

ST. PATRICKS DAY 2009 FEEDBACK

Now, that the St. Patrick's Day 2009 street party celebration is over, please let us know how things went this year. What was improved? What didn't work? Any issues / problems with parking, noise, litter, behavior, etc... We will forward this information onto the Dallas Police Dept. and Councilwoman Angela Hunt.

Email info@vpna.org.

Thanks,
VPNA Board

55XX Goodwin:

We live at 5546 Goodwin and we were very, very pleased with the Police presence. We could definitely tell a difference in the number of Officers who were present this year compared to last year. Thank you for asking for feedback!

55XX Goodwin:

I want to start off by saying "Thanks" to all of the supporters and participants and what a great job everyone did with the St. Patrick's day event. While I understand the desire for increased police presence, I really didn't think that the event warranted the expense associated with the increased manpower. The vast majority of revelers by our house were well behaved, polite, tidy, and dare I say, sober (?). I think this is a tremendous event that draws a great deal of positive attention to our neighborhood and highlights how businesses can thrive and still be good neighbors to the community. And when I crawled out of bed on Sunday, my street was spotless (It was almost disappointing). No doubt there were outliers who had to be dealt with, but for the number of people who attended overall I would say the number of incidents was somewhat minor. I am grateful to the neighbors who participate in the management of the event, and also to the police who take valuable time to come out and work at our event. With the sheer number of participants, I think the traffic control must be an especially onerous task and I appreciate the hard work on that issue and the subsequent hassles of towing, etc. Overall, I would say everything went very, very smoothly.

53XX Goodwin:

Frankly I found this year's celebration less intrusive in the neighborhood than last year's (and I praised the results even then). Around my home in the middle of the block of Goodwin, the no-parking signs represented the only litter and that was obviously temporary. I spotted no lewd behavior, no signs of falling down drunkenness, and nothing more destructive than shuffling the dirt on the sidewalks as the revelers made their way to Greenville. Kudos to the planners and all the volunteers that helped make this celebration tolerable and fun.

53XX Goodwin:

I was most impressed with the thorough plans and their execution this year -- from the "No Parking" signs with their little plastic raincoats, to the litter crews that came by the morning after the event. The only people who were a tad raucous in my immediate area were a few neighbors. Thanks for another great job!

52XX Goodwin:

My only concern was for the postal employees?!? Were they exempt from the "no parking" in order to deliver the mail, or did they have to fight for parking?!? Everything else worked well down here on the 5200 block of Goodwin.

52XX Goodwin:

Great job. Expanding the no parking signs really helped. I especially appreciated the clean up crews coming through this morning.

52XX Goodwin:

I just wanted to pass along my appreciation and admiration for all the volunteers that worked on the No Parking signs, particularly those who went out in the cold and the rain to hammer them into the ground. I was also very impressed with how quickly they were picked up Sunday morning. It appeared the entire enterprise was extremely well coordinated. Congratulations on a great effort, and many, many thanks!!

56XX Vickery:

This was probably one of the best years. It was great to see the cleanup crew on Sunday morning actually picking up beer bottles in people's yards and not just picking up the trash boxes. That has always been one of my biggest beefs. It was also nice that there did not appear to be any late night parties with loud music. It really seemed to quiet down around 9:30 or 10PM and we couldn't hear the bars this year.

It would have been nice if Vickery and some of the other streets that had Road Closed signs on them had actually been enforced. With all the people traffic and the cars with some people speeding it wasn't always a safe place to be.

All in all I would give it a grade of B. It's come a long way and still has a little ways to go.

56XX Vickery:

It was the best St. Patrick's Day ever. The only improvement would be to close our block- 5600 block of Vickery. There was a lot of traffic- very heavy and drivers driving way too fast with all those people around.

56XX Vickery & RPO Signs:

Thank you so much for those signs - they will mean a huge improvement for us.

56XX Vickery:

I think that this year was better than in years past -- it always helps to have lots and lots of police presence for this event. It would also be lovely if we could schedule cold and rainy weather for the event every year.

My critiques --

1. Open container -- the police told me that they were not enforcing the open container law because of the large numbers of people walking around with open containers. I think that this is a serious public safety issue.
2. Blockades at 5600 block of Vickery. It was my impression that there was to be a barricade at the intersection of 5600 block of Vickery at Greenville. For whatever reason, there was not one this year. I strongly urge that one be placed at that location in order to limit the number of vehicles on this street because of the large number of pedestrians walking in the street. This is a public safety issue.

3. Location of cab stand -- I thought that it was to be at Belmont and Greenville in order to prevent vehicular traffic on Greenville south of Belmont. This is a public safety issue.
4. Cost -- As this is an event sponsored by taxable entities, I again request that the permitting process be altered to require that all costs, including all on-duty police, incurred by the city in conjunction with such event be paid by the sponsoring entity. If the actual costs exceed the estimated costs, then the city should be allowed to present an additional invoice after the event to recoup all costs. If the entities fail to pay, then no permits should be issued for the equivalent event for a period of 4 years. As the City of Dallas is facing a significant budget shortfall and is cutting its support of tax-exempt entities and reducing city-provided services to its taxpayers, I cannot imagine that there is any logical support for continued taxpayer subsidy of this event. In my opinion, the prudent fiscal approach would start with a complete analysis of the costs and revenues associated with this recurring event.

**55XX Vickery:
Improvements:**

Signs

- Increased number of No Parking Signs (people were appreciative for the blocks covered)
- Having 'No Parking' on both sides of McMillan & Worcola was a BIG improvement (easier to get in and out of cross streets, helped with traffic flow).
- Date/day of event & times on signs
- Verbiage on signs, 'No Parking This Side of Street'
- 'Respect the Neighborhood' signs were sturdier this year, looked much better.

Towing

- More tow trucks to enforce No Parking violations

Clean-up

- Clean-up crews continually emptying trash receptacles throughout day.
- Day after, streets were cleaned up early, 'No Parking' signs picked up throughout Vickery Place neighborhood before noon on Sunday.

Police

- 911 response much better, altho' calls were not always directed to command center.
- Having ENP Officer on duty.

Continued issues:

Public Misconduct

- Open container law blatantly ignored. (Drinking in front of and around officers with no consequence)
- Public urination (men & women)
- Public intoxication

Police

- Unmanned road blocks – 8-10 officers at Goodwin & Worcola, none at Vickery/Worcola & Miller/Worcola intersections, 1 officer at Vanderbilt/Worcola.
- More police hired, but not more effective, still not stationed throughout neighborhood – VPNA hired ENP officer for most of the day.

Cabs

- Good to have more cabs, but drive too fast, make illegal u-turns at intersections.

Parking

- Illegal parking in yards and in front of stop signs – police drive right by when happening or after the fact and did nothing.

Road Blocks

- People continually ignoring the road blocks and enter anyway, go wrong way, especially cabs.
- No barricade on Vickery or Miller, just Road Closed signs in middle of road—not as effective as barricade.

55XX Vickery:

In spite of the overcast and cool day, the party looked to good success. At the corner of Vickery and Worcola, we had the regular flow of party goers with only a few very minor incidents. The police presence was very evident with many squad cars driving by on the side streets. Our street seemed to be less busy than previous years and we also noticed an increase in the number of cabs.

The road closed sign and one way street set-up was generally ignored on the 5600 block of Vickery and needed full time police presence.

The No Parking signs were not tampered with during the event in this area and most drivers were respectful of the signs.

The event was mostly over by 7 o'clock in the evening and we were unaffected by any of the revelers that stayed on for the evening on Greenville.

We did have an accident with a person falling off a float on Worcola and ambulance needed. This was strictly an isolated incident and not indicative of the day.

Overall, the event was well structured and coordinated between the neighborhoods, police and local business owners. As usual, a good time was had by most everybody coming to the party and the neighbors.

We very much enjoy this event and hope that it will continue.

55XX Vickery:

I just want to say that the additional portable toilets paid off -- I didn't have to run anyone off from my bushes this year. The litter control was terrific, and noise was not usually a problem. It is nice seeing the police so responsive.

Thanks to VPNA, the Dallas Police, and Angela Hunt for making this better for the neighbors every year. Thanks, too, to the sponsors, who, for the most part, gracefully comply with the city's requirements.

54XX Vickery:

Spent all day at home and watched at times from my porch. The biggest problem and most obvious over the last few years is the need for more port-o-lets or portable toilets in the neighborhoods surrounding the main event. The empty lot across the street from me was serving as a Public human dumping ground. I counted over 80 people using the property as a restroom. Twice I notice people in the alley doing the same. You know these people come down here to get wasted drunk but then head back to where they came from and piss everywhere along the way. Perhaps the portable toilets on the corners of Laneri and McMillian and Homer would be better served than the cardboard trash containers. And how about all those No Parking Signs

that were put out the night before, Well seems to like the Party Goers pulled them all up for a prank. Perhaps something more carefully displayed or securely fastened down would be harder to remove.

54XX Vickery:

Observations:

No parking on both sides of Worcola and McMillan was very effective and a great improvement over previous years of one-side no parking. No violations seen and traffic flow was very efficient.

No parking on north side of Vickery Place streets was very effective. No violations seen during afternoon review.

The no-parking signs were much better than last year. Key improvements were hours of enforcement and phrase "this side of block" being on the signs.

The "be nice" signs were better than last year in attractiveness and sturdiness. They held up throughout the party.

Clear bags for signs in case of rain should be a required contingency if there is a chance of rain from Wednesday through the Saturday party. It should not be up to an individual to find and purchase bags.

When a resident called 911 to ask for help with parking problems and said the correct identifying phrase as directed, she was unexpectedly transferred to 311.

Open containers were again a very common problem. There were bottles, cans and plastic cups. Often the cups were clearly identifiable as coming from the party zone.

I saw more big coolers than I've ever seen in past years. Many were rolling coolers.

There were porta-potties at 5527 Vickery and 5551 Miller on residential property.

Parking on residential property

5522 Vickery -- vacant residential lot; party next door to the east

5536 Vickery – front and side yard of residence; party next door to west

after police were asked for help, cars moved from vacant lot but not from front yard

The alley between 5600 Vanderbilt and 5600 Ridgedale was the primary west route of exit from the north end of party cage; no barricades, no police, no security, no monitoring at either end.

There was a problem with public urination in the neighborhood.

I had to keep chasing groups of people from my neighbor's house being remodeled that appeared to be vacant (but isn't) – groups using rear of the home for a bathroom.

Traffic going the wrong way on Vickery between McMillan and Greenville (including taxis); lack of barricades made this easier.

I saw more police car patrols than ever; they didn't necessarily do anything about violations going on as they went by.

Lots of 24-packs of beer being carried toward and away from party. Groups standing next police around party perimeter (near fence) between Vanderbilt and Ridgedale drinking cans of beer from 24-packs on the ground in plain sight of and close to police.

Police enforcement, role and presence inconsistent and somewhat ineffective

Worcola barricades in party zone (Vickery to Vanderbilt)

- barricades at Goodwin but not at Vanderbilt or Vickery
- "Road Closed" signs at all 3 intersections
- 8-10 officers including sergeant at Goodwin; 1 female uniformed officer in a plain-clothes car at Vanderbilt; no officers or security at Vickery

We had been having trouble figuring out how to get parking enforcement for 2 residential properties on 5500 Vickery being used for party parking (one vacant lot and one front/side yard). We approached the large group of police officers on 5600 Goodwin at Worcola. They appeared to be all facing each other instead of facing out toward passing party-goers. They appeared to be just socializing with each other instead of enforcing anything. We asked if they could help us with the parking enforcement issues. They said that they couldn't because they were the "beer patrol". When asked what that meant, they said that they were there to stop people from going on with open containers of alcohol. I asked, "Then why is it that we've been standing over there watching as group after group comes by you toward Vickery with open containers?" Suddenly they looked around and noticed the passing party-goers with alcohol and began asking them to pour it out.

Later we were on 5600 Vanderbilt at Worcola. The lone female officer seemed to mostly be sitting in her unmarked vehicle at the barricade. Since there were party goers around the intersection with open containers of alcohol, we asked her to enforce the law and request that they pour out the alcohol as they walked through our neighborhood. She said that she absolutely would not do that. There were no orders to do so and that was not her role. She said if she received orders, she would do it but not until then. She explained, as if we were unaware, "This is a street party." We reminded her that the "street party" was up on Greenville and not in our residential neighborhood, but she did not apparently agree.

Still later we again were on 5600 Goodwin at Worcola. We asked the officers why they were the beer patrol but the officer at the next intersection would not enforce the open container law. They directed us to the "sergeant" in the group who told us that she was an "off-duty officer". I asked how to tell the difference between a uniformed on-duty officer and a uniformed off-duty officer, and he said "You can't."

One individual on Matilda at Goodwin spent at least 10 minutes in discussion with officer in a patrol car; individual was holding a clear plastic cup half full of beer and continued to lean into the open window of the front seat of the patrol car with the beer; was not asked to pour out the beer.

Parking over sidewalks.

Barricades and signs moved by partygoers but less than in previous years.

Security stayed at alley posts longer than last year.

Far fewer staggering drunks walking through neighborhood.

There were children at party zone.

Could have used bicycle patrol officers out in neighborhood during party instead of only after the party was over.

No parking signs were still up on McCommas between 3:30 and 4 pm on Sunday.

Needed more unprompted enforcement of no parking at STOP signs.

San Francisco Rose had food and beverage booths on street. Permit? Legal? Very crowded.

The celebration stretched north from the party cage to at least McCommas on Greenville Ave. Greenville Avenue was very full of pedestrian traffic, many of whom were carrying alcohol from the party zone. The pedestrian traffic prevented most vehicular traffic.

56XX Willis:

We were pleasantly surprised at how little trash and noise after midnight that there was. The no parking signs worked great. Our street, Willis, got a little busy with cabs because it was one of the first places cars could drive through, but overall, seemed to be great. The large police presence was nice to have.

56XX Willis:

From my vantage point on Willis Avenue, first block off Greenville, things were MUCH better this year.

CROWD SIZE: I think because of the weather, the crowd was just much much smaller. At noon, there was still a vacant parking space in front of my house. I didn't see crowds and crowds of people on my street as in years past. Neighborhood parties (at least 3 or 4 in my block) seemed calmer and no one was parking in the yards. (In past years, my street has become jammed with cars...and crowds of people.)

I was able to be at home and go about my day without the normal st. pat's "life interruption". This is the first year in a long time that the event size seemed more reasonable and manageable.

HOWEVER, we can not always count on the weather to keep the numbers down. All efforts implemented this year must be continued and increased to accommodate the larger crowds that are more typical of this event.

NOISE: I called 911 @ 12:55 b/c I could hear the band @ the street party in my house with the windows closed. It seemed to be better the rest of the day. (Again....I think the weather made the whole event calmer... including the private parties on my street.)

POLICE & 911: 911 response was polite and they seemed to be informed to route calls to the command post @ Lee. Response times were quick. Officers were very courteous and understanding. Officer (Sgt?) Tooker told me he was hoping the rain would have continued and commented that the event probably needs to be moved to some where else like the Am. Airlines center.

(My second call to 911 was when someone parked in front of my house, behind my car, with their bumper mashed up against mine. I didn't see it happen and fortunately there was no damage to my car.)

I was also very pleased this year to see Angela Hunt's flyer about the event posted on the city website (and news articles gave the site as reference for more info.) DMN news stories also listed much of the information from the flyer in a "list format". Also, the news stories seemed to mention the **increased police presence and concerns about drunk driving**. However, I still saw news reports that showed people drinking along the parade route (is that legal?) and read a comment on DMN website that said "we can't bring alcohol into the Party, **but is it still ok to bring it to the Parade?**"

MY SUGGESTIONS:

I think it is important as a neighborhood that we keep standing firm on the issues. If this event is to be held in a residential neighborhood, then we must have this type of law enforcement...so partygoers know there will be consequences for any misbehavior. **Lack of strong police presence and enforcement creates a party atmosphere with a lax attitude towards intoxication.**

This needs to continue in the future and be stepped up even more. If you google "**drunk driving, St. Patrick's Day**" you get page after page of links to stories like these from cities all around the country. Here are just a FEW of the many many examples:

- *St. Patty's Day drunk driving crackdown begins*

Mar 12, 2009 ... CHICAGO — State, county and local police throughout the Midwest will begin a drunk driving crackdown through the St. Patrick's Day holiday ...

- *DUI crackdown enforced statewide St. Patrick's Day weekend .. (ARIZONA)*

- *DUI Patrols Begin Friday For St. Patrick's Day Weekend - Denver ...*

- *DUI checkpoint set for St. Patrick's Day - York Dispatch (YORK, PA.)*

- *IL DUI News: 76% Increase in Citations at 'Unofficial' St ...*

Mar 12, 2009 ... 76% Increase in Citations at 'Unofficial' St Patrick's Day Party in Illinois.

DALLAS needs to join the rest of the country with this attitude towards drunk driving around this holiday....ESPECIALLY as long as the following facts remain to be true....

from MADD:

- Drunk driving is the MOST FREQUENTLY committed VIOLENT CRIME in our country.
- It is MORE FREQUENTLY committed in **TEXAS**, than in any other state.
- 45% of crashes in Texas are CAUSED BY DRUNK DRIVERS.

(that amounts to **a LOT of senseless deaths and avoidable injuries**). I know first hand. In 2004, I survived a head-on collision with a drunk driver. I sustained life-threatening injuries including a spinal fracture and brain injury and am still battling to get my life back. My friend and business partner, Carol Wilder Enge, was killed in the crash.

55XX Willis:

No problems. I was out all day, but didn't notice any problems. Neighborhood was in fine shape when I got home

52XX Willis:

I decided to stay indoors this Sat as the traffic is usually awful. Parking seemed to be ok in front of my house; however, several times I caught people peeing in my yard, my neighbor's yard and the yard across the street. Middle of the day around 2:30-3 pm. If I had been quick enough, I would have taken their pictures. I find it disgusting that some of the party goers can be so disrespectful and disgusting.

I have no idea on how to curb this disgusting behavior, but it certainly make me not want to do yard work where humans are defecating.

55XX Richard:

Ever since the "no parking" and "traffic route" has been in effect, I have had little problem with the event. I thought that the police presence was excellent this year. I saw a car being towed as it

should be if illegally parked. I saw people being pulled over by the police. I thought some of the taxis were driving too fast through the neighborhood again. I have written to the cab companies in the past. The only difference that I saw this year is I thought the boundaries were extended, but maybe not. It seems to me that in past years once you were out of the actual neighborhoods bordering lower Greenville that you were pretty much free to move about, but yesterday afternoon I had a terrible time getting to Central Market and was late getting to Arlington for a family reunion. But I also think that the residents of our neighborhoods are hosting more and more parties in their yards and that we can no longer hold entirely responsible the bars of Lower Greenville for the event and the impact that it has on congestion. And once again many thanks to the guys of Vickery Place who went out in the cold rain most of the night Thursday to install the no parking signs. If it were not for the combined effort of the neighborhood associations, the City and businesses, it would not be a good event. As we have seen in the past.

54XX Richard & Parade:

I participated in the parade with DFW Lab Rescue and thought that event went really well. I walked back to my car at the top of the route and thought the police presence was exceptional and likely had an impact on the behavior of the crowd. My block - 5400 Richard - isn't really impacted by the festivities and when I was at home couldn't really tell a difference (outside of the cars) from a regular Saturday. Since I'm sure more people complain than compliment when given the opportunity, I just wanted to sincerely thank the businesses, the police and the neighborhood leaders for their significant efforts in making such a unique Dallas event a success that can continue on next year.

54XX Richard:

The police presence was noticeably stronger/improved from last year. Adding the cardboard trashcans in M-streets was nice. We should consider in VP, maybe they were there but we missed them?

The taxis were out of control. I witnessed countless ones speeding, swerving thru our streets looking for next occupants. One braked thru stop sign, almost hitting pedestrians. It's great that they're "around" to haul around those who've enjoyed a few cocktails but all should remember these streets are home to families, kids, etc.

55XX Bonita:

As a Vickery Place resident I didn't have any problems with the traffic or parties. I did notice a lot of broken glass on the sidewalks and in the street afterward, I saw the crews picking up litter but they didn't sweep up the glass. I walk my dogs in the neighborhood I am very concerned about the broken glass and it looks like we have a neighborhood that tolerates trash in our streets.

Business on Greenville in party zone & Residence 5800 Vanderbilt:

I have a business, that stays open and we also participate in selling snacks, sodas and water. I am also a neighbor who lives on the 5800 block of Vanderbilt, and just want to say thank you for everyone who makes this day run smooth, safe, and organized. It seems that every year gets a little better and better.