

BRIGHT SIDE CLEAN UP PLANNING GUIDE



NOVEMBER 2023

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PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE BOOK

Community and neighborhood driven events are challenging and require collaboration among organizations and residents. This guidebook is designed to help other neighborhoods create, plan, and carry out a neighborhood clean up effort utilizing the resources available and leveraging partner capacity.

Thank you to our partners for the development of this project and guidebook:

- Northern Plains Resource Council
- City of Billings Code Enforcement
- South Side Neighborhood Task Force
- Community Leadership & Development Inc.
- Billings Chamber of Commerce
- Hope Center Four Square Church
- United Way of Yellowstone County
- Bright n' Beautiful

BRIGHTSIDE OF THE TRACKS BACKGROUND

The Healthy By Design Coalition is a multi-sector collaborative of organizations committed to improving the quality of life for those who live, work, learn, and play in Yellowstone County. By implementing policies, systems, and built environment changes, the Coalition seeks to make the healthy choices more easily accessible.

In 2017, the Healthy By Design Coalition collaborated with community residents, leaders, and stakeholders to develop the Healthy South Side Neighborhood Plan. This plan, resulting from a yearlong, resident-driven process and funded by the Kresge Foundation, identifies evidence-based, locally tailored solutions to enhance the health and vibrancy of the South Side neighborhood. This report showcases the project background, approach, and results that may support neighborhoods seeking to complete a similar effort.

A resident steering committee, local artists, and city government worked to create a process for creative placemaking and to identify potential arts and culture projects to revitalize this historic neighborhood through increased walkability, a sense of community pride, and improved access to daily needs. The theme, “South Side – The Bright Side of the Tracks”, was suggested by an elder in the community and selected during a community party held at South Park. The Bright Side theme will inspire creative placemaking efforts within the community, incorporating historic, diverse, and unique assets of the South Side.

While implementing the neighborhood brand through art installations and walking tours, the coalition seized an opportunity to present the South Side as a model neighborhood for others to learn from and visit.

01.



02.

CLEAN UP BACKGROUND



In October 2022, South Side businesses convened to discuss how they could actively support continued efforts to support the South Side neighborhood as a healthy and vibrant place to live, work, and play. During the meeting, attendees identified that some residents in the neighborhood were facing challenges in maintaining their yards.

Between December 2022 and May 2023, a task group consisting of representatives from business, development, neighborhood, health, code enforcement and faith-based sectors collaborated to plan, implement, and assess the Bright Side Clean Up initiative.

Healthy By Design had previously assisted in a city-sponsored neighborhood tune-up held in 2015 for the Central-Terry neighborhood, which inspired the Bright Side Clean Up effort.

The Bright Side Clean-Up aimed to promote neighborhood beautification and foster community engagement, while also addressing noncompliant properties by providing resources to help property owners achieve compliance. This initiative serves as a model for effective collaborative and neighborhood-driven clean-up efforts.





PLANNING TIMELINE*

Month 1

Determine group convener and organizer
Identify partners and set planning meetings
Set event goals and potential timeline

Month 2

Determine scope of project and partner capacities
Develop workplan
Assign roles
Contact Public Works to get project participation approval

Month 3

Identify primary communication platform/channels
Draft forms, surveys, outreach communications

Month 4

Develop volunteer plan
Conduct outreach to potential volunteers
Finalize information dissemination and social media plans
Begin neighborhood canvassing

PLANNING TIMELINE CONT.

Month 5

Mobilize event volunteers
Distribute event flyers to neighborhood and on social media
Finalize event check-in locations and prominent features:
location of dumpsters, check-in tent, etc.

Month 6

Complete final outreach opportunities such as a press release, radio spots, etc.
Develop instructional video for volunteers
Assign volunteers to resident assistance requests
Hold clean-up event

Month 7

Committee wrap-up process - following the event, host a committee meeting, review successes and challenges, establish best practices, and evaluate project



***We planned a 7-month timeline, but completion may depend on the timeframe during which public works can allocate resources. Volunteers, materials and messaging can happen at multiple paces depending on your need.**

CONSIDERATIONS



Selecting date:

City Code Enforcement identified May through September as the busiest time for Public Works and Solid Waste. To ensure dumpsters and staffing are available, planning and coordination should begin at least 6 months in advance.

Weather:

The warmer months may yield the best results.

Selecting project area:

Set physical parameters for the event to define the project space. Clearly communicate with participants and volunteers where the event will take place and what is designated outside of the project area. Avoid proclaiming an area in need of clean up.

Budget:

Partnering organizations donated printed materials, trash bags, volunteer vests, and paint for graffiti among other supplies. Although minimal, it may be helpful to set aside a budget to purchase supplies that cannot be donated.

A fundraising effort will take significant coordination but will enable the work group to provide volunteer incentives, purchase supplies, materials and utilize a broader messaging platform

Canvassing:

In-person canvassing requires greater time commitments. If the budget allows, consider sending a mailer to the designated project area.

Communications:

Identify or create a single point of contact. Creating a Google suite to keep all email communications, a Google Voice phone number, all meeting minutes, agendas and other documents, Google Maps, or Google Forms is one way to achieve this.

CONSIDERATIONS CONTINUED

Project Development:

Monthly meetings with timely minutes and specific task items are recommended. In the final two months leading up to the event, meeting every two weeks may support the potential increase in action items and resident or committee questions.

Clearly identify and define program parameters ie. what will volunteers do, what is not eligible for this project?

Partnerships

Ensure representatives from every sector or organization involved in the implementation of the project have input in the planning process. Identify specific tasks that each partner will complete.

Create clear roles for partners, i.e. who will convene the group, who will be the point contact person for the city, who will help get volunteers organized etc.?

Limitations and liability:

The larger the project, the more complicated the instructions for volunteers and residents may become. Consider if volunteers will enter structures or properties, if volunteers will be doing yard work, or bagging waste. Clearly indicate the expectations of volunteers and the physical requirements. Communicate to residents what is expected to receive volunteer help. Determine whether a volunteer liability form is needed and the content of the liability form.

Messaging:

Determine the tone of the project. For example, will it be a regulatory event informing and encouraging people to get properties in compliance an opportunity for seniors to receive help, or a general family friendly event? Once determined, create messaging that reflects the intention of the project with specific details. Create a messaging plan that reflect the project intent and remains consistent as the project is promoted. Label the spaces where the project operates during the event with event information and wayfinding signs to prevent confusion with infrastructure that might be mistaken as part of the project.

BEST PRACTICES

Getting Resident Requests

To reach the maximum audience, share event information in multiple mediums such as TV, radio, print media, social media. Contact interested residents to better understand their request. Do not make promises that cannot be guaranteed.

Mobilize Volunteers

Reach out to local groups, clubs, businesses and schools to get volunteers. Create a schedule for volunteers to sign up for a specific time slot. Mobilize volunteers with trucks and large vehicles to haul trash to dumpsters. Use a mapping software to identify key areas in event space for volunteers. Send volunteers out in groups of 2 - 4 per resident request.

Community Engagement

Ensure the neighborhood or area of interest is engaged and active throughout the entire planning process. Address resident questions and concerns as soon as they are received. Create resources for residents whose needs are beyond the project scope and distribute before and during the event. If working with the city to address noncompliant properties, make sure any messaging related to regulations is sent by the city. Use clean-up opportunity to engage community in beautification. If funding and coordination permits, plan a community block party in tandem with the clean-up event to celebrate the neighborhood and build community.

SOUTH SIDE CASE STUDY

Success story

The South Side triangle was the pilot neighborhood for this project after successful partnership and community engagement in previous neighborhood-lead projects. This project demonstrated the need to utilize shared capacity of community organizations, follow a detailed workplan and identify a champion for project management.



7 Volunteers

helped residents remove trash from yards and bringing them to the dumpsters



8 Organizations

partnered with the South Side Task Force to facilitate this clean up



14,000 Pounds

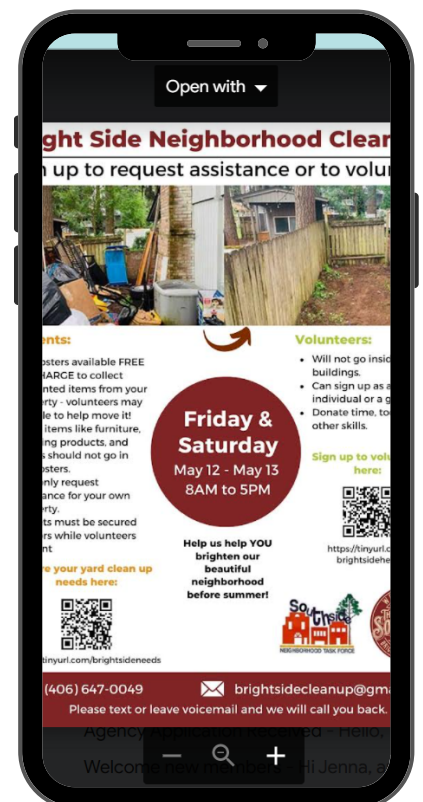
of trash, leaves, and open storage was removed from the South Side Triangle



540 Pounds

of metal was collected and recycled

The Bright Side Clean Up is a pilot program designed to be replicated in other neighborhoods in which champion residents help coordinate and develop partnerships across the city. Neighborhood based events are successful when there is buy in among partners and residents towards a collaborative goal benefiting the greatest number of people.



CLEAN UP CHECK LIST

Start here to work on your own neighborhood clean up!

- Bring a group together consisting of residents, city staff (public works/code enforcement), nearby non-profits, neighborhood business owners, volunteer organizations, and others!
- Identify partners and determine consistent facilitator
- Set project parameters, timeline and partner capacity
- Get in contact with public works to set dumpsters
- Develop messaging and promotional materials
- As a committee, share the word about event with residents, news stations, and city communications
- Determine volunteer/resident request options and develop a process to collect and manage inquiries prior to event
- Collect donated or borrowed yard work supplies, trash bags, and gloves
- Prepare for day of event: mobilize volunteers, connect with residents, communicate with the public, develop a safety plan, determine metrics to measure success
- Once the event passes, collect information from participants to measure outcomes and inform future projects
- Share your story and successes!

**THANK
YOU**

