PRINCIPLES of GOOD URBAN DESIGN
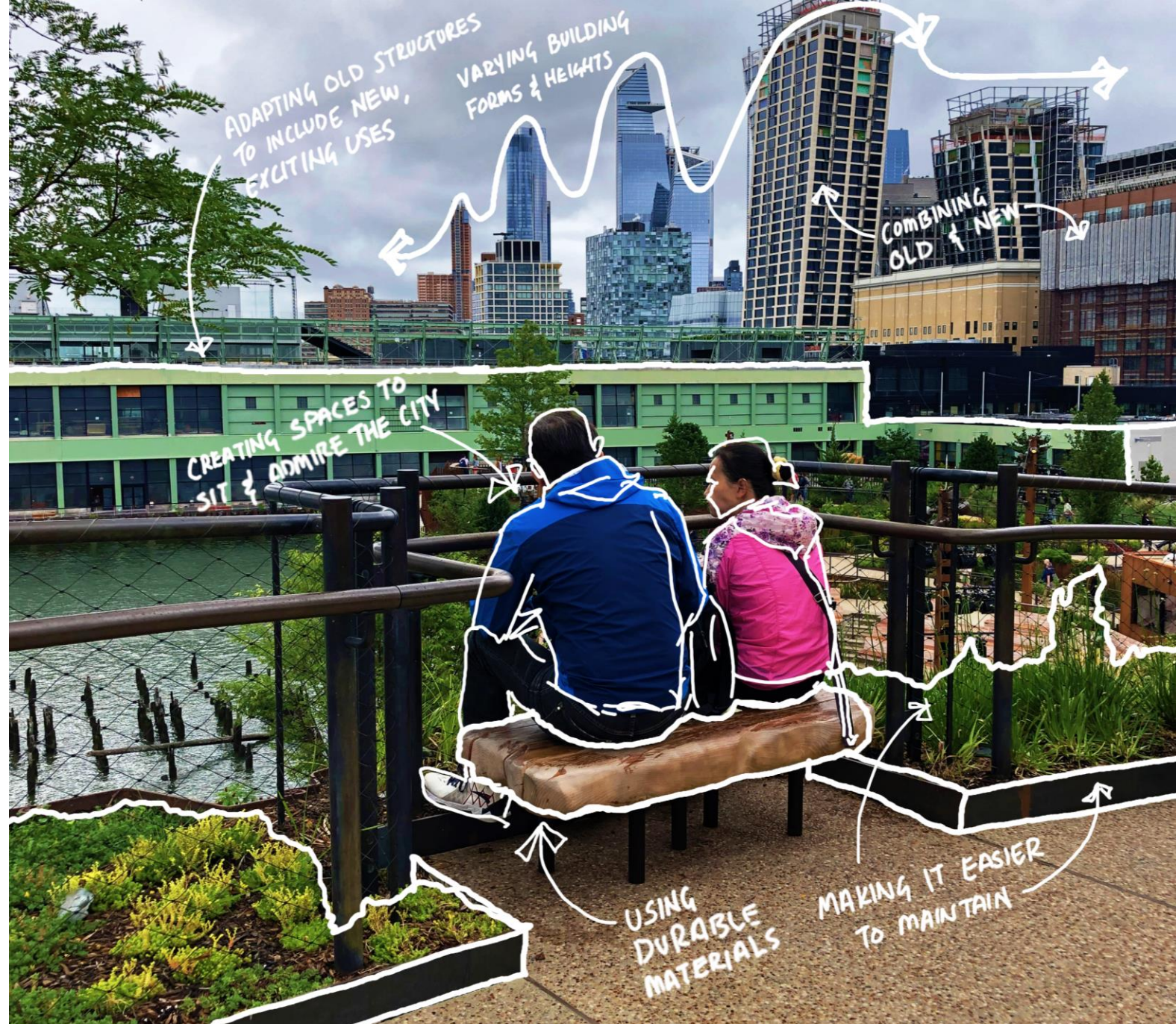
for NEW YORK CITY

Town & Gown Design Symposium
May 20th, 2024

Agenda

- Urban Design in NYC

- The Principles & Guidebook

- Q &A

Questions

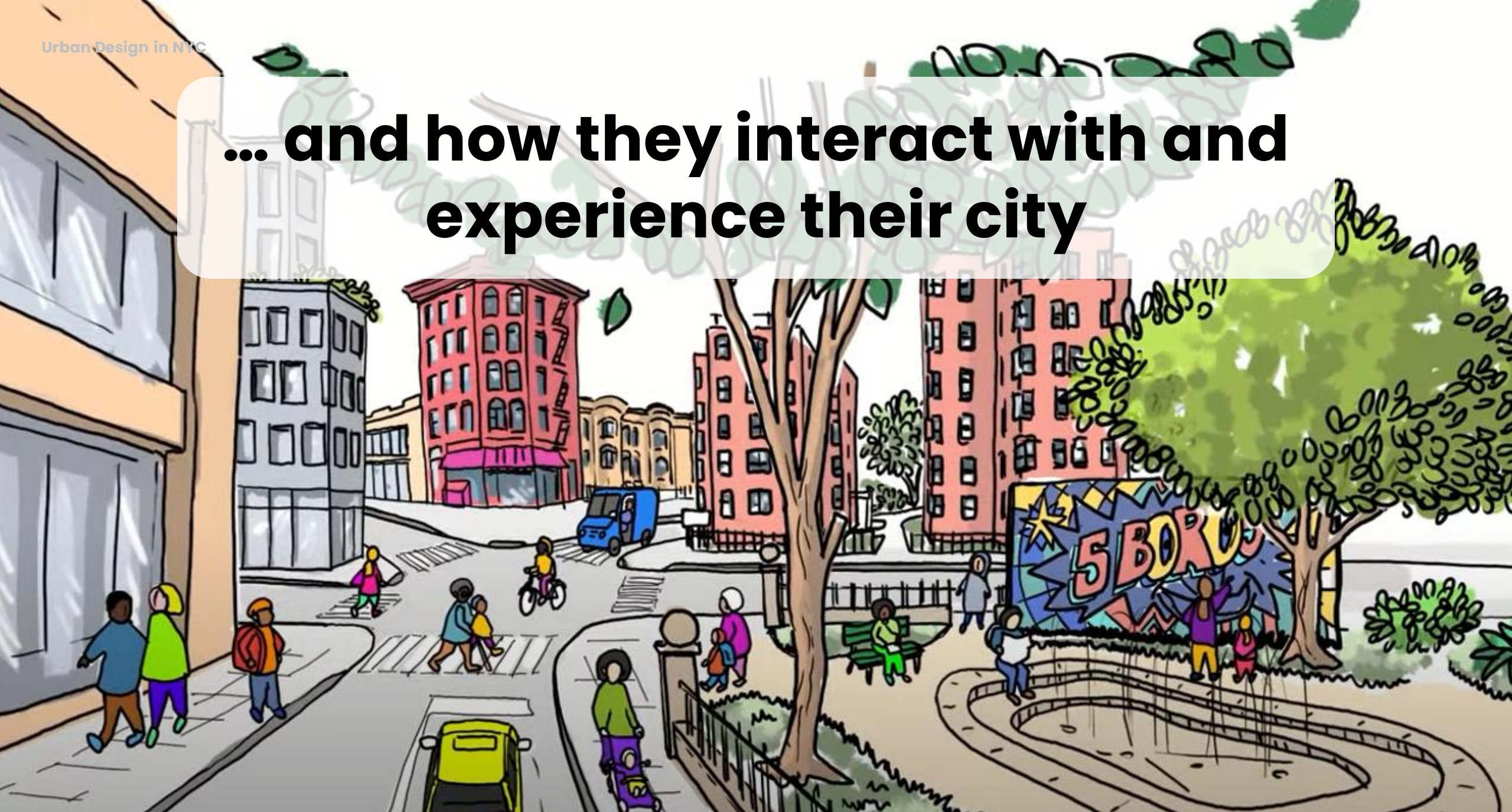- **Do you have a project in mind that exudes the** *Principles of Good Urban Design?*

- **Do you have an idea for how you would use this resource in your work, or a suggestion for making** *The Principles* **actionable?**

Urban Design focuses on people

... and how they interact with and experience their city

The buildings, sidewalks, and streets…

NYC
PLANNING

...the plazas,

...the parks,

...and the waterfronts

At NYC Planning,
We shape the city through...
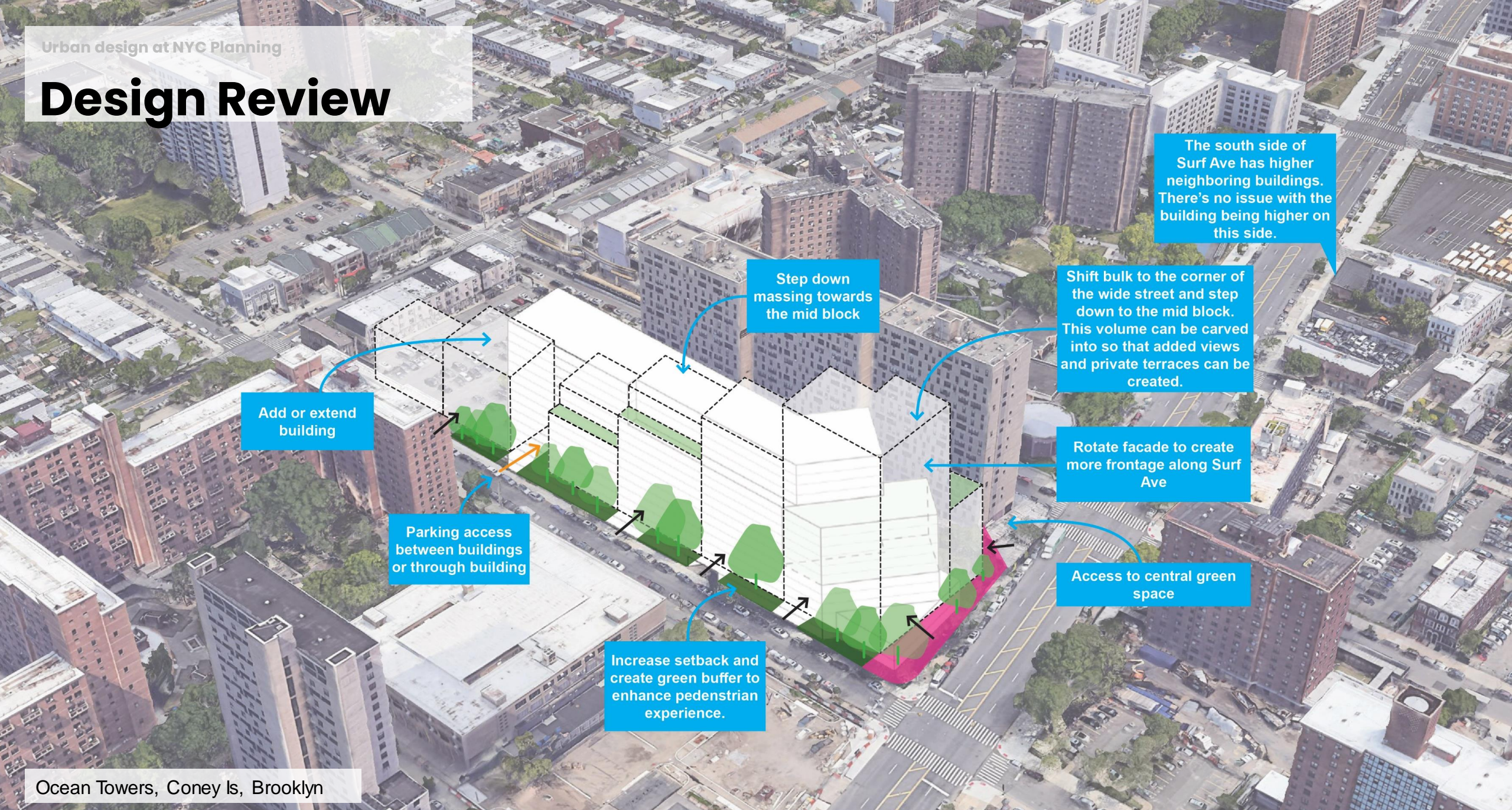
Ocean Towers, Coney Is, Brooklyn

Citywide Initiatives

City of Yes for Housing Opportunity

Neighborhood Planning

Bronx Metro-North Station Area Plan

New Station

Tools, Resources + Research

NYCHA Connected Communities Initiative

Civic Engagement

Cross Bronx Walking Tour

Cross Bronx Workshop – Morris Heights, Bronx

Roundtable Discussions & Activities

Cross Bronx Biking Tour

Our Mission

To shape a more livable city by advocating for high quality design of the built environment, together with all New Yorkers.

2017's Principles of Good Urban Design

The Principles -

- Communicate the importance of a high quality-built environment

- Established a set of design values for the Department

- Aided Urban Designers as a tool to advocate and improve projects

- Shared resource for those involved in city making

Good Urban Design:

Both reinforces and creates a *sense of place*.

New Yorkers love neighborhoods with a sense of identity and authenticity. Great urban design incorporates and celebrates a neighborhood's history, the culture of those who call it home, and the natural systems that underlie and surround it. Iconic buildings, vibrant public spaces, and natural areas can generate a powerful and unique sense of place. Those elements of urban design that are familiar throughout the city—recognizable building types, well-ordered streets, and waterfront esplanades—create a rich and welcoming urban environment.

Pays attention to *details*.

Good urban design spans multiple scales, from benches to planters, to large-scale planning and large-term initiatives. It requires attention to detail at every step in the planning and design process. With urban design leadership and vision, an abandoned rail line can become a world class park and a dilapidated street can emerge as a village commons. Good design does not have to cost more or take more time, it is rather about making strategic decisions at the initial stages of a proposal.

Is open, accessible to everyone and *inclusive*.

The City uses policy and zoning tools to improve New Yorker's access to housing, open space, healthy food, and other essential neighborhood services. For instance, quality public space can be defined as balancing the needs of its users, pedestrian, bicyclists and motor vehicles, on any given street. By ensuring that privately owned public spaces and waterfronts are both visible and welcoming to passersby, and that affordable housing construction enjoys the same standard of design as its neighbors, our city will feel more inclusive to all.

Provides a sense of *comfort*.

In 1916 New York City's first zoning regulations were established to address quality of life concerns, from appropriate separation of land uses to access to light and air. These core ideas remain integral to every urban design decision, more so as we now address a broader set of questions regarding public health, greater inclusion, and enjoyment across public spaces. Urban design supports the creation of vital street life by promoting a diverse range of uses to activate the ground floor of buildings that give each neighborhood a unique identity. People feel a sense of security and comfort walking through a well-knit network of buildings and public realm.

and don't be afraid to explore new solutions, these may produce a more innovative and improved outcome.

Urban Design Principles
for Planning
New York City

At the Department of City Planning, the practice of urban design is concerned with the policies that shape our experiences of the built environment. The goal of these policies is to create a sense of civic pride and foster the enjoyment of the city for people of all ages, abilities and background. To do so, urban designers aim to create a well-knit fabric of buildings and public spaces and to improve people's experience through the city by crafting policies that serve the public good. By thinking across scales – from the bench to the building, to the block to the neighborhood, the borough to the city – we promote quality of the built environment in support of good quality of life. The principles are intended to be a resource internally for department staff and externally for those who are working to improve the livability of New York City's neighborhoods and those who share our commitment to expand, protect and promote our public realm.

NYC PLANNING

120 Broadway, 31st Floor
New York, NY 10271
www.nyc.gov/planning
@NYCPlanning

Why update the Principles?

Dyckman Street – Open Restaurants. Inwood, Manhattan

Multi-Year Engagement Process

Community Board Meetings

Including all 5 Borough Boards

Website

1500 Survey Respondents form all 59 Community Boards

Public Events

Earth Day

Workshops

With the AIA, Design and Planning Professionals

Interagency

City Agencies Survey & Workshops

Roundtable

With Developers

Voices & Outcomes

Lacks Clear Grounding to Everyday Work

Resiliency

Insular Focus

Equity

Climate Change

Too Abstract

Not Revisited Over Time

Do Not Reflect Current Challenges & Opportunities

Incorporate **feedback**

Make them more **accessible**

Provide concrete **examples**

Put them into **action**

The Principles of Good Urban Design

Principle 1
Enhance People's Daily Lives

Principle 2
Care for a Neighborhood's History, Culture, and Identity

Principle 3
Embrace the City's Dynamism

Principle 4
Confront Society's Greatest Challenges

Overview

Web version now available at: nyc.gov/urbandesign
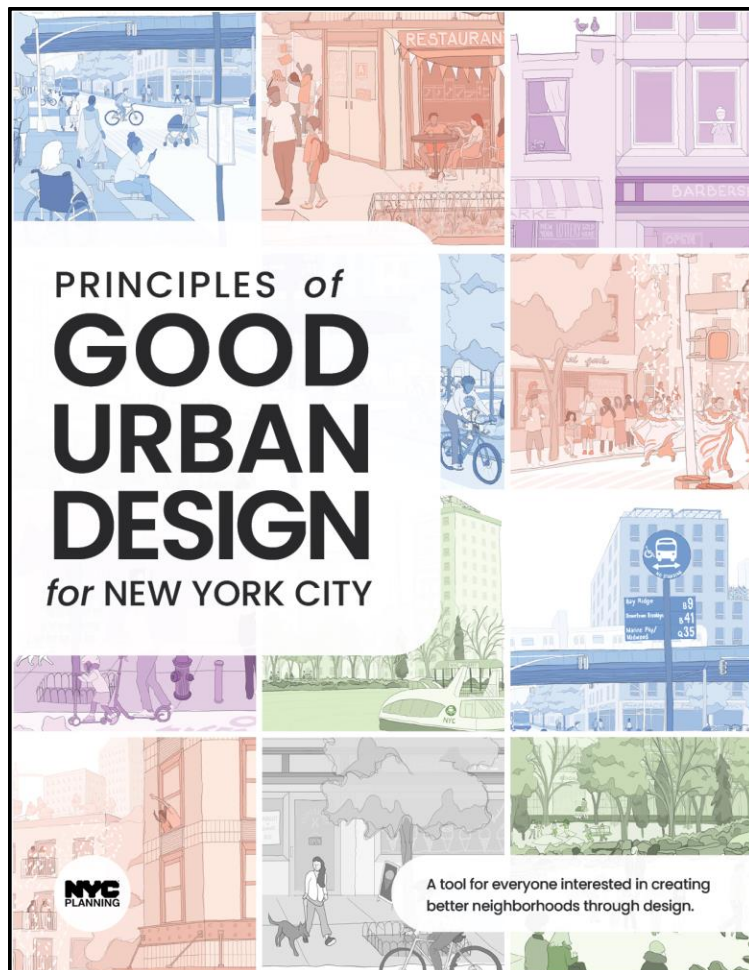
CONTENTS

1 Urban Design in NYC (pages 1-12)

A primer on urban design and introduction to this guidebook.

2 The Principles (pages 13-32)

Illustrations, language, and objectives to explain how to achieve better design outcomes in all parts of the city.

3 The Principles in Place (pages 33-48)

Real-world project examples to showcase how *The Principles* take shape in different spaces across the city.

4 Resources and Acknowledgments (pages 49-60)

Resources, references, and terms to learn more about urban design and get involved in planning projects.

Driving Goals

1

By defining what is good urban design, **we can set expectations that align with a vision for the city.**

2

By outlining an approach to good urban design, **we can shape better design outcomes.**

3

By promoting examples of good design, **we can illustrate how urban design goes beyond aesthetics.**

4

By simplifying design language, **we can increase involvement in planning and design discussions.**

What are *The Principles?*

Good urban design is centered on the **experience of daily life** and **care for our neighborhoods** so that we may continue to **embrace our dynamic city** and **confront the challenges** ahead.
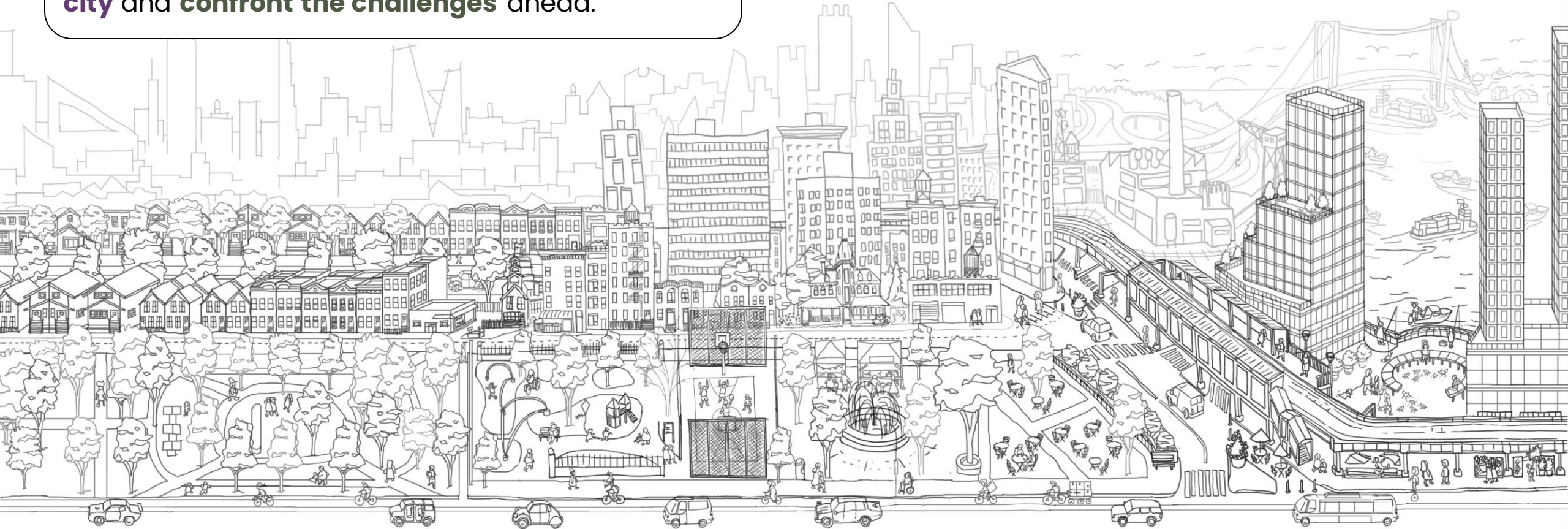
Who are they for?

Members of the Public

Provide tools and language for people to shape their neighborhoods

Professionals

An aid to justify design ideas and link to other important project goals
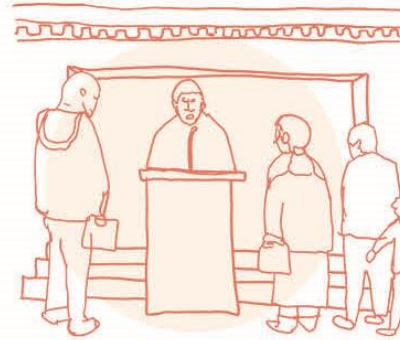
The Government

Leverage design to further the NYC's policy goals

Developers

Clear understanding of NYC's design values and larger vision

ENHANCE

CARE

EMBRACE

CONFRONT

NYC PLANNING
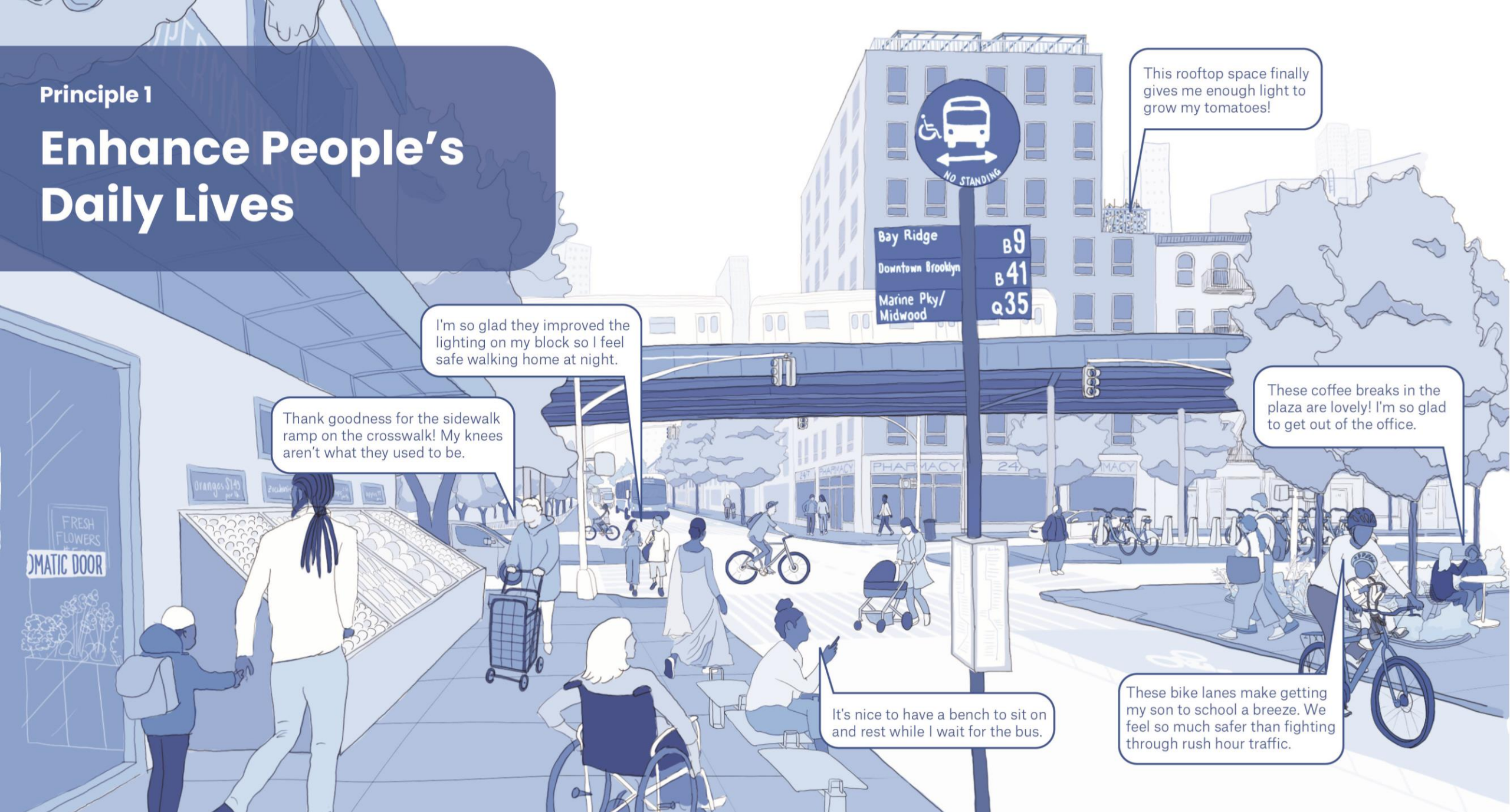
Principle 1: **Enhance People's Daily Lives**

Access to a variety of transit options

Fordham Plaza

Well-connected to nearby green spaces, schools, and essential retail services

Cyrus House

Building space can prioritize homes over parking spaces because tenants do not have to rely solely on cars

Third Ave

Photo © Alexander Severin

NYC PLANNING

Principle 1: **Enhance People's Daily Lives**

Quality architecture strengthens visual appeal

Indoor comfort is improved by maximizing residents' access to natural light

Cyrus House

Strong ground floor design enhances the sidewalk experience and heightens perceptions of safety

Third Ave

Photo © Alexander Severin

Principle 2: **Care for a Neighborhood's** History, Culture, and Identity

All local communities were engaged by conducting meetings in multiple languages and holding all events within the neighborhood

Dinsmore Chestnut Visioning Workshop

Principle 2: **Care for a Neighborhood's**
History, Culture, and Identity

Existing networks and local assets were mapped with community input, allowing the project team to gain insight on how people use different spaces

Strategies to protect and enhance the industrial business zone were developed by meeting with local industrial businesses
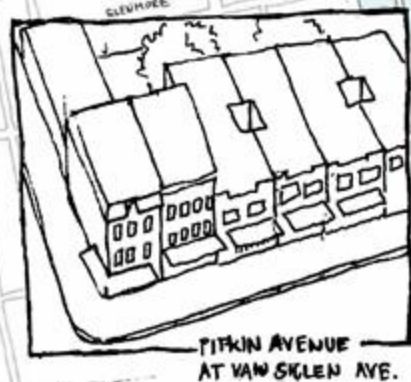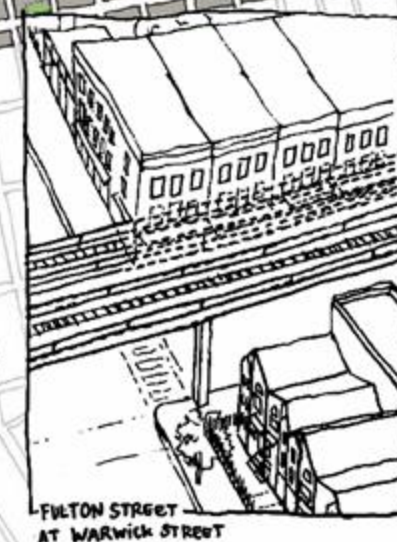
Principle 2: **Care for a Neighborhood's** History, Culture, and Identity
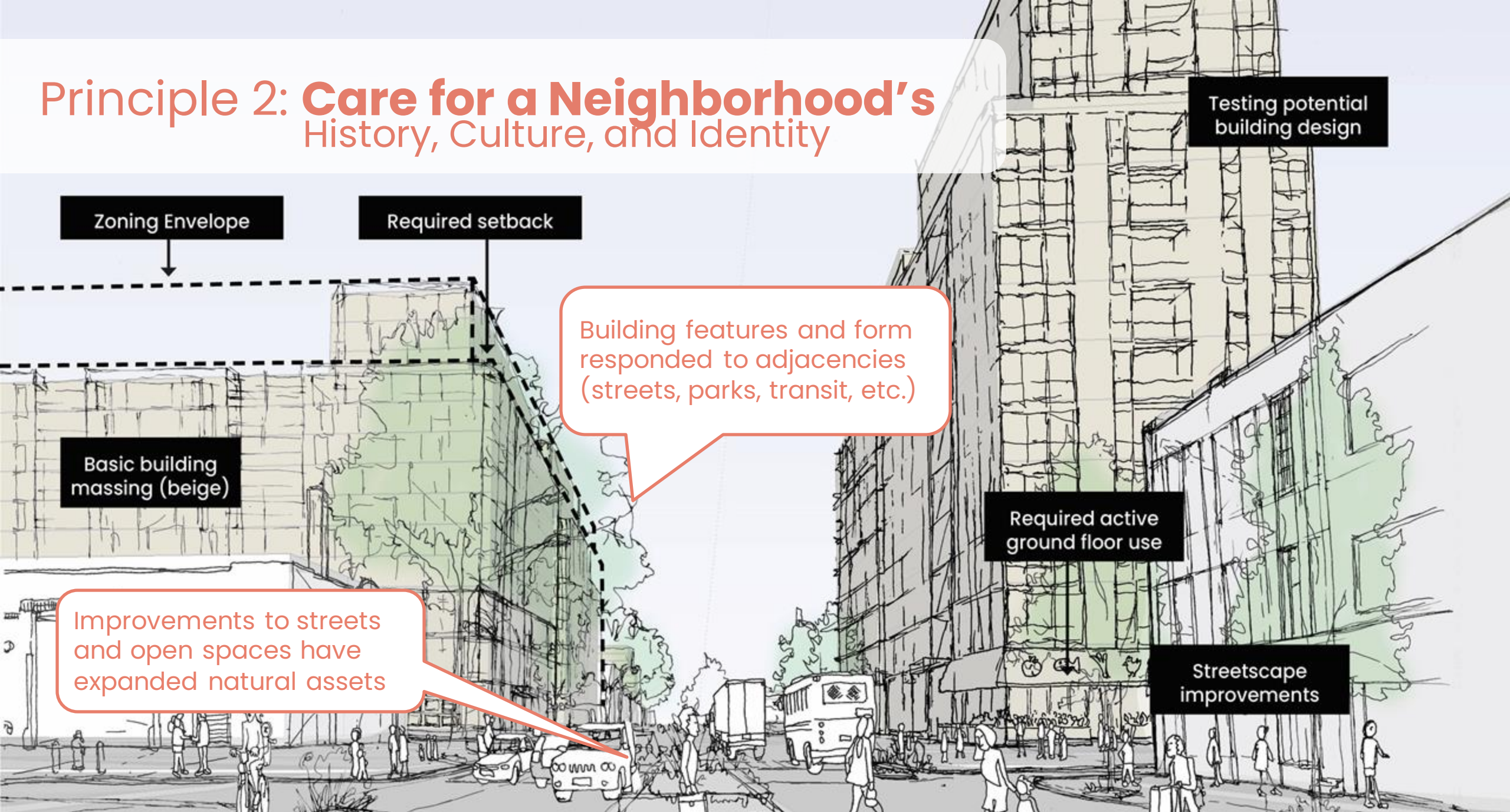
Principle 3: **Embrace the City's Dynamism**

Sendero Verde

Community-driven programming and thoughtful coordination between indoor and outdoor spaces amplify public life

Thoughtful trade-offs were negotiated to re-create community gardens while generating affordable housing units.

Madison Ave

E 111th Street

Principle 3: **Embrace the City's Dynamism**

The elevated courtyard adds variety to East Harlem's public space network

The development attracts residents, students, workers of various professions, and visitors, adding energy and new experiences to the neighborhood.

Principle 4: **Confront Society's Greatest Challenges**

The building's non-residential uses bring a variety of people to the waterfront, providing diverse opportunities for social interaction.

Environmental improvements prepare the site to address climate risks

300 Huntington

Gowanus Canal

Principle 4: **Confront Society's Greatest Challenges**

Native and aquatic plants enhance biodiversity, flood resiliency, and local ecosystems.

A variety of seating areas and social spaces encourage people to enjoy time outdoors

NYC PLANNING

Objectives

- Ground each principle with goals and prompts

- Adjust as needed given the project at hand

- Promote creativity and genuine solutions

Topic-based objectives + detailed "how-to" actions

Principle 4

Objectives

Good urban design is about problem solving. These actions can help us confront society's greatest challenges in a collective and responsible manner.

Sustainability and Adaptability

→ Forging an ambitious path toward a carbon neutral city, while protecting neighborhoods from the impacts of a changing climate.

→ Looking for opportunities to incorporate signage and other features that share information about climate issues and goals.

→ Going above and beyond code requirements to better prepare for the climate risks of today while creating a more resilient environment for the future.

→ Identifying clear strategies that adapt open spaces to withstand climate risks, improve ecological habitats, and ensure people have access to cool spaces.

Equity and Opportunity

→ Striving for positive change by "co-designing" our neighborhoods.

→ Designing alongside diverse, representational groups and community leaders to generate an inclusive vision for public spaces in any given neighborhood.

→ Prioritizing restorative and reparative strategies, such as improving parks that have received less investment than others in the city. (An example is featured on pages 45-48.)

→ Avoiding "hostile design"—or design features that discourage access, gathering, or rest—to create inclusive, comfortable, and welcoming spaces.

Health and Well-being

→ Designing to reduce noise and air pollution and mitigate urban heat.

→ Making physical activities more available and enjoyable for people of all backgrounds and abilities.

→ Encouraging people to maximize time in public spaces by designing interesting pathways with ample amenities.

→ Being mindful of generational needs to ensure that all ages— from young children to seniors— are well connected to spaces that are comfortable and engaging.

Diversity and Mutual Understanding

→ Considering programs and spaces that facilitate social interaction and community decision-making.

→ Encouraging programs and activities that enliven the neighborhood by welcoming residents and visitors of all races, ethnicities, socio-economic backgrounds, and sexual orientations.

→ Increasing the design quality of open spaces in all corners of the city to foster pride, encourage stewardship, and bring neighborhoods together.

→ Creating or enhancing spaces that support social interaction and allow for a diverse array of cultural and artistic expressions.

31

32

Talking About Urban Design
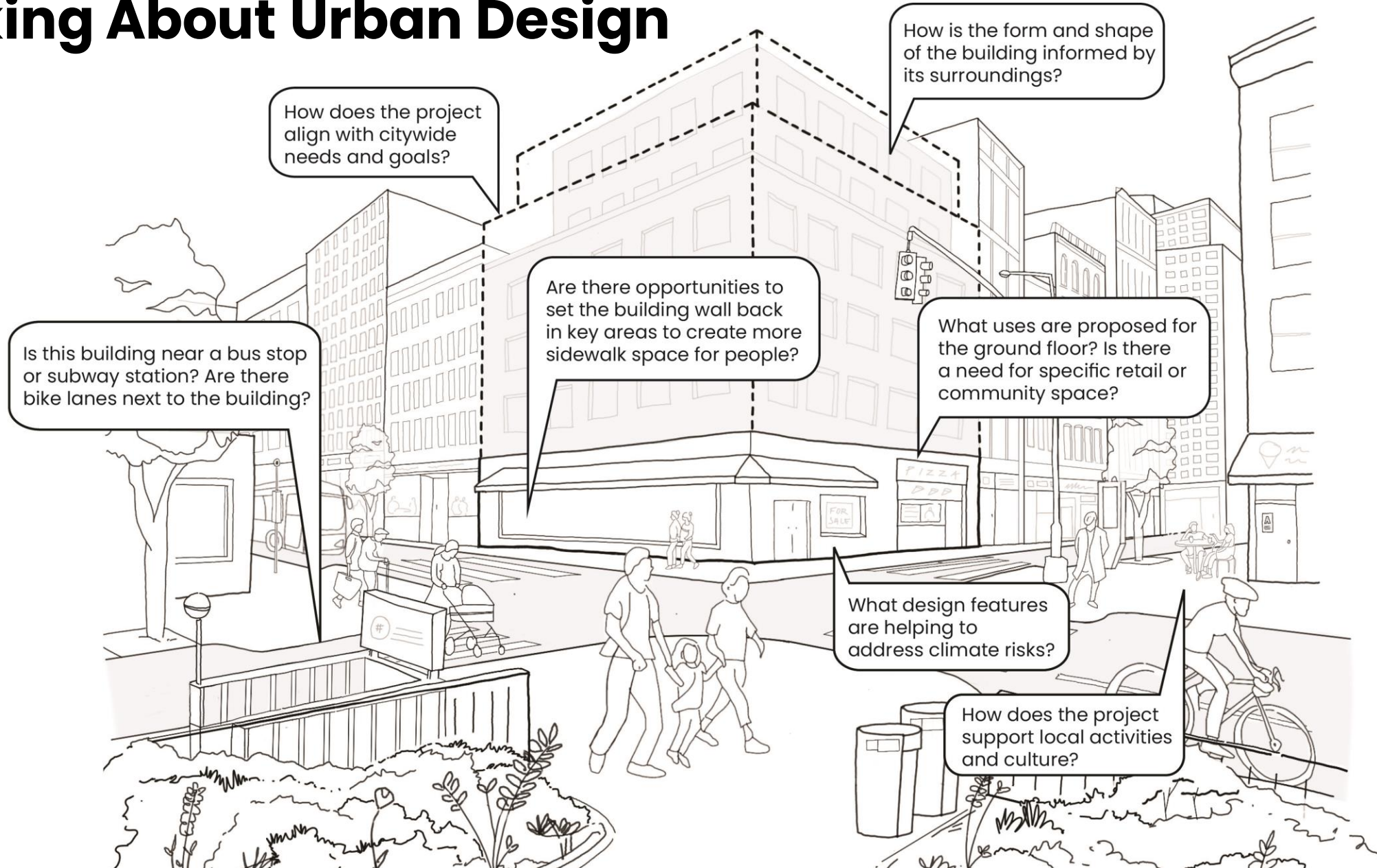
Getting Involved in a Project

1

Determine the STATUS

Is the project currently being built or still in planning?

→ Search the Building on My Block website.

→ Search the DOB NOW portal.

→ Visit the site. Is there construction fencing along the sidewalk? Look for a "work in progress" sign—these contain helpful information about projects that are under construction.

→ Find your Community District and consult your Community Board website for more information.

Yes! This project is in the Planning Phase.
See Step 2.

No! This project is Under Construction.[1]

Contact your DOB Borough Office.

2

Understand the SCOPE

Does the project involve land use changes?

→ Search for the project on the City's Zoning Application Portal (searchable by address, borough/block/lot, or on interactive map).

Visit DCP's website and search the Initiatives page for more information.

Yes! This is a Land use change.
See Step 3.

No! This is not a Land use change.

Find the lead city agency or identify the commission[2] that votes on the project.

→ For projects in a historic building or district, visit the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

→ Is the project on city-owned land? Check with the Public Design Commission.

→ Visit the Department of Transportation website for Current Projects.

→ Check the NYC Parks website for open space initiatives.

3

Find the SCHEDULE

Is this project currently in the public review process?

→ Check the project schedule[3] on the Zoning Application Portal and search under "Milestones" for upcoming events.

→ Visit DCP's website and search the Initiatives page for more information.

No! It is not in public review.

Yes, Public review is in progress.

Attend a public meeting.

→ Visit NYC Engage for upcoming events.

Contact your Community Board District Manager, Council Member's Office or DCP Borough Office to get involved.

Speak Up!

How do I come prepared to outreach events or public hearings?

→ Join the project's City Planning Commission Review Session or view the recording at DCP's YouTube channel.

→ Use the Zoning Application Portal to view project details and understand which actions are up for a vote.

→ Visit the Community Board website (or project website) for information on specific project details.

→ Use language and visuals from this guidebook to advocate for good design!
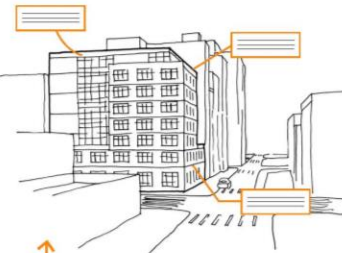
Refer back to pages 7–8 for conversation prompts on how to talk about the design of a project undergoing public review.

Exploring Topics Further

Read the Guidebook Online!
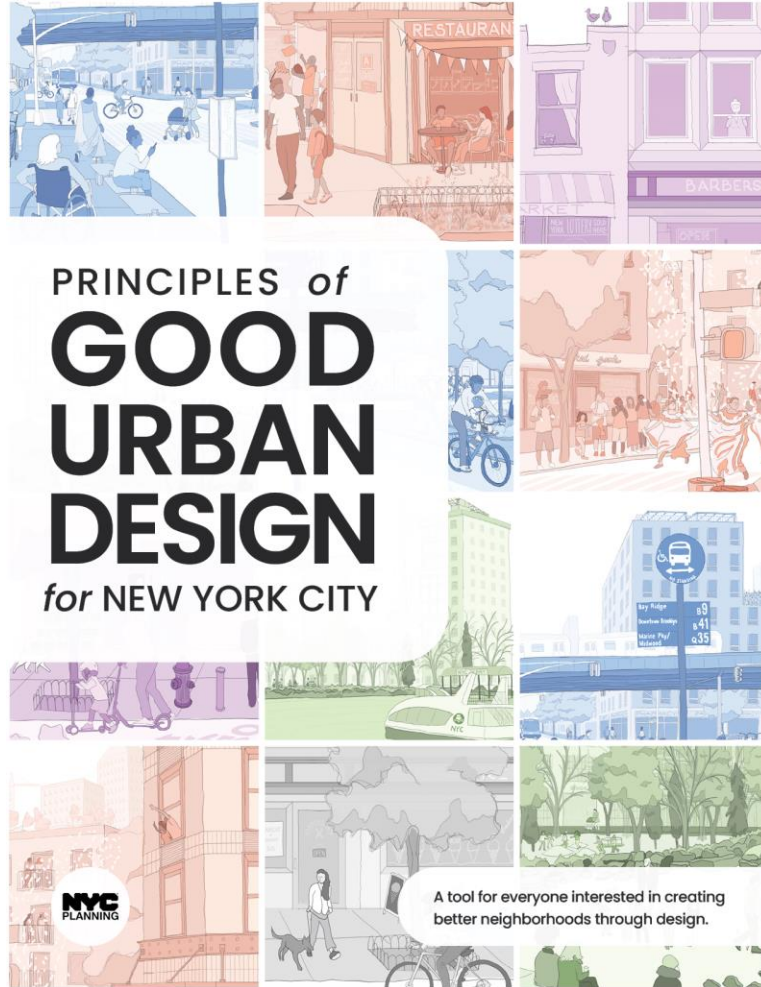
Scan the QR code to view and download the guidebook to the **Principles** *of* **Good Urban Design**

Contact us at:
UrbanDesign@planning.nyc.gov

What's Next

- **Continued outreach** to community boards, design and planning practitioners, city agencies, and opportunities to connect with the broader public.

- Build out repository of **Case Study** examples.

- Supplement with additional guidance focused on **Design Process and Review.**

- **Design Briefs** that focus in on project types, themes and trends.

Principles of Good Urban Design

Questions

• **Do you have a project in mind that exudes the** *Principles of Good Urban Design?*

• **Do you have an idea for how you would use this resource in your work, or a suggestion for making** *The Principles* **actionable?**

Principles of Good Urban Design

PRINCIPLES *of*
GOOD
URBAN
DESIGN
for NEW YORK CITY

Town & Gown Design Symposium
May 20th, 2024

Appendix

Who We Are

Urban Design Office

Team

Team

	Erick	Sagi	Ryan	Chau	Gary	Crystal	Galina	Sarah
	Director Chief Urban Designer	**Deputy Director**	**Senior Urban Designer**	**Associate Urban Designer**	**Urban Designer**	**Senior Urban Designer**	**Associate Urban Designer**	**DCP Fellow**
Focus Areas	Vision Agency-wide & Interagency Strategy City-wide initiatives New projects & partnerships	City-wide initiatives Timelines/capacity Neighborhood Studies Application guidance & protocols Borough Support	Complex infrastructure projects Neighborhood Study Support Waterfront Public Realm Resiliency Principles of Good Urban Design Agency Liaison – DOT, DPR, DEC			Complex Architectural & Housing Neighborhood Study Support Environmental Review Digital Tools & Protocols Storytelling & Communication Design Briefs Agency Liaison – PDC, HPD & NYCHA		

Urban Designers Within DCP

o Design Review

o Civic Engagement

o Neighborhood Planning

Borough Offices

Land Use Review + Commission Operations

Strategic Planning + Neighborhood Studies
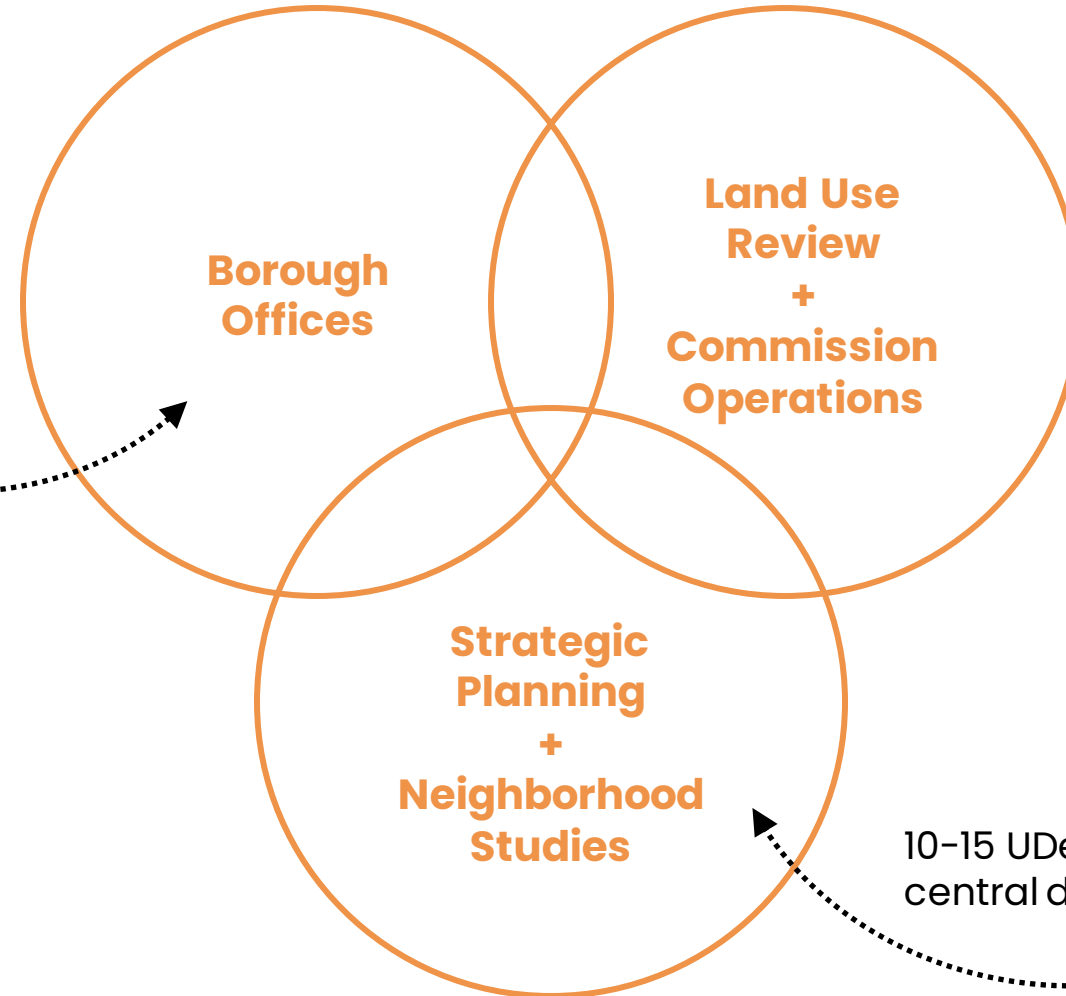
o Citywide Initiatives

o Neighborhood Planning

o Urban Design Tools, Resources + Research

o Design Review

o Civic Engagement

2-3 UDers per borough

10-15 UDers in central divisions

Central Urban Design Office Work Structure

Borough Office Work

Special Projects/ City-wide

Urban Design Office Initiatives

Research/ Design Briefs
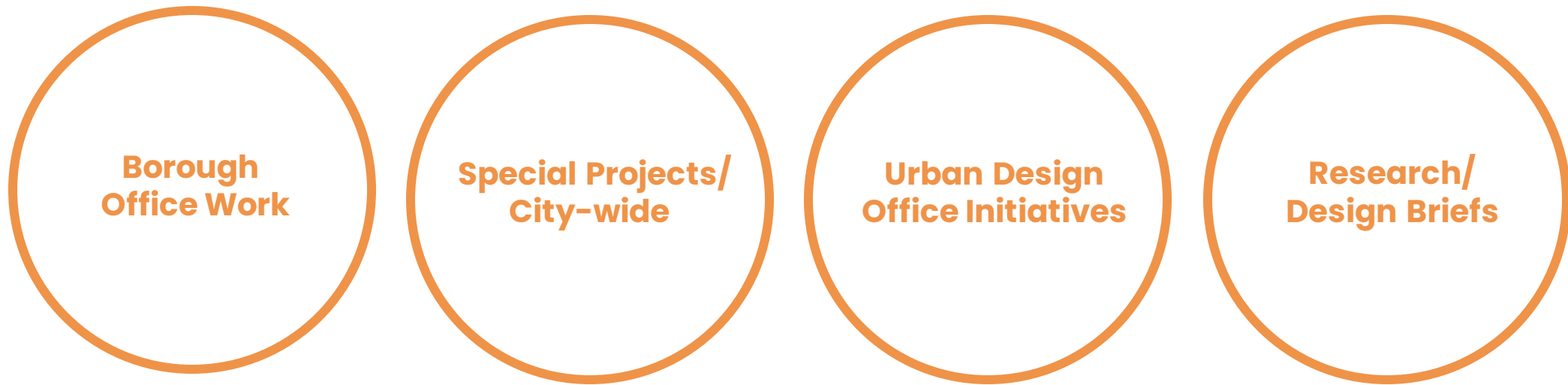
Urban Designers Within DCP

Communication between applicant teams

Urban Designers also communicate with DCP's internal Teams (TRD, Zoning, etc.)

DCP Team

Ownership Rep.

Land Use Attorney

Landscape Architect

Planner

Urban Designer

Architect

Engineer

Applicant Team

What We Do
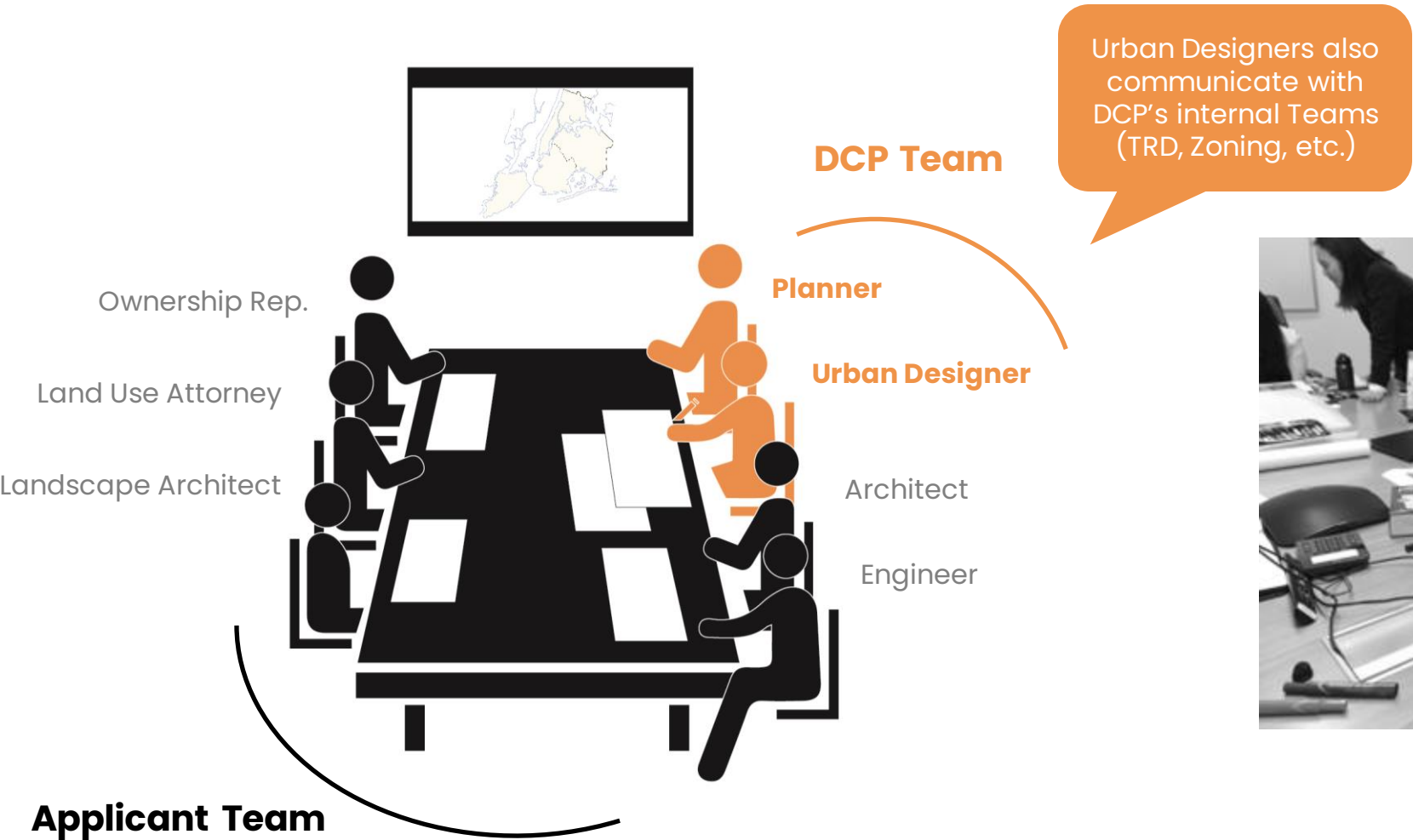
The Origins of the Urban Design Practice at DCP

The
Threatened
City

A REPORT ON THE DESIGN OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
BY THE MAYOR'S TASK FORCE

"The subject is <u>quality</u>, the quality of living in the sometimes-overpowering environment of the world's greatest city."

– Mayor Urban Design Task Force, 1967

Urban Design Group created in 1967

JONATHAN BARNETT

URBAN DESIGN AS PUBLIC POLICY

PRACTICAL METHODS FOR IMPROVING CITIES

FOREWORD BY JOHN V. LINDSAY

ARCHITECTURAL RECORD BOOKS
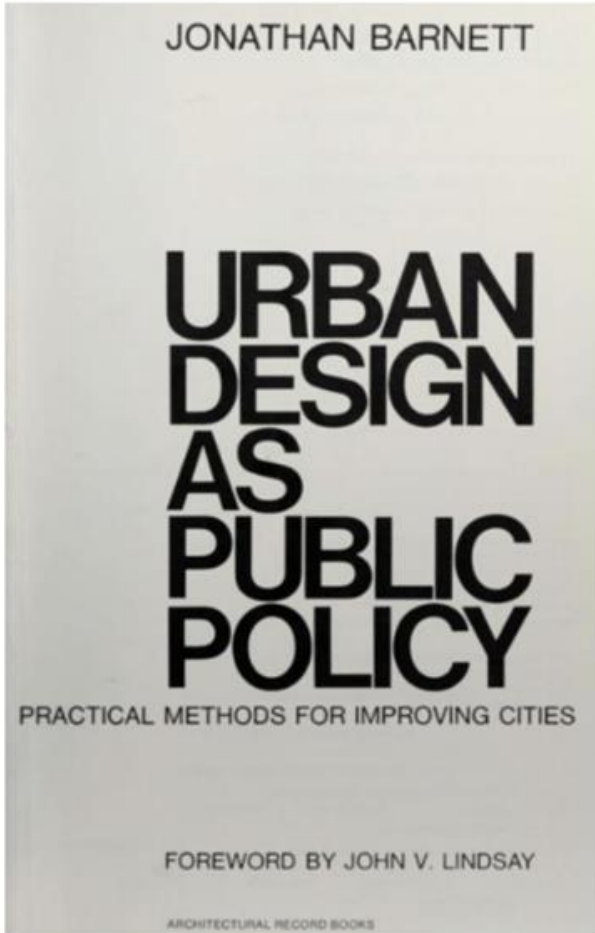
"... it is the <u>individuals</u> who must be kept in mind in working out the <u>details of the design solutions</u> if the solutions are to be <u>genuine</u>, not merely standard."

- Mayor Urban Design Task Force, 1967

Online Engagement

Website

goodurbandesign.nyc

| **1** | Video of what urban design is and why it's important | **2** | Share things you care about in your neighborhood | **3** | Share stories and photos from your neighborhood | **4** | Read and give feedback on the Principles |

Public Input – Survey

1,586 Responses across all 59 of 59 CBs

Focus on **safe and inclusive streets**, cleanliness, and sustainability

The Principles need to be more **encompassing** and **accessible**

Need **examples** to put them into action
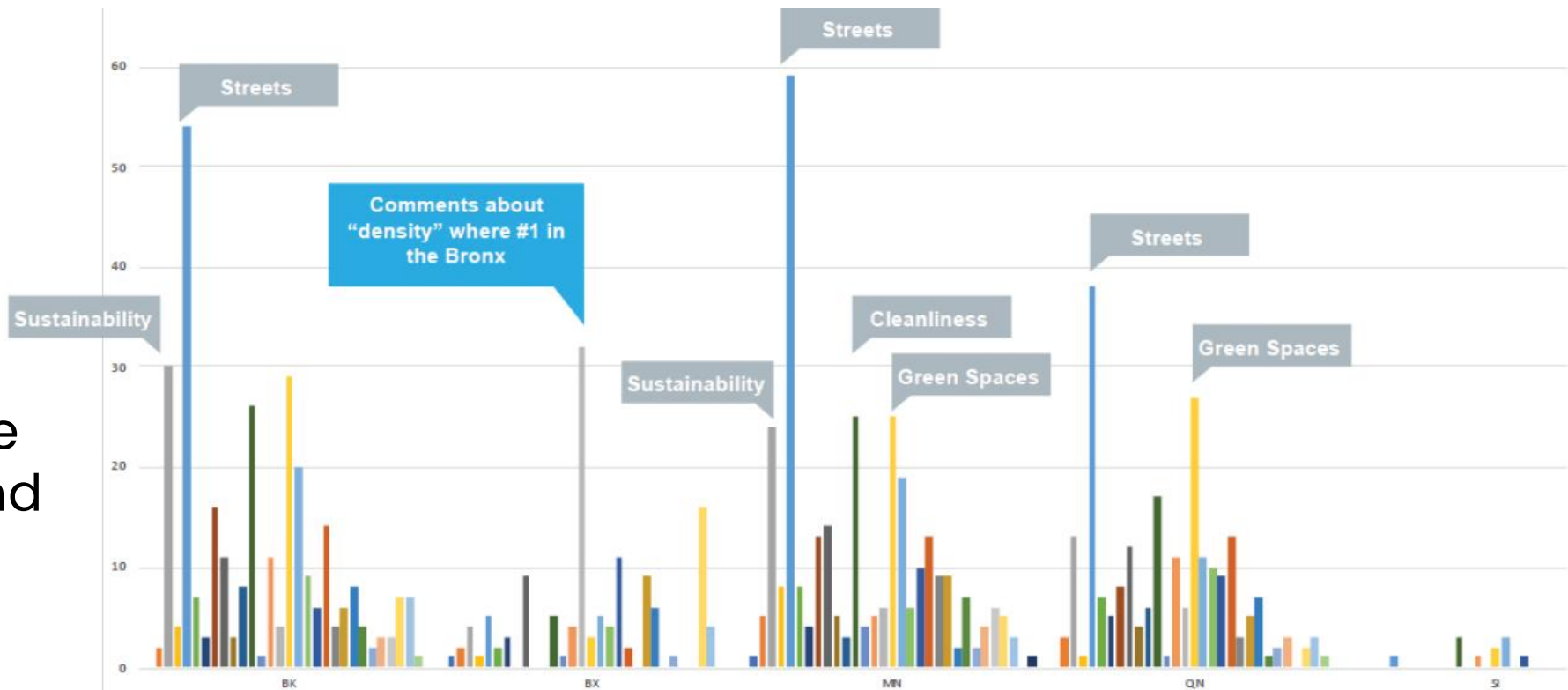
Practitioners Roundtables

PROCESS

Utility of The Principles to better fulfill community needs (timing of public engagement, interagency coord., etc.).

INSPIRATION

Molding a set of values that can be applied to many different contexts.

PRACTICE

Importance of unpacking the Principles through case studies and ways to translate a principle to practice.

ASSESSMENT

Use The Principles as an assessment tool to create more certainty in the design review process for applications.

PRODUCT

Create a physical reference that can sit on a professional's desk (i.e. the Zoning Handbook)

May 2022 Roundtable at AIANY Center for Architecture

Roundtable with Developers

Main takeaways:

- Good Design can create more **valuable assets**

- Design is iterative, with most critical thinking at the **on-set** and at the end through **details**

- Cost is a key driver

- Expectations for design can be helped through **consistent communication**

- **Case studies** and creation for a physical reference (like the Zoning handbook)

- Allow for **Flexibility**
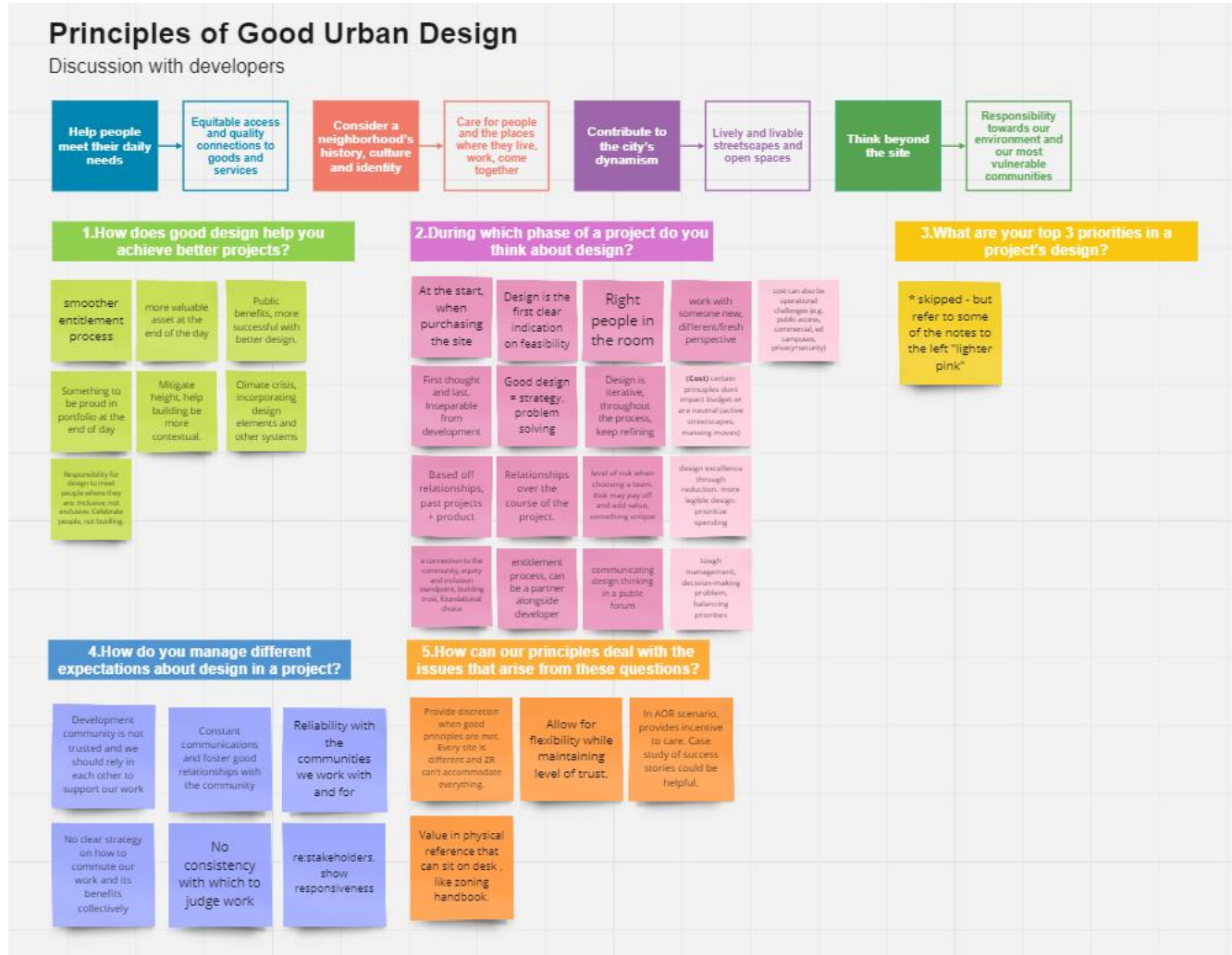
Interagency Discussion

Main takeaways:

- Understanding interaction various missions, values and objectives of **multiple agencies**

- Bring **alignment** where possible and allow for use across **varying project types**

- **Connect** with/to resources, guidelines and publications

- Benefit of **helping to define** what good urban design is and why it is important

Redrafting *The Principles*

Workshop
09/14

Something I'd like to tease out somewhere is knowing when to have a light touch / if its working well then don't disrupt

Principle 1:
Enhance people's daily life

Beauty!!!!

Whatever one's gender, race, ethnicity, faith, ability, or sexual orientation, everyone should feel comfortable and safe moving around New York City and enjoying its many open spaces and all that it has to offer. Good design can help strengthen people's quality of life, enhance their well-being, and help meet their daily needs with ease. Whether it is the sidewalk that is wide enough to accommodate rush-hour crowds, the elevator that provides accessibility to a subway station, the storefronts that provide activation along a neighborhood street, or the tables and chairs in a plaza that offer a comfortable place for leisure activities – the details of how we design our city matter and help contribute to a friendlier, more inclusive, and enjoyable experience of the city. Ultimately, a well-designed city creates a place of belonging where people not only feel like they are part of the city, but that the city is part of them.

everyday details?

Maybe this last sentence goes to principle 2

add in ground floor topics

- Advocate for including grocery stores, food markets, and other healthy and affordable food retailers in ground floor spaces.
- Advocate for preserving and improving public housing.

TALK ABOUT HOUSING EITHER IN DESCRIPTION OR OBJECTIVES

Accessibility and Safety

- Promoting easy, safe, and comfortable access for all ages and abilities.
- Ensuring safety in daytime and nighttime by providing good lighting, visibility, and inviting spaces.
- Providing clear hierarchy of vehicular, cycle, and pedestrian routes to reduce conflict and ensure the safe movement of people through the city.
- Defining programs and protecting resting and playing areas
- Minimizing the impact of security infrastructure on pedestrian experience; leverage as asset wherever possible.

Not sure if appropriate?

Mobility and Connectivity

- Prioritizing pedestrians by focusing on walking, bikes, buses, subways, and trains over automobiles.
- Minimizing the impact of traffic and automobiles by improving streetscape and sidewalk conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Addressing the different ways people get around the city as well as changing priorities by creating clear and legible connections between places.
- Facilitating convenient connections between different modes of transportation and protected areas for resting during commutes or waiting for public transit.

edit

legibility

there's a level of health that i think should be included here

Comfort and Well-being

beauty and comfort

- Ensuring everyone's access to wide, leafy, clean, and inclusive streets and sidewalks.
- Providing a diversity of programs to activate spaces through the different seasons and times of day, and that are comfortable in both extremely busy periods and quiet times.
- Prioritizing the presence and equitable distribution of public open spaces, landscaped areas, and green infrastructure
- Considering opportunities for family-friendly and cross-generational programming and play spaces.
- Providing with features that help mitigate environmental pollution such as air quality and noise
- Promoting waste management strategies that create a more attractive streetscape and improve the pedestrian environment

merge

add in ground floor topics

bathrooms and sanitation

mental health

create a more clean, attractive

Quality and Durability

Principle 2:
Care for the neighborhood's history, identity, and culture

New York City is made of a variety of individual and unique neighborhoods consisting of many different people, buildings, and histories that have shaped and continue to shape these neighborhoods. Good design can help people that live, work, and visit a neighborhood feel more considered by demonstrating care and awareness for the diversity of people, places, experience, cultures, and traditions that may already exist in a place. These layers are what should be reflected in how a neighborhoods buildings, streets, parks, and plazas look today. Whether it is the building form that is sensitive to the scale of the street, the playground that families bring their children to everyday, the plaza where communities gather for celebrations and festivals, or the natural landscape features that define the character of a place – caring for what makes a neighborhood unique can help foster a greater sense of belonging, community, and civic pride.

How do we lighten the language. Maybe less reactive? Leave to Jackie

Co-leading   *Empowering*

Listening, learning, Striving for co-creation

Community and Diversity

- Ensuring continuous collaboration and transparent communication between the community and all the involved parties to establish together an organization for local management and long-term stewardship.
- Prioritizing the neighborhood's history and collective knowledge to inform community needs and guide the design process
- Designing lifelong, flexible places where everyone can express and perform their culture and traditions.

People should be able to express and perform culture and tradition everywhere and not only in spaces especially designed for that. How to make it clearer?

Existing Uses and Networks

- Relying on existing networks and collaborating with community leaders and organizations to better capture the community's necessities.
- Considering existing places of gathering and the different ways in which people use and appropriate their spaces to inform priorities and opportunities for design.
- Integrating the existing economic, cultural, religious, and festive activities that take place in the neighborhood to buildings, streets... etc
- Accommodating shared aims of residents, workers, and visitors to make the city a more enjoyable place for everyone.

Natural Features and Resources

- Incorporating a variety of native plant and tree species, increasing the areas biodiversity, with more intensive planting away from the high footfall areas.
- Celebrating seasonal change and incorporating natural cycles into designs of buildings and open spaces.
- Encouraging greening, planting, and use of rooftops for additional opportunities for green spaces and biodiversity.
- Promoting access to light and clean air as a means of addressing broader public health considerations.
- Consider the natural topography, water bodies, fauna and flora to reinforce the neighborhood's character

These all feel more related to Principle 4 - make them more specific to place

Building Form and Features

- Building from and revealing the existing patterns and character of a place by considering the materials, colors, and forms of buildings,

---

Principle 2:
Care for the neighborhood's history, identity, and culture

New York City is made of a variety of individual and unique neighborhoods, consisting of many different people, buildings, and histories that have shaped, and continue to shape these neighborhoods. Good design can help people that live, work, and visit a neighborhood feel more considered by demonstrating care and awareness for the diversity of people, places, experience, cultures, and traditions that may already exist in a place. These layers are what should be reflected in how a neighborhoods buildings, streets, parks, and plazas look today. Whether it is the building form that is sensitive to the scale of the street, the playground that families bring their children to everyday, the plaza where communities gather for celebrations and festivals, or the natural landscape features that define the character of a place – caring for what makes a neighborhood unique can help foster a greater sense of belonging, community, and civic pride.

Community and Diversity

- Reinforcing a sense of identity and authenticity by incorporating aspects of the neighborhood's history and surroundings.
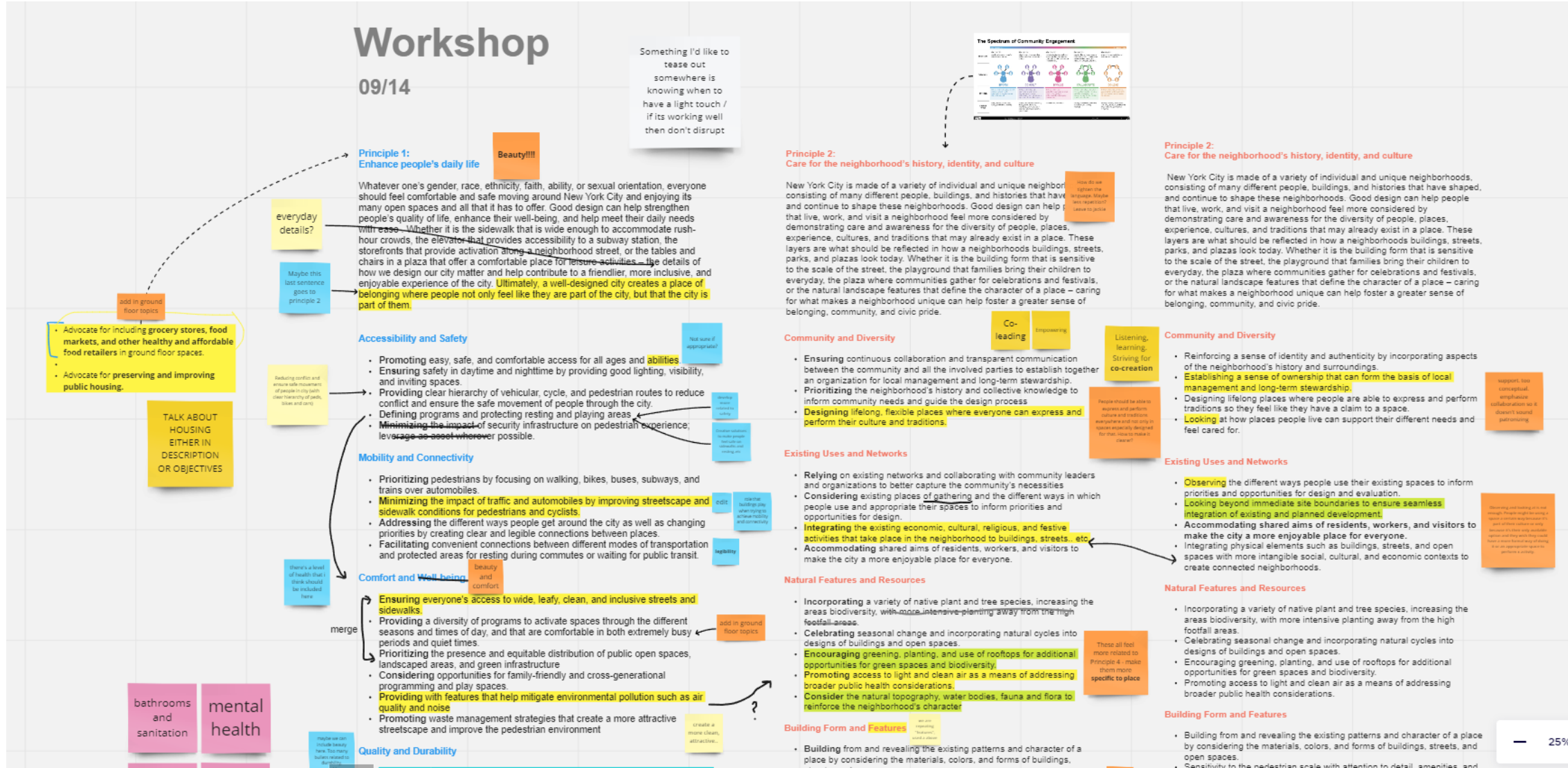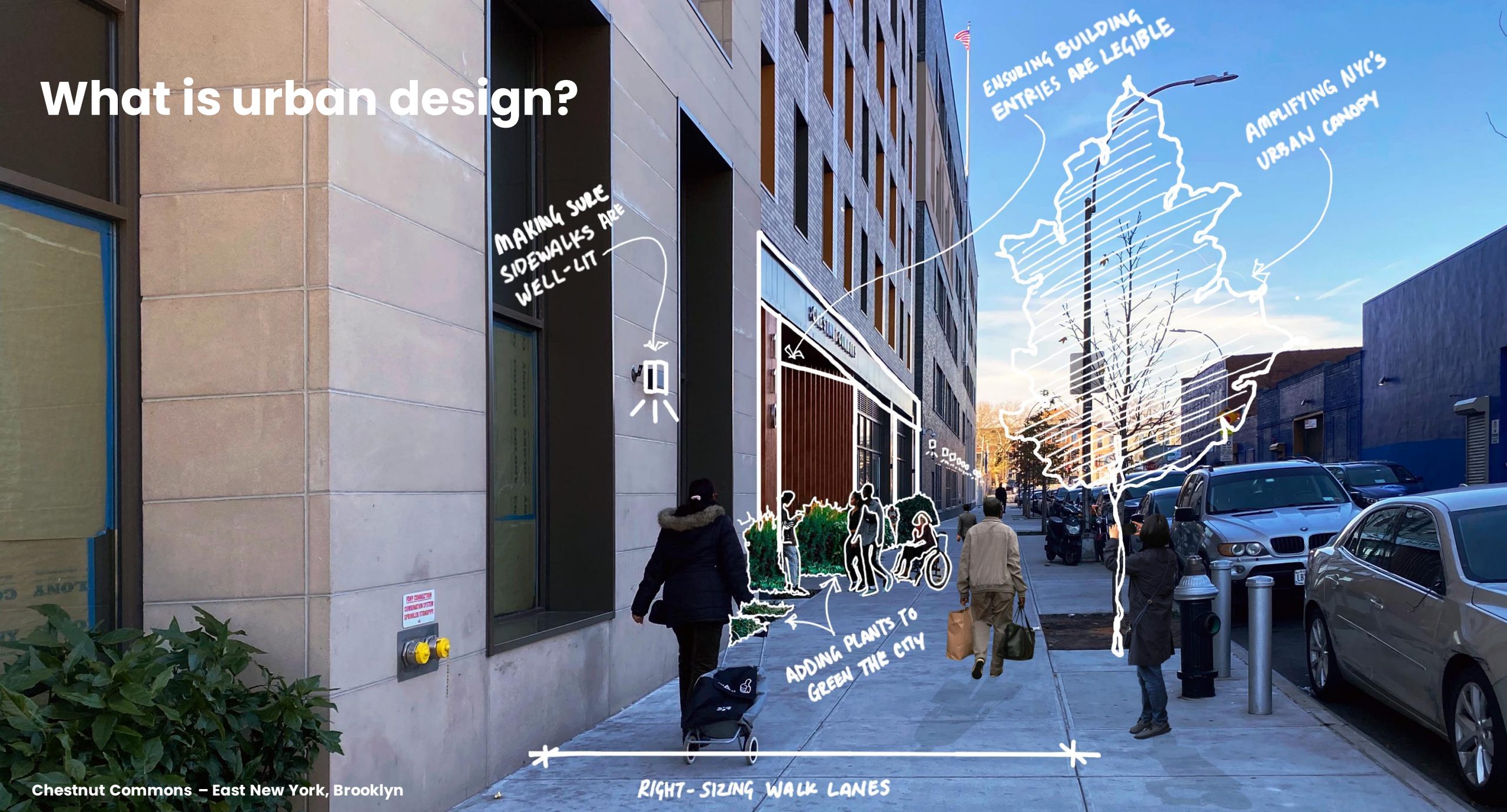- Establishing a sense of ownership that can form the basis of local management and long-term stewardship.
- Designing lifelong places where people are able to express and perform traditions so they feel like they have a claim to a space.
- Looking at how places people live can support their different needs and feel cared for.

support, too conceptual, emphasize collaboration so it doesn't sound patronizing

Existing Uses and Networks

- Observing the different ways people use their existing spaces to inform priorities and opportunities for design and evaluation.
- Looking beyond immediate site boundaries to ensure seamless integration of existing and planned development.
- Accommodating shared aims of residents, workers, and visitors to make the city a more enjoyable place for everyone.
- Integrating physical elements such as buildings, streets, and open spaces with more intangible social, cultural, and economic contexts to create connected neighborhoods.

Natural Features and Resources

- Incorporating a variety of native plant and tree species, increasing the areas biodiversity, with more intensive planting away from the high footfall areas.
- Celebrating seasonal change and incorporating natural cycles into designs of buildings and open spaces.
- Encouraging greening, planting, and use of rooftops for additional opportunities for green spaces and biodiversity.
- Promoting access to light and clean air as a means of addressing broader public health considerations.

Building Form and Features

- Building from and revealing the existing patterns and character of a place by considering the materials, colors, and forms of buildings, streets, and open spaces.
- Sensitivity to the pedestrian scale with attention to detail, amenities, and

The Spectrum of Community Engagement

25%

Redrafting *The Principles*

Workshop with Executive Office in September 2022

What is urban design?

MAKING SURE SIDEWALKS ARE WELL-LIT

ENSURING BUILDING ENTRIES ARE LEGIBLE

AMPLIFYING NYC'S URBAN CANOPY

ADDING PLANTS TO GREEN THE CITY

RIGHT-SIZING WALK LANES

Chestnut Commons – East New York, Brooklyn

NYC PLANNING

Why does it matter?

Scale of a
Person

Scale of a
Site

Scale of a
Block

Scale of a
Neighborhood

Scale of the
City and Beyond

Principle 3: **Embrace the City's Dynamism**

Before

After

A variety of spaces and seating options accommodate flexible programming throughout the day

Thoughtful material selection and design detail allow the contemporary POPS to blend well with old buildings and public spaces

Principle 3: **Embrace the City's Dynamism**

The innovative glass canopy invites visitors to discover the POPS, and also collects rainwater to irrigate plants

The tiered landscape creates hierarchy and topography, adding variety to Midtown POPS

Objectives

The following categories and detailed actions demonstrate how good urban design can enhance people's daily lives.

Accessibility and Safety

→ Providing people of all ages and abilities with an easy, safe, and comfortable experience on streets and within all our city's shared spaces.

→ Improving convenience of everyday life by ensuring access to essential neighborhood assets and services such as schools, open spaces, libraries and community facilities, grocery stores, pharmacies and health facilities, banking, and laundromat facilities.

→ Ensuring safety in daytime and nighttime with good lighting, clear sight lines, and inviting spaces.

→ Incorporating a variety of spaces to sit, socialize, or take shelter, as well as opportunities for play.

Mobility and Connectivity

→ Prioritizing sustainable mobility by encouraging walking, cycling, and public transit.

→ Facilitating convenient and comfortable transfers between modes of transit, while providing an opportunity to sit and rest during commutes.

→ Making navigation easier by using building features—such as easy-to-spot transit entries, visible access to indoor public spaces, and buildings that recess to expand the sidewalk—to connect the city's network of inviting public spaces.

→ Providing basic public services, such as bathrooms, drinking fountains, and Wi-Fi, and ensuring they are equally distributed across the city.

Comfort and Beauty

→ Ensuring everyone has a short journey to quiet, leafy, and clean open spaces that offer New Yorkers moments of respite from busy urban life.

→ Prioritizing activities, amenities, and architectural variety along the lower portions of buildings to create visual interest and enhance the pedestrian experience.

→ Finding opportunities for family-friendly design with programming and play spaces for all ages.

→ Creating cleaner, more attractive streets to promote a healthier and more enjoyable environment.

Quality and Durability

→ Providing public space amenities, such as seating, planting, and lighting, that are attractive, comfortable, and encourage social interaction.

→ Delivering long lasting, well-designed buildings that enhance neighborhood architecture and help improve quality of life within neighborhoods. (An example is featured on pages 39-40.)

→ Prioritizing durable and sustainable materials in our buildings and public spaces to serve New Yorkers for generations.

→ Considering maintenance needs in site design and materials. For example, using low-maintenance plants and locally-sourced building materials.

Objectives

These actions should be used to inform the design process and provide care for a neighborhood's history, culture, and identity.

Community and Diversity

→ Approaching urban design with the understanding that shaping neighborhoods must be a collaborative, open, and honest process.

→ Communicating in plain language and meeting the needs of non-English speakers.

→ Considering a neighborhood's history and collective knowledge to inform community needs and guide design decisions.

→ Respecting that change can be uncomfortable, and being a patient and active listener during design discussions.

→ Providing information, data, research, and tools that are easily accessible for people to shape their neighborhoods.


Existing Networks and Uses

→ Collaborating with neighborhood groups, institutions, and other local leaders to shape the design process and respond to community needs.

→ Considering how people use their existing spaces to inform priorities and unlock opportunities through design.

→ Incorporating established economic, cultural, religious, and festive activities into the design of buildings and public spaces.

→ Providing flexible public and semi-public places (such as libraries, community centers, and markets) where communities feel comfortable expressing their cultural traditions.

→ Synthesizing a wide variety of goals, whether they be from residents, property owners, elected officials, or more, to ensure different opinions are accounted for.

Natural Features and Resources

→ Looking for opportunities to re-integrate landscape within larger natural ecosystems by incorporating native species or materials into the design of public spaces.

→ Designing spaces that celebrate seasonal change and can be enjoyed year-round.

→ Encouraging greenery on rooftops, building facades, and other infrastructure to expand the biodiversity of NYC.

→ Considering how the design of public spaces and buildings can mitigate exposure to air and noise pollution.

→ Orienting new buildings and designing infrastructure in a way that maximizes access to natural light.
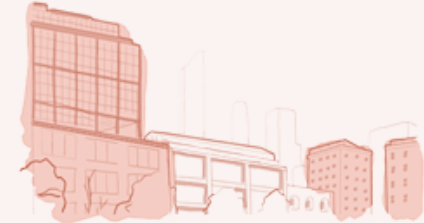
Building Features and Form

→ Creating relationships between buildings and public spaces by emphasizing the forms and rhythm of surrounding neighborhood blocks.

→ Using materials, colors, and shapes that reflect their surroundings.

→ Looking beyond the immediate boundaries of a lot to inform site programming and ensure a planned development complements neighborhood conditions.

→ Designing quality city facilities to represent the pride, history, and ambition of communities.

Objectives

These ambitions describe how good urban design can contribute to NYC's dynamic and vibrant spirit.

Innovation and Creativity

→ Reflecting NYC's wonder and delight with designs that give people a variety of experiences and vantage points. (An example is featured on page 35-36.)

→ Promoting ambitious and thoughtful approaches to design, programming, and the environment—no matter the size or budget of the project.

→ Utilizing new technologies (such as modular construction, *Passive House* design techniques, and advanced materials) to create better places for living and working.

→ Recognizing creative local initiatives and collaborating with communities to develop responsive solutions.

Flexibility and Variety

→ Embracing a variety of architectural forms and details to provide people with a dynamic experience as they move through neighborhoods.

→ Coordinating layers of activity in the design of buildings and open spaces to amplify public life.

→ Creating indoor and outdoor spaces that are great not only in their own right, but also complement and draw people to NYC's network of public spaces.

→ Designing places that are functional, beautiful, and comfortable throughout the seasons and across different times of the day and night.

→ Promoting amenities and programs for everyone, including evening activities and one-off celebrations or events.

Old and New

→ Ensuring new developments strike a balance between embracing NYC's continual change and respect for the context of existing neighborhoods, so they can stand as unique places on their own.

→ Collaborating with an alliance of local, public, and private interests to create inclusive places that support the old and embrace the new.

→ Recognizing the design opportunities that engage the ebb and flow of movement that is characteristic of NYC.

→ Adapting old buildings to meet current needs, ensuring NYC continues to thrive.

Resourcefulness and Tenacity

→ Contributing to NYC's enduring spirit of reinvention by learning from past challenges, adapting to change, and continually striving to create the best city we can.

→ Welcoming new ideas, approaches, and technologies to solve problems and unlock opportunities for urban imagination.

→ Identifying creative solutions when dealing with budget constraints by prioritizing design strategies that meet broader planning and policy goals.

→ Negotiating thoughtful trade-offs between hyper local, borough, citywide, and regional initiatives.

Objectives

Good urban design is about problem solving. These actions can help us confront society's greatest challenges in a collective and responsible manner.

Sustainability and Adaptability

→ Forging an ambitious path toward a carbon neutral city, while protecting neighborhoods from the impacts of a changing climate.

→ Looking for opportunities to incorporate signage and other features that share information about climate issues and goals.

→ Going above and beyond code requirements to better prepare for the climate risks of today while creating a more resilient environment for the future.

→ Identifying clear strategies that adapt open spaces to withstand climate risks, improve ecological habitats, and ensure people have access to cool spaces.

Equity and Opportunity

→ Striving for positive change by "co-designing" our neighborhoods.

→ Designing alongside diverse, representational groups and community leaders to generate an inclusive vision for public spaces in any given neighborhood.

→ Prioritizing restorative and reparative strategies, such as improving parks that have received less investment than others in the city. (An example is featured on pages 45-48.)

→ Avoiding "hostile design"—or design features that discourage access, gathering, or rest—to create inclusive, comfortable, and welcoming spaces.

Health and Well-being

→ Designing to reduce noise and air pollution and mitigate urban heat.

→ Making physical activities more available and enjoyable for people of all backgrounds and abilities.

→ Encouraging people to maximize time in public spaces by designing interesting pathways with ample amenities.

→ Being mindful of generational needs to ensure that all ages— from young children to seniors— are well connected to spaces that are comfortable and engaging.

Diversity and Mutual Understanding

→ Considering programs and spaces that facilitate social interaction and community decision-making.

→ Encouraging programs and activities that enliven the neighborhood by welcoming residents and visitors of all races, ethnicities, socio-economic backgrounds, and sexual orientations.

→ Increasing the design quality of open spaces in all corners of the city to foster pride, encourage stewardship, and bring neighborhoods together.

→ Creating or enhancing spaces that support social interaction and allow for a diverse array of cultural and artistic expressions.