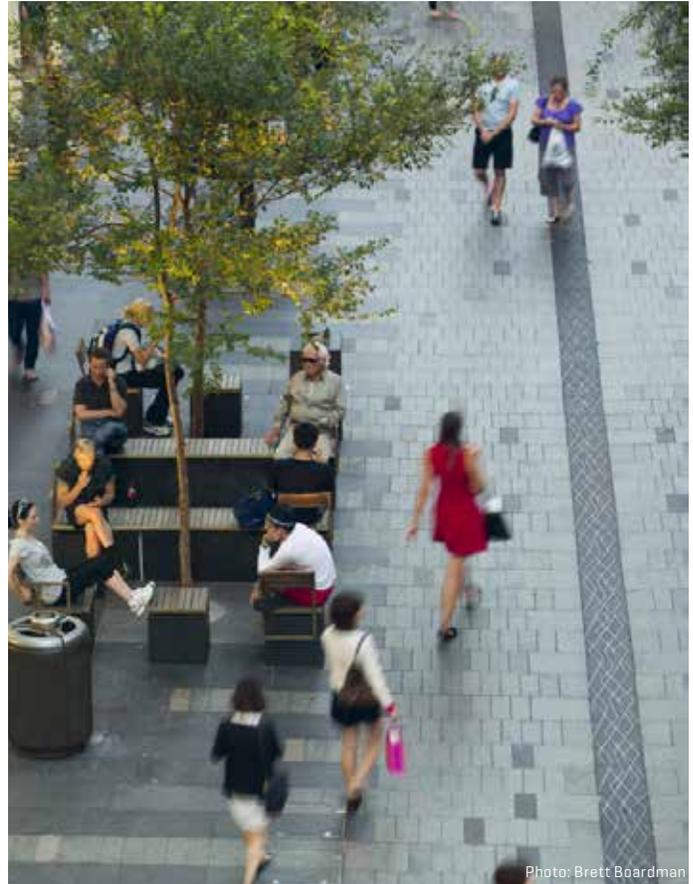


Photo: Brett Boardman

*Placing seating at the edges of a widened sidewalk will create a gradient of passive to active use.*



Photo: Gehl Architects

## Shared Streets

At New Road in Brighton, UK, the road, plaza, and sidewalk are on the same level, creating ease of movement for pedestrians.



MAJOR PROJECTS

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# PARK INFRASTRUCTURE



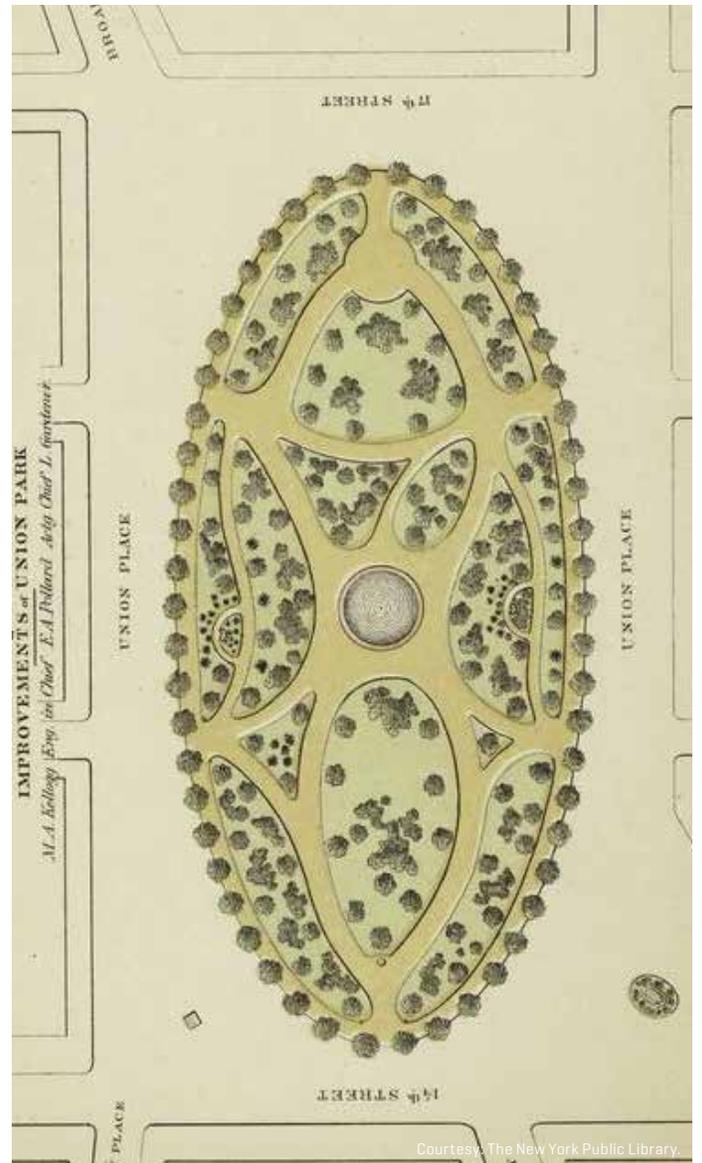
# PARK INFRASTRUCTURE



Developing a new master plan for Union Square Park is vital to the vision. While this Vision Plan addresses major zones in and around Union Square-14th Street, master planning is a dedicated process for the park space itself.

Union Square Park has been master planned four times — approximately every 40-50 years. The most recent master plan happened in the 1980s-90s. Today, some of the major landscape and infrastructure features of the park need replacement or repair, from gardens to paving to lighting to restrooms, everything is on the table.

Master planning requires years to complete, significant financial investment, and robust public engagement. Now is the time to embark on this critical process. The completed master plan will account for all major park features, and outline a phased reconstruction scheme.



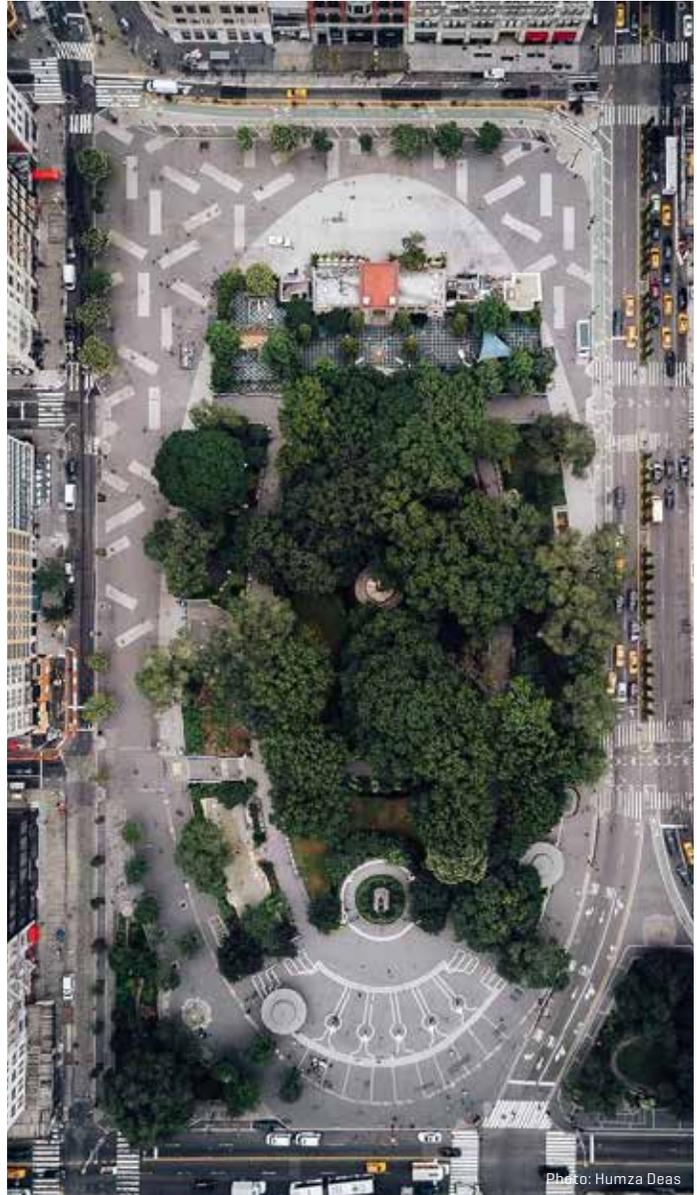
The 1871 plan for Union Square Park by the landscape architects Olmsted & Vaux widened the sidewalks, added more trees, relocated statues, and increased public space within a fenced interior.

## COMMUNITY INPUT

We heard a number of ideas and suggestions during our community engagement process that relate specifically to the park interior:

- Landscape design that incorporates paved plazas
- Design that allows natural light from the South Plaza to illuminate the subway station beneath the surface
- Create more programming and activities for teens and youth
- Create a permanent park information kiosk
- Expand park seating and increase the number of park benches
- Replant trees that are damaged by vehicular traffic at busy intersections and/or areas of the park
- Improve trash storage in visible public spaces and pickup operations
- Add composting facilities on non-Greenmarket days
- Maintain spaces for public expression and free speech demonstrations
- Improve the Union Square Park dog run, particularly the drainage, paving, and seating

*A master plan aims to redesign and renovate core park features to meet the needs of today — including neighborhood dynamics and transportation realities — and prepare for the needs of tomorrow.*



Aerial of Union Square Park today.

# PLANNING PRIORITIES





## Trees

The historic trees within the park are near the end of their lifespan, and many of the trees along the park’s perimeter are struggling. The new master plan will preserve the existing tree canopy (i.e. the upper layer of trees), while also adding color and visual interest to the park.

## Market Infrastructure

Fixed, retractable canopies and refrigerated storage will improve the look, operation, and experience of the flagship Greenmarket. Investment in permanent booth structures and power upgrades will also benefit the holiday market.



## Landscaping

The park’s gardens, lawns, fencing, pathways, steps, and gravel areas all require renovation. The primary focus of the new master plan will be on improving the accessibility, durability, and aesthetics of the park’s landscape. Drainage and irrigation systems (including in the dog run) will also be upgraded for ease of maintenance.

## Lighting and Public Utilities

Matching light pole styles will unify park lighting, with upgrades to high-efficiency LEDs. The existing plumbing and electrical systems will be replaced and upgraded. High-speed data lines will be installed for use by markets, concessions, and the public.

## Subway Entrances

The master plan will restore Union Square's historic subway canopies, and expand the entrance at 16th Street and Union Square West. A new glass canopy, escalators, and an elevator will be installed to improve accessibility.



## Seating

Benches and movable seating areas will be added to the park wherever possible. More seating will meet the growing demand for passive recreation and outdoor gathering in the neighborhood.



***Rebuilding the park's infrastructure will respond to the changing ways the space is used today versus 45 years ago.***



## Restrooms

Park bathrooms are in need of a major overhaul as more than a decade has passed since they were last renovated. Providing a 100% touchless experience has proven to be a critically necessary upgrade during COVID-19.



## Bicycle Facilities

The master plan would be an opportunity to increase bike parking capacity by adding a new, secure bike pod and additional Citi Bike docks.





FRIEND OF A FARMER  
RESTAURANT & BAR

IRVING C

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# **STREETSCAPE TOOLKIT**

# STREETSCAPE TOOLKIT

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The Streetscape Toolkit is a suite of design interventions and programs that USP can pilot and deploy for use throughout the entire Union Square-14th Street neighborhood. These concepts are meant to be used individually or together, and can typically be installed much faster and more flexibly than the Major Projects in the Vision Plan.

We created this toolkit to address some of the community's top concerns for the area, including seating, security, waste management, and greenery, especially on crosstown streets.

- 1 OUTDOOR SEATING**
- 2 INTEGRATED PLANTER BENCHES**
- 3 WASTE CONTAINERS**
- 4 LIGHTING**
- 5 SECURITY**
- 6 PUBLIC ART**



Union Square West

Union Square West

NYX

PROFESSIONAL MAKEUP

ONE WAY

# OUTDOOR SEATING

Parklets (also known as Street Seats) — small green spaces created on a sidewalk or in a parking space located within curbside parking lanes — are increasingly common in New York City. Where space is limited, a parklet provides a safe way to expand the sidewalk. These areas offer a place to rest and socialize, support walking, and provide outdoor seating for nearby businesses. Parklets have also been an effective way to expand outdoor dining during COVID-19 and are beneficial for social distancing.

## UPGRADED SIDEWALK ZONE

- Minimal design adds a custom planter bench with tree pit
- Planters may serve a dual function as roadway barriers and must not conflict with existing sidewalk elements or transit stops



The vision is to increase pedestrian space along the 14th Street corridor and other neighborhood streets by adding more seating, planters, and parklets.

The toolkit includes three design options shown below, each of which follows the NYC DOT guidelines for parklets under the agency’s Street Seats program.



## EXPANDED SIDEWALK ZONE

- Expand sidewalk to curbside lane with parklets
- Intersperse parklets to allow for vehicle loading zones on active commercial streets
- Protect and preserve existing street trees
- Provide a platform to maintain sidewalk elevation and ADA accessibility
- Provide roadway barrier with greenery
- Integrate movable seating to allow for informal use and flexibility
- Align parklet between two trees to create a “micropark”

## SIDEWALK CAFES

Foot traffic drives the success of retail businesses, yet New York City has typically limited cafe seating confined to the space against the building. This configuration pushes pedestrians away from storefronts, shop entrances, and window displays.

In response to COVID-19, the City relaxed its criteria for outdoor dining. To allow for proper distance between tables, outdoor dining was permitted to move to curb edges and into the roadway. Situating outdoor seating at the curb has two benefits: increased visibility and access

to shopfronts, and greater seating capacity for restaurants. In this configuration, seating mixes with trees, kiosks, bus shelters, and other fixed elements. Businesses can meet their needs without impacting pedestrian mobility.

***The vision is to increase the number of restaurants and the amount of cafe seating throughout the district and to foster the use of the building frontage, sidewalk, and curb lane for restaurant seating.***



[Above]: Storefront, pedestrian, and amenity zones form three distinct sidewalk areas. Allowing cafe seating at the curb edge creates opportunities for greater access and visibility to storefronts while maintaining pedestrian circulation.

[Left]: Sidewalk cafes with seating along both the building edge and the curb edge enliven the street and prioritize pedestrian use.

Photos: Liz Ligon

# INTEGRATED PLANTER BENCHES



1. New benches integrate with existing movable furniture to avoid congestion
2. Seating wraps around planters to activate edges
3. Planters allow for a variety of greenery, including trees
4. Sloped concrete planters act as a backrest

Throughout the city, public space inspires people-watching and socializing. This is especially characteristic of Union Square’s iconic South Plaza stairs. We propose adding new seating to encourage visitors to sit back and observe Union Square’s vibrant street life.

This custom multi-purpose bench combines seating with concrete planters, bringing greenery outside the border of Union Square Park. NYC DOT street design guidelines and NYC Parks tree planting standards will guide planter location and species selection to ensure proper care for plant health and sustainability.



Planters serve as protective roadway barriers.

# SECURITY FEATURES

During our outreach process, we heard that safety and security are concerns for many community members. This includes security from acts of mass violence, as well as personal safety and security in general.

Protecting pedestrians from the threat of vehicles driving through public spaces is a top priority for the City. The New York Police Department has already installed a variety of both temporary and permanent barriers to prevent unauthorized vehicles from intruding on the main gathering areas around the square.

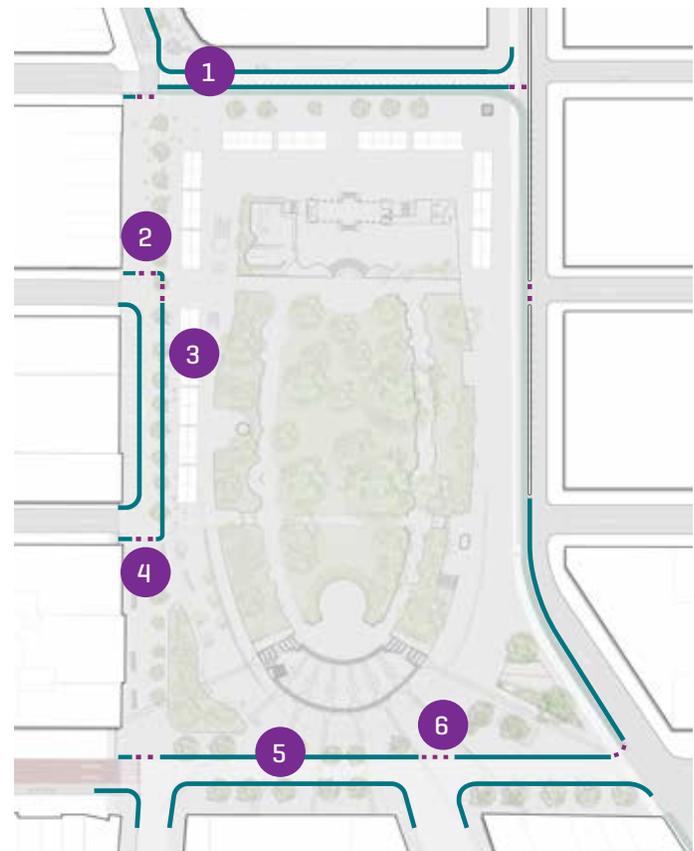
1. Pedestrian-friendly security bollards
2. NYC DOT security bollards
3. Safe space for Greenmarket vendors
4. Removable bollards to permit emergency vehicle access to Union Square West
5. Planters and bollards as protective barriers along the 14th Street roadway
6. Removable bollards at Union Square East / 14th Street



Concrete planter benches complement granite or brushed stainless bollards.

These features will be integrated into any street work where deemed appropriate by the NYC inter-agency Security Infrastructure Working Group, including all the major reconstruction projects in the Vision Plan.

Restricting through vehicular access to streets such as Union Square West will streamline the square's security perimeter, and balance service and emergency access with the need to protect pedestrians in general.



**KEY**

- Fixed bollards
- - - Removable bollards

# WASTE CONTAINERS



Marvel proposal for DaRT depicted installed within a curbside lane on 14th Street.

***New York City’s Zero Waste Challenge<sup>1</sup> calls upon New Yorkers to reduce the amount of waste we generate by 90% by 2030.***

To meet this goal, we must put an emphasis on diverting waste from landfills.

The rising cost of waste disposal burdens the City’s resources, and landfills compromise the environment. The blight of trash that spills out

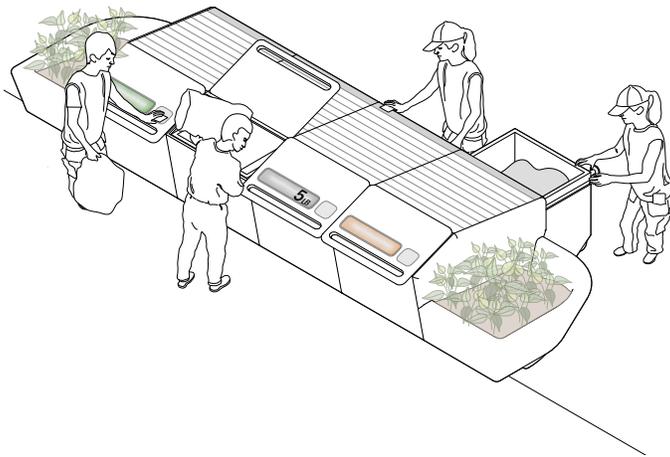
on streets and sidewalks also interferes with walking, bicycling, shopping, and recreation.

Meeting the Zero Waste Challenge requires a coordinated effort by residents, businesses, waste haulers, and the NYC Department of Sanitation [DSNY]. Waste handling and material recovery facilities must also help close our waste loop by feeding diverted material back into the supply chain.

<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/sustainability/initiatives/zero-waste-challenge.page>

## DART SYSTEM

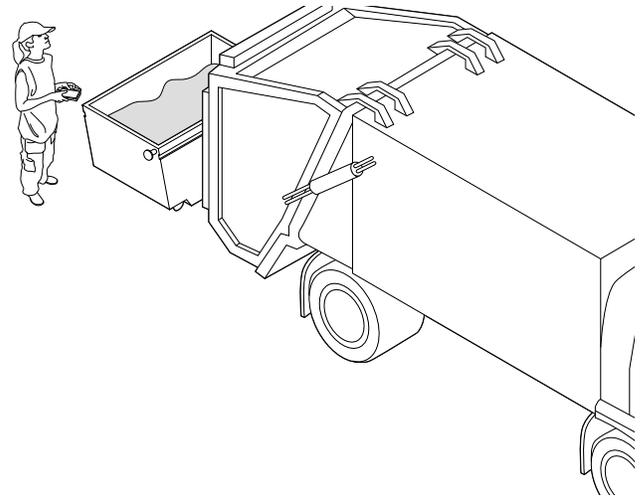
In response to a DSNY and an NYC DOT's joint Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI), Marvel developed a design concept for "DaRT," the Diversion Recovery Tracking system. DaRT is a unique waste collection system that consolidates pick-up locations for multiple retail establishments into one container in the parking lane and provides block-by-block data for the tremendous volume of waste and recycling that New Yorkers generate each day.



### How it works for retail customers:

- The business owner selects the appropriate bin for their waste and unlocks it with a key fob.
- The customer opens the lid and drops in their waste. After a 15 second hold-open, the lid closes automatically.
- The unit photographs the waste and a scale measures the change in the weight in the bin. The software analyzes the image and flags any anomalies.
- A fullness sensor signals if the unit is full. If it is, the display directs customers to the nearest available bin.

New York's density, lack of back alleys, and the demands on our streets create unique challenges. DaRT turns these challenges into an opportunity to make New York a global leader in waste reduction and material recovery. DaRT will enable efficient truck routes and centralized pick-up points, resulting in fewer stops and less truck idling.



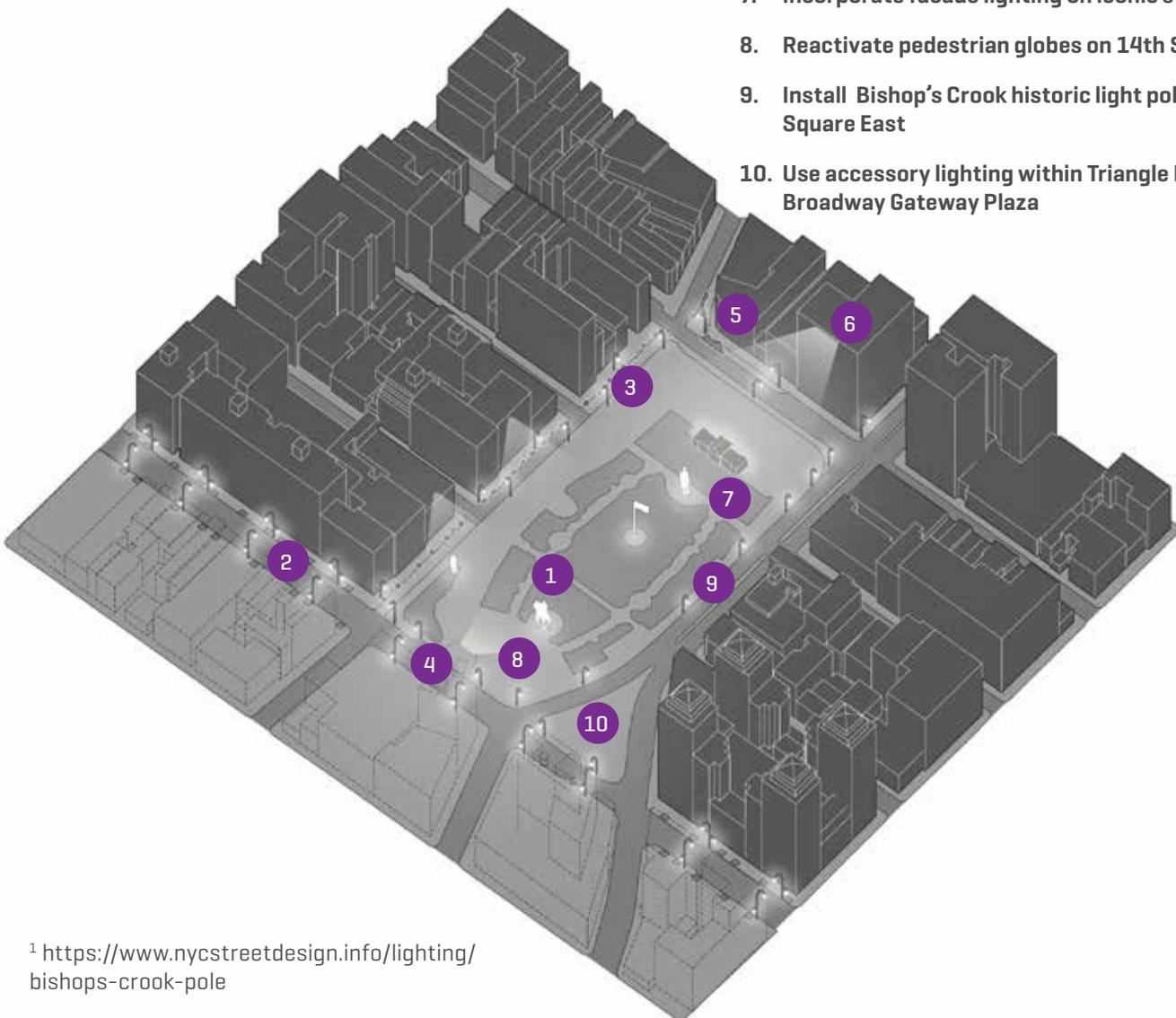
### How it works for the commercial trash hauler:

- Haulers use a street-side fob key to unlock the bin.
- The hauler pulls the bin out towards the street. Rails help to pull the unit to and from the curb.
- Wheels allow the bin to be positioned for pick-up. [The bins are designed for rear loaders but can be adapted to front load as well.]
- The hauler pushes the bin back onto its rails and the dock locks the bin into place.

# LIGHTING

Union Square has an array of historic street lights, park lamps, plaza edge Bishop's Crook lights<sup>1</sup>, and globes on the South Plaza. They provide a sense of safety, identity, and atmosphere to the park and the surrounding neighborhood. While darkness in the park's interior is important to the health of the plants and lawn, new targeted lighting can also enhance the sense of safety around Union Square-14th Street throughout the year.

1. Illuminate the monuments in the park
2. Anchor 14th Street with combined traffic and pedestrian poles
3. Introduce low-level pedestrian lighting in amenity zones
4. Reinforce the Bishop's Crook historic poles along 14th Street
5. Install uplighting on building facades around the park
6. Add "moon lighting" from building rooftops to give a cool wash to large public gathering spaces, as in Bryant Park
7. Incorporate facade lighting on iconic structures
8. Reactivate pedestrian globes on 14th Street
9. Install Bishop's Crook historic light poles along Union Square East
10. Use accessory lighting within Triangle Plaza and Broadway Gateway Plaza



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nycstreetdesign.info/lighting/bishops-crook-pole>



Photo: Sean Pavone/Dreamstime

The existing lighting within Union Square park and from the surrounding buildings. Enhanced lighting design will emphasize historic light poles and provide additional lighting from adjacent buildings.



Photo: David Sundberg/ESTO

Uplighting on building facades, such as the Daryl Roth Theatre on Union Square East.



Photo: Trey Ratcliff

Moon lighting from buildings surrounding Bryant Park.

# PUBLIC ART

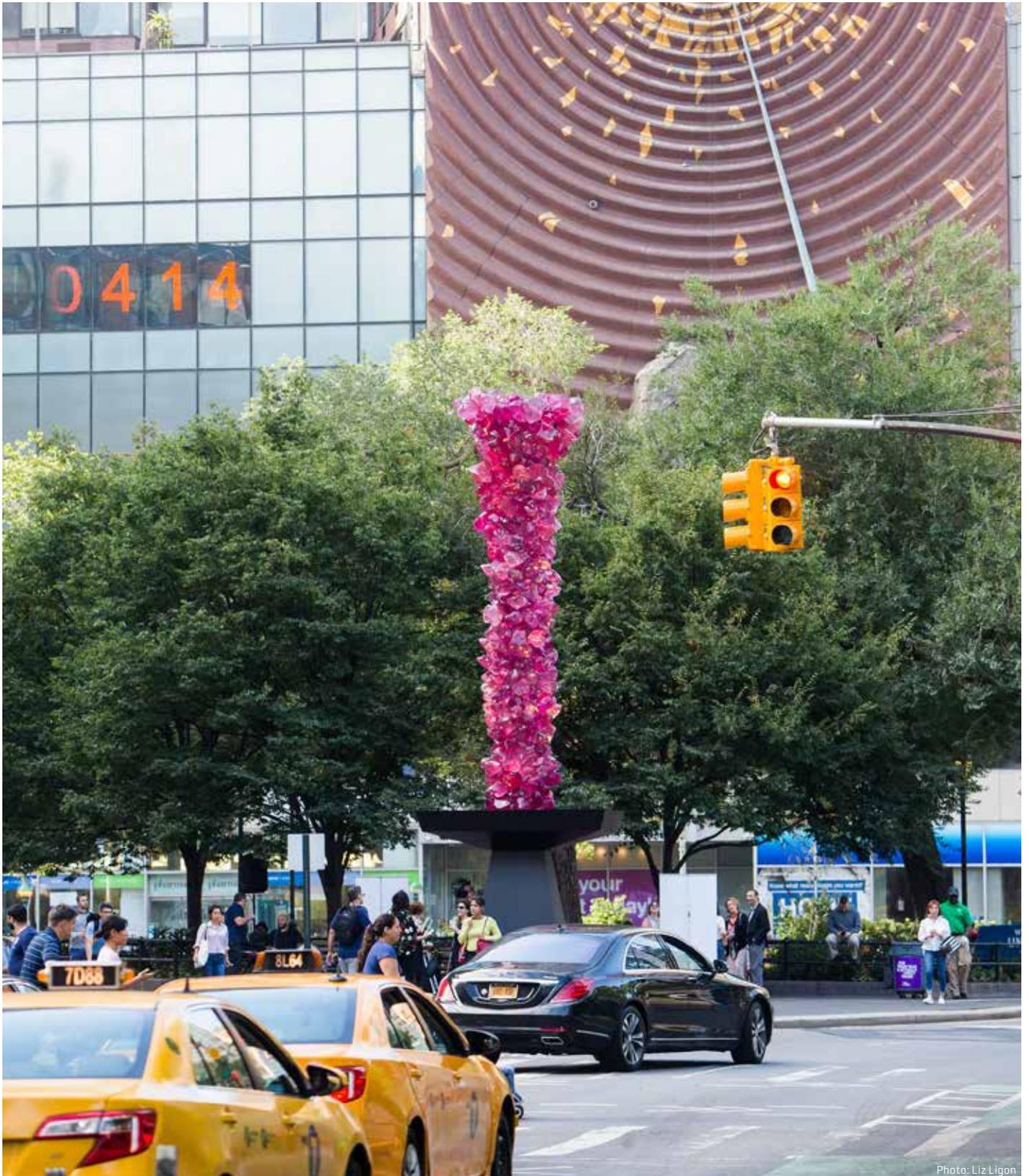


Photo: Liz Ligon

To engage the community at the street level and to promote the work of aspiring artists, USP will continue to partner with arts organizations to host annual public art design competitions and to program specific locations for art to be displayed seasonally or annually.

Similar to the Flatiron Public Plaza Holiday Design Competition or the Times Square Valentine Heart Design Competition, Union Square can also host its own international design contest to gain interest from a global community of artists. This work can be installed each year for a major holiday or event (e.g. May Day), and pay homage to the history of Union Square Park.

USP is committed to expanding the public art program in and around Union Square-14th Street. As part of this vision plan we have identified three new key potential sites for public art:

1. **The Union Square West Corridor will increase the public realm footprint by over 15,000 square feet. Due to the volume of pedestrian traffic and its proximity to the park, this new pedestrian plaza is an ideal location for high-visibility public art installations.**
2. **Broadway Gateway Plaza can extend the public art corridor north up Broadway.**
3. **Triangle Plaza, which will be a more open and flexible central gathering space, can be an excellent site for more interactive public art installations.**

Opposite: Dale Chihuly's Rose Crystal Tower was exhibited in Union Square's Triangle Park in 2017.

**Public art — both temporary and permanent — has been an integral part of Union Square for decades.**



#### KEY

-  Existing sites for temporary and permanent artwork
-  Proposed sites for a public art installation



---

# IMPLEMENTATION

# IMPLEMENTATION

## MAJOR PROJECTS

Each major project in this plan is a substantial undertaking. Overall management would be handled by relevant government agencies such as the NYC Department of Design and Construction [DDC], NYC DOT, NYC Parks, and/or the MTA. A consultant team would lead public engagement, perform major engineering tasks, finalize design details, and develop phased construction timelines and cost estimates.

Projects of this scale typically take between five and eight years from start to finish. This process includes multiple rounds of public reviews and approvals, including the local Community Board, Public Design Commission, and Landmarks Preservation Commission [where applicable].

## STREETSCAPE TOOLKIT

Unlike the Major Projects, elements from the Streetscape Toolkit are simpler and generally quicker to implement. They could be piloted on a one-off basis, deployed in small groups, or undertaken as full neighborhood roll-outs. First, prototypes of the custom elements — such as the integrated planter benches and curbside waste containers — will be developed, tested, and modified. Once they have gone through a public review process similar to Major Projects, the units can be fabricated for district-wide use. These projects will take approximately one to three years to execute.

## PILOT PROCESS

The concept of tactical urbanism entails making small-scale investments to demonstrate the value of big ideas. Smaller investments in temporary versions of projects allow for testing and iterating in real-time. Pilots can also deliver benefits to the community more quickly, and involve hands-on participation providing citizens with opportunities to invest in their ongoing success.

For example, new street furniture such as the integrated planter benches could be fabricated and placed as temporary prototypes before committing to a full production order. Changes to pedestrian areas and park expansions — such as shared streets and pedestrian plazas in existing roadbeds — can be built using paint and movable elements. See the table at the right for an overview of the way projects can evolve from temporary to permanent over time.

This process has already been used in some areas of the Union Square-14th Street district, such as the current configuration of the Broadway Gateway Plaza at 17th Street and the pedestrian areas alongside the 14th Street Busway. Once projects built in temporary materials have proven successful and have been operational for some time, they can be reconstructed using permanent materials. This process is more cost-effective, delivers quicker results, allows more community engagement, and yields better projects.

## FUNDING SOURCES

All told, the proposals in the Vision Plan will likely cost upwards of \$100 million and require decades to complete. USP will use an “all of the above” funding strategy to pursue any available resources for advancing the projects. Some of the possible funding sources over a 10-20-year horizon include:

- **BID Assessment (\$1M - \$5M):** operating funds for design and short-term projects
- **Bond Issue (\$10M - \$20M):** financing for street furniture and other added-value items
- **Private Contributions (\$10M - \$20M):** a capital campaign for park features
- **City/State/Federal (\$40M+):** government funding for infrastructure and utilities

## ITERATIVE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

	DEMONSTRATION	PILOT	INTERIM DESIGN	LONG-TERM / CAPITAL
<b>Timeline &amp; Cost</b>	[1 day - 1 month - \$]	[1 month - 1 year - \$\$]	[1 year - 5 years - \$\$\$]	[5 years - 50 years - \$\$\$\$]
<b>Project Leaders</b>	Can be led by anyone [city, BID, or both]	Government/ BID leadership + involvement required	Government/ BID leadership + involvement required	Government/ BID leadership + involvement required
<b>Materials</b>	Low-cost, typically low-durability. Can be easily obtained	Relatively low-cost, but semi-durable materials	Moderate cost materials, designed to balance flexibility with a maintenance need	High-cost permanent materials that cannot easily be adjusted
<b>Public Involvement</b>	Public input + public action	Public input, champion engagement, government/BID stewardship	Public input, government/BID stewardship	Public input, government/BID stewardship
<b>Flexibility of Design</b>	High: the project is expected to be adjusted and later removed	High: the project is expected to be adjusted; it may be removed if it does not meet goals	Moderate: the project is expected to be adjusted, but it is intended to remain in place until capital upgrades are possible	Low: the project is considered a permanent capital upgrade that is unlikely to be adjusted significantly once installed
<b>Data Collection</b>	Recommended	Always	Recommended	Always — project performance can inform future investments

Courtesy: Street Plans

# PRIORITIZATION MATRIX

	PRIORITY	COST	TIME	COMPLEXITY
◆ RECOMMENDED FAST-TRACK PROJECTS	 LOW - HIGH	 \$ - \$\$\$\$\$	 YEARS TO COMPLETE	 LOW - HIGH
<b>STREETScape TOOLKIT</b>				
<b>STREET SEATS / PARKLETS</b>				
◆ DESIGN, PERMIT, FABRICATE, AND INSTALL	High	\$\$	1 year	Low
<b>SIDEWALK CAFES</b>				
◆ WORK WITH OWNERS, RESTAURANTS, AGENCIES	High	\$	1-5 years	High
<b>WASTE MANAGEMENT</b>				
◆ PROTOTYPE DEVELOPMENT	High	\$\$	1-2 years	Med
FABRICATION AND INSTALLATION	High	\$\$\$	3-5 years	Med
<b>PLANTER BENCHES</b>				
◆ PROTOTYPE DEVELOPMENT	High	\$\$	1-2 years	Med
FABRICATION AND INSTALLATION	Med	\$\$\$	3 - 5 years	Med
<b>PUBLIC ART</b>				
◆ ART PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT	Med	\$\$	Ongoing	Low
<b>LIGHTING</b>				
◆ LIGHTING PLAN	Med	\$\$	1 year	Low
INSTALLATION	Low	\$\$\$	1 - 5 years	High
<b>SECURITY FEATURES</b>				
BOLLARD INSTALLATION [PROJECT-SPECIFIC]	Med	\$\$\$	1 - 10 years	Med

The next step toward making this vision a reality is prioritizing each project. In this chart, we have included the design recommendations from the Major Projects, Park Infrastructure, and Streetscape Toolkit sections.

Each initiative has been assigned attributes according to priority, cost, time, and complexity. For the cost attribute, each additional dollar sign represents an order of magnitude increase. For example, \$ equals thousands of dollars while \$\$\$\$\$ equals tens of millions of dollars. Projects with a star are excellent candidates to be fast-tracked for development and implementation in the years immediately following the launch of this plan.

## PROJECT GOALS



INCREASE  
PEDESTRIAN  
SPACE



IMPROVE  
ACCESS



INCREASE  
OPEN SPACE



SUSTAIN ORGANIC  
ACTIVITY



PROMOTE  
DIVERSITY



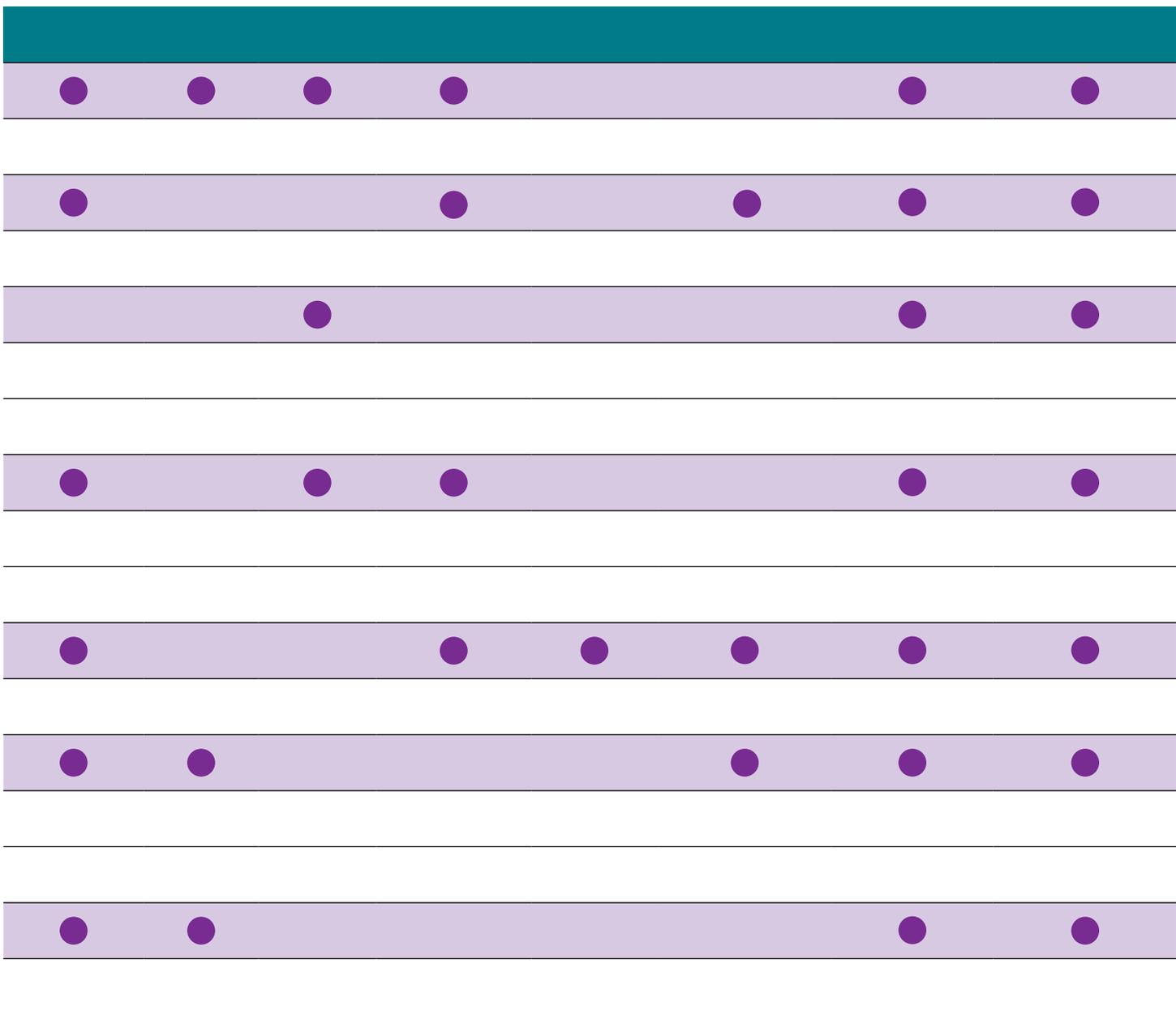
PRESERVE HISTORIC  
ELEMENTS



ENLIVEN GROUND  
FLOOR



SUPPORT  
ENVIRONMENTAL/  
PUBLIC HEALTH



**PRIORITY**

**COST**

**TIME**

**COMPLEXITY**



LOW - HIGH



\$ - \$\$\$\$\$



YEARS TO COMPLETE



LOW - HIGH

◆ RECOMMENDED FAST-TRACK PROJECTS

**MAJOR PROJECTS**

**UNION SQUARE PARK MASTER PLAN**

◆ TREE SUCCESSION PLAN	High	\$\$	1 year	Low
◆ UTILITIES AND DRAINAGE	High	\$\$\$\$	5 years	High
◆ BICYCLE FACILITIES	Med	\$\$	1-2 years	Med
◆ SEATING	Med	\$\$	1-2 years	Low
◆ PARK LIGHTING	Med	\$\$\$	2 years	Med
BATHROOM RENOVATION	Med	\$\$\$	2 years	Med
PATHWAYS AND STEPS	Med	\$\$\$\$	2 - 5 years	Med
PARK LANDSCAPING	Med	\$\$\$\$	5 - 8 years	High
SUBWAY ENTRANCES	Med	\$\$\$\$	5 - 10 years	High
MARKET INFRASTRUCTURE	Low	\$\$\$	2 years	High

**14TH STREET BOULEVARD**

◆ STREETScape DESIGN	Med	\$\$\$	2-3 years	Med
PLANTER BENCH INSTALLATION	Med	\$\$\$	2 years	Med
UPGRADE STREET LIGHTING	Med	\$\$\$	2 years	Med
STREET RECONSTRUCTION	Med	\$\$\$\$\$	3-5 years	High

## PROJECT GOALS



INCREASE  
PEDESTRIAN  
SPACE



IMPROVE  
ACCESS



INCREASE  
OPEN SPACE



SUSTAIN ORGANIC  
ACTIVITY



PROMOTE  
DIVERSITY



PRESERVE HISTORIC  
ELEMENTS



ENLIVEN GROUND  
FLOOR



SUPPORT  
ENVIRONMENTAL/  
PUBLIC HEALTH

PROJECT GOALS							
INCREASE PEDESTRIAN SPACE	IMPROVE ACCESS	INCREASE OPEN SPACE	SUSTAIN ORGANIC ACTIVITY	PROMOTE DIVERSITY	PRESERVE HISTORIC ELEMENTS	ENLIVEN GROUND FLOOR	SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL/ PUBLIC HEALTH
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**PRIORITY**

**COST**

**TIME**

**COMPLEXITY**



LOW - HIGH



\$ - \$\$\$\$\$



YEARS TO COMPLETE



LOW - HIGH

◆ RECOMMENDED FAST-TRACK PROJECTS

**MAJOR PROJECTS (CONT.)**

**TRIANGLE PLAZA**

◆ UNION SQUARE EAST PLAZA DESIGN	Med	\$\$\$	1-2 years	High
◆ TRIANGLE PARK DESIGN	High	\$\$\$	1-2 years	Med
STREET & PARK RECONSTRUCTION	Med	\$\$\$\$\$	3-8 years	High

**BROADWAY GATEWAY PLAZA**

STREET & PLAZA DESIGN	Med	\$\$\$	5 years	Med
STREET RECONSTRUCTION	Med	\$\$\$\$	3 years	High

**UNION SQUARE WEST**

STREET & PARK DESIGN	Med	\$\$\$	1-2 years	Med
STREET TREES	Med	\$\$\$	1 year	Med
PLANTER BENCH INSTALLATION	Med	\$\$\$	2 years	Med
GROUND FLOOR RETAIL ACTIVATION	Med	\$\$\$	5 years	High
STREET RECONSTRUCTION	Med	\$\$\$\$\$	5-8 years	High
NEW SUBWAY ENTRANCE	Med	\$\$\$\$	5-10 years	High

## PROJECT GOALS



INCREASE  
PEDESTRIAN  
SPACE



IMPROVE  
ACCESS



INCREASE  
OPEN SPACE



SUSTAIN ORGANIC  
ACTIVITY



PROMOTE  
DIVERSITY



PRESERVE HISTORIC  
ELEMENTS



ENLIVEN GROUND  
FLOOR



SUPPORT  
ENVIRONMENTAL/  
PUBLIC HEALTH

PROJECT GOALS							
INCREASE PEDESTRIAN SPACE	IMPROVE ACCESS	INCREASE OPEN SPACE	SUSTAIN ORGANIC ACTIVITY	PROMOTE DIVERSITY	PRESERVE HISTORIC ELEMENTS	ENLIVEN GROUND FLOOR	SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL/ PUBLIC HEALTH
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# CONCLUSION

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The future of the Union Square-14th Street district is bright. While the past few years have brought unprecedented challenges, the district's core strengths remain unchanged: a vibrant mix of uses, a nexus of transit options, a solid foundation of residents and institutions, and unique retail offerings, including flagship businesses from the Greenmarket to bookstores to grocery stores. And at the center of it all is the world-renowned Union Square Park.

It has been a privilege to work with this great community and our many partners, supporters, and stakeholders developing this bold and exciting vision plan. It bears repeating that the concepts in this plan are meant to be inspirational. They represent a jumping-off point for future engagement to guide priorities, refine design details, and move forward building projects which will cement the enormous wealth of place created in Union Square over the years and make it more accessible and inclusive for all.

USP was founded for times like these and our organization is in this for the long haul.

***We remain committed to stewarding a positive, long-term vision for our neighborhood, and making continuous investments to ensure its ongoing success.***

We would like to thank everyone from our community who was involved in providing input and direction to this plan, and we look forward to your continued engagement and support in realizing the vision. To get involved in the vision's ongoing development and implementation, please visit [unionsquarenyc.org/vision](https://unionsquarenyc.org/vision).

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Comptroller Hon. Scott Stringer

Manhattan Borough President Hon. Gale Brewer

Council Member Hon. Carlina Rivera, District 2

Carter Booth, Community Board 2

Alysha Lewis-Coleman, Community Board 3

Vikki Barbero, Community Board 5

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## OUR HEARTFELT THANKS

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Yellow sticky note



UNION SQUARE EAST

IRVING PL

3 AVE

RATHERFORD PL

2 AVE

ST. SO...

M

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M

M

M

M

M

M

E 16 ST

E 17 ST

E 18 ST

E 19 ST

E 20 ST

SITTESANT SQUARE PARK

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# APPENDIX



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Beginning in September 2018, USP launched a 9-month collaborative neighborhood visioning and planning initiative to shape the future of the Union Square-14th Street district.

With the support of Marvel, USP gathered ideas and suggestions to develop a cohesive, long-term vision for the Union Square-14th Street district and a concrete plan for USP's future capital investments and programs.

The project team gained input from over one thousand community members, through a variety of public forums, neighborhood pop-ups, stakeholder working sessions, and community opinion surveys.

Many constituents were thrilled to learn more about the community's vision and desires for the Union Square-14th Street area, providing invaluable comments about things that work well in the district, and amenities and improvements they would like to see in the future.

The following pages include the timeline of community engagement events between October 2018 and January 2019 and a summary of the feedback provided. The design team used the range of community input to inform the focus areas for the design that would ultimately shape the vision for Union Square-14th Street.



**Over 1,000 residents, businesses, commuters and visitors provided input on Union Square-14th Street's assets, challenges and opportunities.**

**5** **STAKEHOLDER WORKING SESSIONS**

**58** Attendees



**ANNUAL COMMUNITY OPINION SURVEY**

**335** Respondents

**2** **COMMUNITY FORUMS**

**263** Attendees



**13** **NEIGHBORHOOD POP-UPS**

**401** Attendees

## OUTDOOR POP UPS + PUBLIC FORUM SCHEDULE

DATE	LOCATION	ATTENDEES
October 13, 2018	16th Street Transverse, Union Square Park	25
November 2, 2018	South Plaza, Union Square Park	6
November 8, 2018	16th Street Transverse, Union Square Park	20
November 9, 2018	CAVA + Glaze [4th Avenue between 13th-14th Streets] w	50
November 15, 2018	14th Street Y [Between First-Second Avenues]	4
November 17, 2018	Union Square Pedestrian Plaza [Broadway/17th Street]	35
November 18, 2018	Union Square Holiday Market	52
November 19, 2018	Whole Foods Market [14th Street]	32
November 20, 2018	Zeckendorf Towers/Food Emporium [16th Street Entrance]	29
November 27, 2018	The Victoria / Reebok [14th Street]	20
November 28, 2018	14th Street Subway Entrance at Sixth Avenue	13
November 29, 2018	PUBLIC FORUM: 14th Street Y	140
January 11, 2019	WeWork [33 Irving Place]	35
January 16, 2019	Lobby of Zeckendorf Towers, 10 Union Square East	40
January 22, 2019	Lobby of The Victoria, 7 East 14th Street	40
January 28, 2019	PUBLIC FORUM: Xavier High School	123

## WHAT WE HEARD...

During our community outreach events, stakeholders and community members shared a range of feedback about Union Square-14th Street, including the things they love most, or would like to see improved in the district.

**“More trees and more tree maintenance”**

**“Love the diversity of people who gather in Union Square”**

**“Needs to be less crowded”**

**“Really important that the free speech + mobilizing elements stay here”**

**OCTOBER – NOVEMBER 2018:  
NEIGHBORHOOD POPUPS**



**NOVEMBER 2018:  
COMMUNITY FORUM**

**“Better and more frequent trash pickup is needed”**



**“Make the east side as great as the west”**

**“Should be safer and more welcoming at night”**

**“I want a better dog area, the dog run is overcrowded”**





**JANUARY 2019:  
COMMUNITY FORUM**

**“Better bike connections to the East River and other public spaces”**

**“The park is a form of entertainment – love people watching on the South Plaza ”**

**“Union Square is perfect”**

**“Like that space is relatively free – not a lot of restrictions – people express themselves”**

**“Congestion on 14th Street makes it feel very unsafe for pedestrians, particularly the elderly”**

**“Not enough recycling in the park and on the streets”**

**JANUARY 2019:  
POPOP EVENTS**

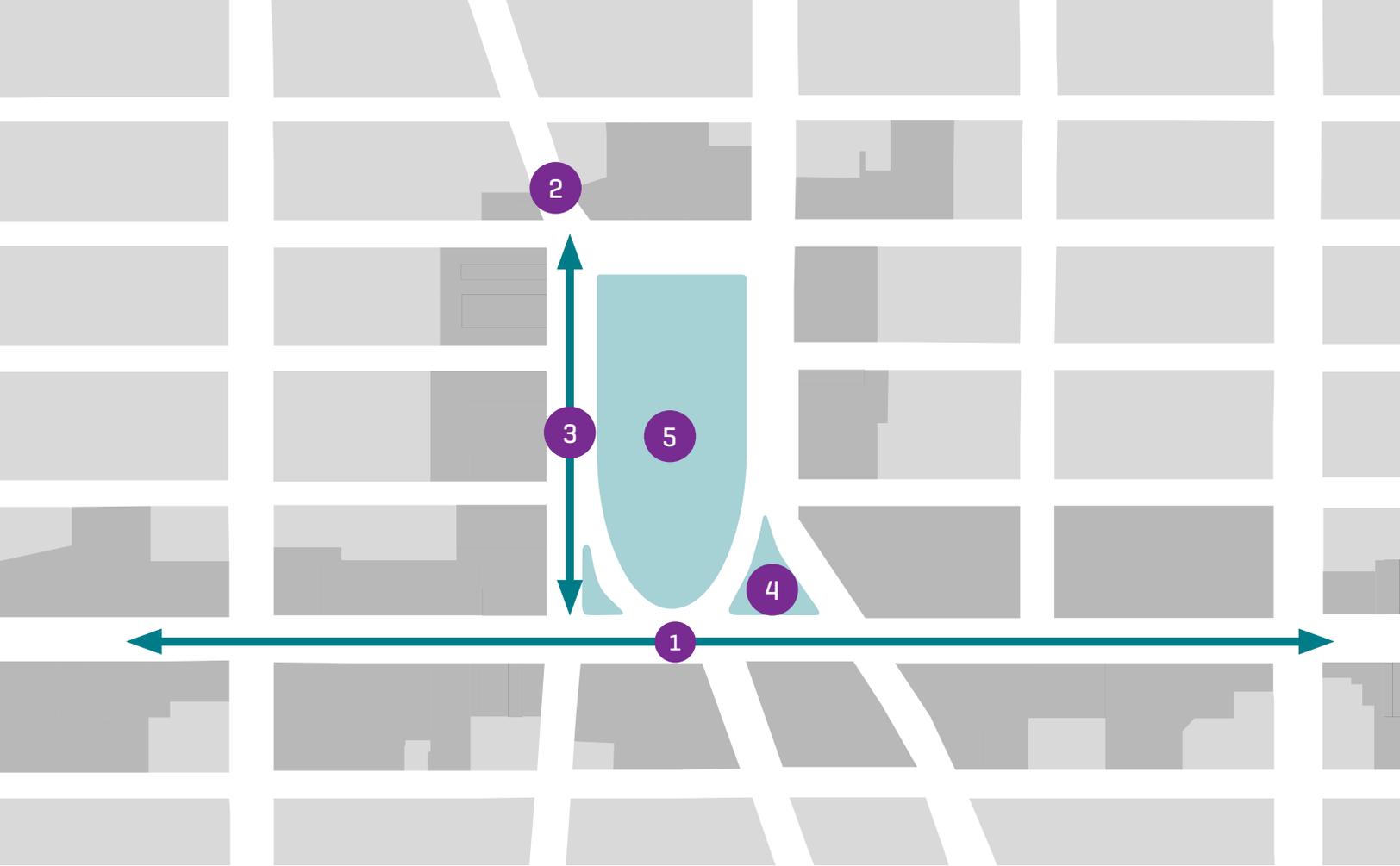


**“Include more artwork”**



**“It’d be helpful to have more designated taxi + for hire vehicles spots for pick-up”**





## FEEDBACK FOCUS AREAS

Five priority projects emerged from the community engagement process:

- 1. 14th Street Boulevard (First Avenue to Sixth Avenue):**  
Provide additional street seating along the eastern and western stretches of 14th Street. Consider how to attract healthier food options along the corridor.
- 2. Broadway Gateway:**  
Create a continuous pedestrian space between the 17th Street Broadway Plaza, Union Square West, and University Place.
- 3. Union Square West:**  
Consider either fully pedestrianized or shared street designs.
- 4. Union Square Triangle Park:**  
Reimagine the underutilized spaces as a new signature destination with expanded green space. Create a gateway to the district for those arriving from the south along 14th Street.
- 5. Union Square Park Core:** Preserve ample movable furniture and provide additional seating throughout the park core. Reconfigure pathways to showcase elements such as the central flagpole and statues. Create respite in the center of the park.



1 14th Street Boulevard



2 Broadway Plaza at 17th Street

Photo: Liz Ligon

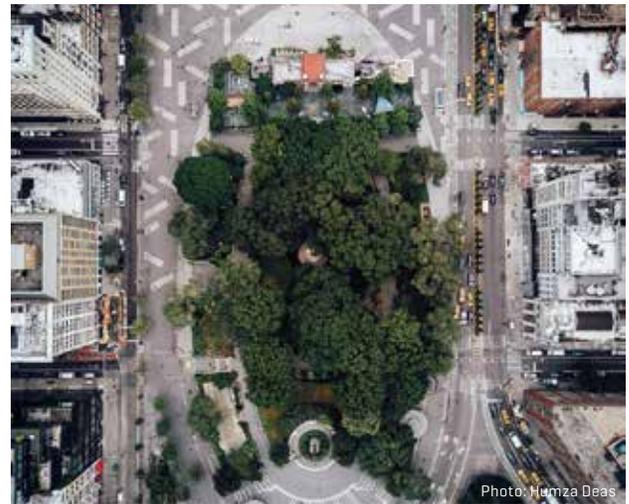


3 Union Square West

Photo: Liz Ligon



4 Union Square Triangle Park



5 Union Square Park Core

Photo: Hamza Deas



WHOLE FOODS MARKET

FOREVER 21

DSW

PRAYER STATION

West Side Hwy →

ONLY ONLY

# TRANSIT CONSIDERATIONS

In New York City, the most significant policy that will impact transportation across Manhattan is Congestion Pricing, which was officially included in the New York State 2020 Budget after Governor Andrew M. Cuomo reached an agreement with the State Legislature on April 1st, 2019.

At the time of this study, details about specific congestion rates, times, and exemptions have yet to be finalized, but the policy is projected to reduce congestion in Manhattan's Central Business District (CBD), the area south of 59th Street, by as much as 14% while raising over \$1 billion per year. The majority of fees raised through driver surcharges will be bonded and spent on MTA Capital Plan investments, including modernization of subway signals and accessibility improvements to 70 stations, including 14th St [F/M/1/2/3].

***Congestion pricing could impact the Union Square-14th Street area's streetscape by reducing traffic congestion and freeing up additional street space for walking, public space, and more efficient modes such as transit and bicycling.***

Another major development that has changed transportation in New York City is the growing popularity of Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), such as Uber and Lyft. Between January 2015 and March 2019, TNC vehicles in New York City increased from transporting 60,000 to 770,000 passengers per day, more than a 1,200% increase. According to the New York City Mobility Report, a 2018 survey conducted by the NYC Department of Transportation (NYC DOT), if TNC services were not an option:

- 50% of users would have used transit
- 43% would have taken a taxi or car service
- 13% would have walked
- 12% would have driven themselves
- 3% would not have made the trip
- 2% would have bicycled

In March 2018, the State passed the New York State Congestion Surcharge, which added a \$2.75 surcharge on private TNC trips below 96th Street in Manhattan (and a \$.75 per customer surcharge on pooled rides). The surcharges went into effect on February 1st, 2019. Similarly, in August 2018, New York City capped the number of active TNC drivers while studying the effects of TNCs on New York's transportation systems.

## CURB MANAGEMENT

Along with the congestion caused by the 60,000 TNC vehicles driving around the City daily, the pickup and drop-off operations of the 770,000 daily trips are increasingly infringing upon Manhattan's limited curb space. Replacing parking spaces with designated pick up and drop off locations could help mitigate the congestion caused by TNC vehicles. Designating pickup and drop-off zones on city blocks would create an opportunity to improve the accessibility of TNC services, provided the loading areas have ramps to accommodate wheelchairs and people with limited mobility. Such pickup and drop-off zones around Union Square-14th Street could improve traffic congestion caused by TNC and reduce conflicts between roadway users.



Waste containers in Barcelona are located curbside.

Similarly, despite New York City's practice of storing garbage that is waiting to be collected on the curb, advocates are questioning why pedestrian curb space rather than street space is being used. Other cities such as Barcelona have experimented successfully with re-purposing parking spaces for dumpsters, freeing up valuable curb space for pedestrians.

*Union Square-14th Street would be a great location for a containerized waste system pilot program to free space for the district's significant pedestrian traffic.*

## MICRO-MOBILITY

Across the U.S., over 84 million micro-mobility trips (bicycles, scooters, electric bicycles/scooters) were completed in 2018, up from 35 million in 2017. 38.5 million of the trips in 2018 were completed using electric scooters and 6.5 million were completed via electric bikes (e-bikes), including e-bikes belonging to both docked and dockless systems.

As of June 2018, New York City's Citi Bike has a fleet of over 12,000 bicycles, 147,000 annual members, and over 60 million rides have been completed within the system. Despite their limited presence in New York City due to regulatory restraints, electric scooters and e-bikes offer an opportunity to improve New Yorkers' ability to reduce their car use citywide.

Following e-bike implementation, Citi Bike found that from August 2018 to February 2019, each deployed e-bike was utilized 15 times per day, compared to 5 times per day for conventional bikes. Beyond being used more frequently, the trips completed on the Citi Bike e-bikes were, on average, 10% longer than the trips completed with conventional bikes.

At the time of this study, New York City did not permit electric scooter companies to operate [the City legalized electric bicycles and scooter standards in 2020], but numerous studies from cities across the U.S. demonstrate the potential to reduce congestion through electric scooters.



Courtesy: Citi Bike / Lyft

Each day Citi Bike's e-bikes are utilized 3 times more than conventional bikes.

For example, in San Francisco, a performance analysis of Bird's electric scooters found that each scooter deployed in the city was being used 5.5 times per day. Additionally, an analysis of electric scooter users in Portland, Oregon found that 19% of scooter users would have driven if scooters were not an option, and another 15% said they would have taken a taxi or TNC ride.

To incorporate micro-mobility transit options arriving in NYC, USP could start a conversation with NYC DOT focused on designated parking areas for micro-mobility including street signage and enforcement mechanisms to prevent uncontrolled deployment.

## FREIGHT MANAGEMENT

Union Square-14th Street, a business and residential district, experiences extensive freight activity including deliveries for restaurants, retailers, farmers market vendors, offices, and residents. Streets in the district face increasing pressure due to the high demand for limited curb and loading space.

According to a study by the Texas A&M University Transportation Institute, trucks, currently, 7% of U.S. traffic, create 28% of the nation's congestion. Additionally, with the increasing proliferation of online shopping [including same-day deliveries], curb space in Manhattan's CBD, already a rare commodity, is becoming further congested. A study by José Holguín-Veras, director of the Center of Excellence for Sustainable Urban Freight Systems at New York's Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute revealed that urban freight traffic attributed to online shopping and e-commerce doubled between 2009 and 2018.

Results from NYC DOT's 2017 Citywide Mobility Survey indicate that 41% of New Yorkers receive delivery of some kind at their home at least a few times a week. A 2015 NYC DOT study determined that every day over 25,000 delivery trucks travel in and out of Manhattan.

In 2009 NYC DOT has also initiated an Off-Hour Delivery program to incentivize the number of deliveries completed in the off-peak time of 7 PM – 6 AM. NYC DOT is currently looking for additional businesses to participate in the program.

Private companies such as Amazon are attempting to help increase the efficiency of their delivery operations by using lockers where purchased goods can be picked up by customers, rather than delivering the goods to every individual customer. Amazon currently operates over 2,800 lockers located in metropolitan areas nationwide.

Strategies for freight management that could be tested and monitored in the district include:

- **Creation of a Neighborhood Freight Consolidation Center:** Consolidate goods in a centralized location and combine with zero emissions last mile solutions such as cargo bikes or small electric vans.
- **Regulation and Enforcement:** Work with NYC DOT to regulate delivery windows and incentivize off-hour delivery programs. Implement curb regulation changes to constrain delivery windows, together with better enforcement especially on bus corridors, bike lanes, and crosswalks.
- **Collaboration Between Businesses:** Shared transport resources through collaboration between businesses can lead to a reduction in vehicle trips as well as financial and environmental savings. For example, collective procurement and coordinated schedule between businesses could cut duplicate deliveries and reduce congestion.
- **Creation of Truck Loading Spaces:** Designate loading spaces to alleviate delivery trucks parking in unauthorized spots or double-parking on busy streets.

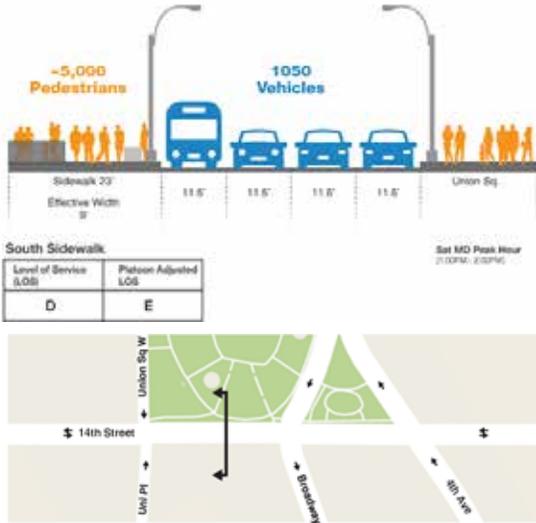
## 14TH STREET TRAFFIC ANALYSIS

14th Street, between University Place (Union Square West) and 4th Avenue (Union Square East), is part of a major crosstown street in Manhattan with significant street and sidewalk activity. Union Square-14th Street is well-served by public transportation, including 10 subway lines, more than 10 bus routes, and a PATH station nearby at 14th Street and Sixth Avenue. In fall 2019, NYC DOT commenced the 14th Street Transit and Truck Priority Pilot Project, a designated busway serving the M14A/D Select Bus Service route[s]. At the time of this study, the City is evaluating the impacts of the busway on ridership and surrounding traffic patterns.

At the southern border of Union Square Park, 14th Street also experiences substantial pedestrian activity due to adjacent busy retail establishments. Furthermore, parts of 14th Street serve as an extension of Union Square Park, which is a popular local and tourist destination. 14th Street also features a wide variety of street furniture to service the diverse range of users on the street, including bicycle racks, garbage cans, streetlights, subway entrances, and street plantings.

Given the limited sidewalk space, the abundance of street furniture, and high pedestrian and vehicular activities, the current right-of-way distribution and curbside management directly contribute to the congested conditions experienced by all street users. This congestion has potentially negative impacts on traffic safety while creating operational challenges.

To understand the existing conditions along this section of 14th Street, the Sam Schwartz team conducted a quantitative street traffic analysis using vehicular and pedestrian count data collected by NYC DOT.



Sectional diagram illustrating the traffic data analysis and level of service for 14th Street between Broadway and University Place.

The diagrams on the following page summarize the comparison between vehicle and pedestrian volumes along 14th Street between University Place and 4th Avenue during the weekday morning [AM] peak hour [7:45 AM – 8:45 AM], the weekday afternoon [PM] peak hour [6:00 PM – 7:00 PM], and the weekend midday [MD] peak hour [1:00 PM – 2:00 PM for pedestrians, 1:45 PM – 2:45 PM for vehicles]. Representative peak hours for the analysis were determined based on the existing condition traffic volumes for those respective peak hour periods.

**Based on the traffic data analysis, there is a great need for additional pedestrian space on 14th Street between University Place and 4th Avenue.**

### Traffic Analysis Takeaways:

- Pedestrian volumes are highest at the intersection of Broadway and 14th Street, with a peak volume of 9,060 pedestrians on Saturday mid-day [MD].
- Pedestrian volumes were significantly higher than the vehicular volumes during the weekday PM and weekend MD peak hours.
- Pedestrian volumes during Saturday MD peak hours were higher than the weekday AM and PM peak hours, respectively.
- The highest pedestrian crossing volume occurred at the intersection of 14th Street and Broadway during the Saturday MD peak hour. The same intersection during the Weekday PM peak hour also experiences the highest vehicular volume.
- Vehicles turning right from 14th Street to Broadway conflict with a major pedestrian desire line, however, the Transit and Truck Priority plan [14th Street Busway] will restrict this right turn, greatly relieving the conflict point.
- When compared with other popular destinations in Manhattan, 14th Street between Fifth Avenue and University Place sees more pedestrian volumes than Sixth Avenue at 51st Street [Radio City Music Hall], East 42nd Street at Lexington Avenue [Chrysler building], and West 40th Street at Fifth Avenue [Bryant Park].
- The southern sidewalk between Broadway and University operates at Level of Service [LOS] D or better for the non-platoon conditions and LOS E or better for platoon conditions during the Saturday MD peak.

**Weekday AM Peak Hour**  
(7:45AM - 8:45AM)



**Weekday PM Peak Hour**  
(6:00PM - 7:00PM)



**Sat MD Peak Hour**  
(Vehicle Peak Hour - 1:45PM - 2:45PM)  
(Pedestrian Peak Hour - 1:00PM - 2:00PM)



Diagrams illustrating pedestrian and vehicle volumes on the Union Square South section of 14th Street, between University Place and 4th Avenue.

## CASE STUDY: KING STREET TRANSIT PILOT, TORONTO

King Street is the busiest surface transit route in the City of Toronto and highest ridership streetcar in North America, moving more than 65,000 daily riders (as a point of reference M14A/D sees 27,000 daily riders). In November 2017, the City of Toronto launched the King Street Transit Pilot, between Bathurst and Jarvis Streets, to improve transit reliability, speed, and capacity.

The Pilot's significant changes to King Street included the prevention of private vehicles from traveling through intersections (motorists are largely permitted to drive only a block before having to turn right) while prioritizing streetcars. Although there is no on-street parking in the pilot area, commercial and passenger loading zones allow for the delivery of goods and passenger pick-up and/or drop-off. From November 2017 to December 2018, transit ridership increased by 17% (all-day weekday ridership) and travel time became more predictable, making the service more attractive.

The King Street pilot also included new curb lane public spaces along the corridor with amenities such as cafes, art installations, public seating areas, bike share stations, and parklets. These spaces created opportunities for people to stay and socialize and provided extra sidewalk space for pedestrians.



The King Street Transit Priority Corridor converted the adjacent curbside traffic lane into additional seating areas.

Economic point-of-sale data suggests that year-over-year growth in total spending on King Street was largely unaffected, noting a slight [0.8%] decrease following the Pilot's installation. Spending in both the retail and service sectors appears to have grown faster during the year after the project's installation compared to the rate of growth in the year prior. The decrease appears to have been primarily due to reduced spending in the restaurant sector. This trend existed before installation, however, and may not be attributed to the Pilot project.

In April 2019, the City of Toronto approved recommendations to make the King Street Pilot permanent, allocating approximately \$1.5M in capital funding to the project. Overall, the King Street Transit Pilot has demonstrated a relatively quick and cost-effective method to move people efficiently on public transit without compromising the broader road network.

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The Union Square Partnership works to ensure the community's continued growth and success by providing sanitation, public safety, economic development, and marketing services, and by investing in the beautification of Union Square Park. For more information visit [unionsquarenyc.org](http://unionsquarenyc.org).

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