



## **The Daniel McIntyre / St. Matthews Revitalisation Inc. (DMSMRI) Block Party Guide 2016**

### **About This Guide**

Daniel McIntyre / St. Matthews Revitalization Inc. (DMSMRI) is a not-for-profit Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation that serves the Daniel McIntyre and St. Matthews neighbourhoods of West Central Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Block parties are a great way to celebrate summer, get to know your neighbours and build community. Through our Community Small Grants Program, we provide a limited number of grants each year to help offset the cost of hosting a block party within our catchment area. For more details, see our website at <http://dmsmri.ca/index.php/grants/block-parties>.

While the rewards of a successful block party are many, they do require a lot of planning and resources. This guide is meant to offer some helpful tips, local contact information and links to more detailed “how to” guides from other cities and community organizations.

Information contained within this guide, especially regulations, permits and fees, is subject to change without notice. Be sure to check with the appropriate city or provincial departments for the latest details.



## **TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL BLOCK PARTY**

### **Start Early**

You will want to start planning the block party at least a couple of months ahead of time.

It will take this long to talk to residents, get the necessary permits and collect donations of food and / or funds to help offset costs. You will also find that booking entertainment or equipment for the party will get more difficult as summer draws nearer.

### **Talk to you neighbours**

The first step is to talk to neighbours you already know to gauge their interest in a block party. Once you have a small number in agreement you can take it to the wider community.

Plan to have at least a couple of meetings to which all of the residents of the block are invited to in writing. Not everyone will show up, of course. That is okay. You are keeping them in the loop and providing them the opportunity to participate if they want to.

If you plan to close the street for the party you will need to get the agreement of at least 70 per cent of the property owners on the block. This makes it all the more important to keep them informed of what is happening.

If you would like to hold a group meeting but do not have space, check with local churches, community centres or even private companies. They may have spaces or boardrooms that you can use.

At your first block meeting you will want to choose a proposed date for the party, as well as:

1. Create an organizing committee.
2. Get an idea of the scale and type of block party people want.
3. Create an equipment and skills inventory.

#### **- Organizing committee**

There should be at least two residents responsible for each of the major activity areas: administration, (applying for grants and donations, writing letters and sending out notices); food, (procurement of food and required equipment plus the set up / take down on the day of the party); entertainment, (procurement of entertainment and required equipment plus the set up/ take down on the day of the party); transportation, (to pick up and drop off supplies); volunteer coordination; site procurement, (things like tents, chairs, lights and other items that you might require.)

#### **- Determine the scale of the block party**

Larger events carry more financial risk and require more time commitment. It is important that the committee is comfortable with the scale of the event that is being planned.

If you are likely to have just a “skeleton crew”, then providing a day of live stage entertainment or activities that require volunteer supervision might not be a good idea.

### **- Equipment and Skills Inventory**

Create an inventory of the equipment that you and your neighbours have access to and are willing to lend to the party. Most important are items such as barbeques, folding tables, chairs, etc..

Make note of neighbours that have first aid or food handling certificates. Are any of them musicians that may be able to play or have experience setting up sound systems? Perhaps there are teachers or community club volunteers who are used to setting up activities for kids. Who has access to a printer for the signs and letters and who owns a pick-up truck or van for delivery jobs?

It is also important to make note of who can be available during the work day. Some of the businesses and all of the city departments that you will have to deal with are not open evenings and weekends.

### **Funding and Donations**

In Winnipeg there is no main funding source to cover the cost of block parties. You can approach community associations, Business Improvement Zones and, of course, local businesses and neighbours. (See the end of this guide for a list.)

Another source of possible funding is your city councillor. At the very least, you may be able to get a grant to cover the cost of the city permits and fees that will be outlined below.

The largest budget item for most block parties is food. Estimate how many people are on your block and decide what food you would like to serve. Contact local stores to see if they are willing to donate product, or sell at a reduced cost.

Other supplies that you will need include drinks, cups, paper plates, condiments, serviettes and name tags.

Most potential donors will require the request in writing, stating the date and purpose of the event. Also include in the letter how they will be thanked for their donation. Will there be signs at the event? Will their name appear on event posters and notices?

### **City Permits**

To hold a block party, you must obtain a permit from the City of Winnipeg’s Public Works Department. They require a minimum of 7 days advance notice, but don’t leave it until that late as a minor issue could end up putting off the entire event.

***To obtain a permit form package, contact Public Works at 204-986-6006.***

The permit form package has important information about what the city needs before they can issue a permit. Here are some key requirements:

*- You must close an entire block, not a portion of a block or one lane of the street.*

If your street is a bus route or designated for emergency vehicles, it might be more difficult to get permission to close it. Also, planned road repair work on your street or an adjacent street could have an impact.

*- 70 per cent of the property owners, both residents and businesses, on the block must agree to the closure by signing a petition.*

The city's permit form package has a petition template that you can use. They suggest the following wording:

*"The following residents agree to close XYZ Street between ABC Avenue and PQR Avenue to hold a neighbourhood block party on July xx, 2016 between 11:00 am and 3:00 pm. Access to front approaches will be cut off and sidewalks will remain open"*

Note that each address on the affected block must be included on the petition, even if the resident does not wish to sign.

*- The organizers of the block party are required to pick up, erect and return the "Street Closed" barricade signs.*

A \$52.00 refundable deposit will need to be left with the city when the barricades are picked up. You will need a couple of daytime volunteers with a pick-up truck or large van as the barricades heavy and measure 8 feet long.

## **Insurance Requirements**

Before the city will begin processing your permit application, they require proof of insurance for the event that includes \$2,000,000 in third party liability. The insurance requirements are explained in detail in the city's permit form package.

For a fee of \$133, the event can go on the city's insurance policy. Note that this comes with a \$2,500 deductible for each incident, which you would be responsible for. You are also responsible for the cost of any damage done to the street, boulevard or other city property during the event.

Members of the organizing committee need to be made aware of this potential liability.

## **Permit Costs**

Permit costs include \$52 for a block party permit, a \$33.00 administration fee, plus \$ 4.25 GST for a total of \$89.25. If you include the \$133.00 for insurance, the total is \$222.25. This does not include the refundable deposit for the barricades.

## **Food Handling**

If you are making food to serve to your neighbours, you do not require a food handling permit or inspection. For the safety of those you are feeding, however, it is recommended that you follow the tips listed in the province of Manitoba's Temporary Food Service Establishment Guideline.

A link to this booklet can be found at the end of this guide. If you have any questions about food handling requirements, call the Winnipeg Health Protection Unit at 204-945-4204.

## Entertainment

There are many options for family entertainment at your block party.

Some of the most fun are the least expensive. A bucket of sidewalk chalk, a street hockey game, a makeshift badminton net, an area marked off for skateboarding only, face painting and old fashioned bubble blowers will keep kids busy.

The city's Community Services Department offers a number of children's games for rent at very reasonable prices. These must be picked up and dropped off at the city's Community Services depot. To see a list of games and their prices, go to:

<http://winnipeg.ca/cms/recreation/rentals/recreationequipment.stm>

You may opt for higher priced options such as pony rides, "bouncy castles", paid musicians and clowns. Be aware of what their cancellation policy is in the case of bad weather before signing the contract.

Note that the street closure permit and city's insurance policy does not include things like carnival rides, fire pits and fireworks. Special permits and insurance would be needed.

## Getting Close

### A week before the event:

- The permit application should already be filed with the city.
- Meet with the organizing committee members to find out what items are still outstanding and, if necessary, reassign them.
- Donors, suppliers and volunteers who offered to do specialized tasks (such as potluck food preparation, equipment pickup, etc.) should be contacted to confirm the dates that items will be available.
- A flyer should be distributed to all of the addresses on the block to remind residents about the party and request volunteer help on the day of. A volunteer schedule should be drawn up for the day. Be sure to include shifts for the set up and take down of the event.

## More Advice

These are excellent guides for hosting a good block party. They are for other jurisdictions, so, of course, the regulatory information does not apply.

Old Ottawa South Community Association

<http://www.oldottawasouth.ca/events/special-events/2459-block-parties-a-great-way-to-build-a-community>

City of St. Albert

[https://stalbert.ca/uploads/PDF-forms/FCSS\\_BlockPartyGuide\\_2016\\_FinalProof.pdf](https://stalbert.ca/uploads/PDF-forms/FCSS_BlockPartyGuide_2016_FinalProof.pdf)

City of Edmonton Block Party Kit

[http://www.edmonton.ca/residential\\_neighbourhoods/PDF/NeighbourhoodBlockPartyKit.pdf#search=block%20party](http://www.edmonton.ca/residential_neighbourhoods/PDF/NeighbourhoodBlockPartyKit.pdf#search=block%20party)

## Winnipeg Block Party Contacts at a Glance

### Street Closure Permits

City of Winnipeg Public Works Department – Permits Division

107-1155 Pacific Avenue (West of McPhillips Street)

Phone: 204-986-6006 Fax: 204-986-6006

Information: <http://winnipeg.ca/publicworks/permitsApprovals/permits/default.stm#7>

### Recreation Equipment Loans

City of Winnipeg Community Services Department

565 Watt Street (Rear Compound)

Telephone: 204-986-7426

Email: cms-equipmentloans@winnipeg.ca

Information: <http://winnipeg.ca/cms/recreation/rentals/recreationequipment.stm>

### Food Handling Regulations

Province of Manitoba Public Health Department

Telephone: 204-945-4204

Information: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/environmentalhealth/protection/food.html>

Temporary Food Establishment Guidelines booklet:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/environmentalhealth/protection/docs/tempfood.pdf>

### Contacts

To find your city councillor: <http://winnipeg.ca/council/> or call 311

Neighbourhoods Alive! Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/housing/neighbourhoods/neighbourhoods/nrc.html>

BIZ Associations in Winnipeg [http://www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/biz\\_associ.stm](http://www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/biz_associ.stm)



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