

# Fast Company: Announcing The 2017 World's 50 Most Innovative Companies

*45 Related Companies for Creating a Thrilling New West Side Story*

**How do you turn a once-barren stretch of Manhattan's far West Side into a genuine neighborhood?** "It's as much about embracing the public as it is having commercial spaces and residential units," says Jeff Blau, CEO of Related Companies, the real estate developer behind the \$25 billion Hudson Yards project. "[Hudson Yards] is not meant to be an enclave." To succeed, Related is bringing together an array of lifestyle brands (including its own, SoulCycle and Equinox) and public amenities to create a private development with broad public appeal. Here's how the project is creating a new model for urban revival.

## **1. An elevated food court**

Related enlisted renowned chef Thomas Keller to curate the site's 16 dining spaces. The French Laundry owner has already recruited chefs Costas Spiliadis and José Andrés, and is planning his own steak house. Other spots will be grab-and-go casual. "We're going to have 40,000 office workers and 15,000 residents," says Blau. "We want places where people can eat every day."

## **2. A hardworking hotel**

The developer will use its cult fitness brands to coax residents into its buildings and attract foot traffic from throughout the neighborhood. The site will host a prominent SoulCycle studio and a 60,000-square-foot gym, which will be housed in the company's first Equinox-branded hotel and spa.

## **3. A culture hub**

To create spaces capable of drawing an anticipated 125,000 visitors a day, Related has tapped architect Thomas Heatherwick to design Vessel, a \$200 million, Instagram-ready sculpture in the site's plaza. Nearby will be the Shed, a 200,000-square-foot art space with a retractable roof for indoor-outdoor performances and programming.

## **4. Retail therapy**

To anchor its eventual 1 million square feet of retail, Related wooed Neiman Marcus to open its first Manhattan store, due in 2018. Once the deal closed, Related signed more affordable brands such as Zara and H&M. "You have to have a range so people can go for whatever they want," says Blau.

## **5. A living landscape**

A full 50% of the site will remain open, public space. Landscape architecture firm Nelson Byrd Woltz is developing a soil structure deep enough to accommodate full-scale trees—an expensive investment given the site's position above active rail yards. But it's reflective of Related's approach. "[Hudson Yards] gave us the opportunity to think about how you would develop a city from scratch," says Blau.