

The Municipal Art Society of New York

**MAS**NYC



**MAS**NYC

# JANE'S WALK

WALK LEADER TRAINING  
GUIDE



# ABOUT JANE'S WALK

---

Jane's Walk is a global festival of free, citizen-led walking tours inspired by urban activist, Jane Jacobs. MAS is proud to be the city organizer of Jane's Walk NYC, the biggest Jane's Walk festival anywhere in the world. What started with a handful of walks in 2011 has since grown into a three-day celebration featuring hundreds of walking tours across the five boroughs.

During the Jane's Walk festival, the simple act of exploring the city is enhanced with personal observations, local history, and civic engagement. Anyone is welcome to lead a Jane's Walk. Whether you are affiliated with an organization or just an impassioned individual, Jane's Walk is an opportunity for you to share your knowledge with fellow urbanists.



Photo: Giles Ashford

# BRAINSTORMING YOUR WALK

---

The first step to planning a successful Jane's Walk is picking a topic and an area of the city that piques your interest. Below are a few examples to demonstrate the festival's range and offer some inspiration.

Two elements that make for a great walk are incorporating interactivity in some way and getting off the beaten track. Think about engaging the group in a participatory or experiential activity (e.g. Scavenger Hunt in Tribeca) or bringing them to parts of the city that they would not normally see (e.g. Walking the Ridgewood Reservoir).

## **Advocacy**

Example: Preserving Affordability through Community Land Trusts

## **Art & Architecture**

Example: Lost and Found Murals in East Harlem

## **Food & Entertainment**

Example: Tastes from Around the World: Exploring Queens International Night Market

## **Environment**

Example: Flora, Fauna & Folk Riots: The Natural and Social History of Washington Square Park

## **History & Culture**

Example: A Brewing History of Bushwick

# PLANNING YOUR WALK

---

## Select a Route

The average Jane's Walk runs between **60-90 minutes**. For this duration, we suggest plotting between **7-10 walk stops**. Here are some considerations for selecting your route:

- Pick a precise meeting place (e.g. an exact street address or public landmark) that is easily accessible by public transit and near a restroom, if possible.
- Think about the story you are trying to tell to help map out your walk's sequence of spots.
- Use Google Maps to plot your route and factor in walking time between stops.
- Practice your route beforehand, identifying good places to gather the group that are close to the features of the streetscape or landmarks that you want to point out. We recommend inviting a friend to join you as you practice your route to offer feedback. Look, listen, smell, feel, and observe. Talk with people during your practice walk and hear what they have to say. Be present in the city around you.
- Consider accessibility. Everyone experiences space differently, so think broadly and empathetically about how others might feel along your route. You can indicate walk accessibility in your submission.
- Be mindful of areas that are not accessible to the public and seek permission before leading your walk onto any private property.

## Research Your Walk

In addition to online research, information can be found by visiting [MAS's Greenacre Reference Library](#). The collection contains approximately 3,000 books and reports along with 2,000 archival publications and ephemera produced by MAS over the course of its 125-year history.

Please contact MAS's Information Resources Manager Erin Butler at [ebutler@mas.org](mailto:ebutler@mas.org) to learn more about Greenacre Reference Library and to schedule your visit.

### Other Helpful Resources:

Your local library and community archives are other useful tools for researching your walk. Another great resource at your fingertips is Urban Archive. The Urban Archive iOS app features archival photos and content from cultural institutions in New York City (including MAS!). The app maps the city's history, block by block, making it easy to plan a walk route and develop walk content.

# PLANNING YOUR WALK

---

## **Incorporate Multiple Perspectives**

You can play a curatorial role on your walk by adding different voices, recruiting subject matter experts, and posing questions to generate discussion and highlight local knowledge. This can make for an even more dynamic walk!

## **Recruiting Help: Volunteers and Walk Co-Leaders**

We strongly recommend recruiting a volunteer who can help attend to logistics along your walk. Volunteers can assist in managing the crowd (e.g. make sure the group stays together and does not block narrow sidewalks or entryways), documenting the walk, and helping to answer questions.

You also don't have to lead your walk alone. Often times, walk leaders recruit a co-leader, which can help to create a more dynamic, comfortable, fun, and conversational walk.

## **Stay Curious, Learn, and Practice**

Don't worry about being an expert. You are an expert in your own experience of the city and you have plenty to share. Remember, this isn't a lecture, this is a walking conversation.

MAS is also here to help! For support in your research and planning, we organize a variety of in-person training opportunities. See the following page for upcoming dates.

# TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR JANE'S WALK

---

## Begin Preparing

From informational presentations, to on-the-ground learning, MAS has you covered. Below are scheduled opportunities to strengthen your preparedness for planning and leading a walk.

### Jane's Walk Kick-off and Information Session, in Partnership with New York Public Library (NYPL)

**Thursday, February 28, 2019**

**6:00 PM–8:00 PM**

**Jefferson Market Library (425 6th Avenue)**

Join MAS and NYPL at Jefferson Market Library for more information about Jane's Walk. Gain useful tips and insights for researching and planning a walk, hear stories directly from Jane's Walk leaders, and access curated resources to expand your knowledge. Snacks and refreshments will be served. [RSVP here.](#)

### Jane's Walk Urban Archive Workshop

**Tuesday, March 19, 2019**

**6:30 PM–8:00 PM**

**MAS Office (488 Madison Avenue, 19th Floor)**

Urban Archive is a location-based mobile iOS app that empowers New Yorkers to learn about history where it happened. Join MAS for a special workshop with Urban Archive on how to use the tool as a resource in researching, planning, and leading your walk. Snacks and refreshments will be served. [RSVP here.](#)

### Jane's Walk Training Tours

**Thursday, March 14, 2019**

**6:00 PM–7:30 PM**

and

**Thursday, April 11, 2019**

**6:00 PM–7:30 PM**

Do you have questions about how to manage a crowd of people, when to address questions, and more? Learn tips, tricks, and best practices by joining MAS Director of Tours, Ted Mineau, for a tour of the 34th Street corridor. Attendees will leave with valuable insight on leading a walk, in addition to a deeper understanding of the history of 34th Street. [RSVP for Thursday, March 14 here](#), and for [Thursday, April 11 here](#). Space is limited.



# SUBMITTING YOUR WALK

---

## Pick a Start Time

To allow travel time between walks, we have staggered time slots over the course of the weekend. We suggest offering a walk at least two times during the festival to give attendees multiple opportunities to attend.

- **Friday, May 3: 1PM, 3PM, 6PM, 9PM**
- **Saturday, May 4: 9AM, 11AM, 1PM, 3PM, 6PM, 9PM**
- **Sunday, May 5: 9AM, 11AM, 1PM, 3PM, 6PM, 9PM**

## Time Slot Considerations

- Afternoon slots (1PM and 3PM) tend to be the most crowded. Leading a morning or evening walk can mean less competition with other walks and better attendance.
- Be mindful of when there is the most foot traffic and noise in the area of your walk. Take into account what time the streets are easiest to maneuver with a group and when participants will best be able to hear you.
- Check the Jane's Walk roster on the [MAS website](#) as new walks are added to see what other walks are happening near yours—scheduling your walk right before or after (but not during!) a nearby one is a great way to boost attendance.

## Make It Catchy

Coming up with an enticing title and description can help to attract the attention of potential attendees amid the hundreds of walks offered during Jane's Walk weekend. Feel free to bounce ideas off the Jane's Walk team – we're here to help.

SUBMIT YOUR WALK ONLINE AT  
**MAS.ORG/JANES-WALK-NYC**

# PROMOTING YOUR WALK

---

MAS will promote Jane's Walk through our website, social media channels, and media partners, but we ask that walk leaders also do their part to spread the word.

Here are a few ways to get the word out:

- Share the MAS Jane's Walk NYC Facebook event page on your wall or invite your friends to join.
- Reach out to local outlets or organizations to ask if they will promote Jane's Walk.
- Send an email announcement to your personal and professional networks.
- Post flyers in your local gathering places including coffee shops, libraries, or schools. These are available [on our website](#).

HELP TO GET JANE'S WALK TRENDING ON SOCIAL MEDIA  
BY USING THE OFFICIAL HASHTAG  
**#JANESWALKNYC**

Tag us using the MAS handle to help spread the word and get promoted!

 **@MASNYC**

 **@MASNYC**

 **@MAS\_NYC**



# LEADING YOUR WALK

---

## Start Strong

- Introduce yourself and share the goals for your walk.
- Briefly explain what MAS is, who Jane Jacobs was, and explain a little bit about the Jane's Walk festival (suggested talking points can be found below).
- Take a moment to learn about your group. Ask participants where they are from, what they know of the area or topic, and what attracted them to your walk.

## Avoid “The Walk and Talk”

- Avoid walking and talking at the same time to ensure that everyone in your group can hear you.
- Pick a spot that is removed from foot traffic and noisy streets to gather the group.

## Speak Up and Stay Visible

- Standing on a higher elevation, such as a park bench or stairs, can help everyone in your group see you.
- Project your voice throughout your walk. MAS does not provide amplification devices. If you will need one, we encourage you to consider either renting or purchasing one.
- Use your MAS sign to help the group identify you at the meeting place and while walking. If you have a volunteer, position yourselves at opposite ends of the group when walking from point to point so everyone stays together. We also suggest wearing attire that is easy to spot, such as a brightly colored shirt.

## Encourage Conversation

- Open the floor to questions or thoughts from participants at each stop.
- Brainstorm a few questions beforehand to generate conversation.

## Go the Extra Mile

- Consider any supplemental materials you might want to bring to enhance your walk, including walk itinerary handouts and historical photographs for reference.
- Keep the conversation going after your walk. Think about ending at a cafe or park where participants can gather and connect.

# LEADING YOUR WALK

---

## Ask Questions

- If you don't know the answer to a question, that's ok! You may want to use the opportunity to ask if anyone in the crowd has the answer. It's a walking conversation, not a lecture—it's great for walk leaders to learn something new at Jane's Walk too. You can also choose to share your email or other contact information to make yourself available to answer questions after the walk.

## Document Your Walk

- MAS encourages walk leaders to share about their Jane's Walk experience. Ask participants to pose for a group photo, encourage attendees to take photos, and capture any testimonials or great quotes. Share these memories with your community, on social media with #JanesWalkNYC, and by e-mailing them to [janeswalknyc@mas.org](mailto:janeswalknyc@mas.org).

# TALKING POINTS

---

## ***What is MAS?***

MAS is a 125-year-old civic advocacy organization that works to educate and inspire New Yorkers to engage in the betterment of their city. In addition to organizing Jane's Walk, we advocate on planning, preservation, and policy issues that shape New York's built environment and offer many programs and walking tours throughout the year.

## ***Who is Jane Jacobs?***

Jane Jacobs was a famous urban activist and writer who lived from 1916-2006. She is best known for galvanizing New Yorkers to stop Robert Moses' project that would have built an expressway through Greenwich Village. She believed in the power of individuals to influence their city. Today, her principles represent the participatory planning approaches that have been embraced in communities around the world.

## ***What is Jane's Walk?***

Jane's Walk is an annual festival of free, volunteer-led, neighborhood walks that generate conversation about the city and celebrate its vibrant past, present, and future.

## ***How can I learn about all the other walks happening this weekend?***

The full list of walks is available on our website at [www.mas.org/janes-walk-nyc](http://www.mas.org/janes-walk-nyc) starting in mid-April. It's easy to find a walk on the Jane's Walk NYC website, where you can filter by date, theme and borough.

## ***How often is Jane's Walk?***

Jane's Walk is an annual celebration that takes place the first weekend in May every year, to coincide with Jane Jacobs' birthday on May 4.

## ***How do I stay involved with MAS year-round?***

MAS is a membership organization that offers events, programs, and tours throughout the year. Visit our website at [www.mas.org](http://www.mas.org) for more information.

# GET IN TOUCH

---

Do you still have questions? The MAS Jane's Walk NYC team is here to help. Give us a call or shoot us an email for more information.

**[janeswalknyc@mas.org](mailto:janeswalknyc@mas.org)**

**(212) 935-3960**

**[mas.org/janes-walk-nyc](https://mas.org/janes-walk-nyc)**



Photo: Giles Ashford

## Thanks to our Funding Partners

**SwigEquities**  
ARTISTRY IN OWNERSHIP®



**Council on  
the Arts**

Jane's Walk NYC is paid for in part by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.