

TUTORIAL FOR NEIGHBORHOOD WALKING TOURS

Before the Tour

Decide the kind of tour you will do and narrow the focus to a specific area of the neighborhood.

- Historical Tour
- Architecture Tour
- Park/Green Spaces Tour
- Garden Tour
- Business District Tour



Research everything you can about your focus. Get information, facts, anecdotal stories, myths, mysteries, etc.

- Sources: Northwest Room at the library, tax records, city directories, archives at the MAC, newspaper articles, internet, long-time residents, etc.
- Keep a record/bibliography of your sources of information. Be sure to get permission from people to tell their stories.
- Anticipate questions people might ask and find answers.

Write out your tour. Walk the tour and stop at each place and read/practice your tour notes. Edit, review, decide the most important information in case you have to cut something. Don't memorize your tour but practice it without reading. Refer to your notes if necessary.

- IMPORTANT! Tell the *story*, not just the information and data. Support your neighborhood's stories with the facts.
- Think about the point of view that you will portray with your word choice. Try to not give your opinion, or use sarcasm.
- Sometimes if you're not sure of something, but it's interesting, you can say "I'm not sure this is true but..." OR "Someone told me that..." OR "It seems to me that..." OR "I wonder why/how/when..." Be aware of the impression you're giving when you do this.
- Practice the tour a few times with friends. Tell them to ask questions as you go along. Critique the tour with them and use their feedback to improve the tour.
- IMPORTANT! Do not make up information for entertainment or shock value. Be able to support everything you say with a source.
- NOTE: The real tour will probably take about 25% - 50% more time than when you do it by yourself.

SUGGESTION: Put together something visual to show the participants—photos, maps, drawings, etc. Put them on a large iPad/table- or get photos copied to show or pass around. Objects or artifacts can also be passed around if they are relevant to your story.

Organizing the Tour

- Choose a starting point that is generally well known and has adequate parking, if possible. Ask permission of businesses or property owners if needed.
- Ask a volunteer to act as sweep (if you have more than about 6 people). This person follows behind and makes sure everyone can keep up; makes sure that others don't join the group; lets you know if you're walking too fast or speaking too softly. He/She can also help you check people in at the beginning, leaving you free to chat with the participants.

- Decide if people will pre-register or just show up. How can they pay?
- Advertise locally on the free community bulletin boards about a month in advance. Be sure to read the criteria before trying to submit.
 - Inlander: <https://posting.inlander.com/spokane/Events/AddEvent>
 - Visit Spokane: <https://www.visitspokane.com/events/submit-an-event/>
 - KPBX: <http://spokanepublicradio.org/post/how-submit-events-kpbx-arts-calendar>
 - Spokesman: <http://www.spokane7.com/calendar/events/submit/>
- Put up flyers in your neighborhood.

On the Tour

- Show up at least 15 minutes early. (Consider wearing something distinctive (a hat, colorful shirt, etc) to set yourself apart so that you are easily spotted).
- If needed, hold up or post a sign to show where the tour will start.
- Chat with people before the tour starts. Find out who lives in the neighborhood, how they heard about the tour, their interest in the area, etc.
- Introduce yourself and your volunteer. Give a 10 second spiel about yourself and your interest in giving the tour. Explain the purpose of the tour (Fund raiser? Advocacy?)
- Tell them where the tour will take them and about how long it will be. Explain any cautions if necessary (broken sidewalks, muddy fields, overhanging branches, etc).
- Be sure that everyone can hear you. Use a voice amplifier if possible. It will protect your voice and help you bring the proper expression to your stories.
 - Check out the *Portable Voice Amplifier SHIDU S258 10W Ultralight Rechargeable Mini Pa Speaker* or any Shidu amplifier.
- Walk to each point of interest and stop. Do not walk and talk if possible. Be sure everyone has caught up to the group before you begin your explanation. If possible, stand on ground that is slightly higher than your group. Speak to the group, not to the structure your standing in front of. Speak slower than your usual talking voice and vary the intonation more than usual. Use pauses to allow the participants to process the information or story. Building in pauses also helps you gather your thoughts.
- Think about when you'll ask people if they have any questions. Some people will think of questions just because you asked them to and this could delay the tour, extend the time, or frustrate those who want to hear only you talk. Invite people to ask questions while you walk and then, if appropriate, you can relate those conversations to the group when you stop. Do occasionally or at the end of the tour, ask for questions.
- Some people will make comments or relate their own stories. This could be a good thing if it doesn't dominate the tour. It can create unity among the participants to include them in the stories *and* you can possibly get good information to add to your next tour.



- End the tour by thanking everyone for coming. Give announcements or other information about the neighborhood if appropriate (special events coming up, times of council meetings, etc). Hand out flyers, brochures, etc at the end of the tour if you have them.
- Stay behind and chat with anyone who wants to have private conversations.

After the tour

- Send personal thank you notes to the volunteers and businesses/organizations who supported your tour.
- Assess your tour and make notes on what you'll change. Do this almost immediately so that you don't forget.
- Keep careful records so that you can answer questions or make a report if asked to do so.

