



Hudson Square Business Improvement District

INNOVATION

The Hudson Street Redesign aimed to balance pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular needs along one of the neighborhood's primary arteries while creating a grand boulevard to animate and beautify the commercial district and reinforce the neighborhood's distinctive character.

This infrastructure project was the first in New York City to utilize the design-build process and was implemented by the public-private partnership of the Hudson Square BID, NYC EDC and NYC DOT. The partnership effectively tackled the design and logistical challenges of redesigning urban infrastructure. The BID and the City of New York co-funded the project, with each partner leveraging their expertise and relationships to deliver the project on time and under budget. The BID led an inclusive, community-driven design process and serves as an ongoing maintenance partner with the City. Due to its capacity and expertise, NYC EDC managed the construction and coordinated with relevant city agencies, while the BID coordinated construction-related community concerns and conflicts.

The redesign implemented green infrastructure on a corridor scale while providing a park-like experience in a neighborhood with historically scarce open space. The redesign expanded sidewalks to create room for numerous amenities such as bike racks, continuous tree pits, and significantly more seating in various arrangements for social interaction. The design applied the Hudson Square Standard, HSBID's distinctive tree pit design that bolsters tree health, yields major environmental and public health benefits and increases overall permeability and stormwater capture.

OUTCOME

The Hudson Street Redesign has catalyzed growth and development in Hudson Square, reinforcing a visually unique neighborhood identity. The seven-block corridor welcomes a large variety of daily users. Home to 4 million square feet of office space, 250 residential units, eight new ground-floor retailers since the project broke ground, and the entrance to the busiest passport office in the country, Hudson Street's expanded sidewalks, ample seating and lush greenery created a front porch for the neighborhood. A recent study observed that seating amenities along each block of the corridor were in use 83% of the time, and expanded sidewalks have created opportunities to allow for sidewalk programming, including sidewalk cafes throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

The redesign brought balance to the street, improving multimodal connectivity through a parking-protected bikeway that connects with the existing bikeway to the north, creating a six-mile continuous stretch of protected bikeway to upper Manhattan at a time when bike ridership has been increasing citywide.

The redesign balances the contemporary needs of a greener, sustainable future with the neighborhood's industrial legacy. Sustainable and robust materials, such as the recycled plastic composite used for the benches, were prioritized. The Hudson Square Standard tree pits and distinctive pavers contribute to a sense of place through their design and have resulted in 12% faster tree growth than standard city pits, leading to more oxygen production and greater CO₂ capture from street trees.

EXECUTION

The project was executed on time and under budget despite the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The successful partnership model and the design-build process allowed flexibility in responding to obstacles and unforeseen conditions while maintaining and achieving the outlined objectives. The BID's relationships with adjacent ground floor businesses and property owners, combined with hyperlocal knowledge, allowed this complicated project to move forward promptly and efficiently. The BID coordinated efficient resolutions to challenges and concerns raised through construction by the community and adjacent developments. It advocated for the continued support of the project through the pandemic and its period of fiscal uncertainty. EDC was able to coordinate the efficient participation of many different agencies. Thanks to the design-build process and team, the project team was able to efficiently come up with design changes that addressed unexpected field conditions and conflicts while still achieving the design objectives.

REPRESENTATION

The design was shaped by a community-led process involving several public meetings and workshops with local stakeholders, including property owners, businesses, residents and community organizations. As part of the first neighborhood streetscape plan, initial planning and urban design studies looked beyond the site's edges and explored potential impacts and recommendations for future development. The BID conducted outreach to all residents, businesses, organizations and property owners in the area throughout the planning and design phases, inviting everyone to participate in the process through design charrettes and stakeholder meetings. The design was presented to the local Community Board and elected officials and received strong support.

Throughout the development and construction process, the BID prioritized keeping stakeholders informed and employed creative solutions to encourage participation and communication in an inherently disjointed time. The BID focused on clear communication beyond just the design phase, sending out dedicated monthly newsletters to keep everyone aware of construction status and impacts, and designing banners to hang along the construction site to convey renderings of the future improvements, the project benefits, and ways to contact the project team with any concerns.

REPLICATION

The Hudson Street Redesign project presents a replicable solution that other downtown areas can modify for their circumstances where there is a funding commitment to create this kind of complete street, balancing the needs of all street users and a sidewalk environment that promotes pedestrian safety and comfort, active retail, and sustainability. Using durable and sustainable materials and plants allows for ongoing maintenance on a limited budget. By reducing the oversized roadway to standard lane widths, the project reallocates road space to the pedestrian realm to create widened sidewalks without removing traffic lanes, significantly limiting political or traffic engineering opposition. This project serves as a model public-private partnership for others looking to retrofit the built environment. The BID's role in funding, project management and community engagement can help city governments build support for, advance, and fund projects that would not otherwise move forward.

COMPLEXITY/SIMPLICITY

Designing a streetscape that works for many different uses and users in a dense urban setting is complex. The technical complexity of the Hudson Street Redesign required an immense amount of communication among city agencies and local stakeholders, which the public-private partnership was uniquely able to respond to. The BID proactively engaged the community during the design phase to ensure the design accounted for various curbside needs of businesses, pedestrians, cyclists and building owners. EDC was able to coordinate with multiple city agencies, increasing overall efficiency. Additionally, the role of the BID in developing close relationships with all owners and ground-floor businesses along the corridor allowed for efficient response to unexpected challenges/conflicts, which was necessary given the amount of private construction and development happening concurrently along the corridor. The relationship among DOT, EDC and the BID also allowed for easier communication around the need to coordinate unforeseen circumstances that arose due to new open dining regulations during the pandemic and the different types of public and private infrastructure found under the streets and sidewalks of Manhattan.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Webpage: <https://www.hudsonsquarebid.org/bid-programs/public-improvements/hudson-street/>

Master Plan: <https://www.hudsonsquarebid.org/bid-programs/neighborhood-master-plans/hudson-square-is-now/>

Mayor Adams on CBS: <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/video/mayor-adams-makes-safe-streets-announcement/>

AMNY: <https://www.amny.com/news/hudson-street-redesign-dot-hudson-square-bid/>

NYC.Gov: <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/491-22/mayor-adams-nycedc-dot-hudson-square-bid-newly-renovated-hudson-street#/0>

NYC EDC: <https://edc.nyc/press-release/mayor-adams-nycedc-dot-hudson-square-business-improvement-district-unveil-newly>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtTseeJTvac>

Patch (7/13/2022): Hudson Street Gets A Makeover: New Green Space And Bike Lanes
<https://patch.com/new-york/west-village/hudson-street-gets-makeover-new-green-space-bike-lanes>

AMNY (7/12/2022): City celebrates Hudson Street redesign, nearly half of which funded by local BID
<https://www.amny.com/news/hudson-street-redesign-dot-hudson-square-bid/>