Times Square: The Next 100 Years





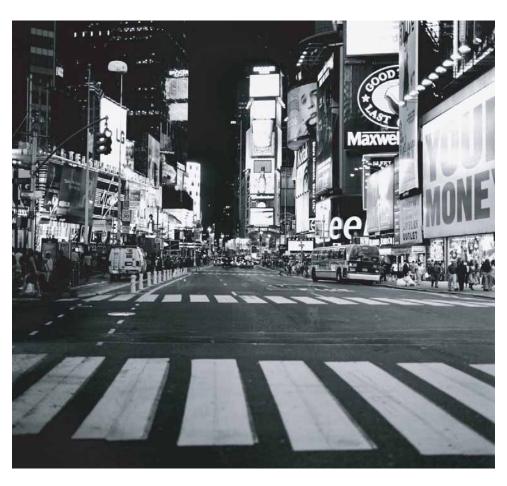


Re-imagining the Pedestrian Environment in Times Square

DESIGN TRUST FOR PUBLIC SPACE



Executive Summary



PROBLEMS

INSIGHTS & IDEAS

PRINCIPLES & ADMONITIONS

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

- Times Square's pedestrian spaces are insufficient to handle current demands. Crowding produces "Pedlock", a state of extreme sidewalk congestion creating pedestrian paralysis. The streetscape is unattractive at best, especially for a world-class public space. There are no adequate spaces for observing Times Square. Soaring pedestrian counts create a public safety hazard. Transit ridership is growing and planned commercial and residential development over the next 10-15 years will bring even more pedestrians.
- An eclectic mix of 25 noted designers, urbanists, artists, planners, Alliance board members and public servants took a special look at what makes Times Square distinctive, which led to the Principles and Admonitions, and a number of the Practical Solutions below.
- Balance different elements. Recognize the diversity of who and what is here, as well as the layers. Create places. Be sure to make Times Square a place where New Yorkers want to come. Look for opportunities to reinforce and recognize what is authentic, what is historic. Allow for the exhibition of creativity as a way to express Times Square's unique qualities. Re-think the relationships between pedestrian and vehicular spaces and traffic. Think of Times Square as an ever-changing theater set, with both fixed and temporary elements. Look for ways to make the horizontal plane as exciting and dynamic as the vertical. Keep it simple.
- Expand and rebuild Duffy Square. Alter the Bowtie's center islands. Create additional sidewalk space. Investigate new ways to regulate traffic. Design aesthetically-pleasing security elements. Provide spaces and opportunities for public performance and art. "Wire" the Bowtie. Explore enlivening the horizontal plane Encourage and recognize high-quality design. Look at ways zoning regulations can be used to advance these goals.



Pedestrians on the streets of Times Square

CELEBRATING THE CENTURY, CONTEMPLATING THE FUTURE

Let's get honest. Lots of people talk about Times Square's success. This document is about Times Square's problems, and what can be done to address them. On the occasion of Times Square's centennial, the Times Square Alliance partnered with the Design Trust for Public Space to undertake a series of workshops with creative and thoughtful people who care deeply about this place to advise us as we enter our second century. The group, which convened during the summer of 2003, worked to identify what has been unique and thrilling about the world's bestknown public space for its first 100 years, and then thought about how to celebrate and preserve that spirit in a place where creation rather than preservation is the norm. At the same time we very much wanted to keep our feet on the ground, even as we observed and commented on the glorious spectacle above us.

It ain't pretty. And that's a big part of the problem: while Times Square is gorgeous from the neck up, it needs a makeover from the neck down. Most of the problems are simply side effects of the area's success. More people than ever walk its streets and the demands on this singular space have grown enormously. Times Square is New York's manic version of a town square. It is alternately (and often simultaneously) the world's most condensed theater district, a booming commercial and corporate center, a broadcast studio, and an event venue. And while it is spectacular and engaging on the vertical plane, its ground plane – the streetscape – is ordinary at best, ugly at worst. Finally, because of the overcrowding, it is literally a public safety hazard, as thousands of people a day are forced to walk in the street.

Let's get creative. Facilitated by Kinshasha Holman Conwill, the workshops were not unlike Times Square in that they brought together an unusual mix of people: 25 noted designers, urbanists, artists, traffic planners, property owners, Alliance Board members, and some terrific and creative people from the City's transportation and planning agencies. And as in Times Square, we heard and saw the practical and the impractical, the exuberant and the ordinary, side by side. Many of the results are what you see in this report. We suspect that some participants might not agree with every point we've made and every conclusion we've drawn, but there's no doubt that everything grew out of the energy and intensity of the interactions that took place during a few special days in Times Square.

Let's get going. The following pages offer viable ideas to keep Times Square competitive, interesting and thought-provoking into the next century. The concepts here provide a starting point for the Alliance's explorations during the coming year.

Tim Tompkins
Times Square Alliance

Claire Weisz, Andrea Woodner Design Trust for Public Space



The most crowded sidewalks anywhere...



with wall to wall people...



no room to walk...



except in the streets...



with their children...



night as well as day...



causing mayhem...



and "pedlock" so that...



the street is the only option.



It's out of control!

It Ain't Pretty Problems >5



Fortress-like planters...



sidewalk as showroom...



uneccessary obstacles...



stench trench turned wading pond...



uninviting public spaces...



shabby structures...



newspaper-box soup...



unsightly barricades...



sidewalk as warehouse.

Top Five Reasons People Would Consider Working Somewhere Other Than Times Square

Congestion of Respond 25% Distance from

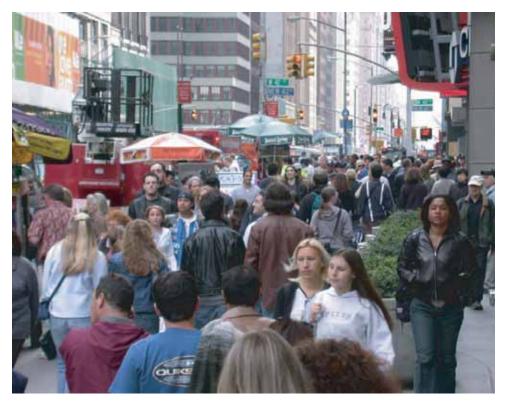
PEDESTRIAN CONGESTION IS A PROBLEM

Times Square's magnificent turnaround has produced an unforseen problem: crippling congestion. In a recent survey of 2,350 local employees done by the Alliance in conjunction



Pedestrian overcrowding causes unsafe conditions for individuals, especially children, the disabled and the elderly.

with Global Strategies Group, congestion was the number one complaint – cited 68% of the time – why people would want to work elsewhere. The next highest issue was cited by 13%.



Source: Times Square Office Workers Survey, Global Strategies Group, Inc., 2003



 $2003\ \mathsf{Times}\ \mathsf{Square}\ \mathsf{Area}\ \mathsf{Winter}\ \mathsf{Pedestrian}\ \mathsf{Count}\ \mathsf{Report}\ \mathsf{Wednesday},\ \mathsf{October},\ \mathsf{15}$

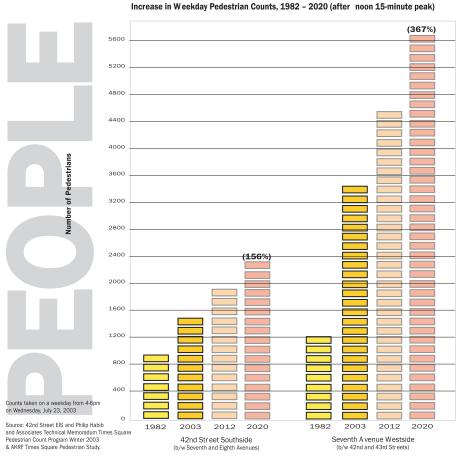
PEOPLE AT RISK

At peak times (late afternoon, early evenings, post-theatre, and all weekend) thousands of people are forced to walk in the street because of crowded and cluttered sidewalks. It's not only out of control, it's downright dangerous.

Pedestrians using a traffic lane for additional sidewalk space causing unsafe conditions for motorists and pedestirans alike.



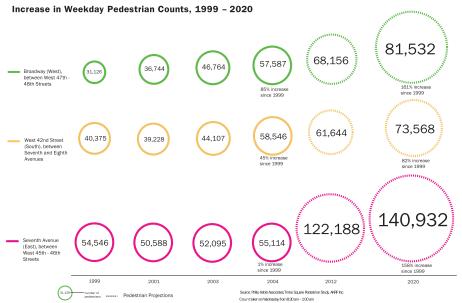


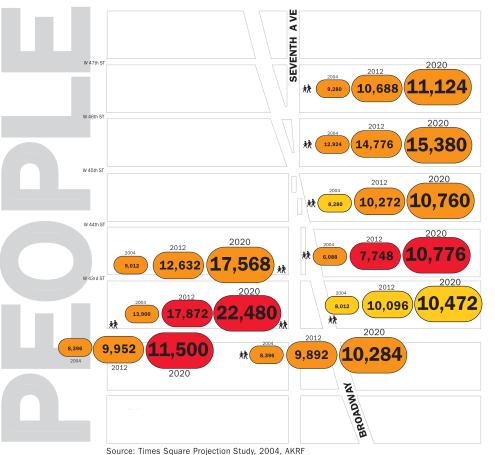


HIGHEST PEDESTRIAN COUNTS IN THE CITY, WITH MORE TO COME

Among New Yorkers, Times Square is as recognized for its severely congested sidewalks as for its spectacular signage. There are over 300% more people walking through the area than there were in 1980 and, in the last few years, pedestrian counts have soared at key locations. The result at peak times is tremendous congestion, creating a major public safety

hazard by forcing thousands of people to walk in the streets. A study by AKRF for the Alliance looked at planned and likely development and predicted even more pedestrian traffic. In the future this issue could escalate and affect Times Square's competitiveness as a tourist destination and commercial district.

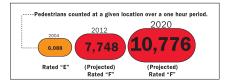




PEDESTRIAN MOBILITY SET TO WORSEN

Pedestrian congestion is measured by traffic engineers based on a Level of Service analysis using a scale from 'A' to 'F', 'A' representing maximum mobility and 'F' maximum congestion based on a combination of the number of people on the sidewalk and the amount of space available on the sidewalk. The City of New York accepts Level 'D' or better in

Midtown Manhattan, although Level 'D' suggests that pedestrians must restrict pace and conflict is likely. In 2004, a majority of locations in the Times Square Bowtie area have Level 'D' or worse service. Looking at likely development eight and sixteen years into the future, the Alliance's study shows Levels of Service consistently worsening throughout the district.



COLOR KEY - Level of Service Designations

- Pace severely restricted and forward progress is only made by shuffling. There is frequent and unavoidable contact with other pedestrians.
- E All pedestrians move at a restricted pace, volumes approach limit of capacity. Space is not sufficient for passing slower pedestrians.
- Resticted freedom to select pace and a high probability of conflict.
- C Space is sufficient for normal walking speeds and for bypassing pedestrians.
- B Space is sufficient to select walking speeds freely, to bypass other pedestrians and to avoid crossing conflict.
- A Pedestrians move freely without altering their movement in response to other pedestrians and conflicts between pedestrians are unlikely.

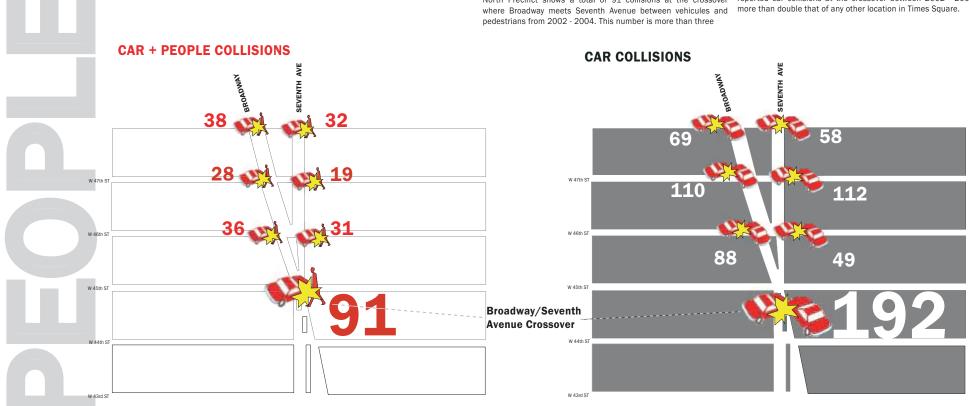


Pedestrian congestion causes unsafe conditions for motorists and pedestirans alike.

IT'S ABOUT SAFETY, STUPID!

North Precinct shows a total of 91 collisions at the crossover reported car collisions at the crossover between 2002 - 2004 -

Recent data provided by the New York Police Department Midtown times that of any other location in Times Square. There were 192



Source: NYPD Midtown North Precinct (Collision data 2002, 2003, 2004)

TRANSIT RIDERSHIP: A TREND THAT WILL OVERWHELM

In total there are at least half a million people who commute to Times Square area via all forms of public transportation on an average weekday. With the planned

2.00

2003 2008

M6

1998

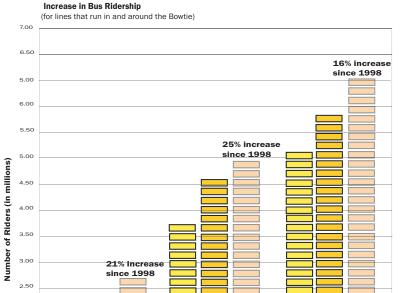
2003 2008

M42

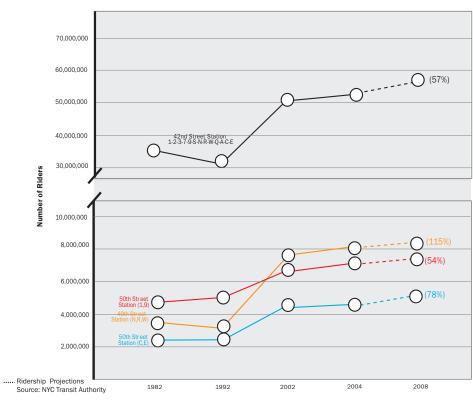
commercial and residential development in the area, there will be even more people coming to Times Square, adding to the pressure on our sidewalks.

1998 2003 2008

M7



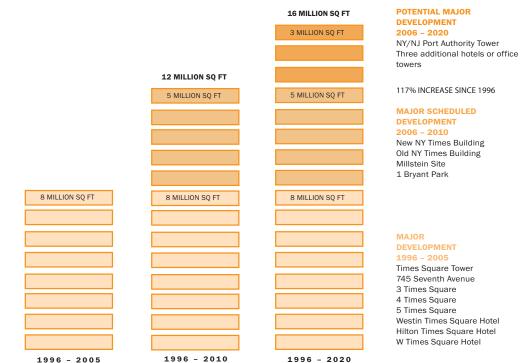
Increasing Subway Ridership



MORE DEVELOPMENT, MORE PEOPLE (NOT INCLUDING RESIDENTIAL)

Much of the recent congestion comes from the 6 million square feet of commercial space built since 1996. The next 15 years will bring between 5 – 8 million square feet of new space, creating additional pedestrian pressure. In addition, more than 8,200 high-rise residential units are in or

just west of Times Square, the great majority of which were built in the last six years. About 900 new units west of Times Square are planned for development, adding even more pressure to the area.



PROJECTED PEDESTRIAN VOLUME INCREASE 1996 - 2005 1996 - 2010 1996 - 2020 🙏 8 million sq ft of major commercial space: 12 million sq ft of major commercial space: 16 million sq ft of major commercial space: 20,000 new workers and with a 36,666 new workers and with a 50,000 new workers and with a total increase of 157,278 people per day total increase of 208,702 people per day total increase of 296,998 people per day

At the invitation of the Times Square Alliance, the Design Trust for Public Space organized two visioning workshops on May 14 and June 3, 2003 to try to identify what is unique about Times Square as a public space and to think boldly and without restrictions about approaches to enhancing it. First, we asked people to think and talk about the place. Then we asked them to look and imagine.

The quotes and the selected images that follow don't begin to do justice to the richness of what we heard, saw, and discussed. Nonetheless, they suggest how Times Square excites the imaginations of creative folk. We didn't ask that ideas be practical or doable, we simply hoped that we could come away with a stronger sense of the principles that should guide us as we move forward, and the pitfalls we should try to avoid. From these discussions, we generated both the Principles and the Practical Solutions contained in the later sections of this report. Following are selected quotes.

Come up with a vocabulary of these elements (such as the bollards and the planters) that will help fit into Times Square and will be unique to Times Square.

Zoning is an important tool.

We need to balance all of these needs to really promote the best use of the space.

It is critically important that the TKTS booth be built.

You probably have more visual activity in Times Square than anyplace else in the world...yet there is really probably less space to stand and observe it and enjoy it ...than anyplace in the world. Create places of repose, passive areas where people can enjoy what's going on here.

I think of the Bowtie space as really "The Plaza" ...that does different things during different times of the day.



Add pulsing lights to turn the streetscape into its own signage. Matthew Moore, ESI Design

The performing artists in this Times Square community are like magnets ...and so I wish there were certain places in Times Square where more of a focus could be placed on this energy

It would be a big mistake if the streetscape had a sort of dulling effect of uniformity that so much streetscape has. I think we need to be careful to maintain the interstitial, ad-hoc spaces – it would be great if we had just totally fantastic curbs.

Take the Times Square area and look at it as a giant, alwayschanging theater set – something that is sort of an armature in which to change things. The vehicular traffic, the people, everything is a player [on this stage]. I love the idea of the glowing curbs ...it is all of these things, it's not just architecture, it's not just public space, it's entertainment, it's everything.

The main thing I am interested in is the kind of visceral and emotional engagement that a person can have with a place.

I wish it was a little bit less of a constant collision, and that engagement between people was just a little bit more possible. So I began to wonder [as a designer], what can we do to these surfaces [streets and sidewalks] to activate them?



Use sidewalks and street furniture as decorative elements. Stephen Doyle, Doyle Partners

Duffy Square is a big barricade, that nasty snaky [fence] down there is a barricade.

Disguise the bollards as pedestals that we could put around the square so that people could climb up on these things and be photographed. We would completely invert the reaction to these things as being to keep away, but rather an invitation to come and play

Our communities need centers ...what do we have high and low, horizontally and vertically, what do we have that is between chaos and calm, what do we have that is between commercial and fine art.

I really like the idea of providing some sort of stage or some sort of place for the visitor or tourist to perform on, because they do it anyway, they are attracted to the center islands and they photograph each other and they really use that space, but because of the spectacle it seems like there is a yearning to become part of the spectacle.



Boldly patterned sidewalks could build on Times Square's energy and help create a very cool public

Presened by Stephen Doyle

Delineate the Bowtie with boldly patterned sidewalks and/or paving Stephen Doyle, Doyle Partners

I love Times Square and I have to say that I love the congestion of it ...the greatest effect is when you walk in the middle of Times Square ...walking in the center of Times Square I think is an incredible sensation ...the contrast between this being a cross street ...at the same time this is also a piazza, something happens here that is more static, like New Year's Eve, or lots of performances.

We need to think beyond a traditional streetscape mindset.

There is an opportunity to capitalize on this as a district of amusement.

The key to the long-term viability of Times Square will be to **provide** more stuff for New Yorkers to want to come here.

"IT WOULD BE A BIG MISTAKE IF THE STREETSCAPE HAD A SORT OF DULLING EFFECT OF UNIFORMITY..."

We need to choreograph the chaos...there has to be a place to appreciate the chaos. Right now it is very difficult to find places – and you look at the center islands and you just think "wow what a big fat stinking waste" because those are the places to appreciate the chaos

Let's take what Times Square is and make it more...it's important that we maintain the uniqueness, the New Yorkness here. At our firm we have talked a lot about how locals validate things for visitors. If locals don't do it, eventually no one does it. Because it just becomes fake. I think we need to find a way that people come here for more than just the shows, and want to stay.

I also would not be so quick to throw nature out.

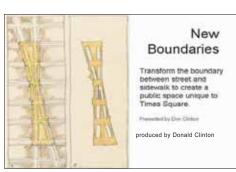
I like the idea of emphasizing the horizontal and making chaser lights all along every street everywhere. Each bollard has a big golf ball light on top. And maybe there is a traffic set and a pedestrian set.

Just to build on what people were saying, that notion of **burrowing down**, **but also burrowing up**. Almost like an archaeological dig, where there are layers both above ground and below ground, because Times Square is so much about layering...as you're walking through Times Square you are experiencing and interacting with art and culture and ideas at a much smaller scale, not necessarily all on the largest scale.

What about **requiring stores or restaurants to provide a street retail experience?**

I'm not sure we could create a [focal point or] thing in the middle that could really hold up to stuff around it and it actually might be better as a kind of emptiness or void and then all this choreography and activity and programming stuff actually kind of washes across that emptiness.

One of the great things about Times Square is the fact that everything is sort of malleable and changeable...like a theatre set. The potential for multiple functions of the street furniture,



Define the boundaries between streets and sidewalks creatively.

Donald Clinton, Cooper, Robertson & Partners

of the bollards, all that sort of thing...I like the idea that everything is sort of advertising, and an opportunity to make a statement. And you have all these layers of statements, and things being said. They are commercial, they're artistic, they're all sorts of things. And I think that it would be a terrible waste for the bollards or the bus stops or whatever the street furniture is, that it just stayed in one form. We have technology that can...represent different things to different people at different times, and the bollards for instance can have messages on them that always change...but I just want to emphasize that everything should be malleable, should be transitory and able to change because I think that that is a big part of what Times Square is about, that it is not just one statement...each person is a player, each vehicle, everything that is there does something. And we need to really play on that.

Part of what keeps this not being Disneyland is the people obviously, and the great diversity that is here, but it is also **the fact that it is a little bit gritty...**we have a pathetic group of street foods being sold around the city and maybe...we can



"Media Strips"

Glowing curbs could provide easily accessible media channels for power, communications and support as well as mark the transition from pedestrian to vehicular areas.

Presented by Nan Smith Liprobuspe AsShirst

Use light creatively to define pedestrian space and media channels.

Ken Smith, Ken Smith Landscape Architecture

artificially stimulate the creative, international group of street foods that exist.

So part of this notion of center also has us look at the periphery, and look at the different quality of these passage spaces, how these can be activated, how people can be drawn there.

Basically we have the spectators, who are the tourists, and the doers, who are the sort of New Yorkers, currently. And I think that the idea of keeping the center open as a place for the spectators to spectate [is important].

One ultimately has to distinguish between what gets privileged, the automobile or the pedestrian.



Allow pedestrians to bypass automobile traffic. Matthew Moore, ESI Design

It would just be so wonderful to be in a quiet space and to experience the visual excitement and chaos.

Special events for people who live in the city—they don't always have to be the biggest, the most spectacular. And I think that sometimes there are smaller, quieter things that people who live in the city would be happy to come to this part of the city to do...and I also want to say that this idea of what we do in Duffy Square and the TKTS booth is critical...I think is going to be a critical factor.

How you can engage people in some kind of activity that might have them having more contact than just that brief bumping into each other?

"WE NEED TO CHOREOGRAPH THE CHAOS...THERE HAS TO BE A PLACE TO APPRECIATE THE CHAOS."

A lot of people visit New York and **this may be the densest pedestrian condition that they are ever in**, in their life, and that is part of the vitality and part of the mix – the wild demographic swings, the blasting bible guy on the corner – that is sort of the nutshell of our city and of our vanity. And to diffuse that too much, I think would be a mistake.

Here **we can set precedents like no where else**, and we can set precedents about the flexibility of the use of space ...

I have one burning issue and that's because we were talking about tourists and residents, like they are separate things...I would hope that what we would do here would sort of break us out of normal roles of trying to rush past the dumb tourists who don't know how to walk, and kind of slow us down and be tourists ourselves, and block the sidewalk, and look up, and be stupid. I think the role reversal is an interesting thought.

I think we really need to consider practical solutions. All the big ideas are great, but we need to have some things that we can actually do.

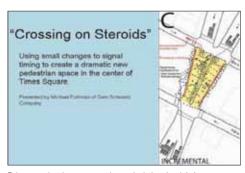
[I propose] creating a walkway in the center, an elevated walkway in the center of Times Square [as well as] the idea of inhabiting the billboards.

I left the last meeting with four words haunting me – that I kept hearing over and over...chaos and choreography, delight and desire...the thing I came away with last time was how awful the place looks from the shoulders down...create bollards that could be interactive.

It's really important that we think about scale, really grand scale and then also very human scale.

Use type on the ground as a way of making an enchanted path through the space. And deal with ideas about the nature of desire and the nature of delight.

Maybe we can actually make the street into a sign to reinforce the horizontal with a little bit more choreographed light and movement.



Enhance pedestrian movement by manipulating signal timing. Michael Fishman, Sam Schwartz, LLC

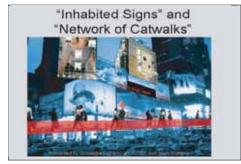
So right now the islands are bad. We have bad islands. They are icky and there is no reason why anyone would really want to go out to them, even though they represent the best place to get that whole big view of Times Square.

Maybe there is a thing in the middle that...represents the crossroads of the world. It becomes the meeting place. It's sort of like the old clock at Grand Central.

Let's create a tram ride from the upper levels of the Times Tower and it sort of loops around the bowtie.

And then there is just a tremendous urge to connect all those center islands, but there is no way you can walk a pedestrian on those center islands from the south portion to the north portion, and it would seem to open up a lot of opportunities if you could do that.

Blur the boundary between vehicular and pedestrian traffic, blur the boundaries between public and private



Create spaces for pedestrians and observers at a variety of vertical levels. Guiseppe Lignano, LO/Tek and Mark Robbins, Radcliffe Institute

Maybe there is an opportunity once in a while to begin to adjust that, not necessarily on a daily basis, but find another rhythm. Not just the major event, New Years Eve and other things, but something that begins to put another pace or pulse on how we can use the Square as citizens of the city as well as tourists. So we thought, well maybe there is an opportunity to actually eliminate all traffic on Broadway for certain times, I mean literally on Broadway. Whether it's a First Friday or it is some kind of schedule once a month that can be introduced that begins to allow for specific kind of economic or cultural programming.



Provide protected space for tourists to view Times Square. Amy Barkow, photographer

Downtown, we have this old glass, bubble covering over all of the old vaults in the streets. **Underneath there can be lights that shine up**, and it's really easy to do this now that we have this fibre-optic stuff. You could have all of the sidewalks of Times Square covered with this.

You really do want to sit around down there. I also liked the proposal that has been done for the TKTS office and I thought maybe you could do chips off the block and do a lot of chairs, taking the idea of seating and introducing it throughout the whole area.

"IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT THAT WE THINK ABOUT SCALE,
REALLY GRAND SCALE AND THEN ALSO VERY HUMAN SCALE."

Selected Quotes and Renderings From the Design Trust Workshops

What do you do with nature in Times Square? You could also make these containers for natural things, like ant farms, snakes, for all kinds of wild life in these containers.

There are a lot of things we can do with signal timing. The other thing I think has merit is the creation of more pedestrian space and special pedestrian space.

Assert some plea for the authentic, the historic, to make some kind of a place holder against the tide of commercialism that we see in Times Square.

The other thing I really loved is the idea of these small discoveries that amongst these big kinds of visual ideas, that there are these small subtleties that you discover, whether it's in the sidewalk [or elsewhere].

I loved the idea of the meeting points.

The notion of other kinds of performances would be really special.

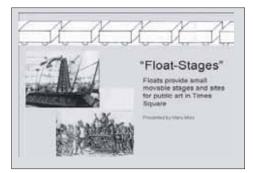
I think of that the excitement that people feel when all these different cultures come together, people come together, performance, art, all of those things in one space.

I was thinking about **how do you keep them coming here.** I think it is important that people come here to experience the excitement of Times Square.

But I like the idea of visual, less physical, for design in Times Square.

What amazes people is that you are coming that close to the center of the hive. You feel all this buzzing activity. Even as an individual, you want to stand there and feel all that in the background...I don't think there is a public observatory in all of Times Square.

Keeping the area very clear and minimal is also very important, but I would like to see more artists have access to Times Square and more performances happen on different levels.



Include venues for public art in the Bowtie.

But the idea of **creating a place where Times Square can be observed in a very dreamy way**, in a way where you are not dealing with anything, you are free to move and watch it, and absorb the energy of it. I think it is something that is definitely missing.

My comment is keeping it simple and I think there is a real positive aspect about keeping it simple and it's about perception...the physical separation between traffic and pedestrians can be done electronically or can be done with bollards, but those boundaries need to be blurred, those distinctions need to be reinvestigated and redrawn...you can't design something or build something that is intended to last forever. There has to be a way of keeping it moving, keeping a dynamic – this is the most dynamic place in New York, it's about movement, the solutions have to be dynamic and allow for change, whether it's a five, ten or twenty year cycle.

There is very little that is authentic about Times Square other than the shared experience in the place...what is authentic



Close streets periodically to allow more space for pedestrians. Rogers Marvel Architects

about it is this very dense experience...it is a sublime urban experience in which a lot of things are share...the key thing here is to try to say how can you have something that is appealing and attractive to New Yorkers, who have to populate the place, without falling into a trap of overstructured, overregulated space. To have it continue to be an experience that is an authentic experience

There is something in the relationship between fixed elements and changing elements and one of the notions I loved from the last session was the idea of Times Square as this giant stage set and the implication that there are certain pieces which are fixed and others that are constantly changing, and not getting stuck and freezing something. And you can change



Display Times Square's recent and historical past.

in terms of times and uses...public art or the programming changing, as a way to appeal to and connect with different people...where what you are trying to create is certain things that are fixed, that create the proper context, a sort of set for them.

We are talking about the tension between pedestrian and traffic, balance. And then we also have a bigger one which is the tension between that and this place as a center, as a piazza. I think it is very interesting to notice that New York has chosen as its piazza, as its main gathering place – the place where you celebrate the end of the Second World War or the New Year – a place of movement.

"CREATE A PLACE WHERE TIMES SQUARE CAN BE OBSERVED."

Balance different elements. Times Square is a place where there are many tensions to be balanced, tensions which produce much of its energy. Be careful not to upset the balance of all these elements in a way that could diminish its distinctiveness. Strive to balance:

- -traffic and pedestrians
- -the vertical and the horizontal
- -the fixed and the changing
- -the historic and the new
- -its function as static plaza and as fluid intersection
- -regulation and spontaneity
- -choreography and chaos
- -observers and doers

Recognize the diversity of who and what is here, as well as the layers. There are observers and doers, spectators and performers, tourists and locals; all the diversity of the city, the country and the world spontaneously interacting. Times Square must accommodate multiple uses. Allow the mixing of the grand scale and the human scale, the planned and the spontaneous. Explore ways to have restaurants and retail engage the street in new ways. Be aware of the layers in Times Square: above, below, the vertical, the horizontal — think of how they relate to each other. Think of layers of history as well. Create connections between streetscapes and subways and underground passages. Explore activating balconies, terraces and platforms on buildings, as well as the giant signs.

Create places. Places where people can meet, where one can stop to observe – along the center, along the periphery, in the interstitial spaces, up above the ground plane. Times Square is one of the most visually interesting places in the world, yet there are so few places where one can stop to observe it. Allow people to see and be seen. A new, expanded Duffy Square is critical. Creating more pedestrian spaces is critical.

Be sure to make Times Square a place where New Yorkers want to come to. Remember that locals validate the tourists, and that if Times Square is not authentic, creative and spontaneous. New Yorkers will not want to be here.

Look for opportunities to reinforce and recognize what is authentic, what is historic. Allow for the expression of the individual and unique as well the mass-produced, the commercial, the common (even though those are also elements of Times Square's identity). The density and the congestion are part of what is authentic. Times Square will always be intense and full of people and movement. In addressing some of the clutter and chaos, don't lose what is authentic.

Allow for the exhibition of creativity as a way to express Times Square's unique qualities, to keep it authentic, and to draw New Yorkers: through distinctive design, public art, small-scale performances. Employ maximum design innovation to articulate Times Square's status as the "Crossroads of the World," where art and life and commerce collide while individuals – and the world – watch.

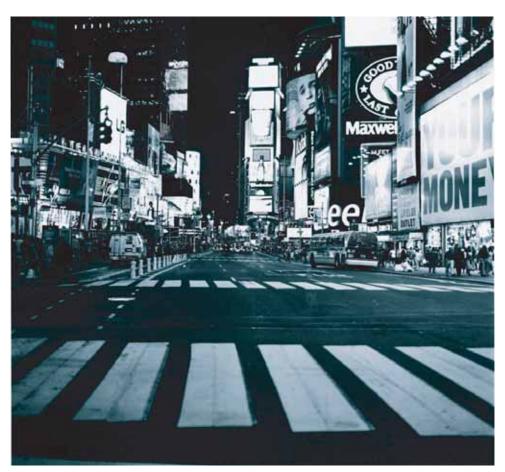
Re-think the relationships between pedestrian and vehicular spaces. Explore new ways to regulate both pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Look at signal timing, closing parts of streets at certain times; explore lessening or making more flexible the boundaries between vehicular and pedestrian space. Use pedestrian engineering to choreograph the chaos: keep pedestrians and vehicles moving without necessarily lessening the density.

Think of Times Square as an ever-changing theater set, with both fixed and changing elements. Explore which elements should be fixed and which need to be everchanging, since constant change is so much of what Times

changing, since constant change is so much or what times Square is. Recognize that it is sometimes a performance or broadcast venue as well as a traffic intersection. Acknowledge the different populations and elements that are players on that stage at different times and in different ways, and allow for both display and observation.

Look for ways to make the horizontal plane as exciting and dynamic as the vertical. Look at the horizontal space as a graphic designer or artist would. Stay away from the uniform or conventional, especially when looking at street furniture. But

...Keep it simple. Don't over-design. Times Square is already one of the most intense places in the world. Allow the center to serve as a void around which activity swirls. The center can be a blank canvas which is ever-changing.



Expand and rebuild Duffy Square, which includes the Theatre Development Fund's new TKTS booth and renovations to the plaza. This will create a central gathering place, distinguished by iconic architecture that will set the standard for rest of Times Square's ground plane.

Create 53% more sidewalk space by altering the Bowtie's central islands to provide an observation space in the center of Times Square, and by expanding the sidewalks beyond the temporary extensions whenever practicable and to create greater security standoff for high-profile buildings.

Investigate new ways to regulate traffic, including revised signal timing, temporary or partial street closings, and flexible boundaries between vehicles and pedestrians. Experiment with closing parts of the street at certain regular times when traffic will not be adversely impacted.

Design security elements that are creative, aesthetically pleasing and appropriate to Times Square: for example, bollards topped by flashing lights, photography platforms on pedestals; make existing street furniture more secure.

"Wire" the Bowtie to allow broadcasters and event organizers to "plug in" to different spots rather than having to build a "studio" for broadcasts, and to create conduits for security technology and elements as needed.

Provide spaces and opportunities for public art, small-scale performance and creativity that reinforce Times Square's creativity, energy and edge and its appeal to New Yorkers.

Explore enlivening the horizontal plane by enhancing sidewalks and redesigning existing street furniture

(e.g. newsstands, pay phones, and newsboxes); examine using higher quality or distinctive sidewalk materials where possible and practical.

Encourage and recognize higher quality design in buildings, signs and public spaces to enhance the street level experience for pedestrians.

Reduce sidewalk clutter by eliminating excess street furniture and better regulating vending, so that it can still exist here, but be better managed.

Look at ways in which zoning regulations can be modified to reflect adaptations to new technologies and to enliven Times Square's perimeter.

CREATING AN INTERNATIONAL ICON

The revitalization of Duffy Square, Times Square's central gathering place, is a crucial next step in the area's renewal. Not only is it the largest open plaza in Times Square, the park also memorializes the heroism of World War I veteran Father Francis P. Duffy of the Fighting 69th Regiment and is the home of the Theatre Development Fund's TKTS booth, which has supported the theatre in New York City for over thirty years. Unfortunately, in its current state, the Square does not remotely achieve its potential as the centerpiece of the new Times Square.

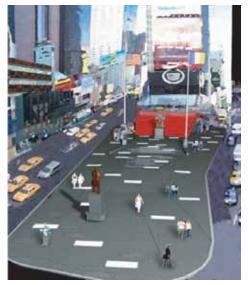
Over the past year, Times Square Alliance, Theatre Development Fund and the Coalition for Father Duffy, working closely with the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), have created a plan to revitalize Duffy Square. The plan includes a new TKTS booth; amphitheater-style seating on top of the booth; and an upgraded plaza, set with granite and ground lighting, which will be significantly wider (up to 18 feet wider) and will provide the most flexible and usable public space in the area.

The three partners have together pledged \$3 million to the project, and Mayor Michael Bloomberg has made possible a \$2.5 million capital contribution for the renovation of Duffy Square. City Council Speaker Gifford Miller provided a crucial leadership grant of \$300,000 in the winter of 2004 for design work for Duffy Square, jump-starting this long-delayed project. Also, with Councilmember Christine Quinn and with the support of the Manhattan delegation, Speaker Miller put \$1.25 million towards the Duffy Square project in this year's

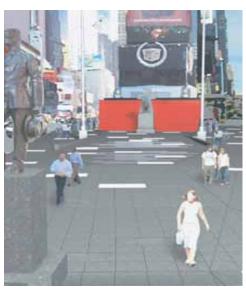
budget. Assemblyman Richard Gottfried secured \$100,000 in state funds. Congressman Jerrold Nadler also earmarked \$4 million in federal transportation funds for overall streetscape improvements in Times Square, a portion of which may become available for this project.



Evening view of new TKTS booth



Rendering of new Duffy Square



View from West 46th Street

SIDEWALK EXTENSIONS

New York City Department of Transportation's (DOT) existing temporary sidewalk extensions are shown in the figure on the right. The Alliance was thrilled to learn that Mayor Bloomberg and Transportation Commissioner Weinshall had allocated \$10 million for a sidewalk reconstruction project in 2006. Under the project, these extensions will be made permanent, resulting in a 15% augmentation of sidewalk space. However, this is unlikely to accommodate the increased pedestrian traffic caused by current and future developments.

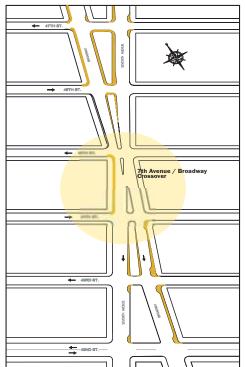
The Times Square Alliance, working with Philip Habib & Associates and DOT, and using the results of the Design Trust workshops as a guide, is studying a plan to further increase sidewalk space, to create a new pedestrian passageway and to decrease vehicular congestion on Seventh Avenue in the Bowtie. This plan eliminates the Seventh Avenue/Broadway crossover, allowing Seventh Avenue traffic to stay on Broadway and Broadway traffic to remain on Seventh Avenue. This configuration maximizes sidewalk area, adding 53% more pedestrian space, with some sidewalks gaining up to 13 feet.

FINDING NEW SPACE IN THE BOWTIE

Despite severe sidewalk congestion, the median traffic islands in the Bowtie are under-utilized. The proposal being studied would remove two smaller contiguous traffic islands (created by the crossover) to form one larger island. This new network of islands and crosswalks would create a pedestrian passageway down the center of Times Square from One Times Square to Duffy Square. The medians could also house public art, and allow for photo and viewing opportunities without clogging needed sidewalk space.

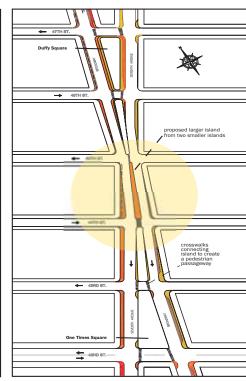
EXISTING DOT TEMPORARY EXTENSION - - REMOVED DOT EXTENSION PROPOSED PHASE 1 CONFIGURATION PROPOSED PHASE 2 CONFIGURATION

CURRENT: 15% MORE SPACE



Existing medians and NYCDOT sidewalk extensions

PROPOSED: 53% MORE SPACE



Proposed medians and sidewalk extensions

Times Square Alliance/Philip Habib & Associates

Investigate New Ways to Regulate Traffic

BALANCING VEHICULAR FLOWS WITH MORE SPACE FOR PEDESTRIANS

The new plan not only allows for the creation of far more pedestrian space, but it also redirects traffic more evenly and lessens the bottleneck on Seventh Avenue below 45th Street.

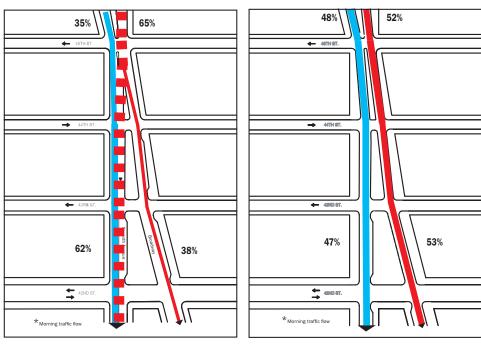
Currently vehicular volumes concentrate on lower Seventh Avenue (with 62% of the morning traffic flow) as seen in the map to the left. With the new plan, as seen on the image on the right, car traffic is more evenly split between Broadway and Seventh Avenue (47% on Seventh Avenue, 53% on Broadway), creating a more balanced traffic flow in Times Square.

SIGNAL TIMING

Each traffic signal is programmed with the amount of red and green time for vehicle and pedestrian movements. Changing Times Square's existing signal timing should be explored to favor pedestrian flows and to maximize the number of people able to cross the Bowtie during a given time interval. Vehicle turn restrictions and alternative turning schemes could be examined and crosswalks should connect the center median islands. These measures will impact intersections throughout the surrounding network, and will require further analysis to determine their feasibility and to ensure that they enhance rather than limit access to theatres, restaurants and entertainment venues.

EXISTING STREET NETWORK*

PROPOSED BALANCED TRAFFIC NETWORK*



% total of all southbound vehicular Broadway/Seventh Avenue traffic combined

SECURITY ELEMENTS

Times Square is one of the most high-profile public spaces in the world and therefore any streetscape plan must take into account security concerns without limiting the area's flexibility and free flow of activity. Any plan must help to secure the ground level without compromising design standards or pedestrian flow. Options to be considered include specially designed security furniture, such as bollards and planters, developing attractive prototypes where appropriate, and "hardening" existing street furniture by anchoring it to the sidewalk to create a barrier effect.



Combined security and lighting element

BROADCAST. EVENT & SECURITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Times Square, with its unique characteristics and prominent role in the life of New York City, has always accommodated many events on local, national, and worldwide scales. Broadway on Broadway** and New Year's Eve are the two annual mainstage events in Times Square run by the Alliance. Other events taking place in Times Square throughout the year include continuous broadcasts by local television networks, television and movie filming, and commercial promotions.

Every time an event or filming occurs in Times Square, infrastructure must be set up. This results in expense, clutter, and hazards to pedestrian safety due to exposed cables and generators causing trip hazards. If the Bowtie were wired for power, signal and sound, cables would be kept underground, clearing them from streets and sidewalks. Creating a broadcast events infrastructure in the area will reduce the cost and the adverse impact of

events on the streetscape and make it possible to better regulate those events so there is less of an impact on surrounding businesses and pedestrians. In addition, such infrastucture will simplify the implementation of any new security techniologies that may be needed in the future.



Tripping hazard



Tripping hazard



Create broadcast infrastructure to lessen neighborhood impact.

TEMPORARY PUBLIC PERFORMANCE AND ART

Times Square is a neigborhood of both fixed and constantly changing elements. Temporary public art and small-scale performances in public spaces around the district create new experiences and connections which nurture the creativity, energy and edge that are the essence of a changing Times Square. Incorporating diverse art elements into Times Square's streetscape emphasizes the area's uniqueness and enriches the pedestrian experience as long as it is managed strategically, so as to not increase congestion.



Marriott Marquis Broadway Mural



Public performance at Solistice in Times Square



Public art in Times Square

Explore Enlivening the Horizontal Plane

DISTRICTWIDE STREETSCAPE PROGRAM

Although the focus of the Design Trust's workshops (and this report) was the Bowtie, the Alliance is exploring streetscape improvements throughout the district that will complement changes in the Bowtie. The Times Square Alliance's district covers from 40th Street to 53rd Street between Sixth and Eighth Avenues, consisting of a number of subdistricts (see right). Possible streetscape improvements could include newsracks, newsstands, landscaping, wayfinding signage and decorative paving and the placement of temporary public art in areas that do not add to the congestion. The streetscape program would create a dynamic vocabulary that recognizes each area's distinctiveness while also establishing a coherent design for the district. Congressman Nadler has generously earmarked \$4 million in transportation funds towards these improvements.

The **Bowtle** is the visual and physical core of Times Square.

The **Eighth Avenue Corridor** is characterized by low-scale buildings to the south and large-scale residential towers to the north. Independent retail, restaurants and services occupy many of the ground floor spaces.

The **42nd Street Corridor** stretches from Sixth to Eighth Avenues along 42nd Street and is one of New York's most visually dynamic streets, with creative billboards and signage. This two-way street contains Broadway theatres, movie theatres, restaurants, hotels and retail.

The Northern District contains primarily large-scale corporate office buildings, such as Lehman Brothers and Morgan Stanley and leading hotels, including the Sheraton.

Restaurant Row on West 46th Street is home to more than twenty street-level restaurants.





Clockwise from top right: Curb design, Ken Smith Landscape Architect; Street signage, Cemusa; Wayfinding kiosk, Adshel; Newsboxes, Karim Rashid; Bus shelter, Cemusa



Design Times Square is a new program to celebrate and encourage quality design in Times Square. Organized by the Times Square Alliance and based on a similar design program in Montreal, Design Times Square seeks to recognize good design in and around Times Square; including, but not limited to commercial establishments, office buildings, theatres, outdoor advertising and public art that are accessible to the public. In doing so we hope to:

- a. Highlight quality design in Times Square
- b. Encourage businesses to invest in design
- c. Demonstrate that good design is good for business

The first Design Times Square, launched in 2004 as part of the Centennial celebration for Times Square, recognizes a broad sampling of both new and old noteworthy design.

A jury nominated the "Best of Times Square" and members of the public then voted for favorites. In 2005 and future years, Design Times Square will focus on both exterior and interior design in newly constructed commercial buildings, retail establishments and outdoor signage.



Armed Forces Recruiting Station



McGraw-Hill Midblock



Second Stage Theater



ABC Ticker Sign

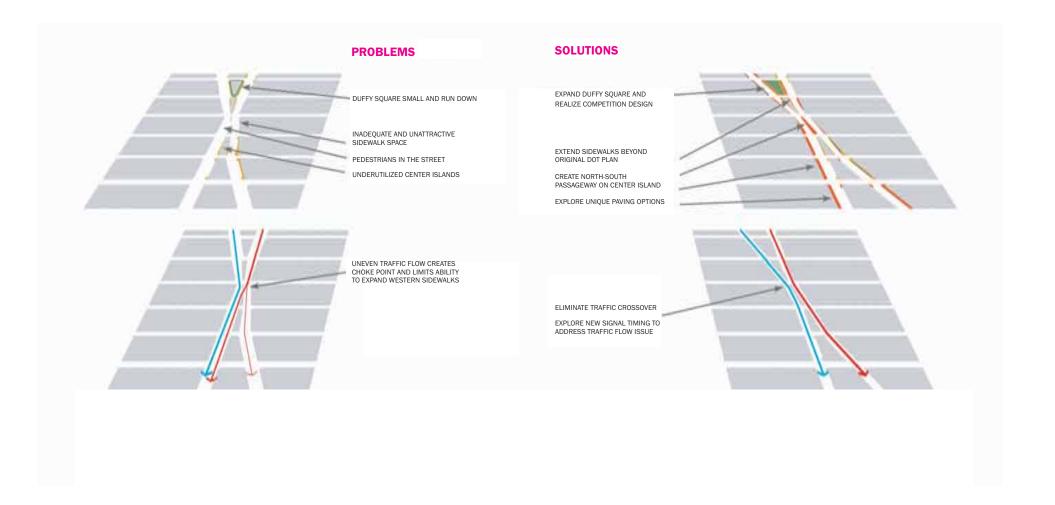


Blue Fin



Howard Johnson's

An Integrated Plan PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS >26



PROBLEMS SOLUTIONS UNATTRACTIVE, ORDINARY AND CLUTTERED STREET FURNITURE HARDEN EXISTING STREET FURNITURE REPLACE ORDINARY ELEMENTS FEW EFFECTIVE SECURITY BARRIERS FOR HIGHEST PROFILE BUILDINGS FACING THE SQUARE WITH DISTINCTIVE, TIMES SQUARE APPROPRIATE DESIGNS ELIMINATE EXCESS FURNITURE CREATE SUBSURFACE THROUGHWAY TO HOLD POWER, SOUND AND SIGNAL CABLES CREATE CONDUIT POINTS WHERE BROADCAST EVENT AND SECURITY ELEMENTS CAN "PLUG-IN" EVENTS & BROADCASTS TEND TO OVERWHELM THE SAME AREAS EVENTS & BROADCASTS CAUSE DISRUPTION, CLUTTER CHOKE POINTS NO CENTRAL CONDUITS FOR INTEGRATED

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A VISION WORTH EXPLORING

This south-facing view of the Bowtie sets forth an overall integrated schematic vision for pedestrian improvements in Times Square, comprised the following elements:

A **revitalized Duffy Square** will provide more sidewalk and plaza space and a newly redesigned TKTS booth to create a central public gathering space and international icon in Times Square

Furthering sidewalk extensions that build upon the NYC Department of Transportation's plan, resulting in more than a 50% increase in pedestrian space and greater security standoff.

Elimination of the Broadway/Seventh Avenue crossover, to ensure **smoother traffic flow** and increased pedestrian safety.

A **unified pedestrian passageway** down the center the of Bowtie, affording continuous passage from Duffy Square to 1 Times Square.

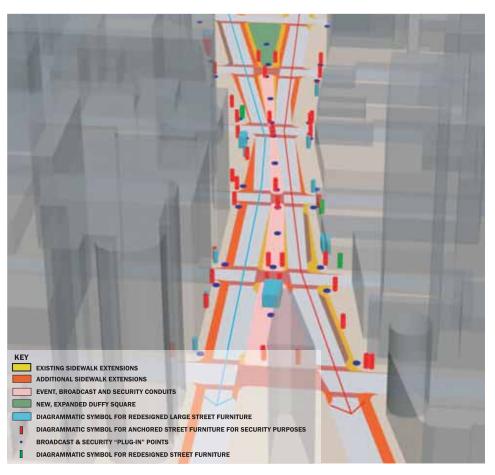
Distinctive streetscape and sidewalk elements that reinforce Time Square's image as a unique, cutting edge place.

Identify places for unobstrusive public performance and art to enrich the pedestrian experience.

Reinforcing existing street furniture in front of buildings and on sidewalks will help to create a safer Times Square.

Creating a broadcast & events infrastructure consisting of an underground substructure and periodic vertical elements allowing access to power, signal and sound wiring.

Encourage better design through the Design Times Square program, which recognizes achievements in architecture design.



PEDESTRIAN ENGINEERING

The entire zone is in need of "pedestrian engineering", the application of traffic engineering principles to pedestrian movement. Through pedestrian engineering – analyzing the origin/destination, direction of movement, and volume of pedestrians as well as automobiles – a sidewalk improvement scheme can be redesigned to move the maximum number of people through Times Square safely and efficiently.

The plan uses pedestrian engineering to build up Times Square's existing strengths: its density of pedestrians and vibrant urban energy. With strategies including sidewalk extensions, revised traffic patterns, improved street furniture, and public art, the Pedestrian Improvement Program presents a host of feasible ideas for creating a highly functional environment for pedestrians and vehicles to echo the excitement and uniqueness of Times Square while setting a new standard in urban design.

There are few places in New York, a city of walkers, where pedestrians are given priority. Times Square is an obvious place to test ideas for promoting mobility due to the sheer number of people and cars coming through the area. It can be a unique model to demonstrate how to effectively balance the needs of pedestrians, vehicles, and infrastructure in a truly integrated and iconic streetscape.

NEXT STEPS

The DOT's Street Reconstruction Project (scheduled for FY 2007) provides a great opportunity to reengineer Times Square for enhanced pedestrian mobility while accommodating the multiple uses and demands that it faces as a result of its revitalization. The agency has shown great flexibility and creativity in anticipating these demands, and will be a key player moving forward.

PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENT PLANS AND PROJECTS IN TIMES SQUARE

1998 Times Square Passageways

Times Square Alliance (BID) with Jeanne Giordano and Philip Habib & Associates

Identified public and private mid-block pedestrian paths and programming opportunities.

1998 Bowtie Improvement Project

Times Square Alliance (BID) with Cooper Robertson & Partners and Philip Habib & Associates Identified additional sidewalk locations to improve pedestrian movement through the Bowtie.

2000 Midtown Manhattan Pedestrian Network Development Project

NYC Department of Transportation and NYC Department of City Planning Identified short, medium, and long-term action items to study and implement for pedestrian safety and mobility.

2000 TKTS Design Competition

Van Alen Institute, NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, the Coalition for Father Duffy and the Theatre Development Fund Created a design for a renovation of the TKTS ticket booth and Duffy Square. Currently in design development; construction will begin in 2005.

2001 Temporary Sidewalk Extensions

Times Square Alliance and the NYC Department of Transportation

Created temporary sidewalk extensions throughout the Bowtie based on the Pedestrian Network Development Plan created by DOT and City Planning in 2000. Deemed successful as a pilot program.

2003-2006 Times Square Complex Station Reconstruction

Metropolitan Transit Authority Renovating and improving the function of 42nd Street subway station.

2003 Times Square Workshops

Times Square Alliance (BID) and the Design Trust for Public Space Suggested creative design and engineering improvements for the Bowtie.

2003 Bowtie Median Plan

Times Square Alliance with Philip Habib & Associates Proposed traffic reconfiguration, sidewalk extensions, special paving, and broadcast/events infrastructure to improve the pedestrian experience in Times Square. Currently being reviewed by DOT.

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This publication and the Design Trust workshops were part of a project of the Design Trust for Public Space in partnership with the Times Square Alliance.

Following the workshops, the Design Trust awarded a fellowship to Michael Fishman, the Vice-President of Urban Design at Sam Schwartz Company, to continue working with the Alliance. Over a three-month period, Mr. Fishman helped to interpret the workshop findings, which influenced this report.

The Design Trust for Public Space is a private nonprofit organization that partners with New York City's public agencies and community groups to improve the vital resource of our public spaces. The Design Trust provides design and planning expertise, and encourages discussion and action through fellowships, forums, and publications to help shape public policy for the benefit of all New Yorkers.

The Times Square Alliance, founded in 1992, works to improve and promote Times Square so that it retains the energy, edge and distinctiveness that have made it an icon for entertainment, culture and urban life for almost a century. In addition to providing core services, the Alliance promotes local businesses, co-coordinates numerous major events in Times Square such as New Year's Eve, manages an Information Center and advocates on behalf of its constituents with respect to a host of public policy, planning and quality-of-life issues.

Both organizations especially thank Robert Hammond for bringing them together and for helping to significantly shape the workshops so that they were both inspiring and practical, and Kinshasha Holman Conwill, for her spirited and creative facilitation of the workshops.

Special thanks to DOT Commissioner Iris Weinshall and

WWW.TIMESSQUARENYC.ORG

City Planning Chair Amanda Burden for allowing their staffs to participate in and contribute to these sessions and for working with the Alliance to explore these ideas.

Primary Authors

Tim Tompkins, Times Square Alliance Michael Fishman, Design Trust Fellow Daniella Eidelberg, Times Square Alliance Eddie Nelms, Times Square Alliance

Additional Contributors

Karen Hock, Design Trust for Public Space Cerina Anggraini, Times Square Alliance consultant Claire Weisz, Design Trust for Public Space Andrea Woodner, Design Trust for Public Space

Philip Habib, Philip Habib & Associates Sandy Pae, Philip Habib & Associates Ellen Goldstein, Times Square Alliance Charles Prideaux, Paladin Entertainment

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Page 21: Nelson Bakerman, center photo

Page 23: Sarah Shatz

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DESIGN TRUST WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Facilitator

Kinshasha Holman Conwill, Design Trust

Architecture

Bruce Fowle, Fox & Fowle Architects Richard Gluckman, Gluckman Mayner Architects Giuseppe Lignano, LOT/EK Jonathan Marvel, Rogers Marvel Architects Rob Rogers, Rogers Marvel Architects

Urban Design/Planning

Donald Clinton, Cooper, Robertson & Partners Michael Fishman, Sam Schwartz LLC John Reddick, Cityscape Institute Mark Robbins, Radcliffe Institute

Real Estate/Finance

Cheryl Cohen Effron, ATC Management LLC Lynne Sagalyn, University of Pennsylvania

Landscape Architecture

Ken Smith, Ken Smith Landscape Architect

Art

Amy Barkow, photographer
Alexa Birdsong, City Parks Foundation
James King, arts administrator/consultant
Vanessa Manley, Urban Bush Women
Mary Miss, artist
Carol Stakenas, Creative Time
Robert Wilson, artist, designer, director
Jawole Jo Willa Zollar, Urban Bush Women

Object/Graphic/Image Design

Brian Collins, Ogilvy Stephen Doyle, Doyle Partners Peter Kohlmann, Peko Productions Matthew Moore, ESI Design Ron Norsworthy, designer

Lighting Design

Nathalie Rozot, L'Observatoire

City of New York

Margaret Forgione, Dept. of Transportation Maurice Bruet, Dept. of Transportation David Jehn, Dept. of Transportation Randy Wade, Dept. of Transportation Douglas Woodward, Dept. of City Planning

Times Square Alliance Board

David Emil, Noche Per Hellman, Millennium Hotel Jeffrey Katz, Sherwood Equities Virginia Millhiser, Millhiser & Company Eric Rudin, Rudin Management

Times Square Alliance Staff

Tim Tompkins Ellen Goldstein Daniella Eidelberg Robert Hammond

Design Trust for Public Space

Claire Weisz Andrea Woodner Simon Bertrang

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