

# Weekend Walks: Montague Street



Montague  
Street  
Business  
Improvement  
District

## Summer Space

Free Fun on Montague Street  
September 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>  
Visit [www.montagueBID.com](http://www.montagueBID.com) for details!

opera and ballet in the street  
deals at local shops • sidewalk sales  
free! live samples • Brooklyn Heights dog show  
arts & crafts • outdoor yoga  
fitness classes • kids' activities

Organized by the  
BID

## Purpose

- Create unique, temporary, multi-block, multi-day pedestrian streets as alternatives to standard street fairs
- Incubate new community groups and strengthen existing organizations
- Promote local businesses
- Support community and economic development
- Promote healthy and safe recreation

## Outreach

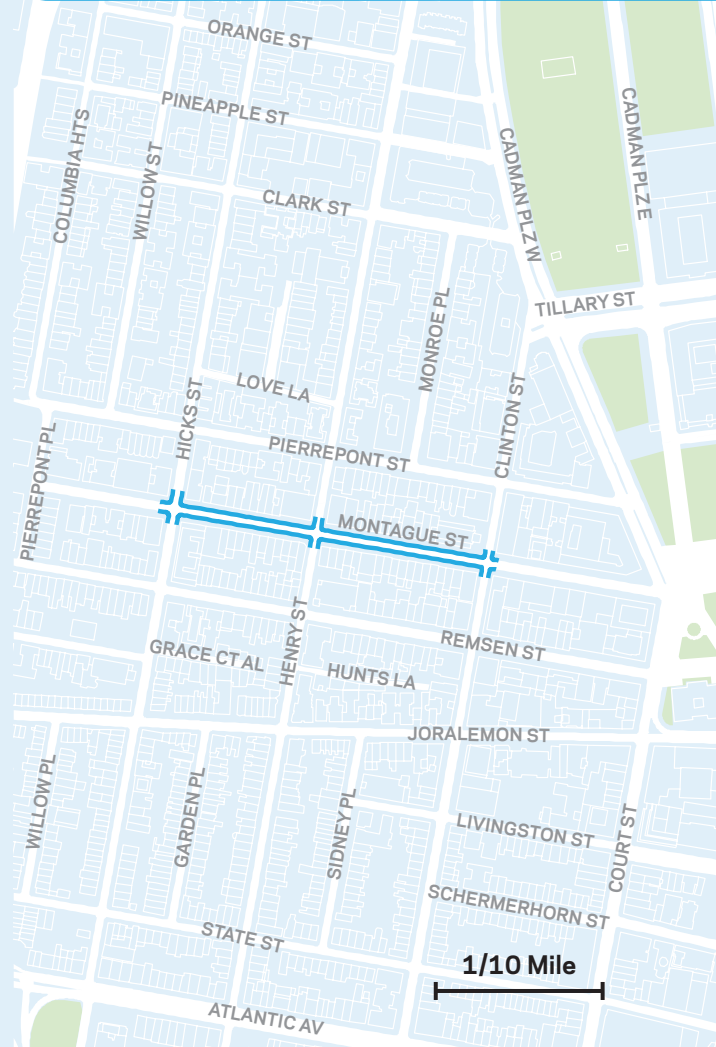
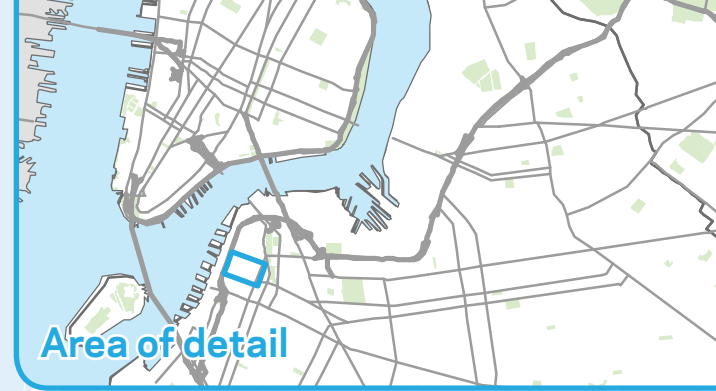
- DOT sent a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) to NYC Department of Small Business Services' (SBS) mailing list of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and other community groups in October 2009
- The Montague Street BID responded to the RFEI in November 2009 and was selected by DOT to participate in Weekend Walks
- DOT submitted the Montague Street BID application to the Street Activity Permit Office (SAPO) in December 2009 and received approval and all necessary permits for the Montague Street Weekend Walk

## Approach

- DOT closed Montague Street to vehicular traffic between Clinton Street and Hicks Street for three Sundays in September 2010 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- DOT provided the Department of Sanitation (DSNY) with the event information so that DSNY could provide extra garbage pickup service after the event

## Results

- Overwhelming support by merchants for organizing the event in 2011
- 76% of merchants reported an increase in foot traffic over a typical weekend day in the summer, up from 2010, when 65% of the merchants saw increased foot traffic
- 86% of merchants reported an increase in sales over a typical weekend day in the summer, up from 44% in 2010



Montague Street Weekend Walks occurs on a two-block stretch of Montague Street, one of Brooklyn Heights' commercial corridors, between Clinton and Hicks Streets, in late September. The site is near the Court Street stop on the N/R train and the Borough Hall stop on the 2/3 train. Montague is a medium-density, mixed-use corridor.

Weekend Walks is an application-based, temporary pedestrian-street program that DOT developed in 2008 as an alternative to the standard street fair. Local merchants' associations, community groups, and BIDs in all five boroughs host Weekend Walks from May through October. The events highlight local businesses and cultural institutions, foster a sense of community, help participants see their streets and neighborhoods in a new way, and promote healthy and safe recreation. Each event features activities ranging from music performances to arts and crafts, classes, and youth programming. Altogether, there were 17 Weekend Walks in 2010, up from 13 the year before and three in 2008. Each Weekend Walk had unique programming that reflects its local character, and the events ranged from two to eight blocks in length.

Weekend Walks are strictly non-commercial – money cannot change hands in the street during the events, with the exception of restaurants, which can provide outdoor seating and full table service. Weekend Walks organizers have told DOT that this policy has actually helped make their events more interesting and more beneficial to their merchants.

DOT sends a Weekend Walks RFEI to SBS' mailing list of BIDs and other community groups each October. Groups must complete their forms and return them to DOT by mid-November. DOT then submits event applications to SAPO, a division of the Office of Citywide Event Coordination & Management, by December 31st; the Weekend Walks organizers complete the applications, but DOT is technically the applicant. SAPO enters the applications into its system and follows up with DOT should it have any questions. Before each Weekend Walk, SAPO issues a permit to each organizer upon receipt of payment of \$15 per block per event day.

DOT supports the Weekend Walks organizers with technical assistance, but its main role is to coordinate with other agencies. For instance, each spring, DOT provides DSNY and New York City Transit (NYCT) with the full list of upcoming Weekend Walks events so that DSNY can provide extra garbage pickup service post-event and NYCT can plan bus re-routes, if necessary.

The Montague Street BID organized a Weekend Walk as one of many ways to pursue economic and community development. Also, because the event demonstrates that the businesses value their customers and are active members of the community, it engenders a very strong sense of goodwill between residents and businesses and fosters customer loyalty.

Branded as "Summer Space", the Weekend Walk on Montague Street, one of Brooklyn Heights' commercial corridors, took place between Clinton Street and Hicks Street on three Sundays in 2010. As it does each year, the BID conducted extensive outreach to its community board, merchants, New York City Police Department precinct, and other stakeholders to encourage participation. The BID also arranges programming with arts and cultural institutions, and distributes sign-up forms to BID businesses soliciting their participation.

The merchants along Summer Space overwhelmingly support the event. Out of 21 merchants surveyed in 2011, 76% saw an increase in foot traffic over a typical weekend day in the summer; 14% saw no change, and 10% reported a decrease. These numbers are up from 2010, when 65% of the merchants saw increased foot traffic, 25% reported no change, and 10% said it was down compared to a normal weekend day.



Montague Street Summer Space and other Weekend Walks provide a diverse array of participatory and spectator programming that helps people reconceive the street and build community.



Merchants use Weekend Walks for creative on-street promotions.

# 86% of merchants reported an increase in sales and 76% reported an increase in foot traffic during the Montague Street Weekend Walks when compared to other typical weekend summer days.

In 2011, 86% of the merchants surveyed reported an increase in sales during the event and 14% reported a decrease in sales. In 2010, 44% of surveyed merchants saw an increase in sales, 38% reported no change, and 18% experienced a decrease.

Twenty merchants, or 95% – up from 70% the previous year – wanted the BID to organize Summer Space in 2012. This is up from 2010, when 70% said they wanted Summer Space to happen again the following year, 20% had no opinion, and 10% did not want to do it again.

Weekend Walks is a powerful tool to incubate nascent community groups and strengthen existing organizations. The Montague Street BID, in existence for 10 years when it created Summer Space, found that the event series strengthened this vital retail corridor and helped the BID develop new relationships with area arts and culture organizations.

