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IN COLLABORATION WITH:



**AIA
New York**

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New York City Department of Sanitation and Van Alen Institute, in collaboration with the Industrial Designers Society of America and American Institute of Architects New York, Announce *BetterBin* Litter Basket Redesign Competition



***BetterBin* Competition Offers Opportunity to Reimagine Iconic NYC Litter Basket**

The New York City Department of Sanitation and Van Alen Institute, in collaboration with the Industrial Designers Society of America and the American Institute of Architects New York, today announced the launch of *BetterBin*, a design competition to reimagine the iconic New York City litter basket.

New York City is home to more than 23,000 litter baskets that offer pedestrians a convenient way to dispose of refuse and recycling on the go. The most widespread design—the green, wire-mesh basket—is affordable, easy to service and has remained largely unchanged since the 1930s. While iconic to the streets of New York, the wire basket is in need of a redesign to better address the current and future waste needs of the City. The *BetterBin* competition seeks entries to design a new litter basket that can improve the quality of life for New Yorkers and the Sanitation Workers who service them while keeping New York City healthy, safe and clean.

Multidisciplinary teams of designers, artists, architects, engineers, landscape architects, planners, urban designers, manufacturers, and others are encouraged to submit proposals by September 20, 2018. Each of three design finalists will receive funding to produce prototype baskets for testing on city streets. Interested parties can download the Request for Proposals at <http://www.betterbin.nyc>.

“While residents and visitors may be familiar with the iconic green city litter basket, we are tasked with keeping the city healthy, safe and clean every day, and the current baskets do pose some challenges to us,” said **Sanitation Commissioner Kathryn Garcia**. “We are excited to announce this competition and look forward to seeing what’s possible.”

“At Van Alen, we believe design has the power to transform city life,” said **Van Alen Executive Director David van der Leer**. “We're excited that this competition will be the first in Product Placed, our new series of design competitions through which we help cities use design to improve civic products. The look and functionality of a DSNY litter basket has an impact on some 6,500 New York City sanitation workers and millions of New Yorkers and visitors. The potential for positive change is huge, in terms of the number of urban lives this product design touches.”

BetterBin is the first in *Product Placed*, a new series of design competitions through which Van Alen Institute helps cities use design to create or improve civic products that affect urban life. This approach brings together experts across disciplines with everyday voices to inspire fresh thinking, help people visualize a different future, and enable lasting change.

“This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to rethink a product that has remained largely unchanged in living memory; an iconic yet often overlooked fixture of our streetscape which is so critical to the quality of our daily lives,” said **Peter Schon, Chair, IDSA New York City Chapter**. “IDSA-NYC is committed to engaging our community in order to address the challenges we face in New York. When you consider that a Sanitation Worker on a single litter basket route can sometimes service more than 250 baskets weighing in at more 30 pounds empty, the possibility of improving ergonomics and usability is inspiring.”

“AIA New York is excited to collaborate with Van Alen Institute and the Industrial Designers Society of America. We look forward to seeing how designers tackle this seemingly mundane but ubiquitous piece of the cityscape. I hope that the competition will lead to much-needed improvements to public garbage bins, resulting in cleaner streets, assisting sanitation workers in collection, and contributing to the overall design profile of the city,” said **Benjamin Prosky, Assoc. AIA, Executive Director of AIA New York and the Center for Architecture**.

The *BetterBin* Competition will be held in two stages. A judging panel will review all submissions and select up to three finalists to move on to the second stage. Each finalist will receive \$40,000, which includes an award and funding to produce prototype baskets for testing. After the testing period, the judging panel will select a first-place winner. The winner will be eligible to contract for further design development to ensure the ability to mass-produce the basket at a reasonable cost, as well as refine technical issues through an agreement with the City.

The Competition partners will host a *BetterBin* Open House on July 26 for potential competition entrants to interact with vintage litter baskets, learn more about the competition and the existing

litter basket designs and the talk to Sanitation Workers about what it is like to service litter baskets on the streets of New York City. For more information about this event and to register, visit <http://betterbin.eventbrite.com>.

The Competition is open to the public and submissions are welcome from international competitors, multidisciplinary teams, and students. The winner is scheduled to be announced in July 2019.

Judges for the competition include: **Keri Butler**, Deputy Director, Public Design Commission; **Vijay Chakravarthy**, Northeast District Chapter Representative, IDSA; **Kathryn Garcia**, Commissioner, Department of Sanitation; **Jeffrey Kapec**, Executive Vice President, Tanaka Kapec Design Group and Visiting Professor at Pratt Institute; **David van der Leer**, Executive Director, Van Alen Institute; **Cara McCarty**, Curatorial Director, Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum; **Victoria Milne**, Faculty, Parson's New School; **Harry Nespoli**, President, Uniformed Sanitationmen's Association; and **Heron Preston**, Designer.

Design considerations for new litter baskets include:

- **Quality of Life and Aesthetics** - The ideal design should improve the quality of life, street cleanliness, and the appearance of street corners. Designs should have proper drainage, and minimize access for rodents and other vermin.
- **Proper Use** - Public space litter and recycling baskets are intended for pedestrians to dispose of light refuse and recycling. Designs should discourage improper use of litter baskets.
- **Accessibility** - A litter basket should be convenient, accessible and easily identifiable as a place to deposit waste. Designs should be ADA compliant, sanitary, and should not require pedestrians to touch the basket in order to use it.
- **Sustainability and Stewardship** – A new litter basket design using recycled materials, innovative fabrication methods, and/or technology applied in a clever, imaginative, and original way are welcome. The basket should be able to be used as recycling bins, and must accommodate sustainability messaging.
- **Servicing** - Litter baskets are emptied frequently; the process includes dragging and lifting them. Empty baskets must weigh no more than 32 pounds. The new baskets should be ergonomically designed, and be able to be serviced quickly and effectively without injuring workers.
- **Cost, Durability, and Ease of Maintenance** - Baskets experience significant wear and tear. The new basket must be durable enough to withstand daily use, frequent servicing, variation in waste materials, and all temperatures, weather, and wind conditions.
- **Security** - Litter baskets are removed for special events or security operations. A stackable design enables easy storage and transport. Designs must be conscious of and minimize risks associated with misuse of public space infrastructure.

More details and submission guidelines on the *BetterBin* competition may be found at <https://www.betterbin.nyc/>.

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About the New York City Department of Sanitation

The Department of Sanitation (DSNY) keeps New York City healthy, safe and clean by collecting, recycling and disposing of waste, cleaning streets and vacant lots, and clearing snow and ice. The Department operates 59 district garages and manages a fleet of more than 2,000 rear-loading collection trucks, 450 mechanical brooms and 693 salt/sand spreaders. The Department clears litter, snow and ice from approximately 6,500 miles of City streets and removes debris from vacant lots as well as abandoned vehicles from City streets.

About Van Alen Institute

Van Alen is a 124-year-old nonprofit that believes design can transform cities, landscapes, and regions to improve people's lives. We collaborate with communities, scholars, policymakers, and professionals on local and global initiatives that rigorously investigate the most pressing social, cultural, and ecological challenges of tomorrow. Building on more than a century of experience, we develop cross-disciplinary research, provocative public programs, and inventive design competitions.

About the Industrial Designers Society of America

Founded in 1965, the nonprofit Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA) is one of the oldest and largest industrial design associations, representing thousands of members in dozens of Student Chapters, Professional Chapters and Special Interest Sections in the United States and internationally. Its mission is to promote the practice of industrial design through education, information, community and advocacy. IDSA sponsors the annual International Design Excellence Awards® (IDEA), the world's most prestigious and rigorous design competition. The Society hosts events including an annual International Design Conference, five District Design Conferences and niche conferences, bringing together some of the biggest names and brightest minds in industrial design and related fields.

About AIA New York

AIA New York is the oldest and largest chapter of the American Institute of Architects with over 5,500 members. To fulfill its goals of design excellence, public outreach, and professional development, the chapter organizes initiatives, programs and exhibitions that explore topics vital to the profession, including housing, planning, historic preservation, and urban design. AIA New York shares a home with the Center for Architecture, the premier cultural venue for architecture and the built environment in New York City. The current exhibition at the Center for Architecture, *Designing Waste: Strategies for a Zero Waste City*, explores how we manage waste in our buildings and neighborhoods, and how design can help New York City achieve its zero waste goal. The exhibition is based on the *Zero Waste Design Guidelines*, a resource developed by the AIANY Committee on the Environment and the Center for Architecture, with support from The Rockefeller Foundation, to help designers, building operators, and planners reduce waste and increase diversion rates for recyclables.