



In 2008, students in the College Now Program at Brooklyn College, the Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP), and teaching artist Cassie Thornton spent a summer investigating what it would take to implement new ideas for Grand Army Plaza. As part of an architecture competition to redesign the plaza, the group researched what it would actually take to make some of the big design changes being proposed. They conducted interviews with various stakeholders, from the Department of Design and Construction to the Prospect Park Alliance. They followed the trail of the complex bureaucratic and political processes involved in changing public space, and visually translated them with this poster. Their work was displayed on Grand Army Plaza alongside official entries from the architecture competition.

The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) uses the power of design and art to improve civic engagement. CUP collaborates with designers, educators, advocates, students, and communities to make educational tools that demystify complex policy and planning issues. We believe that increasing understanding of how these systems work is the first step to better, more equitable, and more diverse community participation.

Urban Investigations are CUP's project-based afterschool programs in which public high school students explore fundamental questions about how the city works. Students collaborate with CUP and teaching artists to create multimedia teaching tools that reach audiences in the arts and social justice.

welcometocup.org

College Now is a free City University of New York program designed to prepare NYC's public high school students for success in college. By taking part in College Now, students get acquainted with the demands of college life and work before they get there. College Now offers college-credit courses, college-preparatory courses and activities, and experiential-based summer programs.

This project was made possible by the CUNY College Now program.

When you see something with really neat design stuff, it usually isn't the city maintaining it, it's usually some sort of business consortium that has agreed to take care of it. Otherwise it would look like a regular city project with a regular street.

Tupper Thomas, Administrator of Prospect Park and President of the Prospect Park Alliance

Joe Sopiak Infrastructure Division, Department of Design and Construction

The Department of Design and Construction builds and maintains major city projects.

The squeaky wheel gets things for their neighborhood. If six of you got together and walked into a community board demanding something, people would say "Oh My Goodness! The community is up in arms!"

Organizations like the Prospect Park Alliance, the Design Trust for Public Space, and the Grand Army Plaza Coalition work to raise public and private money to help create a new Grand Army Plaza.

Michael Cairl, Vice-Chair of Grand Army Plaza Coalition

If money were no object we could have something incredibly fancy, but what results may not be fancy. If it achieves the community objectives, that would be a good thing. When you have five stakeholders, your problem isn't multiplied by five, it's multiplied by ten.

Part of the reason these public projects take so long is that there are a lot of people who get involved. It's not just a roadway project, the Parks Department would have to approve it as well.

Chris Hrones Downtown Transportation Coordinator for the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT)

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A landscape architecture firm will be hired to create a new design for Grand Army Plaza. The Department of Design and Construction will present the master plan back to the community boards, who have a strictly advisory role.

