



REINVENTING GRAND ARMY PLAZA -- Fact Sheet

Reinventing Grand Army Plaza is a project of the Design Trust for Public Space in partnership with the Grand Army Plaza Coalition. The goal of this project is to lay the groundwork for a new, improved Grand Army Plaza.

REINVENTING GRAND ARMY PLAZA EXHIBIT

- A free, outdoor exhibit on display from September 13-October 13, 2008 in the center of Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn
- Will showcase 30 visionary plans for a new and improved Grand Army Plaza, selected from over 200 international submissions to the *Reinventing Grand Army Plaza* ideas competition, including 4 prizewinning entries
- The first ever large-scale exhibition in the center of Grand Army Plaza; will allow visitors to imagine new designs while on site
- Designed by the world-renowned firm, Pentagram
- Consists of fourteen 8'x8'x8' cubes made of backlit vinyl stretched on aluminum frames, and two triple-height cubes, 8'x8'x24'

REINVENTING GRAND ARMY PLAZA IDEAS COMPETITION

- An open, international ideas competition held in the spring of 2008, soliciting ideas for improving Grand Army Plaza. Entrants were encouraged to create bold visions that express the spirit of Brooklyn right now, and did not have to be realistic
- Received over 200 submissions from 25 countries
- An interdisciplinary jury selected four award-winning entries, \$5,000 (two entries, tied for first place), \$2,000 (second place), and \$1,000 (third place)
- Winners will be announced on Friday, September 12, 11am at a Press Conference and Awards Ceremony under the Arch in Grand Army Plaza
- An additional award-winner will be selected by the public in a People's Choice competition. Votes may be cast via text message and online from September 13 until October 5. The winning entry will be announced on October 7

THE FUTURE OF GRAND ARMY PLAZA

- After the exhibit, the Design Trust and the Grand Army Plaza Coalition will work towards creating a new master plan for Grand Army Plaza, in collaboration with local communities, and with the New York City Departments of Transportation and Parks & Recreation
- In late 2008, a community focus group will be convened to discuss community desires and to solicit feedback on design ideas
- The Design Trust and the Grand Army Plaza Coalition will assemble a team that may include landscape architects, urban planners and/or designers, traffic and civil engineers, preservationists, horticulturalists, hydrologists, and artists to create a schematic design, inspired by the ideas on display in the exhibit
- Ultimately, a new master plan for the Plaza will transform Brooklyn's heart, making it more beautiful, user-friendly, and safer and easier for pedestrians, motorists and cyclists alike

GRAND ARMY PLAZA HISTORY

- Designed by famed landscape architects Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux in 1867 as a parade ground and threshold for Prospect Park, its original name was Prospect Park Plaza
- The name "Grand Army Plaza" was bestowed in 1926, to mark the 60th Anniversary of the end of the Civil War
- Originally designated as parkland, the Plaza became taken over by cars in the early 20th Century with the advent of the automobile
- Distinguishing architectural features include the Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Arch (1889), Bailey Fountain (1932) and the formal entrance to Prospect Park (also designed by Olmsted and Vaux)



GRAND ARMY PLAZA GEOGRAPHY

- Recognized as the historic, cultural and geographic heart of Brooklyn, Grand Army Plaza is the gateway to New York City's most populous borough
- Situated at the convergence of five major arteries and several subordinate streets. Major thoroughfares include Flatbush Avenue, Vanderbilt Avenue, Eastern Parkway, Prospect Park West and Union Street
- The 11 ½ -acre site (roughly the size of eight football fields) consists of a series of concentric ellipses formed by Plaza Street and its buildings, berms (earth banks surrounding the central oval), the avenues and major interchanges and the central islands
- Today hazardous conditions for pedestrians and cyclists impede access to neighborhoods, cultural institutions, and the Plaza's center

GRAND ARMY PLAZA CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

- Diverse neighboring communities include Crown Heights, Park Slope, Prospect Heights, and Prospect Lefferts Gardens
- Surrounded by rich cultural institutions including the Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn Botanic Gardens, the Brooklyn Academy of Music and Prospect Park
- Home to the second-largest open air greenmarket in New York City
- Home of New York City's largest cultural celebration, the West Indian Day Parade, drawing crowds estimated between 1- 3 million each year

DESIGN TRUST FOR PUBLIC SPACE

- A 501-(c)3 not-for-profit organization committed to improving the design, utility, and understanding of New York City's public realm
- Brings together interdisciplinary, inter-agency and cross-sector teams to find opportunities for change, making the city more beautiful, sustainable, functional, and available to all
- Selects 1-3 projects per year through a request-for-proposals process
- More information available online: www.designtrust.org

GRAND ARMY PLAZA COALITION (GAPCO)

- GAPCO is an alliance of Brooklyn community groups and cultural organizations working together to improve Grand Army Plaza. Coalition members include:
 - Brooklyn Botanic Garden
 - Brooklyn Greenway Initiative
 - Brooklyn Museum
 - Brooklyn Public Library
 - Citizens Committee for NYC
 - Brooklyn Community Boards 6 and 8
 - Eastern Parkway/Cultural Row Neighborhood Association
 - Gowanus Community Stakeholder Group
 - Grand Army Plaza Greenmarket
 - Heart of Brooklyn
 - North Flatbush Avenue BID
 - The Open Planning Project
 - Park Slope Civic Council
 - Park Slope Neighbors
 - Project for Public Spaces
 - Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council
 - Prospect Heights Parent Association
 - Prospect Park Alliance
 - Transportation Alternatives