



DESIGN TRUST
FOR PUBLIC SPACE



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RELEASE # 14-064

Friday, June 20, 2014

Contact: (DOT) Scott Gastel/Jeff Malamy, (212) 839-4850

Contact: (Design Trust) Ozgur Gungor, (212) 695-2432 x6

**NYCDOT, COMPTROLLER STRINGER AND DESIGN TRUST UNVEIL
INTERACTIVE CALENDAR AND LIGHTING INSTALLATION IN CONJUNCTION
WITH *UNDER THE ELEVATED* PROJECT AND *THE CHINATOWN GATEWAYS*
MASTER PLAN**

*Innovative program seeks to activate public spaces under bridges, highways,
subways and rail lines*

The NYC Department of Transportation (DOT), NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer and the Design Trust for Public Space today unveiled the first prototype for the *Under the Elevated* project in collaboration with the Chinatown Partnership. Located on Manhattan's Division Street under the Manhattan Bridge, the temporary installation of an interactive community calendar enhanced with custom lighting activates the space beneath the underpass. Through the July 4th weekend, the installation serves as a test to determine how best to improve the site conditions and public experience. Already embraced by the local community and visitors, the effort establishes the space and structure as an important gateway under the district's master plan.

DOT officials were joined by the Executive Director of the Design Trust Susan Chin, Chinatown Partnership Executive Director Wellington Chen and a representative from Council Member Margaret Chin's office.

"DOT's collaboration with the Design Trust in addressing the 700 miles of space beneath and adjacent to elevated infrastructure citywide is on the leading edge of a trend that we are seeing in cities around the world," said DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg. "Cost-effective enhancements, improved streetscapes and creative reuse of spaces with community input and participation will reconnect neighborhoods divided by elevated structures. In addition to the interactive community calendar installation at Division Street, we'll be testing green infrastructure elements under a segment of the Gowanus Expressway in Brooklyn, and beneath the Freeman Street 2/5 stop in the Bronx we plan to install a solar-powered structure that will provide lighting and seating as well as play music by Bronx-based artists."



“Chinatown was hit hard after 9/11, and *Under the Elevated* is the kind of innovative program this iconic community needs to get back on its feet,” said NYC Comptroller Scott M. Stringer. “By transforming underutilized spaces into interactive gateways and points of interest, we’ll be engaging the community in the push to reinvigorate Chinatown. I’m proud to have been able to contribute to this effort as Manhattan Borough President with the allocation of capital funds, and I look forward to continuing to promote these collaborative economic recovery efforts as Comptroller.”

The community-generated events calendar orients visitors and residents to the culture, community and activities in Chinatown. People are invited to post opportunities to *Learn, Play, Eat, See, Make* or *Connect* within a 10-minute walk from the Manhattan Bridge. Users can fill out color-coded tags for each day and hang them on Chinatown maps. The installation also encourages users to share their thoughts on how the underpass can be improved. People can leave comments onsite using the chalkboard and the comment box, and online via email – ute@designtrust.org – and social media – #UnderTheElevated.

“It’s always important to continue engaging both community members and visitors in order to promote Chinatown’s historic culture and many public attractions,” said Council Member Margaret Chin. “This project takes great strides toward that long-term goal by providing a welcoming and exciting gateway into the neighborhood, and I’m proud to support the process as it is put into action for the benefit of our residents and local businesses. I would especially like to thank the Department of Transportation, the Design Trust for Public Space and the Chinatown Partnership for the great collaborative work they have done to make this all possible.”

The installation at Division Street is the first of several that will be developed as part of the *Under the Elevated* initiative. The citywide effort is aimed at developing strategies for maximizing the function, use and spatial qualities of the millions of square feet of space underneath NYC’s bridges, and elevated highways, subways and rail lines.

“Millions of square feet of usable, but neglected space lie right beneath the City’s elevated infrastructure. When you look at the impact the High Line has made—at nearly 300,000 square feet—well, you understand the potential of the *Under the Elevated* project. Much of the elevated infrastructure is imbued with magnificent scale and architectural grandeur, such as the Highbridge Park under the Washington Bridge” said Design Trust Executive Director Susan Chin, FAIA.



The installation at Division Street marks the first milestone for the *Chinatown Gateways Master Plan* on which DOT and the Chinatown Partnership have been collaborating. The consensus-built plan is aimed at designing pivotal nodal spaces and entry points within the district to increase open space for residents and foster tourism and business in Chinatown. While the temporary installation leads the way to an overall rethinking of the space, DOT will be installing elements from its toolkit such as CityBenches and wayfinding signage.

“Activating Chinatown’s underpasses and public spaces is one of the ways to highlight the district’s history and attractions and increase the number of visitors to the neighborhood. The red lights that illuminate the Division Street installation are an illustration of our desire to “connect-the-dots” by inviting pedestrians to pause and notice each locale’s special features such as the architecture of the Manhattan Bridge. The installation becomes part of the entry point leading to the gateway that one of the most famous Chinatowns in the world has lacked to this day,” says Chinatown Partnership Executive Director Wellington Z. Chen.

About Chinatown Partnership

The Chinatown Partnership was formed in 2006 to bring residents, business owners and community groups together to rebuild Chinatown following 9/11, and to preserve the neighborhood’s unique culture while ensuring its vitality in the future.

About The Design Trust for Public Space

The Design Trust for Public Space is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the future of public space in New York City. Our projects bring together city agencies, community groups and private sector experts to make a lasting impact—through design—on how New Yorkers live, work and play.

About the NYC Department of Transportation

New York City Department of Transportation’s mission is to provide for the safe, efficient, and environmentally responsible movement of people and goods in the City of New York and to maintain and enhance the transportation infrastructure crucial to the economic vitality and quality of life of our primary customers, City residents.



DESIGN TRUST
FOR PUBLIC SPACE



Under the Elevated is made possible through the generosity of:

Underwriter:



Lead Sponsor:



Tekton BUILDERS



Additional Support:

