

# NYC Plaza Program Proposal Guidelines

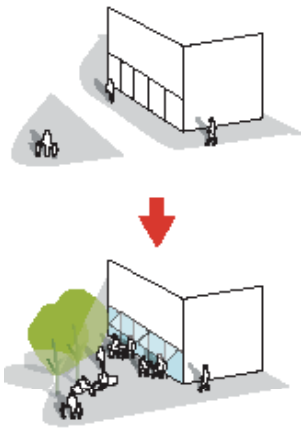


# Introduction

The New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) is proud to launch the NYC Plaza Program (Plaza Program). The new initiative will create or enhance an existing neighborhood plaza in every community in the City by transforming underused streets into compelling, accessible public spaces and walkable destinations. The Plaza Program is a key element of the City's effort to ensure that all New Yorkers live within a 10-minute walk of quality open space.

Through this innovative, new program, eligible nonprofit groups will apply to DOT to request a new public plaza. DOT will select the best proposals and will design and construct new plazas each year.

Partnerships will be essential to the Plaza Program. In collaboration with the Department of Small Business Services (SBS), DOT will work with appropriate community-based organizations to establish long-term, formal partnerships for each plaza. These Management Partners (Partners) will eventually take on daily operation and management of the permanent public plazas, once they are built.



After sites have been selected, DOT and its Partner will hold a public visioning workshop to develop a conceptual design that is appropriate to the scale and character of the neighborhood. A professional team of landscape architects will then base their plans on the conceptual design. The Partners will be involved throughout the design process. Once plazas are built, Partners will be responsible for regular maintenance, management, and programming of the plazas so they remain not only clean, safe, and attractive but also successful, active and well-used public spaces.

By applying to the Plaza Program, the applicant is requesting

- 1** to have City capital funds invested in their community,
- 2** to be involved in the design process, and
- 3** to take on the maintenance, management, and programming of the plaza once construction is complete.

DOT will consider only one application per organization.

# Requirements

## ORGANIZATIONAL CRITERIA

### **Applicants must be:**

- Nonprofit organizations operating in any of the five boroughs of New York City;
- Incorporated in New York State and compliant with annual State and Federal filing requirements for nonprofit organizations;
- Certified tax exempt under Internal Revenue Service Code Section 501(c)(3); and
- Located near the geographical target area of the proposed plaza

*Should the applicant not have 501(c)(3) status, the organization may partner with another sponsor that complies with the eligibility and legal requirements mentioned above.*

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

### **Based on its Fiscal Year 2007 budget, the organization must provide the following financial documentation:**

- Under \$25,000: most current Financial Statement (signed by Treasurer)
- \$25,000 or over: most current IRS 990
- \$100,000 or over but less than \$250,000: most current IRS 990 and Independent Accountant's Review Report
- \$250,000 or over: most current IRS 990 and Audited Financial Statements.

*In some instances, DOT may request audited financial statements from organizations with lesser budgets. Any organization that can claim exemption from the required financial documentation must submit written proof of such with their proposal.*

## SUPPORT

The applicant must demonstrate local support for the proposed plazas. Applicants must provide letters of support from key community stakeholders, which may include nearby institutions, elected officials, property and business owners, other nonprofit groups, neighborhood or block associations, and so forth. Community Board involvement is strongly encouraged. Applicants who cannot obtain Community Board support due to the Community Boards' July/August summer recess yet are chosen by DOT to be Partners will be provisionally awarded contingent upon Community Board support in the fall. DOT expects at least five (5) letters of support.

# Application Process

Any organization interested in applying to the Plaza Program must submit an application to DOT. **Proposals must be received BY EMAIL to [plazas@dot.nyc.gov](mailto:plazas@dot.nyc.gov) by 6 p.m. no later than Tuesday, August 19, 2008.** Fax or post mail submissions will not be accepted. All applications will be subject to a completeness review and organizations will be sent confirmation of receipt of their proposals as soon as the application has been processed. Organizations may be required to provide additional information after the original proposal has been submitted.

Applicants are encouraged to contact DOT with any questions well in advance of the deadline. For questions, please contact Vaidila Kungys by email at [plazas@dot.nyc.gov](mailto:plazas@dot.nyc.gov) or by phone (212) 442-7154.

## APPLICATION REVIEW & RANKING SYSTEM

Applications will be reviewed by a committee comprised of representatives from DOT and SBS. The panel will be charged with judging each application according to the following criteria: Open Space, Community Initiative, Site Context, Organizational & Maintenance Capacity, and Income Eligibility.

### **Open Space | 30 points**

To ensure that all New Yorkers live within a 10-minute walk of quality open space, the Plaza Program will prioritize proposed sites that are in neighborhoods that currently lack open space. An open space to population ratio of less than 1.5 acres/thousand persons is considered to lack sufficient open space. To determine whether or not your proposed plaza is in an area that lacks open space (see Appendix A: Priority Map).

### **Community Initiative | 30 points**

Organizations that have demonstrated community initiative will be considered to be stronger partners for the program. To demonstrate previous initiative, the organization should show existing plans that have been developed, such as 197a Plan. If the applicant has worked with another organization that has developed a community plan itself, this information should also be submitted. If such plans have not been developed, the applicant should demonstrate results or outcomes from a community workshop that focused on public space, open space, or neighborhood planning. If no visioning workshops have been conducted, the applicant's rating for Community Initiative will be determined solely on the strength of the required letters of support.

# Application Process continued

## APPLICATION REVIEW & RANKING SYSTEM continued

Organizations that have secured other funding sources should state the source and amount that is already secured for the project.

### Site Context | 20 points

Proposals will be rated against the surrounding neighborhood context to ensure that nearby uses and the environment is compatible with the proposed plaza. This criterion will rate the appropriateness of the adjacent land uses, population density, and proximity to transit, historic sites, significant view corridors, and other, nearby open space. Proposed sites located near a large number of positive elements are more likely to be successful plazas than are sites without such positive assets. For example, a proposed site located near a dense retail center with transit hub and significant views will be rated higher than a proposed site in a low-density residential area with no nearby commercial activity. In addition, sites located in Community Districts that do not have a recently constructed plaza or a plaza currently in design will be ranked higher than proposals from Community Districts that already have a new or recently enhanced plaza. Community Districts with recently completed plazas or plazas in design include the following: Manhattan 1, 2, 4, 5, 7; Bronx 1, 4, 5, 6, 7; Brooklyn 1, 2; and Queens 4, 14. To see a map of Community Districts that have recently-completed plazas, or plazas that are in design or construction, so-called “Pipeline Plazas”, view Attachment A: Priority Map.



BEFORE



AFTER

If a proposed site has not yet been determined, we encourage applicants to contact DOT to discuss possible sites before submitting an application.

### Organizational & Maintenance Capacity | 10 points

Organizations that demonstrate that they have the capacity to keep the plazas clean, safe and to bring programming activities or events to the sites will be judged favorably. Programming may include art/craft fairs, regular food vendors, sponsorship events, holiday celebrations, temporary art installations, music events, and so on. Organizations that currently do not have this capacity but would like to develop it are encouraged to apply.

# Application Process continued

## APPLICATION REVIEW & RANKING SYSTEM continued

### **Income Eligibility (CDBG Eligibility) | 10 points**

Proposals for plazas in low- or moderate-income neighborhoods, designated by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, will receive additional points. Designation prescribes that at least 51% of the residents in the census tract must be low- and moderate-income persons living in households with incomes below 80 percent of the median household income (\$47,100 for a 4-person household in 2000). To determine your census tract, visit the New York City Census FactFinder: <http://gis.nyc.gov/dcp/pa/address.jsp>

To learn more about CDBG eligibility and to view NYC Census Tracts that are CDBG eligible, visit the Department of City Planning's (DCP) online Census Report: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/resource/censustractreport.shtml>

## CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT

Proposals located in low- or moderate-income neighborhoods, as outlined above, are considered Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) eligible and may apply to participate in a capacity building initiative. **To be eligible for capacity building support, the proposed site must be located in a low- or Moderate-income neighborhood.** Qualifying applicants will be eligible for funding support through the New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS) Avenue NYC Program. Awards will provide organizations up to \$50,000 per year for a period of up to three years. Funds will be used to strengthen organizational capacity and to develop a maintenance and programming plan for the plazas.

To learn more about capacity building support (see Appendix B: Capacity Building Support).



# Responsibilities and Expectations

## PARTNER RESPONSIBILITIES

Partners will be responsible for the following elements:

### **1. Outreach**

Outreach to the public to gather relevant data and to ensure active participation in the public workshops, which may include promotion, surveying, and coordination of participants during visioning workshops.

### **2. Design**

A team of professional designers that have a contract with DOT will be responsible for the design process. Partners will be expected to participate in regular design meetings with DOT and the professional designers to ensure that the design is appropriate to the neighborhood context, that it meets local needs, and that plazas are designed with acceptable maintenance requirements.

# Responsibilities and Expectations continued

## PARTNER RESPONSIBILITIES continued

### **3. Maintenance**

Maintenance. Before construction is complete, the Partner will enter a maintenance agreement with DOT to name the Partner as the party responsible for maintenance and provision of daily services to the plaza so that the site is kept clean and in a state of good repair. The specific maintenance services to be provided will be outlined in the maintenance agreement. Services may be subcontracted. To become the formal partner for the plazas, Partners would apply to the Franchise and Concession Review Committee (FCRC) for a Master Concession Agreement. The agreement would give the Partner the potential to generate revenue from food vendors, sponsorship events, and other programming activities. The revenue generated would then be used to maintain and operate the plaza. Maintenance may include daily sweeping and bagging of rubbish, watering of plants, removal of stickers and graffiti from street furniture and property, shoveling snow from pathways, and so forth, as outlined in the agreement.



# Responsibilities and Expectations continued



## PARTNER RESPONSIBILITIES continued

### **4. Programming & Events**

To ensure that plazas become vibrant centers of activity and neighborhood destinations, the Partner will be responsible for programming regular activities and events at the site, which may include holiday events, food or craft markets, temporary public art installations or exhibits, music events, and so forth. It would be expected that programmed activities take place at least four times per year.

### **5. Liability & Insurance**

In addition to keeping the site clean, safe, and in good repair, the Partner will also be required to maintain insurance on the plaza, as outlined in the maintenance agreement.

### **6. Sustainability Plan**

Partners will develop a sustainability plan that outlines how the organization will fund and manage the plaza for the long term. To show progress on the plan to demonstrate steps taken to achieve the end result, the Partner will provide DOT quarterly progress reports.

# Responsibilities and Expectations continued

## DOT & SBS RESPONSIBILITIES

DOT and SBS will provide the following:

### **1. Design & Construction**

DOT will fund the design and construction of the plaza. Design will strive to create environmentally friendly public plazas that are appropriate to neighborhood context. Possible amenities may include tables and seating, trees and plants, lighting, public art, water features, and drinking fountains. To reduce liability, materials with low maintenance requirements will be prioritized.

### **2. Capacity Building Support**

In collaboration with SBS, DOT has developed an arrangement that will provide eligible Partners up to \$50,000 per year for a period of three (3) years. Funds will support personnel and training to help the Partners develop outreach campaigns, surveys, public workshops, programming and long-term funding plans, concessionary agreements, and organization development. To learn more, see Appendix B: Capacity Building Support.

### **3. Monitoring**

DOT will monitor the plazas.

# Funding Levels

For the first round of the Plaza Program, DOT will provide funds for design and construction for up to eight (8) new plazas. Organizations that have secured other, private or public, sources of funding are strongly encouraged to apply.

TIMELINE	2008						2009						2010												
	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	
Application	█	█																							
Awardees Announced			█																						
Preliminary Review			█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█														
Design											█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█				
Construction																					█	█	█	█	█

\* This timeline is for estimation purposes only. The actual length of time required for each phase may differ from this plan.

# Payment

Awardees will not receive funds from DOT for design and construction. Capital funds will remain within DOT and the City of New York. Partners who are eligible for capacity building support through SBS's Avenue NYC Program can receive up to \$50,000 per year for three years, contingent upon the availability of funds. To learn more about Capacity Building Support, view **Attachment B: Capacity Building Support**.

# FAQs

**Q. Will reclaiming streets cause traffic congestion?**

A. In some parts of the city, there is excess road space. In such places, a portion of the road can be reclaimed for pedestrian use without significantly affecting traffic. In other areas, reclaiming street space can have potential impacts on traffic, in which case a traffic analysis would be required to ensure that there are no significant adverse impacts. As a general rule, the Plaza Program will not pursue proposals that would produce major adverse impacts on traffic.

**Q. What's the minimum size of a plaza?**

A. Sites less than 2000 square feet are not encouraged.

**Q. What will the plazas look like?**

A. Each plaza will be designed to reflect the character and context of the neighborhood. The potential number of elements and activities is limited only by the Partner's capacity and resources. Plazas may include seating (movable and fixed); trees and plants; lighting; paving; information and wayfinding signage; concessions; shelter from the elements; public art (temporary and permanent); bicycle parking; water features, and drinking water fountains.

**Q. Will advertising be permitted?**

A. No. Advertising will not be permitted in the plazas. Banners on light poles, however, may be installed in accordance with the NYC DOT Banner Permit Program. In general, the banners must promote a public event, cultural exhibit, or promote the area. Please contact NYC DOT Banner Unit for more information: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/permits/banners.shtml>.

**Q. Can events and fairs be held in the plaza?**

A. Yes. The Partner may hold events and fairs as outlined in the concessionary agreement. Nevertheless, a Street Activity Permit would still be required and would be applied for through the Community Board's Community Assistance Unit (CAU).

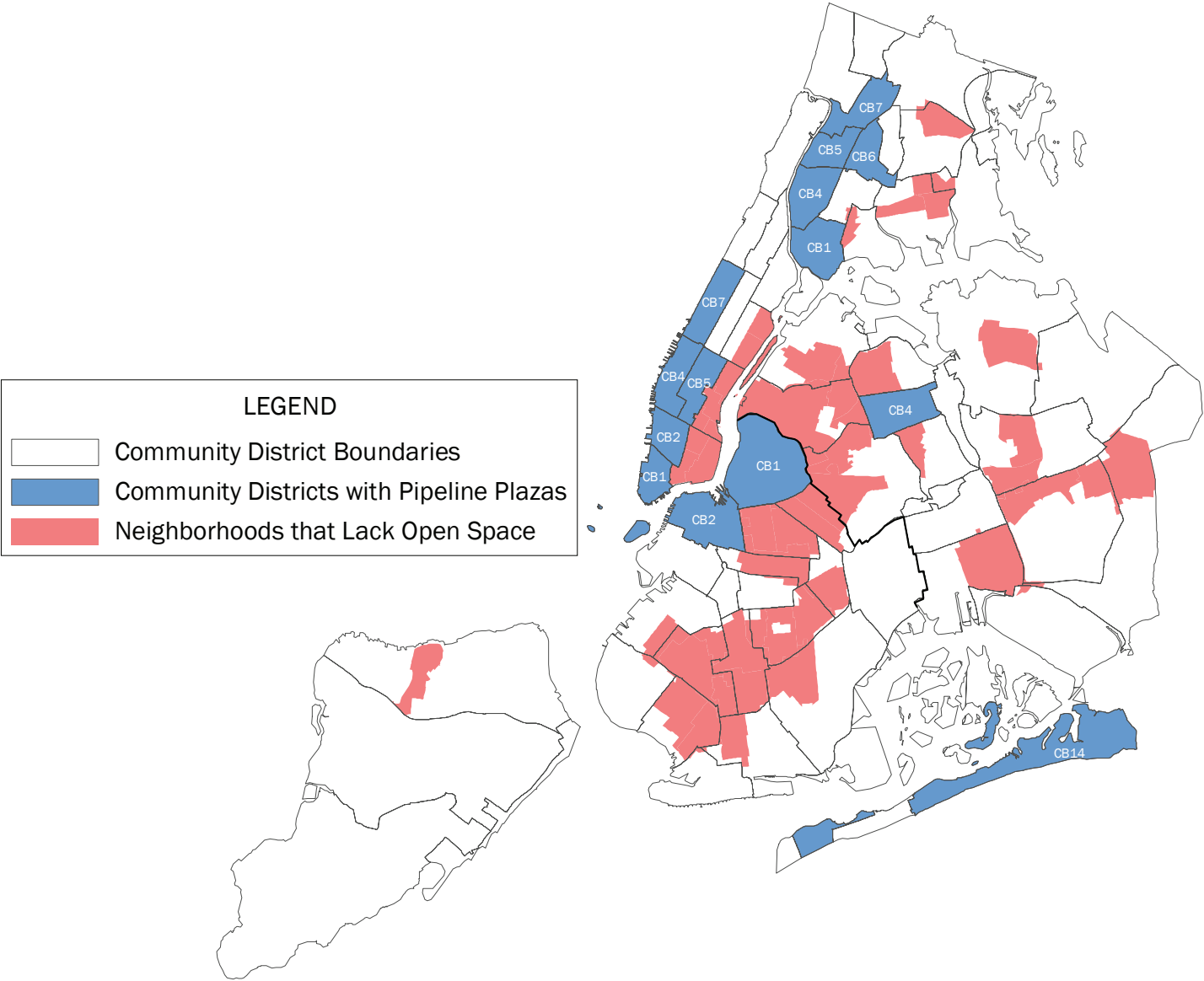
**Q. Can public art be incorporated into the plaza?**

A. Yes, public art can be part of the plazas on a temporary (under 11 months) basis, in accordance with NYC DOT's Temporary Art Program, or through a permanent installation. If permanent, the public art would be coordinated through the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs Percent for Art Program; the art could be completely integrated into the plaza design and functional (e.g. benches, tables, etc.), or it could be stand alone art (i.e. a sculpture). Temporary art can be installed as a one-time project or cycled through on a temporary basis at a designated space in the plaza, such as on a foundation block that would allow different temporary sculptures. The Temporary Art Program is still in development. To learn more, contact Emily Colasacco, Director of the Temporary Art Program at 212-442-7649 or [ecolasacco@dot.nyc.gov](mailto:ecolasacco@dot.nyc.gov).

**Q. Must the organization be registered with the Vendor Information Exchange System (VENDEX) with New York City in order to apply to the Plaza Program?**

A. No. The VENDEX submittal is only required for vendors that are awarded contracts with New York City in excess of \$100,000. To learn more about VENDEX, visit [www.nyc.gov/vendex](http://www.nyc.gov/vendex). Nevertheless, VENDEX submittal will be required if the Partner decides to have a concession on the site.

# Appendix A: Priority Map



# Appendix B: Capacity Building Support

## PROCESS

Partners with sites located in neighborhoods that are CDBG eligible may qualify for capacity building support through SBS's Avenue NYC Program. In Round I, SBS will fund up to three (3) eligible organizations. In addition to completing the NYC Plaza Program Application and having been selected for a plaza, the organization will need to complete a separate application in order to receive funding through the Avenue NYC Program. Partners selected to receive Avenue NYC funding will enter into a contract with SBS.

## TIMELINE

Upon notification of selection into the NYC Plaza Program, eligible organizations will be contacted by SBS to initiate the application process for capacity building support. Funds will be awarded to selected organizations on a fiscal year basis, beginning in Fiscal Year 2010 (July 1, 2009).

SBS will support each Partner for a period of up to three (3) fiscal years, contingent upon the availability of funds. During this time, the organization will develop the necessary skills to develop a long-term strategy to effectively manage, operate, and program the plaza.

## PAYMENT

SBS will provide no more than \$50,000 per organization per year for three years, contingent upon the availability of funds. Funds may be used for personnel and programmatic costs related to the NYC Plaza Program.

## USE OF FUNDS

A major component of the capacity building support provided to Partners in Year 1 will help the organizations to effectively engage the community in visioning sessions, work with consultants to organize charrettes and translate the information gathered into a format that would be useful for the professional design team.

Capacity building support in Years 2 and 3 will focus on organizational development and planning for the implementation of supplemental maintenance services. Additionally, capacity building support over Years 2 and 3 will focus on plaza-specific issues such as public space programming and development of potential strategies for generating additional revenue from the plazas.

# Appendix B: Capacity Building Support continued

## REPORTING & DELIVERABLES

### **Year 1: Planning/Design**

*At the completion of Year 1, Partners will have completed the following:*

- Outreach campaigns to local merchants, property owners, residents and other community stakeholders
- Administration of survey(s) to solicit input and feedback on design from local stakeholders
- Organization of community charrette(s) on plaza design and use
- Submission of report summarizing input, feedback and ideas gathered over the course of above three deliverables
- Hosting of community meetings to 'unveil' plaza conceptual design and to get feedback

### **Year 2: Construction**

*At the completion of Year 2, Partners will have completed the following:*

- Ongoing outreach campaigns to local merchants, property owners, and residents over the course of construction updating them on progress
- Plan for providing ongoing maintenance and sanitation services to the plaza
- Identification of sustainable funding source(s) for the implementation of maintenance and sanitation services and programming of plaza

### **Year 3: Programming/Ongoing Maintenance**

*At the completion of Year 3, Partners will have completed the following:*

- Plan for programming and activating the plaza
- Engagement of supplemental maintenance and sanitation service provider
- If applicable, the Partner will have a Master Concession Agreement in place for the concession

Partners will be required to submit quarterly reports to SBS and DOT, providing updates on progress toward completing these deliverables.



# Appendix B: Capacity Building Support continued

## FAQS

**Q. For reporting that relates to Capacity Building Support, does the Partner report to SBS or DOT?**

A. The Partner will submit the same quarterly reports to both SBS and DOT. In order to receive Capacity Building support, however, the Partner will have to enter into a contract with SBS and follow the contracting rules and regulations set forth by that Agency.

**Q. Can Capacity Building Support be used to pay for plaza maintenance?**

A. No. Capacity Building Support will only be used for personnel and programmatic expenses related to the completion of the deliverables outlined above.

**Q. Can organizations apply for Capacity Building Support as well as to other Avenue NYC programs?**

A. Yes. Organizations selected to receive Capacity Building support may apply for other Avenue NYC programs.