

REIMAGINING BROOKLYN BRIDGE



VAN
ALEN
INSTITUTE

SUBMISSIONS DUE APRIL 5
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NYC

OVERVIEW



The Brooklyn Bridge was never just a thoroughfare. Its 6,016-foot long span, soaring neo-Gothic towers, and hundreds of galvanized steel cables completely transformed New York's skyline upon completion in 1883, and made a powerful impression on the world that endures to this day. From literary masterpieces and Hollywood blockbusters, to online travel guides and tourists' selfies on Instagram, it is clear the Brooklyn Bridge holds a special place in our collective imagination. It is one of New York's most recognizable landmarks, and for many it has come to symbolize the city as a whole.

But that iconic status comes at a cost. As people flock to the bridge, its publicly-accessible areas become overcrowded. Every day, the Brooklyn Bridge attracts visitors from all over the world, while still serving locals as a connector. Tourists, commuters, and vendors all jostle for space on bikes and on foot, creating uncomfortable and sometimes unsafe conditions for visitors. We're seeing this narrative unfold throughout New York City. With growing numbers of cyclists and pedestrians, it is imperative that modern infrastructure allows people to move comfortably and safely around the city. In recent years, city officials have responded, adding protected bike lanes, widening sidewalks, building pedestrian plazas, and providing new bike and pedestrian space on some bridges around the city. The Brooklyn Bridge, perhaps the city's most crucial interborough connection for pedestrians and cyclists, remains unable to accommodate the demands of its users.

On the 150th anniversary of the start of its construction, the New York City Council and Van Alen Institute seek visionary ideas that would improve every aspect of the Brooklyn Bridge experience: access, the journey across, understanding of its history, landmark status and extraordinary engineering, and the meaning and pleasure that visiting one of the globe's most iconic public spaces should deliver.

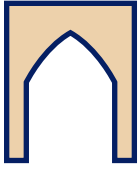
This is an international design competition, free and open to the public. Design proposals may be submitted by individuals or multidisciplinary design teams. We will select six finalists, three proposals from participants 22 years of age and older ("professionals"), and three proposals from participants 21 years of age and under ("young adults"). We seek ingenious, provocative, and forward-looking designs. The winning proposal will balance the needs of the bridge's many users, honor the bridge's place among New York's most treasured landmarks, and inspire civic design in our city for generations to come. Professionals will receive \$13,000 and young adults will receive \$3,000 to develop their ideas. Finalists will work with Van Alen and City Council for six to eight weeks to further improve their designs before presenting in front of a public jury. From each category, one winning proposal will be selected.

THIS COMPETITION ASKS:

How do we make the bridge a pleasant experience for all users and inspire infrastructure and transit needs for the 21st century?



COMPETITION GOALS



As the city continues to think about incremental enhancements, this is an opportunity to imagine bolder, more creative solutions—design ideas that improve access to and movement across the bridge, and enhance what is already one of New York’s most awe-inspiring experiences.

Proposals should focus their enhancements on the bridge’s walkway, but proposals can include recommendations for adjacent spaces such as approaches, sidewalks, roadways, or transportation and public spaces.

HISTORY

We must balance celebration of the bridge’s rich history and iconic status with its everyday utility.

INSPIRATION

We must create an environment that brings surprise and delight to users today and inspires innovative infrastructure in New York for the 21st century.

ACCESS

Circulation, wayfinding, and overall user access must be improved, especially at pinch points like promenade entrances and approaches. The Brooklyn Bridge must also continue to be a connector, not a barrier, between Brooklyn and Manhattan.

SOCIAL

The bridge is many things to many people. We must balance the needs of commuters with sightseers, cyclists with pedestrians, and vendors with public service providers and emergency uses. We must make the bridge a pleasant experience for all non-automotive users. Ensuring physical and psychological comfort, safety, and accessibility for individuals with different levels of mobility (e.g., the elderly, children, families with strollers) are priorities.

ENVIRONMENT

The bridge must consider biophilic design, stormwater management, and/or cleaner energy and air.



COMPETITION TIMELINE

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

April 5, 2020

FINALISTS ANNOUNCED

Early May 2020

FINALISTS KICKOFF EVENT

Mid-May 2020

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

May–July 2020

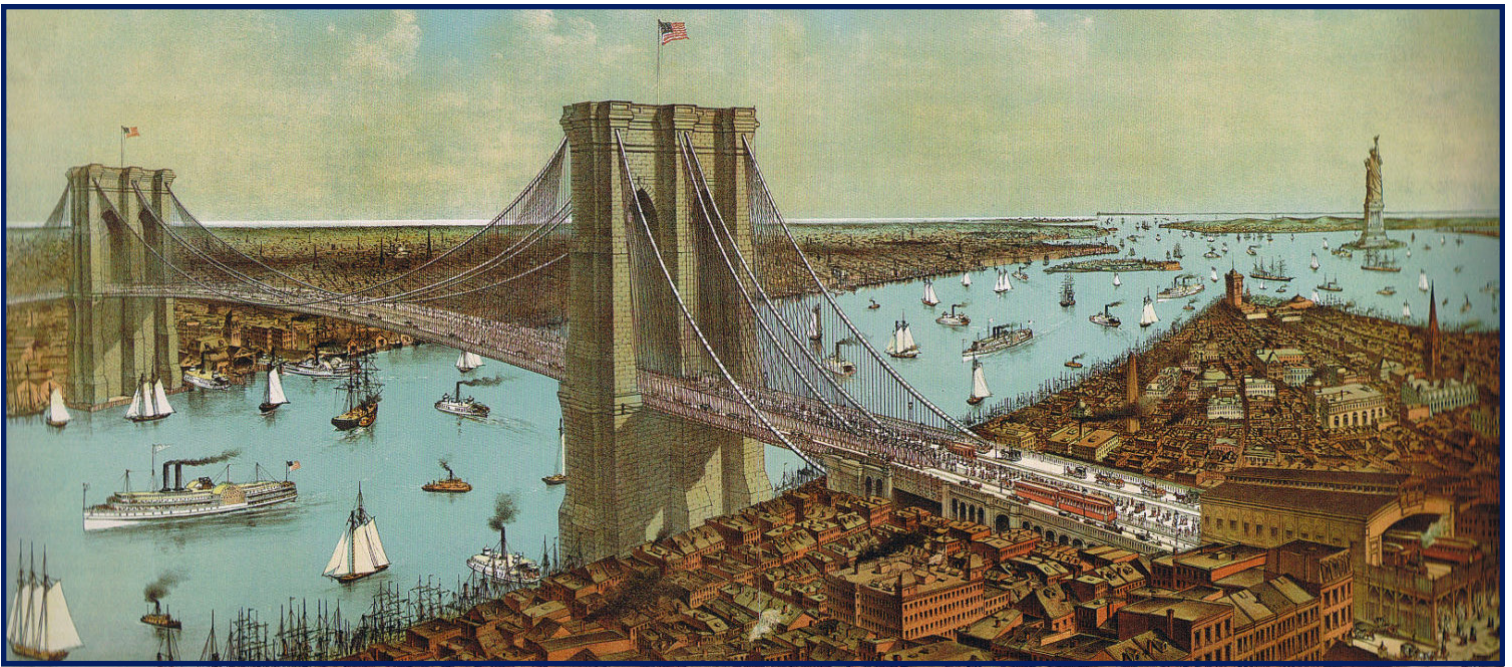
PUBLIC JURY SESSION

Mid-July 2020

WINNER ANNOUNCEMENT

Late July 2020

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BACKGROUND

Driven by a need for faster, more efficient transportation between Manhattan and Brooklyn, construction on the Brooklyn Bridge began around New Year's Day, 1870. Over the course of fourteen years, the Roebling family—first John Roebling, then his son Washington, and finally Washington's wife, Emily—oversaw the gradual completion of the bridge using innovative techniques such as pressurized pneumatic caissons, which allowed work below the riverbed, and steel cables of unprecedented length and weight.

The Brooklyn Bridge opened on May 24, 1883. Upon completion, its cables held up the longest span in the world (1,600 feet), and for several years after construction, its granite towers stood as the tallest structures in the Western hemisphere. Horse-drawn and rail traffic traversed the bridge's roadway, while the promenade above allowed the crossing of pedestrians and cyclists. In its first 24 hours, 250,000 people walked across the bridge.

Over time, the roadway transitioned from serving trolleys, elevated trains, and carriages to passenger vehicles, dramatically lowering the number of trips taken across the bridge. In 1907, 426,000 trips occurred; by 2016, that number was approximately 126,600.

The promenade has remained a space for cyclists and pedestrians. Now one of New York City's top tourist attractions, between 2008 and 2015 the promenade's foot and bike traffic grew by 275% and 104% respectively. To address congestion and improve the pedestrian and biking experience, the city is considering several investments. Improvements to the **bridge's gateway** along Tillary Street in Brooklyn which is wrapping up, and a **curb-protected bike lane** was installed at the entrance near City Hall Park (Manhattan). **Expanding the pedestrian promenade** is also under consideration. Ongoing regular **maintenance under way** includes rehabilitation of towers, arches, and other bridge elements.



THE SITE

According to NYC DOT, in 2016, more than 120,000 cars, 4,000 pedestrians, and 2,600 bicyclists used the bridge every day. The pedestrian and bike promenade is elevated 18 feet above the bridge's roadway, spans 1.1 miles, and varies in width from 17 feet to 10 feet in some places. A white line divides the promenade into two lanes, one for pedestrians and the other for cyclists. Each lane serves both east- and west-bound traffic, and one often finds both sides of the walkway overtaken by pedestrians and tourists taking photos. Police vehicles and vendors selling souvenirs also compete for space along the promenade. During peak hours, the bridge is crowded, uncomfortable and sometimes hazardous due to the high volume of use.

The Brooklyn Bridge connects the neighborhoods of downtown Manhattan to downtown Brooklyn. Both neighborhoods are dense areas, with homes, offices, stores, schools and various attractions from museums to trendy bars and restaurants that draw many visitors. On the Brooklyn side, pedestrians and cyclists enter the bridge via a two-lane, 16-foot-wide, tree-lined path that begins at Adams and Tillary Streets. In Manhattan, the entrance sits at Centre Street facing City Hall. Pedestrians and cyclists follow a two-lane path to the bridge, protected from car traffic by cement barriers on both sides.

APPLICANTS

The competition has two finalist categories:

Professionals

Three individual or team finalists will be 22 years of age and older, and each will receive \$13,000. Ultimately, one winner will be selected.

Young Adults

Three individual or team finalists will be 21 years of age or under, and each will receive \$3,000. Ultimately, one winner will be selected.

The competition is free and open to the public. Submissions from international competitors and multidisciplinary teams are welcome. The general public and students are encouraged to enter.

We do encourage teams to apply. There is no maximum number of team members, but the recommended number is four. The ideal team should represent an interdisciplinary mix of expertise across transportation, public space and engineering. However, competitors do not need to have formal training in design, planning, or engineering to submit a proposal. While proposals need to be structurally plausible, they do not need to be technically precise.

Individuals or teams may only make one submission to the competition, and no individual or firm may be a member of more than one team submission.

FINALISTS

The six finalist teams will work with Van Alen and City Council to develop their designs over two months. Finalists are expected to:

- Participate in a New York-based kick-off event (mid-May)
- Create two renderings and one sectional drawing of their proposed idea (May–July)
- Create and present their ideas to the public in a final jury session (late July)

APPLICANTS SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

To enter this competition, submit your proposal electronically as a single PDF document via the submission portal. The PDF should be formatted 11x13 inches in landscape orientation, no longer than 10 pages, and no larger than 10MB. Title your PDF file with “[Lead Name].” Hard copies of submission materials will not be accepted.

Please submit questions to competitions@vanalen.org by March 6, 2020. Responses will be posted on the [project webpage](#) the following week.

Submit here: <https://forms.gle/yjXUT2XdfyS6z1Ce7>

COVER SHEET

Include a one (1) page cover sheet with: 1) the project’s title, 2) the name of the team lead and that person’s phone number and email address, 3) the city and country in which you are based, and 4) the number of team members submitting. Please note that team leads will serve as the sole point of contact and liaison throughout each phase of the competition.

TEAM DESCRIPTION

Describe your team and key team members. Include each team member’s name, experience, and qualifications in a one-paragraph biography.

VISION

A singular ‘poster image’ that conveys your proposal, and includes your project title plus a one-sentence description. Your proposal can be a sketch, rendering, collage or take another format—and should look to address the competition goals. Your poster image should aim to bring your concept to life—make sure it is vibrant, contextual, engaging, and responsive to the competition brief.

PROJECT APPROACH

Describe how you came to the recommended proposal.

Overview (75 words max)

Provide a description of your proposal. Please include how this achieves the goals of the competition.

History (100 words max)

How does the proposal balance the bridge’s iconic status with its everyday utility?

Access, safety (200 words max)

How does your proposal enhance mobility and accessibility? How does your proposal address the needs of diverse users? How does it enhance their comfort and safety?

Inspiration (100 words max)

How will this proposal inspire civil engineering and infrastructure design in New York in the future?

Environmental Benefit and Security (250 words max)

What components does your proposal include to support the environment? How does your proposal consider users' security?

Other (100 words optional)

Is there anything else you would like us to consider?

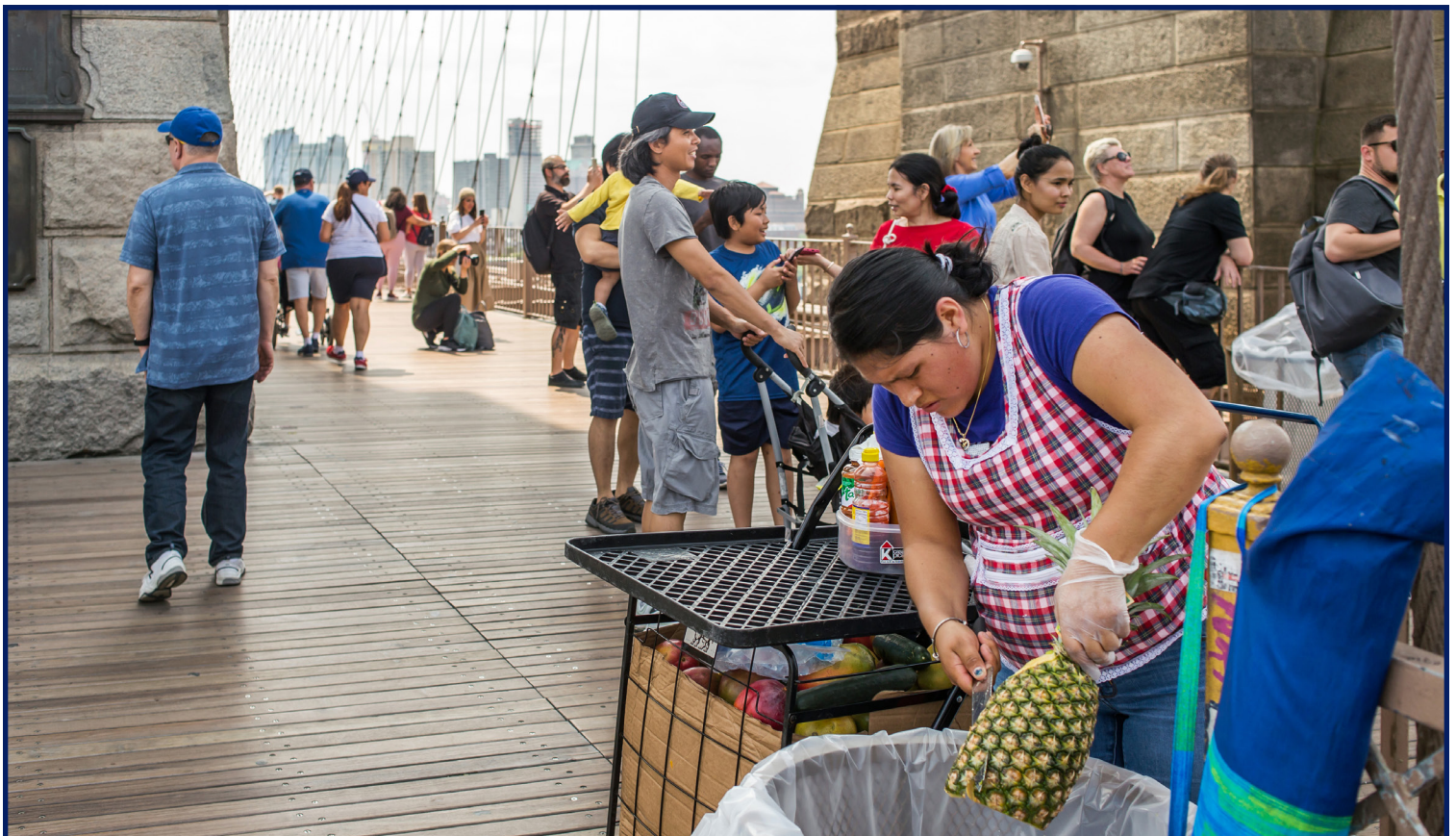
****Feasibility (200 words max)****

What engineering approaches would need to be considered to enable this?

****PREVIOUS WORK****

Include a maximum of two projects. For each project, please include the following items in a maximum of three (3) pages total: 200-word description of the project's relevance, mobility and accessibility improvements, innovative design and/or engineering recommendations. Include a list of relevant participants or project partners.

***For Professional track submissions only.*





EVALUATION CRITERIA

Entries will be judged and narrowed to six finalists by expert jurors from the fields of landmarks preservation, public policy, architecture, transportation, public space, and design/construction. Then, the public will choose the winners. Winners will be announced in July 2020.

Team Composition

Teams representing diverse disciplines and experiences.

Accessibility and safety

The design must balance the needs of diverse users, including emergency uses. The design must foster a comfortable, safe experience and be a dynamic connector between boroughs.

Magic

The design must present new ideas that surprise, delight, and fascinate. It must find novel ways to balance the bridge's history and iconic status with its everyday utility.

Environmental benefit and security

The design must contribute to solutions for climate and ecological concerns. It must promote sustainability in its process and chosen materials.

****Feasibility****

It must be possible to implement the design with existing technology, materials, and building techniques. The design must consider anti-terror elements (i.e., fences, bollards, blocks).

***For Professional track submissions only.*

JURORS

The following jurors will help evaluate and select the six finalist teams.

PEG BREEN

President
New York Landmarks Conservancy

ANDREW BROWN

Associate Director of Research
Van Alen Institute
(Non-voting)

HON. JONATHAN GARDENHIRE

Artist and District
NYS Assembly District 65, Part B

MARLA GAYLE

Managing Director
SOM

DANNY HARRIS

Executive Director
Transportation Alternatives

HELEN HO

Principal
Karp Strategies

ISABELLA JOSEPH

Student
Bernard and Anne Spitzer School of Architecture, City College of New York

REGINA MYER

President
Downtown Brooklyn Partnership

AMY PLITT

Editor
Curbed NY

ELIGIBILITY, TERMS, AND CONDITIONS

Current New York City Council employees and Department of Youth and Community Development employees are not eligible to participate in this competition. No member of the jury may participate in this competition, assist individuals or teams (“Applicants”) with their submission to the competition (“Submission”), or act in any other capacity or way to advise or aid in the development or presentation of a Submission. No partner, associate, or employer/employee of a jury member may participate in the competition.

DELIVERY OF SUBMISSIONS

Submissions must be received before 11:59pm (ET) on April 5, 2020. Applicants assume all responsibility for ensuring that their Submission arrives before the stated deadline. Submissions received later than the stated deadline will not be considered.

DISQUALIFICATION

Any Submission received after the deadline, that is incomplete, or that violates any provisions of the competition conditions will be disqualified. Applicants shall not communicate in any manner with any member of the jury regarding this competition prior to the public announcement of the winner/s. Upon evidence of any infraction of the competition conditions, the person/s involved shall be informed by the project manager, in writing, of disqualification.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

By entering this competition, Applicants declare that the designs in their Submission have been developed solely for the purposes of this competition and represent no infringement of any existing copyright, patent or other intellectual property rights. Applicants, by virtue of making a Submission to the competition, acknowledge and agree that New York City Council, Department of Youth and Community Development and Van Alen Institute, and their affiliates, successors, contractors and assignees, will have a worldwide, perpetual, royalty-free license to use the Submission, and any materials developed therefrom including but not limited to any materials developed during the finalist phase, for all reasonable purposes including but not limited to purposes of exhibition, promotion, dissemination and publication.

Applicants will otherwise retain all intellectual property rights over their work. The New York City Council, Department of Youth and Community Development and Van Alen Institute shall use reasonable efforts to credit or attribute work to Applicants, but shall bear no responsibility for any failure to do so or for any unauthorized use by a third party.

Work developed by the finalist teams cannot be implemented by Van Alen Institute, Department of Youth and Community Development or New York City Council without further involvement or consent from the finalist team.

ATTRIBUTION

Applicants, by virtue of their participation in the competition, acknowledge and agree to credit the competition, Van Alen Institute, Department of Youth and Community Development and New York City Council prominently in all materials concerning the competition or a Submission including without limitation in press releases, publications, websites, social media, other digital communications, brochures, and other materials. To the extent possible, such attribution will always include the following language: *Reimagining Brooklyn Bridge* is a collaboration between Van Alen Institute and the New York City Council. By virtue of their Submission, Applicants agree not to make any public announcements, statements, news releases, publicity releases or advertisements relating to the competition or project without prior Van Alen Institute and New York City Council approval.

INDEMNITY

Applicants, by virtue of their participation in the competition, acknowledge and agree to indemnify and hold harmless Van Alen Institute, Department of Youth and Community Development and New York City Council, including its and their officials and employees from liabilities, damages, losses and costs including but not limited to reasonable attorneys' fees, to the extent caused by the negligence, recklessness or intentionally wrongful conduct of an Applicant and any other persons employed or utilized by the Applicant in connection with this competition and project. This indemnification provision is separate and apart from, and in no way limited by, any insurance provided or otherwise. This paragraph shall not be construed to require an Applicant to indemnify New York City Council, Department of Youth and Community Development or Van Alen Institute for their own negligence, or intentionally wrongful acts. This clause shall survive expiration or termination of the arrangements hereunder.