

# City of Saint John Neighborhood Block Party Planning Guide



As connections grow, so do engaged, welcoming, and inclusive neighborhoods

A Block Party (also known as a Play Street) is a great way to meet your neighbours, celebrate a special event in your community, and make new friends.

If your neighbourhood would like to host a Block Party Event, you can apply using the City of Saint John's Public Space Event and Street Event booking platform ([insert URL](#)). If you decide to host your event in a public park, you can also book it using [this website](#).

## TOP TEN REASONS TO HAVE A BLOCK PARTY:

- Block parties are FUN!
- You'll meet your neighbours.
- They increase the sense of belonging to community.
- They strengthen neighbourhood spirit
- You'll help make connections--- find new friends, discover common hobbies and interests
- You can learn about the neighbourhood's history.
- Establish new friends.
- Learn a little about each other and who might need a little extra help from time to time.
- Gather together in a safe way.
- Start a neighbourhood tradition of getting together at least once a year!



This guide will help you plan your event, whether you are hosting for the first time, or this is an annual neighborhood tradition!

The purpose of a neighbourhood block party is to bring neighbours together. It's a good idea to find 1 or 2 neighbours to help you with the event.

### STEP ONE:

#### CONNECT WITH YOUR NEIGHBOURS

- For a first-time block party, distribute a flyer in person or through social media/ email requesting feedback 4 to 6 weeks before the event.
- The flyer should let your neighbors know what a Block Party is, the dates and times you have in mind, and ask them for any feedback.
- Make sure you reach everyone who lives on your block, and the houses that may be affected at the intersections.
- Adjustments may need to be made if a neighbour already has an event of their own planned.
- A Block Party can happen any time of year.
- A weekend date or holidays are often the best times for the event.
- Have an alternate rain day planned, just in case.
- Keep in mind who lives in the neighbourhood when setting the hours for the party. If young children or seniors are living near the party area, plan to finish earlier in the evening.



## STEP TWO:

### BOOK YOUR EVENT

The City helps residents celebrate in their neighbourhoods by allowing them to host block parties or play streets for a specific period of time. Block parties or play streets are intended for residential neighborhoods with low traffic in order to provide a venue for neighbors to gather safely and enjoy shared activities.

#### On your street

If you would like to close your street to traffic, you will need to share this information with your neighbors. You must collect the signatures of the residents on your street, with at least 80% support.



The City has a booking platform to help residents facilitate their Block Party application. You can find the application form at this URL:

Be sure to fill out this application including the date, time, and location you would like to use. This application form will start the approval process. A City staff person will connect with you if there are any concerns that may hinder your event, such as road work that may be scheduled or other traffic disruption slated for that time. City staff can also provide available resources such as barricades, help with traffic plans, etc.

**Your application must be approved by the City prior to closing the street**

## STEP THREE

### ORGANIZE YOUR EVENT

- Your organizing committee can now start planning the event. Delegate roles to families who have offered to help out. But remember that as the applicant, it is up to you to ensure everything is done in accordance with the City and Province's guidelines
- Consider starting off with a smaller event rather than a large one. It could centre around a holiday theme, or one or two activities (a neighbourhood ball hockey tournament or games like capture the flag).
- In selecting who to invite, use natural neighbourhood boundaries where possible. If you are planning cul-de-sac party, you need to invite everyone from that area.
- Make sure all feel welcome! Ensure your block party is welcoming and inclusive for all people who live in your neighborhood. Consider designating a host to ensure new families are properly introduced to their neighbors.
- Decide early and make it clear in your flyer if this will be a block party restricted to those on the street/ block or whether people can invite friends/ relatives (if yes, how many). This is especially important if there are provincial mandates that limit the number of people at a formal outdoor gathering.
- Discuss Liability Insurance with your home insurance provider

### Suggested committee roles:

- Invitations
- Posters (social media and/ or printed)
- Activities
  - Plan games/ activities for all ages and abilities
  - Get kids and teens involved in the planning and supervising
- Entertainment
  - Canvas the neighborhood to see if your neighbors have hidden talents: are there magicians, musicians, dancers, or storytellers?
  - Designate an entertainment area and arrange for a microphone and speakers, and a sound mixer if your performers require one.
- Power
  - Arrange for generators for power (if needed)
- Garbage
  - Arrange for garbage/ recycling/ compost bins (with replacement bags) and clean-up supplies
- On site safety
  - You must have an on-site safety liaison at all times. Arrange for first aid kit(s), fire extinguisher(s) and make a site plan ensuring emergency access.
- Traffic safety
  - Arrange for barricades for closing a street (the City has a limited supply that can be obtained through the application/ permit process)
  - Arrange for road closure and/ or detour signs to be placed during the day of the event
- Washroom Facilities
  - Decide if each neighbor is expected to use their own washroom facilities, or if you will rent porta potties for the event.
- Volunteers
  - Have your volunteers organized into shifts, and make sure they know the expectations. Provide each volunteer with a name tag or lanyard (or a t-shirt) so that they are easily identified in case of emergency, or for leading activities.

Post signs the day before the event to remind everyone to remove cars for the street closure.

Neighbours should observe security precautions by keeping doors locked and equipment in sight. Loud music is prohibited and alcoholic beverages are not permitted on City streets or public spaces. Open fires are not permitted on City streets

Remember when setting up tables and chairs that emergency vehicles may need access.

Decide in advance if your event is “pet friendly” or if you recommend neighbours leave their pets at home.





## STEP FOUR

### HOST YOUR EVENT

- Call the non-emergency line 506-648-3333 just before closing the street to notify Fire and Police that the street will be closed.
- Place barricades and detour signs as indicated on your approved site plan.
- Designate the areas for parking, BBQs, food, garbage/ recycling/ compost bins, sitting and games/ activities
- Set up the arrival area(s), with greeters to welcome - provide directions, introduce people, discuss health and safety protocols. Have a sign-in sheet and name tags.
- After everyone has arrived, welcome everyone, announce the day's events and any special announcements

## STEP FIVE

### CLEAN-UP AND REOPENING THE STREET

- As the time of re-opening the street approaches, be sure to have everyone and everything ready to clear the street so that traffic can re-access the area.
- Let everyone know that everything must be moved by that time and have everything off the street at least 15 minutes prior to reopening.
- Ensure all trash and garbage has been picked up and cleared away and that recycling and compost is taken to the proper places.
- Take down any signs that may have been posted
- If the street is barricaded at different ends, be sure to remove barricades promptly so traffic does not get congested.
- Remove signage and barricades to a safe area for storage until they are picked up or delivered to the owner.
- Call the non-emergency line 506-648-3333 to inform Police and Fire that the street is now reopened to traffic.

### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

Host activities that everyone can participate in! Encourage intergenerational and intercultural participation. Communities thrive when we all celebrate together. Ensure that the party is accessible for everyone, including individuals with mobility challenges.



#### Spring/ Summer Activities

Driveway theatre or talent show  
Bike or pet parade  
Garden tours and walking tours  
Sidewalk chalk  
Informal sport activities  
Scavenger hunt

#### Fall/ Winter Activities

Skating or sliding party  
Hot chocolate station  
Book or craft clubs  
Build a snowman or snow fort  
Karaoke party  
Outdoor Movie

### Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Will the City of Saint John advertise my block party?

A: No. You are responsible for advertising your party; however the City will issue a traffic notice about the redirection of vehicular traffic for that day.

Q: Does the City provide barricades and Road Closed signs?

A: There are a limited number of barricades, road closed, and detour signs available through the City. Please request the barricades on the application form. If the City cannot provide them, you can rent them at business in the city.

Q: My street/ cul-de-sac is too small. Where else can I host a block party?

A: We recommend you host your party in a public space---a street or park---as it increases the shared responsibility of the event. If your block party is going to be held on public land (street, park, playground), you must apply to host your event with the City.

Q: Why should I submit an application for my block party with the City?

A: If your event is taking place on public land, you must complete the application form and receive approval in order to obtain a permit. The City's Special Events Task Force will review your application and work with you to make sure your event is safe, fun, and enjoyable. The Task Force includes Police, Fire, Operations, and other service areas that you will need to work with to plan your event.

Q: What restrictions should I be aware of?

A: There are by-laws and other rules around the use of bouncy castles, temporary structures, fireworks, noise, alcohol, and food.

Q: How far in advance will I need to apply?

A: Residents are encouraged to apply at least 16 weeks prior to your desired date.

For more information visit [www.saintjohn.ca](http://www.saintjohn.ca)

Add direct urls for planning guide, customer service, and application forms