Union Square is New York’s true town square: a cultural destination, a leading transit hub, a powerful jobs center, and a burgeoning tech campus. Unfortunately, the area’s public realm appears stuck in the past with deferred maintenance issues, pedestrian safety and access challenges, and an array of aging temporary projects not living up to their potential. In order to make NYC economically competitive, Union Square requires a generational investment delivering a high-quality urban environment with transit, greenery, and open space.

In 2021, the Union Square Partnership unveiled a bold new vision for transforming the greater Union Square neighborhood into New York City’s most accessible place. The Union Square-14th Street District Vision Plan centers on five key improvements prioritizing multi-modal accessibility, district-wide connectivity, and substantial increases in public open space.

This vision is the result of robust community engagement during the plan’s development and builds upon the organization’s past district improvement work, most recently the renovation of the North End of Union Square Park. It also brings together, under one cohesive vision, several City initiatives including NYC Parks’ Parks Without Borders, and NYC DOT’s Plaza Program, the 14th Street Busway, and the plans for the pedestrianization of Broadway.

**KEY IMPROVEMENTS**

1. **Increase public open space by 33%** by expanding Union Square Park to the surrounding building edges
2. **Transform 14th Street** into a world-class boulevard and permanent crosstown transitway
3. **Streetscape upgrades** including pedestrian-friendly “micro-parks,” trees, lighting and trash containers
4. **Enhanced Broadway plaza** at 17th street, the gateway to the square and the terminus of the pedestrian corridor stretching down from Columbus Circle
5. **Park infrastructure** such as landscaping and utilities, enhanced ADA accessibility, permanent market stalls, and new subway entrances

Union Square is a signature public space which resonates with all New Yorkers. It is a destination with a Manhattan-level of global visibility and a 5-boro impact in terms of economic opportunity.
THE UNION SQUARE VISION PLAN’S ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR NEW YORK CITY

1. A $110M investment in capital projects in Union Square is estimated to generate $240M annually in additional economic output across the five boroughs.

2. The overall economic benefits during the construction period are estimated at: 771 total jobs, $71M labor income, $102M GDP, and $157M economic output.

3. According to conservative estimates, after the third year of project implementation, local economic output within the District is estimated to increase by $149M annually, and with the strong economic and transit connections between Union Square and the rest of New York City, this translates to approximately $91M of economic output elsewhere across the five boroughs.

• Over 375,000 visitors pass through Union Square on a typical weekday. The volume of annual visitation represents 10% of all customer visits in Manhattan.

• Job density in the District is 3.5x higher than the Manhattan average while business density in the District is 1.6x higher than the Manhattan average. Top industries include: IT, real estate, professional services, health care, food + beverage, retail, utilities.

• Every 10 jobs located within the District supports 7 additional jobs in other parts of the city, contributing to $2.5B in additional economic output (%1.7BN GDP) and $1B in additional labor income within NYC.

• NYC tax revenue directly attributable to businesses and properties is estimated at $276M, providing the funding needed, for example, to hire 4,200 public school teachers.

• The Union Square Greenmarket hosts 240 producers 208 days a year, supplying products from 15K acres of regional farmland. As of August 2021, 15K EBT transactions [e.g. SNAP benefits] had been distributed in 2021.

• Union Square employs more low-income workers than other parts of Manhattan.