

TO THE STREETS FLASH COMPETITION BRIEF

About

As more New Yorkers take to the streets to make their voices heard, the city faces a powerful opportunity and urgent need to make strategic improvements to these arterial spaces for accessible, equitable, and vibrant peaceful assembly—an issue that we have [shared with Mayor Bill de Blasio in a recent letter](#) signed by PAU, Design Trust for Public Space, the Horticultural Society of New York's Neighborhood Plaza Program, New Yorkers for Parks, Project for Public Spaces, Van Alen Institute, Street Plans, Institute for Public Architecture, the Municipal Art Society of New York, Gehl Institute, WXY Architects, Transportation Alternatives, and Regional Plan Association.

To the Streets is a fast-paced one-day design competition that asks multidisciplinary teams how a distributed network of assembly spaces could be designed for the streets of New York City's five boroughs. Participants will propose how design can make activism more inclusive and champion the city's diverse population. Proposals should be imaginative but also offer physical design elements that could be adopted by local groups and implemented by a municipal agency.

Following a closed-door workshop among finalist teams, join us for the public presentation of their proposals and vote for your favorite. A jury of design and advocacy experts will judge the entries and announce a winner at the conclusion of the event. We're seeking multidisciplinary teams from diverse fields including anthropology, architecture, landscape architecture, graphic design, visual art, urban planning, and more.

This program is part of *Arteries: NYC in Circulation*, Van Alen's spring festival from May 12 to 18 exploring: What defines a city's lifeblood? We'll journey to the heart of the metropolis as we explore the myriad main streets and water mains, multicultural conduits and transportation corridors—both designed and off-the-cuff—that shape the urban experience and route our everyday lives. Across seven days of debates, explorations, and performances, we'll discover a new understanding of our city as we traverse its arteries.

Questions to Get You Started

- How can the design of street interventions be used to make activism more inclusive?
- How can the existing design of streets in New York City be leveraged to promote free speech?
- How can citizens in all five boroughs easily reach a point of assembly within 15 minutes at any time of day by multiple modes of transportation?
- How can we design public spaces to facilitate networked simultaneous citywide protest events?
- How can we make these improvements strategically, with maximum impact and within realistic budgets?
- How can we design spaces that are perceived as safer and more welcoming to activism and civic engagement from a more diverse audience? What would this look like if we started with the most vulnerable populations?
- How could this be an opportunity to bridge the divides in the current political climate?
- How could we design or adjust spaces to reframe our common—and sometimes unproductive—assumptions of public political display?
- How can technology be used to connect diverse communities and bring them together in public space?
- How can streets be designed for accessible, vibrant, and peaceful assembly long-term?

How Does the Competition Work?

Jurors will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:

- It proposes feasible, strategic improvements to arterial spaces with identifiable goals in increasing accessible, equitable, and vibrant peaceful assembly.
- It clearly communicates existing conditions and problems, the demographics the proposal addresses, today's political context, and how the proposal will achieve its stated goals.
- It has the potential to enrich a wide audience's engagement with activism, peaceful assembly, and public space, and is compelling for official political agencies.
- It can be eventually visualized through dynamic, eye-catching imagery
- It proposes feasible, user-centered solutions grounded in a physical design (not simply an app).

- It connects to and builds on existing initiatives from research entities and non-profit organizations, such as:
 - [Seven Steps](#) recommended in a letter to Mayor Bill de Blasio for improving and expanding spaces of assembly
 - [Civic Action Tracker by New Yorkers for Parks](#)
- It demonstrates interdisciplinary thinking and collaboration among team members from different fields of expertise.

Jury

Susan Chin, Executive Director, Design Trust for Public Space

Laura Hansen, Managing Director, Neighborhood Plaza Partnership, The Horticultural Society of New York

David van der Leer, Executive Director, Van Alen Institute

Toshihiko Karato, Project Manager, Sawyer | Berson Architecture & Landscape Architecture

Nadine Maleh, Executive Director, The Institute for Public Architecture

Jennifer Nitzky, President, American Society of Landscape Architects – New York

Lucy Robson, Director of Research & Planning, New Yorkers for Parks

Kate Slevin, Vice President, State Programs and Advocacy, Regional Plan Association

Paul Steely White, Executive Director, Transportation Alternatives

Eligibility

To participate, you must be part of a multidisciplinary team of up to four members; individuals may not participate alone. Your team must include at least one professional from architecture or urban planning. This competition is open to both professionals and students. Members of the team must be available to participate in a workshop and present at WeWork South Williamsburg on Saturday, May 13.

Entering the Competition

Entry fee: There is no entry fee for entering *To the Streets* flash competition.

Number of entries: Individuals may participate on only one team. Each team is permitted to enter only one submission.

Submission of concepts: Teams must submit a maximum 150-word concept by midnight EDT on May 11, 2017. Finalists will be notified by on May 12, 2017. Your entry must include a written concept description of your proposal. Clearly

state your proposed solution(s), the name(s), contact information, title, and affiliation of the team members. Accompanying illustrations of your concept are accepted but not required. Team members have the option to upload a portfolio of past work.

All entries must be in English. Proposals must be uploaded using the submission link on vanalen.org by midnight May 11. Entrants will receive a confirmation that the files have been uploaded and should retain this confirmation for reference. Failure to comply with any of these submission requirements will result in disqualification.

All information required to enter can be found on vanalen.org. If you have questions, please contact Steven Thomson, Van Alen Institute at sthomson@vanalen.org.

Legal

Further details on competition proposal requirements and presentation formats will be provided to the finalist teams.

Publication restrictions: Entrants may not refer to projects that have already been implemented or that have been designed on the basis of any agreement entered into by the entrant or entrants with a public, public/private or fully private body with the intention of actual development of the project in question. Similarly, entries may not refer to projects published before the last day of the deliberations of the judging panel.

Infringement of copyright and other intellectual property: All work submitted for the competition must be the entrant's original work. Finalist teams will retain ownership of all intellectual property rights over their work. It is the entrant's sole responsibility to ensure that the work submitted does not infringe upon the intellectual property rights of any third party, including, but not limited to copyright, trademark and design right. Van Alen shall not be responsible for entrant's infringement of any third party intellectual property rights, regardless of whether said infringement was known or should have been known by entrant.

Use of submitted works: Entrant agrees that Van Alen is granted the nonexclusive reproduction rights to all entries for Van Alen's advertising, promotion, exhibition, print publication, and internet purposes directly relating to the competition. Van Alen shall have no responsibility for any unauthorized use of the entrant's works by any third party, including but not limited to the sponsors.

About Van Alen Institute

Van Alen Institute brings more than 120 years of experience organizing design competitions, as well as developing cross-disciplinary research and provocative public programs. Van Alen Institute collaborates with communities, scholars, policymakers, and professionals on local and global initiatives that rigorously investigate the most pressing social, cultural and ecological challenges of tomorrow.

The *To the Streets* flash competition is presented with WeWork and the Van Alen spring festival, *Arteries: NYC in Circulation*.

Arteries: NYC in Circulation is part of the multiyear initiative, *Understanding Cities*, which aims to improve our understanding of cities via different lenses, from design and policy to activism and visual and performing arts. Through talks, charrettes, and excursions, we tackle compelling questions about the nature of cities from the perspective of varying disciplines.

This series was made possible through our Program Leadership Council, co-chaired by Andy Bernheimer (Bernheimer Architecture), Katherine Chia (Desai Chia Architecture), Koray Duman (Buro Koray Duman), Mark Gardner (Jaklitsch / Gardner Architects), Sara Grant (Murphy Burnham and Buttrick Architects), Stephan Jaklitsch (Jaklitsch / Gardner Architects), Amy Lau (Amy Lau Design), and Joel Sanders (Joel Sanders Architect).

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