

# River District Association

SHOP THE BLOCKS | 2018 SUMMER SEASON

---



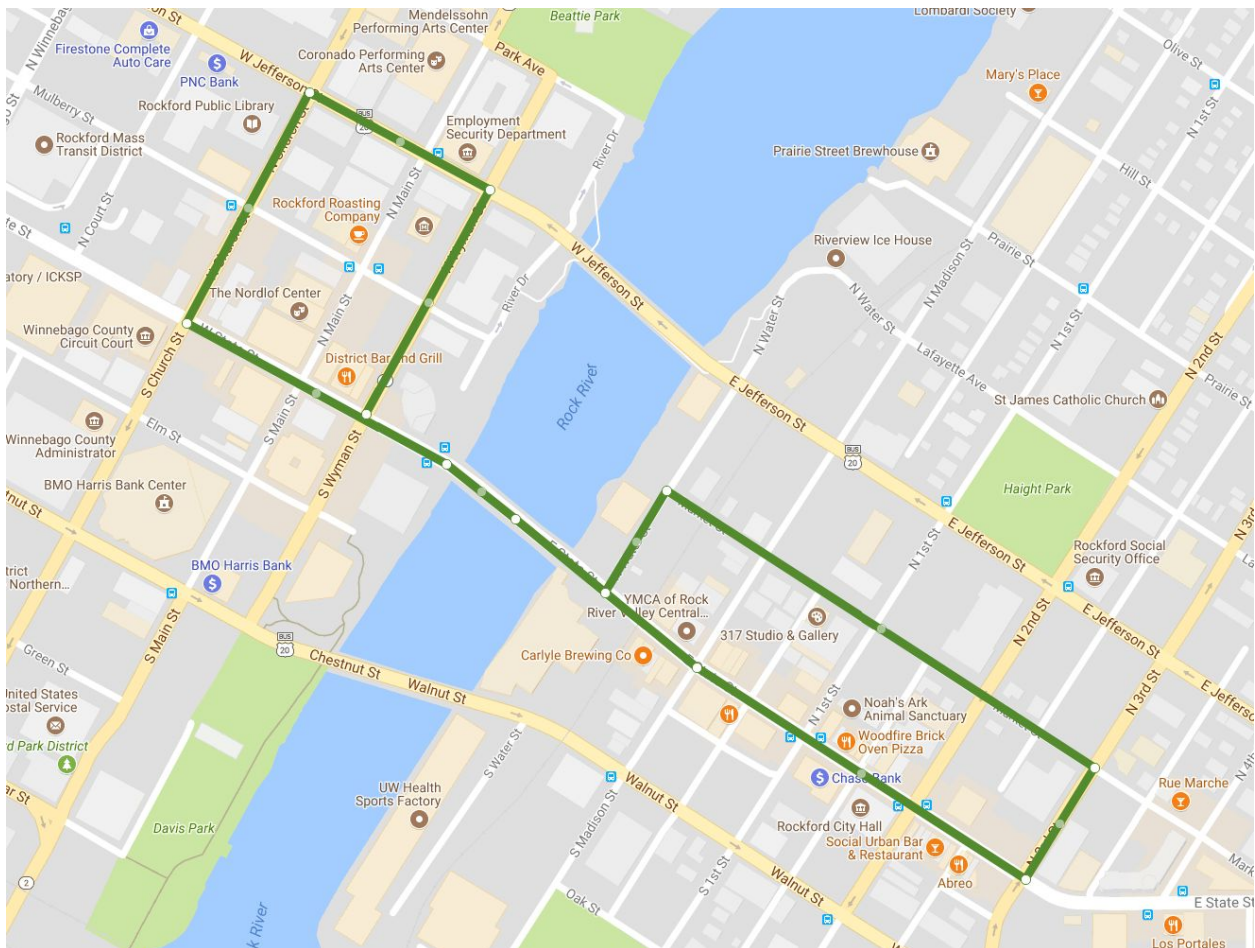
Background:

This year marks the 4<sup>th</sup> Shop the Blocks season in downtown Rockford. The 2018 River District Association Board of Directors ushers in a new era for the popular retail promotion event by moving it to Saturday afternoons.

Shop the Blocks launched in 2015 through Rockford Community Partners as a joint venture between the River District Association, The Element Rockford, The City of Rockford and downtown businesses as a way to encourage people to enjoy sidewalk sales, alfresco dining and parklets on Fridays during the summer season.

This summer footprint for Shop the Blocks includes:

- E. State Street from 3rd Street to Church Street
- 1st Street from Market Street to E. State Street
- Market Street from 1st Street to Madison Street
- North & South Main Street from Green Street to West Jefferson Street



### Event Details:

The River District Association Board of Directors will shift the focus of this event series to three select Saturday afternoons during the summer months of June, July and August.

The hours of our **Shop the Blocks 2018 series** will be from **12pm to 5pm** on the following days:

#### **Saturday, June 23: “Rewind the Blocks: Retro Rockford”**

- To run in conjunction with the RRDP’s Vintage Market (9am - 3pm)
- Shop owners are encouraged to decorate their windows in the time period of the 1940s.
- Businesses are asked to have special discounts on vintage goods and food incorporating “Retro Rockford”
- We will work with a local musician, such as Miles Nielsen, to set up an early afternoon “concert” that will use Water and Market streets as the “stage.”

#### **Saturday, July 14: “Bike the Blocks”**

- We will partner with I Bike Rockford to close off a stretch of State Street for a biking event.
- There will be a healthy food fair that is set up as an expo along the streets
- Local bike companies will be encouraged to participate in the expo
- We will encourage visitors to participate in outdoor activities on the river by collaborating with entities like Rocktown Adventures, the YMCA and LimeBikes.

#### **Saturday, August 11: “School House Rock the Blocks”**

- There will be a special emphasis on back-to-school specials for kids. Everything from bookbags, footwear, clothing, supplies, etc...
- We will identify vendors to sell their back-to-school goods. We will utilize either a “buddy system” and pair vendors with businesses to ensure that patrons travel up and down the streets.
- School districts will be encouraged to provide attendees with information on the upcoming school year.
- The YMCA will be encouraged to attend with their inflatables and promote their after school programs and camp opportunities.
- Any children’s programs running concurrent with the school year will also be encouraged to set up as a vendor at the expo.
- This event will be done in partnership with The Element, which is working to secure the Pavilion for an evening concert event with food trucks.
- We also have “fun fair” type activities such as games and scavenger hunt.

### River District Association Expectations:

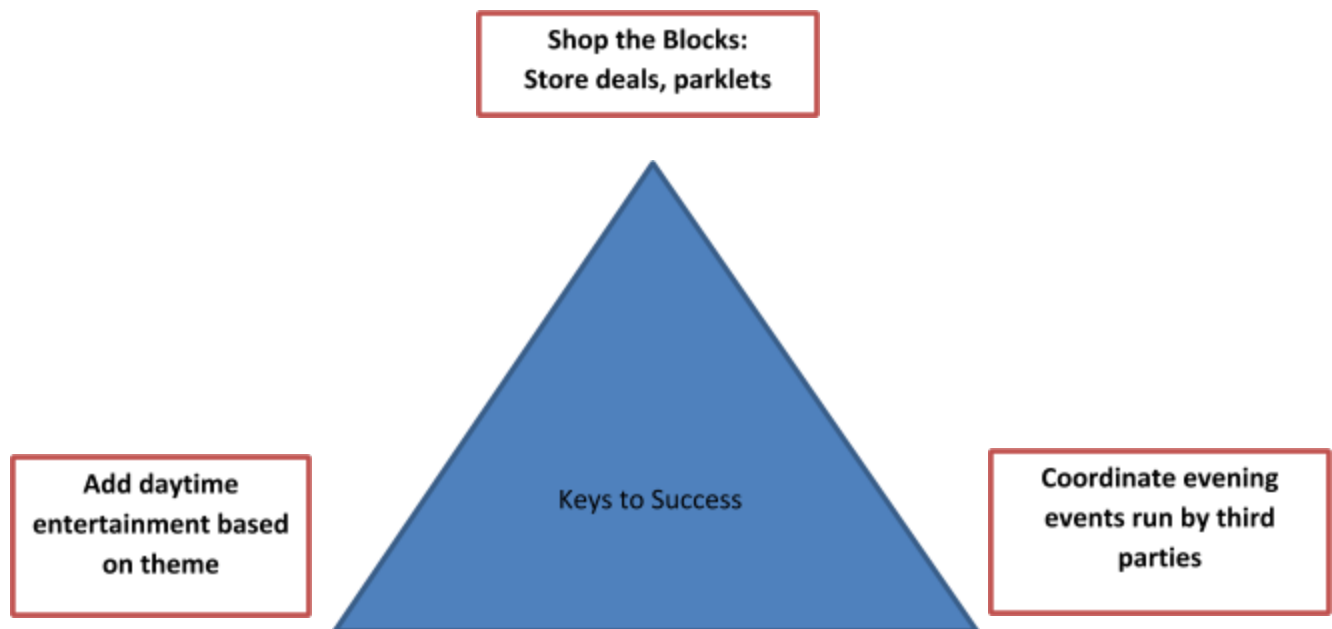
The Board of Directors will identify **specific entertainment** options (street musicians, kids entertainment, etc.) for the Shop the Blocks Saturdays developed around the specific theme. The funds will come out of the River District Association’s marketing budget. The board will also provide intense marketing in TV, radio and all digital platforms.

The River District Association will organize a list of participating businesses and what specials to advertise. It is the board’s intention to run the special promotions of the participating businesses on

the River District Association website. The website would then be posted inside a Facebook event and boosted throughout the summer.

Participating business owners are encouraged to update their own specials for each Shop the Blocks weekend by using a special “sign up” tab on the Shop the Blocks website being designed by Jarrod Hennis, Information Technology Chair of the River District Association.

Other downtown organizations are encouraged to run their special events on these same Saturdays after the Shop the Blocks event ends at 5:00pm so to create a buzz downtown. Restaurant owners have also expressed interest in block parties to tie into the Shop the Blocks.



### **Participating Business' Expectations:**

To have a successful Shop the Blocks 2018 on Saturdays, we the Board of Directors ask you to do the following:

- Staff your business and be open during the listed Saturdays (6/23, 7/14, 8/11) from 12pm to 5pm
- Like and share the River District Association's Shop the Blocks Facebook event
- Advertise and market your specials on your own social media channels and through newsletters
- Place a Shop the Blocks placard in your business window provided by the River District Association prior to the event weekends
- Be available for media interviews and morning show appearances to pitch your offerings

### **Volunteers:**

The River District Association will actively recruit volunteers or hire outside vendors to facilitate outdoor entertainment and attractions. Those volunteers will be utilized throughout the Saturday event series to point participants in your direction.

### **Sign-up Sheet:**

Please let us know if you would like to be a Shop the Blocks 2018 participating business by filling out the attached application. We will officially announce the change to Saturdays in a press conference this May. We will be asking business owners who are participating to join us for this event and speak to the media about the following key messages:

- Downtown revitalization continues to hit new benchmarks year and year
- We thank the community for its continued support of our businesses
- Our continued success relies on your continued business and bringing your family and friends in town to visit us during Shop the Blocks and other times they're in town