

## Urban Design Forum and Van Alen Institute Raise \$100K for *Neighborhoods Now* Implementation and Launch Online Toolkit with 40+ Design Resources

**neighborhoodsnow.nyc features cost-effective, DIY designs such as barriers for outdoor dining, sidewalk retail displays, and modular seating for public spaces**

**More design solutions and strategies will be added as *Neighborhoods Now* initiative continues**

(New York City—October 6, 2020)—The Urban Design Forum and Van Alen Institute today launched [neighborhoodsnow.nyc](https://neighborhoodsnow.nyc), a digital toolkit featuring more than 35 designs, guidelines, and strategies to aid safe reopening and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Each tool was created by neighborhood-specific working groups as part of [Neighborhoods Now](#), a rapid-response initiative launched by the Forum and Van Alen in June. Led by community organizations in Bed-Stuy, Jackson Heights, Kingsbridge, the Lower East Side, and Washington Heights, these working groups include coalitions of architects, engineers, lawyers, and planners in the Forum and Van Alen’s collective network.

The initiative has now raised more than \$100,000 to implement these designs and strategies in the coming weeks. In some neighborhoods, a selection of these designs have already been put into action and the Forum and Van Alen continue to fundraise to support further implementation.

Resources on [neighborhoodsnow.nyc](https://neighborhoodsnow.nyc) include:

- **DIY barrier designs for outdoor dining**, such as a modular barrier that features planters and detachable trash bins, and a flatpack plywood kit that can be adapted for winter dining with vinyl or polycarbonate sheets
- **Extensive HVAC guidelines** that can be applied to different closed environments and work spaces based on need, size, and occupancy
- **Outdoor learning kit-of-parts** that uses affordable, durable off-the-shelf materials to support sustained educational programming

This website will be continuously updated with additional designs and strategies from the *Neighborhoods Now* working groups. Detailed reports from each group, posted on the [Urban Design Forum](#) and [Van Alen Institute](#) websites, provide full context for each resource and greater insight into this collaborative, community-led process.

“We’ve been so lucky to work with the *Neighborhoods Now* initiative, which has brought really talented technical capacity to help implement the solutions

identified and developed by our community,” said **Sandra Lobo, Executive Director, Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition**. “*Neighborhoods Now* is a great example of how partnerships across diverse stakeholders, with community at the center, can be transformative when addressing economic and community development issues, especially at this challenging time when many residents and businesses feel invisible and forgotten.”

“*Neighborhoods Now* has brought equity to our community by providing direct assistance to the most needy small businesses and free planning services to our organization,” said **Leslie Ramos, Executive Director, 82nd Street Partnership**. “Without this initiative, it would have taken us years to do the work accomplished in just a few weeks.”

“The Washington Heights small business community faces multiple challenges. With the expertise of the *Neighborhoods Now* team, we were able to address some of these challenges with practical, cost effective solutions,” said **Yvonne Stennett, Executive Director, Community League of the Heights**. “We are truly grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with such talented architects and designers. Their commitment to safe reopenings and eye for detail is second to none.”

“For us, the *Neighborhoods Now* project has provided an extraordinary opportunity to serve our city at a critical time,” said **James von Klemperer, President, KPF**. “Working closely with the Restoration Corporation to help the Bed-Stuy community to stay functional in this COVID period has been both productive and faith-inspiring. I hope this work will open up doors for us all to be more engaged in the future.”

## WORKING GROUPS

### **82nd Street Partnership | Jackson Heights, Queens**

Coordinating firm: SO-IL and LTL

Supporting firms: ARO; Design Advocates (Frederick Tang Architecture, Kalos Eidos, Office of Tangible Space, Some People Studio, Studio För, Worrell/Yeung); MOS; nARCHITECTS; VHB

### **Bed-Stuy Gateway BID | Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn**

Coordinating firm: Moody Nolan

Supporting firms: Design Advocates (Büro Koray Duman, Bureau V, Lea Architecture, Only If Architecture, Studio Cadena, WIP Studio, Thackway McCord); Grimshaw; Jaklitsch/Gardner; W Architecture

### **Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation (Restoration) | Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn**

Coordinating firm: KPF

Supporting firms: AE Superlab; Farzana Gandhi Design Studio; James Corner Field Operations; JB&B

**Community League of the Heights (CLOTH) | Washington Heights, Manhattan**

Coordinating firm: Arup

Supporting firms: Design Advocates (Barker Associates Architecture Office, Abruzzo Bodziak Architects, Office of Architecture, Overlay Office, Parc Office, Smith & Sauer); Gensler; School of Jellyfish; Stantec; Woods Bagot

**Cooper Square Committee (CSC) | Lower East Side**

Curtis + Ginsberg Architects

**Fourth Arts Block (FAB) | Lower East Side**

DLR Group, Francis Cauffman Architects, and Henning Larsen

**Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC) | Kingsbridge, Bronx**

Coordinating firm: COOKFOX

Supporting firms: Design Advocates (Space 4 Architecture, Architensions, Brandt : Haferd, Future Expansion Architects, Michael K. Chen Architecture, New Affiliates); MNLA; Perkins & Will; Scalar Architecture; Studio Libeskind

**University Neighborhood Housing Program (UNHP) | Kingsbridge, Bronx**

Dattner Architects and MBB

All working groups also received legal resources from Fried Frank and graphic design work by Partner & Partners, Pentagram, and Two Twelve. Kramer Levin, NDC, Sam Schwartz, Silman, and Thornton Tomasetti provided additional support.

*Neighborhoods Now* is made possible by special support from Home Depot and the New York Community Trust. Van Alen Institute and Urban Design Forum also thank *Neighborhoods Now's* generous sponsors. These include Lead sponsors CitiBank and KPF; Benefactor sponsors Alloy, Apple Bank, and Ponce Bank; Advocate sponsors Brooklyn Cooperative Federal Credit Union, the Elmezzi Foundation, Ingram LLP, nARCHITECTS, Studio Libeskind and WRNS Studio; Patron sponsors Bednark Studio, Civitas, COOKFOX, Grimshaw, Perkins & Will, PNC Bank, and Stantec; and Supporting sponsors Daraja Capital, Innisfree, Signature Bank, and Thinc Design.

**About Urban Design Forum**

Urban Design Forum mobilizes civic leaders to confront the defining issues facing New York City's built environment. We are an independent membership organization that empowers professionals of diverse backgrounds, industries and

perspectives to shape a better future for all New Yorkers. We investigate complex challenges in the built environment, study alternative approaches from cities around the world, and advance progressive strategies to build a more dynamic and democratic city.

See all work at [urbandesignforum.org](http://urbandesignforum.org).

### **About Van Alen Institute**

Van Alen Institute helps create equitable cities through inclusive design. In an equitable city, every person is civically engaged, regardless of income or personal circumstances. To achieve that goal, inclusive design supports a community-driven public realm.

For more than 125 years, our purposeful community engagement, convening capacity, and global interdisciplinary network have produced profound transformations in the public realm of New York City and beyond. With a core belief in an interdisciplinary approach to design, the Van Alen team has backgrounds in architecture, urban planning, public health, civic advocacy, community engagement, and arts and culture.

See all work at [vanalen.org](http://vanalen.org).