



Neighbourhood Block Parties Guide

Organizing a Neighbourhood
Block Party and/or Event

2022 Edition

Sports Development, Wellness & Culture
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Introduction

A Neighbourhood Party or Block Party is an opportunity for neighbours to get together, meet each other, have fun and work together on a common activity.

TOP 10 REASONS TO HAVE A BLOCK PARTY

1. To have fun – no excuses or reasons are needed to celebrate.
2. To provide an opportunity to know your neighbours and where they live.
3. To establish friendships.
4. To increase the sense of belonging to a community.
5. To meet people on your block who might be able to help you with a gardening problem or lend you that needed ingredient for your recipe.
6. To encourage people to look after the neighbourhood.
7. To help with safety/crime prevention by knowing who lives where.
8. To learn a little about each other and know who might need a little extra help from time to time.
9. To develop an opportunity to meet some long-time residents and learn about the neighbourhood history.

Try not to go overboard; it can make people feel the event is too much work. Keep it simple!

1. Planning Your Block Party

GETTING STARTED

- The idea of a neighbourhood block party is to bring people together. It's a good idea to find 1 or 2 neighbours to help you with the event.
- Many hands make light work. Try to get as many people involved as possible to make the workload more manageable.
- Getting an organizing committee in place is the first step. It is important to include everyone in the decisions about the event.
- For the first time, you may want to send out a note to explain your idea, encourage attendance, perhaps share some of the benefits; get opinions on how to handle the food, and possible dates and times to have the event.
- Enlist as many folks as you can. Someone can type the flyer; someone else can collect them. You may want to ask neighbourhood kids to drop the flyers in the mailboxes.
- To find out the ways the City can help your group in running a successful Block Party event, send an email to neighbourhoods@cityofgp.com.

2. Types of Parties

WHICH TYPE OF PARTY WILL WORK BEST IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD?

- **Barbecues** – Organizers purchase all that is needed, and neighbours provide the money; or everyone brings his or her own meat.
- **Picnics** – Everyone brings their own meal.
- **Potluck** – Everyone brings one dish.
- **Catered** – Everyone puts money towards the event.

3. How Big to Make It

- Start off with a smaller event rather than a large one. It can always grow, but it can be hard to shrink it.
- In selecting who to invite, use natural neighbourhood boundaries where possible (i.e. end of the block). If you are planning a street or cul-de-sac party, you need to invite everyone from that area.
- 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).

4. Location

- Alley
- Street
- Park

Because these locations are on public lands, a permit is required (see permit information in Section 5). Safety needs to be an important factor in planning!

OTHER OPTIONS

- Someone's backyard
- House
- Garage (rainout)
- Common room in a condo unit

5. Permits

- If you would like to block traffic on sidewalks or roads in the city, you first need to obtain approval to do so. You can obtain permission by calling Transportation Services at **780-538-0300** and asking for an application to barricade a public roadway. Or, the application can be found here: cityofgp.com/city-services/permits-licenses-forms/engineering-services/engineering-services-permit-request
- If the event is to be held in a park, an Outdoor Site & Park Use Permit must be obtained to ensure availability and will allow the City to ensure the site is mowed and ready for your event. To apply for an Outdoor Site and Park Use Permit, the application can be found here: cityofgp.com/city-services/permits-licenses-forms/outdoor-site-park-use-permit-request-form. Enquiries can be sent to eventpermits@cityofgp.com or call **780-538-0451**.
- If food is being served at your Neighbourhood Block Party, the Public Health office will consider the event a "potluck". As long as you do not plan on charging for food and it is only open to residents of the neighbourhood or block (not a public event) you will not require a food permit. See page 6 for recommended food safety tips. Non-profits raising funds are considered a Community Organization Function and require a permit with 14 days' notice. Application can be found here: albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eh-community-organization-functions-package.pdf

It is recommended you use a public space if at all possible. This will increase the likelihood of shared responsibility for the event.

6. The Timing to Get an Event Planned

- Neighbours should receive at least 3-weeks notice for the event.
- For a first-time party, distribute the first flyer requesting feedback 4 to 5 weeks before the event.
- Adjustments may need to be made if a neighbour already has an event of their own planned.
- Once the committee has looked at all the suggestions, the final notice with date, time, and what to bring should go out 3 weeks prior to the event.
- Mid-May to the end of August is a great time of year to host an event. Encouraging activities during the winter months is also a great way to get people to embrace the season. Look for Neighbour Day celebrations.
- Have an alternate rainout day planned, just in case.
- A weekend date or holidays are often the best times for the event.
- Keep in mind who lives in the neighbourhood when setting the hours for the party. Plan to have it wrap up around 9 p.m. if young children or seniors are living near the party area. See Bylaw C-1103 (Quiet hours are 10:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m.).

7. Getting the Word Out

IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP PEOPLE INFORMED.

HERE ARE SOME IDEAS:

- Flyers can be used and left at the houses on the block.
- Information can be gathered from your neighbours by going door to door. This adds a personal touch and people often offer to help.
- A casual approach can be used to inform neighbours as you see them out doing their lawns.
- To reach neighbours in townhouses, apartments and condos, it is best to approach the manager. They will let you know how to get in touch with the residents.
- Utilize social media to reach as many neighbours as possible. For example, if your neighbourhood has a Neighbourhood Association Facebook page or Neighbourhood Community Group, you can post any information there to make it readily available.

8. Role of the Organizers

- Make decisions about the set-up.
- Act as a greeter at the event. You can hand out name tags for people to write their names to help with getting to know your neighbours.
- Be aware of the new neighbours and introduce them around or help them make connections.
- Make sure clean-up is done (You may want to inspire clean-up by rewarding the children with a prize).

9. Set Up

- A sign-in sheet is required to keep a record of attendance at your event and can be used for follow-up post-event. One person should be responsible for keeping track of the sign-in sheet to help ensure accuracy.
- Ask neighbours to bring their own blankets or chairs for seating.
- Identify who can bring garbage cans. If extra cans are required in a park, you can indicate that on your Outdoor Site and Park Use Permit application. cityofgp.com/city-services/permits-licenses-forms/outdoor-site-park-use-permit-request-form. Have receptacles for recyclables as well.
- Ask neighbours to clean up after themselves and ensure that any garbage is removed. It's advisable to wear gloves when cleaning and to use proper hand hygiene.
- You may wish to do an evaluation at the end of the event to collect any new ideas.

10. Activities During the Event

WHAT SHOULD WE DO DURING THE EVENT?

- The purpose of these events is to create social connections.
- For neighbours that have dietary restrictions, preferences, or safety concerns, encourage individuals to bring any additional food and drinks at their own discretion.
- Encourage your neighbours to bring their own chairs or blankets to sit on to reduce post-event clean up.
- You may choose to play music from your own phone and portable speakers or a sound system; just be mindful of the volume and appropriateness of music at all times.
- Practice good hand hygiene. It is advisable to have hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes available for use by all, and to encourage neighbours to bring their own too.
- Get creative! Come up with a variety of games and activities that will be engaging and inclusive for your neighbors. You can ask for suggestions in this area prior to your event to help ensure there is something for everyone!

FIRE PITS

- Under By-law C-1312, you must apply for a Permit for Recreational Open Burning if you do not have one already. You can obtain one from Pete Eagar Fire Station on Resources Road. Cost for one year is \$10.00. Residential fire permits can be found here:
cityofgp.com/city-services/emergency/fire-department/residential-fire-pit-permits
- For permitting on public land please email fire_prevention@cityofgp.com or call **780-538-0393**.
- The fire must be placed 10 feet from the property line and from any combustible material.
- The fire must be attended by a responsible person 18 years of age or older at all times.
- Please see the City of Grande Prairie's website cityofgp.com for more information about fire regulations.

11. Final Reminders

- Residents should observe security precautions by keeping back doors locked and equipment in sight.
- Loud music is prohibited.
- Remember when setting up tables and chairs that emergency vehicles may need access.
- You may wish to post signs the day before the event to remind everyone to remove cars for the street closure.

12. Other Ways to Get to Know Your Neighbours

- To better connect with your Neighbours social media has become an important way to share information and gain familiarity. Look for Neighborhood Association pages, Neighborhood Community Groups or other platforms to stay connected.
- Participate in Neighbour Day or other City organized community activities and events.
- House Decorating contests
- Sidewalk chalk art challenges
- Fill out the Know Your Neighbour Card
cityofgp.com/culture-community/neighbourhood-associations
- Perennial Exchange
- Garden Tour Party
- Fitness Groups (running, walking, yoga, soccer etc.)
- Book Club
- Babysitting Club
- Dog Walking Groups
- New Neighbour Welcoming Committee
- Group Garage/Yard Sale
- Swap Meet
- Get involved with your Neighbourhood Association
cityofgp.com/culture-community/neighbourhood-associations

