FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Press Release # 10-010
Wednesday, March 3, 2010

NYC DOT Launches Design Competition For Temporary Plazas In Times Square, Initiates Capital Design Process For Permanent Improvements

Request for Proposals for a series of innovative, temporary designs marks first step in City’s plans to remake the Crossroads of the World

Permanent project to coincide with a previously planned capital street reconstruction project

New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan today launched a design competition, sponsored in partnership with the Times Square Alliance (TSA), for conceptual designs to refresh the temporary plazas at Times Square and also initiated a separate design process for a permanent, capital reconstruction project for the area under the City's Design and Construction Excellence program. These initiatives mark a new stage in the effort to remake Times Square following Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's decision last month to make permanent the five pilot plazas created under the Green Light for Midtown project. By refreshing the temporary treatments now in place on Broadway from 47th to 42nd Streets with a series of economical, temporary surface treatments, the City will ensure these places remain vibrant, inviting and dynamic as the longer design process moves forward to transform these spaces permanently. Professional artists and designers may submit designs. Simultaneously, the capital process will begin to design world-class plazas with ample seating, new paving and underground infrastructure able to accommodate and enhance the signature events that are staged at Times Square throughout the year. The project will also completely reconstruct the roadways in Times Square, which have not been structurally repaired in decades.

"New York City is the world's greatest stage for urban design and streetscape innovation, and no place offers as much energy and character as Times Square," said Commissioner Sadik-Khan. "As we lay the groundwork for permanent changes, we invite artists and designers to put their own mark on an area that 350,000 pedestrians walk through daily."

"Times Square—a place where creativity and boldness are always on display—is increasingly becoming a place for public art and creative innovation in the public realm," said Tim Tompkins, president of the Times Square Alliance. "This initiative will bring a whole new category of creative energy out into the street for all the world to see."

The Request for Proposal (RFP), titled "reNEWable Times Square," challenges artists and designers living and working in New York City to think boldly about their vision for the temporary plazas, carefully weighing design components along with factors that will enhance pedestrians' experiences and improve the setting for the many trademark events Times Square houses annually, such as serving as the anchor for New Year's Eve celebrations around the country. Designs also must accommodate different "use zones" such as fire lanes, crosswalks, seating areas and pedestrian zones. All professional artists and designers living or working in
New York City may apply, and the selected artist/designer or artist/designer teams will be responsible for the final design and overseeing the installation.

All professional artists and designers living or working in New York City may apply, and the selected artist/designer or artist/designer teams will be responsible for the final design and overseeing the installation. The winning design will be selected by a jury composed of representatives from the DOT, Times Square Alliance, the Mayor's Office and the Design Commission as well as one outside artist or arts advisor. The applicant selected also will receive $15,000 fee from The Mayor's Fund, and the budget for the temporary treatments will be within an existing DOT contract.

The deadline to submit proposals is April 16, 2010. The design is expected to be installed by mid-July. The temporary treatment will remain in place for approximately eight months and will be monitored and maintained by the TSA.

The TSA will also participate in the multi-agency group that will set the scope for, select and oversee design for the permanent build-out. The team to initiate the permanent design phase will be selected in the coming months through the Design and Construction Excellence program administrated by the Department of Design and Construction (DDC). This program brings together some of the most creative and experienced design professionals in the world who are well versed in creating signature public buildings and spaces across the city. As part of the program, DOT and DDC will recruit a design firm that will assemble a team of experts—from landscape professionals to architects to engineers—who will develop the preliminary and final designs for the permanent plazas. The selected consultant team will work closely with the City agencies, the TSA as well as local stakeholders. The design phase of Times Square will begin shortly and last for roughly 18 months. Construction should start in 2012.

Times Square, already one of the busiest hubs of pedestrian activity in the world, drew an even greater number of pedestrians due to the improvements initiated by Green Light for Midtown. The number of people walking along Broadway and 7th Avenue in Times Square increased by 11% during the pilot. In addition, 74% of New Yorkers surveyed by the TSA agreed that Times Square had improved dramatically over the last year.

The RFP will be posted to the DOT's Web site today at www.nyc.gov/dot.

-30-

This page is located on the NYC.gov Web site at http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/pr2010/pr10_010.shtml