

A Blueprint for Public Realm Leadership

MAS Releases Outline for a Deputy Mayor for Placemaking and the Public Realm

(January 10, 2022 | New York, NY) The Municipal Art Society of New York released the latest brief from the [Fight for Light campaign](#), [A Blueprint for Public Realm Leadership](#). This document is a roadmap for the creation of a Deputy Mayor for Placemaking and the Public Realm, a position within New York City government dedicated to improving intergovernmental coordination and oversight of public spaces and innovatively connecting people and the places they experience. *The Blueprint* builds upon MAS's 2019 [Bright Ideas](#) report released with New Yorkers for Parks, which called for a Director of the Public Realm, as well as our 2020 policy brief, [A Public Champion for the Public Realm](#).

Serving as an implementation guide for the new administration, the brief captures ideas about the future of open space in New York City and outlines strategies to build out an effective mayoral structure to advocate for the city's public realm. Topics include:

- A new Deputy Mayor;
- Staffing and Interagency Coordination;
- Public Realm Cabinet;
- Public Realm Advisory Board;
- Citywide Public Realm Plan; and
- Budget Advocacy and Prioritization.

Unlike many other cities of its size, including Paris, Los Angeles, and Boston, New York lacks a central position within its government for planning and maintaining the public realm. In 2020, through the *Future of Open Space* series, MAS heard from advocates around the city on ways to improve active transportation, support small business, increase health, and celebrate our city. This is an opportunity for an effective leader to chart a new course for the public realm, improving how a key piece of the City's mission is delivered.

"The events of the last two years have only underscored the importance of the public realm to urban life," said Elizabeth Goldstein, President of MAS. "Yet the pandemic has also exposed new and existing spatial inequalities, worsened the funding gap for parks, and highlighted many of the day-to-day management issues and conflicting priorities that impact our public spaces. Now more than ever, New York needs a centralized position in City government dedicated to building consensus between municipal agencies and working in coalition with local stakeholders to create a better, more equitable public realm."

"New York City is long overdue for a position that can connect and lead our city's disjointed public realm to create a bolder vision for our public spaces," said **Adam Ganser, Executive Director of New Yorkers for Parks**. "As the COVID-19 pandemic and other recent events have laid bare the inequities that are embedded in New York and its public realm, a citywide approach to the urban environment is a fundamental step towards creating a healthier and stronger city."

"New York City's vibrant streetscape, parks and open space are its lifeblood, connecting people to each other, and their communities across the five boroughs. A multitude of activities—commerce, culture, connectivity, recreation, among others—demonstrate how integral these spaces are to the dynamism and energy of our city to attract visitors, and opportunity seekers, artists and entrepreneurs alike. During the pandemic, New Yorkers showed their ingenuity and determination to keep our city and people safe and healthy by adapting its public realm. I laud MAS for its FFL Blueprint for Public Realm Leadership, a comprehensive framework for the new Administration to give New Yorkers access to a quality public realm they deserve, and to ensure our city's future as a global capital," said Susan Chin, Principal, DesignConnects.

About the Municipal Art Society of New York

The Municipal Art Society of New York (MAS) lifts up the voices of the people in the debates that shape New York's built environment and leads the way toward a more livable city from sidewalk to skyline. MAS envisions a future in which all New Yorkers share in the richness of city life—where growth is balanced, character endures, and a resilient future is secured. For more information, visit mas.org