



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 15, 2017

Contact: publicaffairs@culture.nyc.gov, 212-513-9323

**NYC DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND THE CITY'S THREE LIBRARY SYSTEMS
LAUNCH PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP FOR CREATENYC**

Throughout the month of March, CreateNYC public feedback materials will be available in six languages at 31 high traffic library branches across all five boroughs

Partnership marks the final push for public input into the CreateNYC, the city's first-ever comprehensive cultural plan, before the plan's draft recommendations are released to the public in April

New York – Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl today announced a partnership with the city's three library systems to place CreateNYC public engagement toolkits at dozens of library branches across the city. As part of the public engagement phase of the CreateNYC cultural plan, each library will help to engage a broad spectrum of New Yorkers through their local libraries. The partnership marks the last major push for public feedback into the city's cultural plan currently in development before draft recommendations are released for a public comment period in April 2017.

"The cultural plan has provided us with an amazing opportunity to get out and meet with New Yorkers where they live, work, and experience culture," said **Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl**. "Libraries have become so much more than a place to store books. They provide space for education, connection, and a huge array of programming that speaks directly to neighborhood needs. This exciting partnership will allow us to learn more about the experiences of residents in these community hubs."

The materials on site in each participating library branch include:

1. **CreateNYC Infographic Display** explains the cultural plan process, timeline, components, and community engagement touch points. The display is accompanied by a colorful "Question Canvas" display and suggestion box for direct input.
2. **CreateNYC Community Toolkit** provides tools to gather specific information from library patrons to gain insight about who they are, where they're from, and how they engage NYC's arts and cultural assets. Tools take the form of feedback cards, question prompts, and printed surveys.

Materials will be available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Bangla, and Arabic, depending on the community served by each particular branch.

In addition to the toolkits, every library branch in the city received the CreateNYC digital survey to distribute to its lists and patrons. The survey gathers specific information from library patrons about their cultural participation, neighborhood amenities, arts education, affordability, and equity, access, and inclusion.

The local library branches where the toolkits will be located include:

- **Brooklyn Public Library:** Central, New Lots, Macon, Kings Highway, Sunset Park, and New Utrecht
- **Queens Public Library:** Central (Jamaica), Forest Hills, Ridgewood, Flushing, and Jackson Heights.
- **New York Public Library:** Mid-Manhattan Library, Andrew Heiskell Braille and Talking Book, St Agnes, Jefferson Market, Chatham Square, Inwood, Tompkins Square, SASB, LPA, Schomburg, Bronx Library Center, Parkchester, Kingsbridge, Spuyten Duyvil, Mosholu, Todt-Hill Westerleigh, Richmondtown, New Dorp, Huguenot Park, and Stapleton.

A major theme to emerge in the CreateNYC public engagement process is the desire for more local access to cultural programming. Libraries, with their presence in every community across New York and missions to support free expression and cultural engagement, provide ideal spaces to cultivate community ties and increase access to culture.

"If the packed audiences at our concerts, dance performances, lectures and other events are any indication, there is a large appetite for culture in the borough of Queens," said **Queens Library President and CEO Dennis M. Walcott**. "Libraries are magnets for people looking for lifelong learning opportunities, making them great sources of feedback about cultural and educational organizations in their neighborhoods and elsewhere in the five boroughs. It's a pleasure to partner with the Department of Cultural Affairs as it maps out the road ahead for New York City's cultural offerings."

"Throughout New York—and, crucially, in neighborhoods far removed from the city's best known cultural venues—libraries host first-rate theatrical performances, thought-provoking exhibitions, readings with renowned authors and live music from classical to hip-hop, all for free," said **Brooklyn Public Library President and CEO Linda E. Johnson**. "No institution is better prepared to help ensure that New York's first-ever cultural plan benefits from a diversity of opinions and perspectives. We are pleased to partner with the city on CreateNYC and are certain that patrons from a wide variety of backgrounds will contribute to the plan's success."

"As an institution that makes educational and cultural programming accessible to all New Yorkers, The New York Public Library is eager to work with our cultural institution partners to help the city shape its CreateNYC plan," said **NYPL President Tony Marx**. "We welcome the public into our branches to provide much-needed feedback and information to inform the plan -- and hope that, while they visit, they enjoy some of the free programs, exhibitions, classes, and materials that we offer."

"Our local libraries represent the best of who we are and are places where we go to feel a true sense of community," said **Chair of the Committee on Cultural Affairs and Libraries Jimmy Van Bramer**. "As we develop our city's first cultural plan, we must bring more voices to the table and this partnership between the Department of Cultural Affairs and our city's three library systems will do just that."

"Our libraries are important community hubs that connect New Yorkers with information and services. I am thrilled that our three city library systems will promote and acquire the needed data that our #CreateNYC survey will collect. We need to promote a cultural plan that works for all New Yorkers from all walks of life, in all corners of our metropolis, and this partnership is a needed and welcomed tool to achieve that goal," said **NYC Council Member Andy King, Chair of the Subcommittee on Libraries**.



Since the public engagement process began last October, CreateNYC staff has participated in over 200 engagements attended by thousands of city residents. Every piece of data collected through events and through digital engagement is carefully tracked and recorded. Public input will inform the draft recommendations, which will be released for a public comment period in April 2017. The final draft of the plan will be released by June 30, 2017.

About CreateNYC

In May 2015, Mayor Bill de Blasio signed legislation requiring the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) to lead creation of New York City's first comprehensive cultural plan, CreateNYC. Public input will be the backbone of CreateNYC, providing a long-term blueprint for the efforts and policies of the City and its partners in expanding access to cultural opportunities for all New Yorkers. The plan will also examine a number of issues crucial for maintaining New York City's cultural vibrancy, including affordable artist workspace; access to arts education; and the role of cultural activities in public space. An initial draft of the plan will be published in spring 2017. More information is available at www.CreateNYC.org.

###