



Janette Sadik-Khan, Commissioner

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DOT Commissioner Sadik-Khan and Elected Officials Reopen Historic Manhattan Bridge Archway to Public

Passageway connects two parts of Brooklyn neighborhood separated for 17 years

DOT Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan today reopened a historic, 46-foot-wide archway below the Manhattan Bridge in Brooklyn for public, non-vehicular use, granting access to a spacious but long-inaccessible public space and connecting two parts of DUMBO that had been separated for 17 years. The area beneath the arch, along Water Street between Adams Street and Anchorage Place, was previously occupied by DOT's Division of Bridges for the cutting and storage of metal needed for bridge projects. DOT recently removed the materials and will work with the Dumbo Improvement District to further beautify the cavernous passageway with lighting and benches, and to remove the asphalt to reveal the passageway's historic cobblestone. The Commissioner was joined by Brooklyn/Manhattan Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez, Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, City Councilmember David Yassky, and by Kate Kerrigan, Executive Director of the Dumbo Improvement District.

"Bridges like the Manhattan Bridge are not merely commuter corridors—they are architectural icons that define the character of their surrounding neighborhoods," said Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan. "Nearly 75,000 vehicles and 969 subway trains cross this historic, century-old structure daily, a contrast to the graceful beauty of the arch that supports it, which we are now reshaping into a community public space."

"The Dumbo Improvement District recognized the opportunity to create an entirely new community amenity by re-adapting a found object, the Manhattan Bridge Archway, into a pedestrian thoroughfare," said Kate Kerrigan, Executive Director of the Dumbo Improvement District. "The giant, granite anchorage of the Manhattan Bridge was originally designed to allow for fluid movement through the area. Re-opening this public space not only reconnects our neighborhood, it helps define DUMBO as a home, creative workspace and world class destination."

DOT will continue to provide materials and staff for the ongoing archway project. The Dumbo Improvement District partnered with Rogers Marvel Architects and Jim Conti Lighting Design to restore the 45-foot high, 152-foot long archway in the coming months. The design includes lighting to highlight the graceful vaulted ceiling and provide adequate walkway lighting, benches that incorporate the existing remaining storage brackets, and exposed Belgian blocks that form the archway's base. The design takes a minimalist approach by using existing materials at the site while emphasizing the simple beauty of the structure.



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Enhancing and enlarging public space is a key goal of the DOT's strategic plan, which outlines programs to bring pedestrian plazas and temporary art projects to beautify communities—and to make the City's streets destinations in and of themselves. DOT last week unveiled new pedestrian space at Madison Square and along Broadway.

Opening the DUMBO archway builds on the public plaza built last year at Pearl Street triangle, adjacent to the archway. Other improvements in the area include a DOT/Dumbo Improvement District temporary art installation, Nature Matching System, by artist Tattfoo Tan on Front Street, and a permanent light installation, "This Way," by at the staircase entrance to the Brooklyn Bridge, which includes directional signage for the scores of visitors looking for attractions in Brooklyn Heights, DUMBO and Downtown Brooklyn.

The archway will be available to the public daily during daytime hours before it will be opened around-the-clock on completion of the installation and rehabilitation, scheduled to coincide with the Manhattan Bridge's 100th birthday in 2009.