

YEAR IN REVIEW ²⁰²¹₂₀₂₂



**THE
GARMENT
DISTRICT
ALLIANCE**

RECOVERY



The Garment District

saw sure signs of recovery this year as restaurants reopened, tourists came back, pedestrians returned, and masks came off after two long years. There were ups and downs because of Covid variants, but the neighborhood maintained its positive trend and ended this fiscal year on a high note.



Barbara A. Blair
President



Martin Meyer
Chair

- **Pedestrian counts have been restored** to 80% of what we normally see, after having fallen to just 8% of normal at the beginning of the pandemic.
- Hotels, which stood empty two years ago, are reporting **healthy occupancy rates**, with some as high as 90%
- More than **50 new storefront businesses** have opened since the start of the pandemic
- 89% of adults in Manhattan are **fully vaccinated against Covid-19**, with 99% having received at least one dose
- And, as Covid transitions to an endemic state, our office tenants have been **returning at a steady rate**

As you will read in the pages of this report, the Garment District Alliance spent the year encouraging and welcoming the return of our businesses and visitors by working to make the district a place where people want to be. Like all of Midtown, we faced increased safety concerns brought about by the pandemic. This meant our core services of **public safety and sanitation were more important than ever**, while our advocacy work was critical to bringing much-needed attention to the area. We used our social media platforms to **promote our businesses** as they came back online, and we expanded our **horticulture and public art programs** to enhance the experience of returning tenants and tourists. There is always more to be done, but it is wonderful to see life restored to our streets.

Welcome Back Garment District, and for those of you who have yet to return....we are waiting for you. So, come back and see all that is happening in Midtown!

QUALITY OF LIFE





The GDA's field services form the core of our mission to improve the quality of life in the Garment District.

Sanitation and Public Safety Hours of Operation			
Winter	Weekdays 6am – 8pm	Summer	Weekdays 5am – 10pm
	Weekends 8am – 4pm		Weekends 8am – 8pm

Clean Streets

The GDA's clean team maintains streets, plazas and other public spaces.

- 40-member team
- Privately contracted trash pick-ups keep garbage bags from accumulating
- NYC 100% clean ratings for streets and sidewalks

Maintenance

Our maintenance team undertakes year-round graffiti and sticker removal, steam cleaning, painting, and street furniture repairs.

2021 Stats

- 58 Gates painted
- 124 Table covers replaced
- 129 Stickers removed
- 299 Graffiti removed
- 763 Street furniture painted
- 2,585 Power washed locations

Homeless Outreach

The GDA offers full-time homeless outreach through a contract with Urban Pathways.

- Two-person GDA outreach team is on duty Monday–Friday, 8am to 4pm
- GDA works closely with the Bowery Residents' Committee (BRC), the NYC outreach provider
- All 1,200 homeless residents who were temporarily housed in the Garment District during the pandemic have returned to their original shelters

Public Safety

New and ongoing safety initiatives prioritize the comfort of our tenants and visitors.

- 23 uniformed GDA Public Safety Officers
- Increased Public Safety presence on the Avenues during morning and evening rush hours
- Safety escort available to/from mass transit, 8am – 8pm, Contact 212.764.0490 or GDA public safety director Kevin McGinn at: 917.804.6215
- Daily coordination with NYPD

Neighborhood Advocacy

GDA advocacy brings focus to regulations, enforcement, zoning and other issues that are critical to the Garment District's success.

- Direct dialogue with city and state officials from NYPD, Transportation, Sanitation, City Planning, Homeless Services, Health and other agencies
- Participation in Mayor's Commercial Corridor Recovery Task Force, CB4, CB5, Manhattan DA's Small Business Alliance, Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Coalition, Midtown BID Coalition, and Midtown South Community Council and Sector meetings
- Quality of Life advocacy coordination with other Midtown BIDs
- Ongoing outreach to newly elected officials
- Close coordination with the NYC Department of Small Business Services

STREETSCAPE





Streetscape improvements & public amenities enhance the pedestrian experience in the Garment District.

Broadway Pedestrianization

In October, NYCDOT completed the new full block closure between 39th and 40th Streets, and the new shared block between 38th and 39th Streets on Broadway. These two blocks are part of NYCDOT's Broadway Vision, which includes similar treatments in other neighborhoods along Broadway from Columbus Circle to 14th Street. The expanded public space allows the GDA to increase public amenities and programming.

- 23 large trees were added to the plazas on Broadway in order to fill the new full-block plaza and replace trees that did not survive winter.
- In all, 30 large birch, cherry and redbud trees and 105 holly trees bring green to the 5 plazas spaces.
- Ground cover plantings are refreshed seasonally in the 95 tree pits that the GDA maintains throughout the neighborhood.



Side Street Lighting

Last year, the GDA began upgrading our side street security lights with new, energy efficient fixtures. In 2020, we replaced 169 fixtures, followed by 58 replacements in 2021. The remaining 109 older fixtures will be replaced over the next 24 months. The GDA's side street lighting was first installed in 1997 and undergoes routine maintenance twice per year.

> Street Furniture

- 230 additional arm chairs were added to the expanded pedestrian plazas on Broadway.
- In total, the GDA provides 183 tables and 420 chairs for public use on the plazas.

> Winter Lighting

- Festive winter lighting was installed on our Broadway plaza trees between 36th and 40th Street from November until February.

Public Space Amenities

The GDA provides and maintains public space amenities for the benefit of Garment District tenants and visitors. Initiatives include:

> Horticulture

- 218 planters on Broadway, Seventh Avenue, and Eighth Avenue were filled to overflowing with colorful summer annuals, which were replaced with liriop in the fall.

> Pedestrian Safety Barricades

- NYCDOT barricades on Seventh Avenue have been transformed into a decorative streetscape element. The concrete blocks that protect pedestrians from 35th Street to 41st Street display public art, and planters have been added to the tops to enhance the pedestrian space.



BUSINESS SUPPORT





GDA offers tools for tenants to grow and promote their businesses.

Business Development Collaborative

In 2019 the GDA launched the Business Development Collaborative aimed at strengthening the economic resilience of the Garment District by helping our local businesses and workforce to remain competitive. This multi-year, multi-million dollar programmatic investment brings together a cohort of innovative providers, selected annually through a competitive Request for Proposals, to offer training, one-on-one consulting and advisory services to district businesses, entrepreneurs and workers.

Now in its Year Two, the program has engaged six diverse New York City-based organizations to deliver innovative services:

- > **Custom Collaborative:** An entrepreneurship and workforce development organization that trains women from low-income and immigrant communities to launch fashion careers, and engages with businesses to understand workforce needs
- > **E-Com Fashion:** A niche agency providing consulting, design/branding and development services to fashion e-commerce businesses
- > **Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT):** An internationally recognized college for design, fashion, art, communications, and business, known for academic programming, experiential learning opportunities, academic and industry partnerships, and commitment to research, innovation, and entrepreneurship

- > **ITAC:** An expert manufacturing and technology advisement firm that connects New York City small and medium-sized firms to ideas, resources, and experts to help them improve how they work
- > **Made in NYC:** An initiative of the Pratt Center for Community Development that supports local manufacturers and makers by providing free skills-building programs, marketing services and promotional platforms, and small business assistance and resources to the Made in NYC community
- > **Nest:** A global nonprofit organization dedicated to building a connected and visible handwork community by identifying overlooked or excluded skilled workers and providing resources and training needed to fully leverage handwork and craft production as part of local small business development efforts

To drive the design and delivery of the Business Development Collaborative, GDA has partnered with Resilient Cities Catalyst (RCC), a global non-profit organization of urban practitioners and resilience experts. Through this partnership, the Business Development Collaborative has engaged nearly 200 District businesses to date.

Public Programs

The GDA keeps our members informed of business classes, training, grant opportunities and funding mechanisms offered through government and non-profit entities. Notices are distributed regularly through our e-news and website.

DISTRICT DATA





Data analysis guides our programming and provides valuable information to business tenants, property owners, and brokers.

Economic Quarterly Reports

GDA tracks a variety of data to better understand trends and issues in the neighborhood. Economic Quarterly Reports are distributed to our constituents via email and are made available to the public in the District Data section of our website.

Hotels

The Garment District hotel boom has continued in spite of the pandemic, with 6 new hotels opened in 2021. The neighborhood now has 53 hotels with 12,100 rooms, representing nearly 20% of Manhattan's hotel capacity. Recent months have seen a robust tourism recovery with local occupancy rates up to 76% in March 2022.



Pedestrian Counts

The GDA's pedestrian counting system is installed at six intersections and is an important tool in monitoring the District's economic recovery. Weekly, monthly, and quarterly counts are compared against corresponding time periods in 2019 to benchmark how much activity has returned. Counts hit a low of 8% of normal activity early in the pandemic, but are now averaging 80% of normal.

Retail Activity

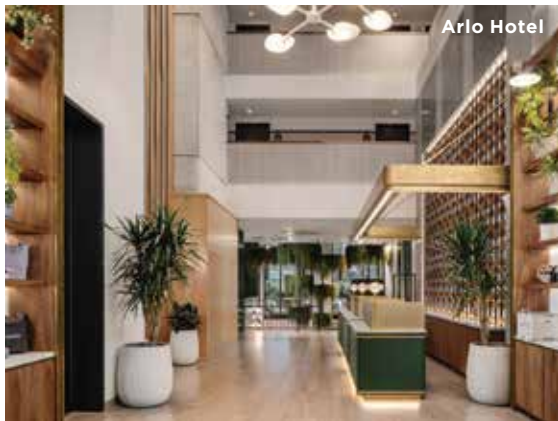
Retail vacancies in the city were already rising prior to COVID but dramatically increased during the pandemic. However, lower rents and widespread availability have meant opportunity for many small business owners, and the retail landscape in the Garment District has been transforming over the past two years. More than 50 new dining, drinking, and shopping establishments have opened in the neighborhood since March 2020.

Office Activity

CoStar, Compstak, and other commercial real estate tools indicate that office activity has been slow to recover in the Garment District and Manhattan overall, and the popularity of hybrid and work from home likely means the office environment in New York will be permanently transformed. Occupancy rates and average rents have fallen significantly, and Kastle Systems reported that as of mid-April key card swipes to Manhattan offices were averaging just 37% of pre-pandemic rates. However, pedestrian counts suggest the Garment District has recovered more robustly than other office areas, and numerous new tenants have moved to the District in the past year.

Employment

In 2019 there were 141,000 employees in the neighborhood, but that fell to just over 123,000 in 2020, the most recent year for which NYS employment data are available. Professional and Business Services is our largest category, with nearly 40% of all District workers. The Leisure and Hospitality sector nearly doubled from 2009 to 2019, but was the hardest hit by the pandemic, losing nearly half of its employees in 2020. The only sector to see growth between 2019 and 2020 was Information, which grew 5%. Manufacturing now accounts for less than 3% of neighborhood jobs.



PROMOTION



Dine



Tonchin

Play



Garment District Plazas

Stay



Archer Hotel

The GDA uses a variety of communication channels and strategies to promote our neighborhood and diverse businesses.

Tourism Initiative

In September, the GDA sponsored NYC Tourism is Back, a hospitality industry initiative to promote the return of tourism and support tourism-based employment. Our support included digital ads promoting DINE, PLAY, STAY in the Garment District.

Social Media

In addition to our own regular social media postings about new and returning businesses, special events, and neighborhood news, the GDA uses social media campaigns with influencers and advertisements to amplify our messaging, reach targeted audiences, and keep the Garment District as an active and vibrant place in the minds of people who work in, live in or visit NYC.

➤ **Summer** — From June through August, the GDA used our social media platforms to promote our members with a Garment District Neighbors campaign highlighting 16 individuals who own or manage local businesses. Influencers were also engaged to amplify the content.

➤ **Fall** — Throughout October and November, the GDA ran a social media advertising campaign promoting local businesses and public art, resulting in a dramatic increase in the number of times our posts were seen, growing from 5,000 to 15,000 times a day.

➤ **Winter** — During Q1 of 2022, the GDA's Instagram account experienced some of its largest growth, due to our winter art installation, *Passage*, and the digital ads and influencers that capitalized on the buzz it generated. Throughout the run of *Passage*, the GDA account averaged 21,000 impressions a day, with a peak of 64,979 on January 30.

➤ **Spring** — In April, the GDA launched a three month digital advertising campaign around the *HERE* installation. Given *HERE*'s celebration of diversity, individuality, and unity, we also engaged diverse and local NYC influencers to drive traffic to the neighborhood and build further affinity for the Garment District while spotlighting the new installation.

Welcome Back Garment District

The GDA has created a Welcome Back packet containing current information about new businesses, pedestrian counts, streetscape projects, hotel activity, public art installations, and quality of life initiatives. The document is updated regularly and is available in the District Data section of the GDA website.

Banner Campaign

"Welcome to the Garment District" banners with free tenant logo placements were installed throughout the district in order to promote local businesses while welcoming our returning employees and visitors. Logos were offered to the first 200 companies that responded to our offer via email and social media.

PUBLIC ART



Here



Inside Out:
NY Together



Magic Hour



Hacer: Transformations

The GDA's year-round public art program brings the works of world class artists to the Garment District, engaging our tenants and visitors, generating excitement on social media, and drawing people to the neighborhood.

Public ARTery at the Port Authority Bus Terminal

Inside Out: NY Together by JR & Inside Out Project

To welcome the return of New Yorkers and visitors to our resilient city, the GDA invited the world-renowned artist JR and his Inside Out Project to create *Inside Out: NY Together*, a celebration of the strength of our city's diversity. For their canvas, the Inside Out Project used the GDA's new 40 foot high Public ARTery space along the south wall of the Port Authority Bus Terminal, filling it with more than 1000 portraits taken right here in the Garment District from October 3 - 9. The piece remained on display until spring.

Art on the Plazas

Magic Hour by Steed Taylor

In July, New York artist Steed Taylor created *Magic Hour*, his second road mural artwork on the plazas. Magic Hour referred to the transition from day to night when the sun is low and the light is golden, capturing this period of time that is satisfyingly different from the rest of the day. Located on the new plaza between 39th and 40th Streets, the piece challenged viewers to contemplate our own special time and place, and incorporated words and phrases from those who passed by during the creation of the mural by sealing them into the design.

Hacer: Transformations by Hacer

Recalling the transformative process of origami through his folded metal sculptures, the California artist Hacer seeks to elicit a dynamic response to the formative process of childhood. Last fall's *Hacer: Transformations* challenged viewers to reshape themselves and begin anew, informed but not defined by their past constraints.

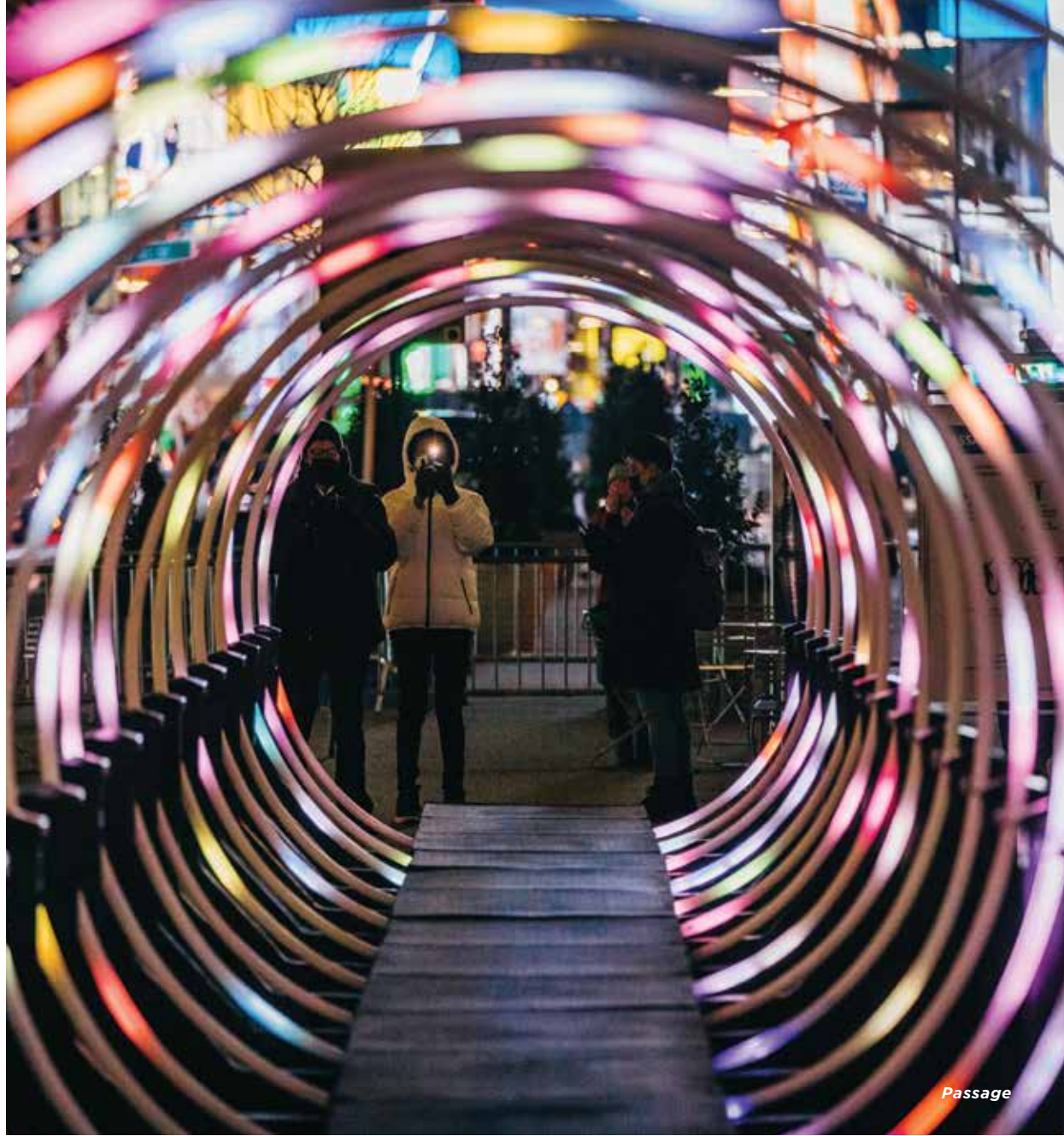
Passage

In January and February, the GDA presented *Passage*, an interactive installation by Serge Maheu. Inspired by the act of moving through or past one state to another in a temporal dimension, the installation referenced the enigmatic moment between life and death, rendered as a personal and sensory experience. The installation's 20 circles formed a tunnel with light animations and sounds that activated as people passed through. Each configuration created its own experience, prompting visitors to explore the emotional connections we develop with light and sound.

Cabane à Sucre

On February 9, Cabane à Sucre, the Garment District's pop-up sugar shack, returned to the plazas to celebrate the final week of *Passage*. Visitors enjoyed free maple taffy, freshly made on site by Quebec's Chef Dominic Sylvain.

Public art exhibits and performances are critical placemaking components that help transform the public realm.





HERE by Santi Flores

In April, the GDA unveiled *HERE*, a series of 14 sculptures by the Spanish artist Santi Flores, dedicated to the people of the Garment District and, by extension, all New Yorkers. *HERE* encourages viewers to look to the future with hope as its sculptural figures gesture with raised hands as if to say, “Here we are. We are moving forward together.” While all the artworks share this form, they display unique colors and drawings on their “skins,” expressing individuality and reminding viewers that people with differences can come together for a common purpose.



Plaza Performances

Broadway Rhythm

The days were hot but the music was hotter as the GDA brought authentic choro music to lunchtime on the Plazas in July and August. Developed in Rio de Janeiro in the second half of the 19th century, choro is a blend of European musical genres and African rhythms, known for its improvisational identity and vibrant beat. Weekly performances featured Dominique Gagné, Felicia De Sanctis, Cesar Garabini, Fernanda Silveira, and Q Morrow.



Spaces for Public Art

The GDA presented 13 installations this year, many of them by local artists, in the Garment District Spaces for Public Art at 315 West 38th Street and The Kaufman Arcade at 132 West 36th Street. One particular installation was a personal favorite of the GDA. February’s *Reduce, Repair, Reclaimed* was created by Hinz Guitars, an initiative started by two brothers who are both part of our clean team. Hinz recovers, refurbishes and sometimes redesigns

discarded instruments, giving them a second life. Their installation featured a Fender Stratocaster refurbished with guitar parts recovered in the Garment District and clad in a pickguard that pays homage to the neighborhood.

Seventh Avenue Public Art

Iconic Button Sculpture — The GDA’s iconic sculpture project is nearing completion. A new button and needle supported by a thread will soon replace the now-obsolete information kiosk structure on Seventh Avenue at 39th Street. The sculpture concept was defined by Local Projects, the innovative exhibition and media design firm that creates experiences for museums and public spaces, while the installation was designed and fabricated by UAP Company, a global leader in public art and architecture solutions. The new sculpture will pay homage to the original button, designed by Pentagram Architects, and will recall the Garment District’s rich history while presenting a modern piece that looks to the future.

Bit, Bridle and Reins — Artist Steed Taylor returned to the Garment District in May to create a linear mural on the Seventh Avenue pedestrian barricades. The 63 concrete blocks that protect the pedestrian corridor from 35th Street to 41st Street have been transformed into an installation, entitled *Bit, Bridle and Reins*, that speaks to the challenges that constrain us in our daily lives.

LOOKING AHEAD



The Garment District Alliance is looking ahead to 2022 – 2023 with optimism. As the pandemic continues to recede, and companies look to complete their return to the office, the Garment District is uniquely positioned as a focal point for Manhattan’s recovery. Work habits have shifted over the last two years, but with its central location, unmatched transit access, and variety of floorplates and building stock, the Garment District offers the convenience and flexibility that companies need in order to adapt to a new workplace normal.

During the coming year, the GDA’s core services of public safety and sanitation will **ensure that people feel comfortable in the neighborhood** during this critical time. Horticulture projects, streetscape improvements and public art installations will **enliven our public spaces**, helping the neighborhood retain tenants and attract new businesses. Social media and marketing efforts will **support our companies** by promoting the neighborhood and its businesses, while economic data analyses will **provide businesses with the information they need** to make decisions about location and expansion.

Within this framework for FY2022 – 2023, notable initiatives will include:

- > **Official unveiling of the new button and needle sculpture**
- > **Broadway Rhythm summer performance series**
- > **Year-round public art**
- > **Holiday lighting**
- > **Horticulture**
- > **Social media campaigns**
- > **Infrastructure improvements and congestion mitigation advocacy**
- > **Working with the new city administration to achieve priorities that are critical to the neighborhood’s future**

It has been an unusual and sometimes difficult two years, but exciting things are on the horizon. As always, we look forward to partnering with our property owners, local businesses, residents, community boards, and the City of New York. **Together, we will build on what we have achieved and continue to enhance the economic vitality of the Garment District for all who live, work or play in this authentic New York neighborhood.**

PARTNERS



The Garment District Alliance partners with property owners, local businesses, residents, civic organizations, and the City of New York.

The Alliance thanks:

Chair Martin Meyer, the Garment District Alliance Board of Directors, and all the property owners, business tenants and residents of the Garment District

The Alliance also thanks:

Mayor Eric Adams / Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine / Council Member Erik Bottcher, Council Member Keith Powers, & the NYC Council

Thanks to:

Commissioner Kevin D. Kim and the NYC Department of Small Business Services / Community Boards 4 & 5 / Christine Helm and the Enterprise Center at F.I.T. / NYC Department of City Planning / NYC Department of Information Technology / NYPD / NYC Department of Sanitation / NYC Department of Transportation / Dr. Anastasia Xenias and the U.S. Department of Commerce / HKNA / 1411 Broadway and Hines

Arts and plaza programming:

All Garment District Plaza and Space for Public Art artists / Emily Wiedenhof and the DOT Plaza Program / Catherine Britell, Mark Schaff, Myron Johnson and The Port Authority of NY & NJ / Nina Marren, Marissa Lazar and the DOT Urban Art program / Kaufman Arcade / Hines & 1411 Broadway

Springboard pedestrian counting camera hosts:

499 Seventh Avenue, 519 Eighth Avenue, 561 Seventh Avenue, 1430 Broadway, 1370 Broadway, 1032 Sixth Avenue, 1033 Sixth Avenue, 519 Eighth Avenue

All photos: Alexandre Ayer/@diversitypics, unless noted
Business Support photos: ITAC Faces of the Garment District

Front cover art: *Magic Hour* by Steed Taylor

Back cover art: *Inside Out: NY Together* by The Inside Out Project

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Photo: Margaritaville

The GDA's dedicated Board of Directors is committed to improving the neighborhood for all who live, work or visit here.

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Stan Herman Company

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