

An Informal Guide to Throwing Events at the Landing Strip

May 2023: For the moment we aren't having any events requiring amplified sound (beyond like background bluetooth speaker music) or a generator at the space. We hope to bring these back soon. Obviously a lot of this event guide is about throwing such events, but hopefully it still has some helpful info, and we encourage everyone to get creative thinking about other fun types of events to hold.

June 2022

Hello and welcome! This is a guide to putting on events at The Landing Strip, an autonomous social space and garden in Seward Minneapolis started in the spring of 2021. The goal of this guide is to encourage you - yes you! - to use the space to put on whatever sorts of events you think this city is missing. This guide is organized very loosely; much of it is probably common sense. At the end there is a separate page which specifically expands on hosting movies, as that is my main area of experience.

A Note on the Space

As you may have noticed, the Landing Strip is run in a decentralized fashion, with various loosely overlapping crews coalescing around the different activities happening at the space, from the gardening to the regular Sunday fires (7 pm) to the reading groups, movies and shows. Hopefully this means no one person or group will hold all the power in deciding what happens there, but I know this can also make things confusing. So if you ever have any thoughts or questions, don't hesitate to speak up! Ask other people you see at the events or fires, ask friends who are around the space, and/or reach out to the Strip's Instagram (@thelandingstripmpls) or email (thelandingstrip@protonmail.com). The main way the space has grown and will continue to grow is simply by people spending time there, paying attention to what needs and desires arise, and addressing them. Chances are if you're feeling any kind of uncertainty or anxiety you're not alone in that, and others will be grateful if you bring it up.

About Me

Ok with that out of the way I just wanted to say that my name is Lyn (they/them) and I've been doing movie nights and some other random events at the space. I originally was gonna just do a guide to movie nights, but figured much of the info would be relevant for broader purposes so I'm making this more general, but it's by no means exhaustive. And I want to be clear again that nobody is really "in charge", so almost all of this is intended as informal suggestions that might be helpful. I'm just doing this guide because it seems like a need, in line with the ethos I talked about in the previous section.

Basic Infrastructure

As you probably know if you've been to the space, the Landing Strip is very barebones. There are a handful of garden beds, two fire pits, two charcoal grills, a portapotty, and some random tables and chairs. There is a huge container of water for the garden, but that water is not ideal for drinking. Anything else you need for an event you will have to bring yourself.

Accessibility

The space is a mostly flat garden lot, although there are a few uneven patches/dips. The portapotty is wheelchair accessible. Please don't hesitate to reach out either in person or via the Strip's IG or email if you have any thoughts/concerns/requests pertaining to accessibility.

Noise

Generally we want to keep on good terms with the neighbors, and some have complained about amplified noise from concerts and events in the past. It seems like the main problem has been when

speakers have been set up along the south fence of the strip, facing north towards the houses on the other side of the empty lot with no buffer. Please stick to setting speakers up more along the western side of the space (by the alley), facing east. Hopefully this setup will prevent future problems. We also try to generally observe the Minneapolis noise ordinance, though it is somewhat vague. Technically any amplified noise that can be heard “above conversation from beyond 50 feet” needs a noise permit regardless of the time, though this would seem to apply to many sound systems you’d hear on a regular summer day around the city. The limit for yard maintenance such as lawnmowers and noisy power tools is 10 PM; a generator obviously isn’t yard maintenance but the sound seems comparable? Generally we just encourage people to use their best judgment to preserve the longevity of the space.

Movies

Outdoor movies are super fun and you should totally host one at the Strip! Most of my movie advice is at the end of this doc, along with a checklist as I think the most stressful thing is just remembering all the different small pieces to bring. One specific question for movies at the Strip is start/end time. Obviously you need to wait for it to be dark enough (at least sunset or a few minutes after), but like I said we also generally try to have loud stuff end around 10 PM if possible. One solution I'm wanting to try this summer is having more music/movie combo events, with bands playing first and then a short program of local films happening after dark.

Concerts

Concerts are also awesome! I haven't hosted any but a lot of the same basic stuff applies at the Strip as at any other concert space, though of course you’ll need to bring all your sound equipment. And again, people are still kind of feeling out the noise question, but generally please be mindful of this, and if you expect the concert to be on the louder end aim to have it wrap up earlier.

Generator

We recently crowdfunded a generator to be used at the space! It puts out 5500 watts which is more than enough for most events we might want to have. If you have an event that will need the generator please reach out when you're scheduling your event and we can try to coordinate to either have someone there with the generator or to pass it off to you and give you instructions on how to use it. Be aware that it is fairly bulky and definitely requires two people to lift in and out of a car.

Food

Food is always nice! Hot dogs, while obviously unideal for many reasons, are often what I end up bringing because they're cheap, filling, and easy to make over a fire. S'mores are also nice and decadent. Otherwise we have the charcoal grills. Sometimes there is extra charcoal and lighter fluid left at the space, but don't count on it. There is often a thing of hand sanitizer stashed under the big water tank. If you are using the grills I find it helpful to have at least one person whose task it is to focus on the food. Trying to manage a grill while also floating around the space setting stuff up and hosting is overwhelming. Also remember that bringing water/other beverages is a good idea depending on the event; the water in the big jug is not great for drinking.

Fire

There's a big pile of wood at the west end of the space. Use it to have a fire if you want. Unfortunately the wood we have is pretty sappy/wet and takes a while to get going, so if you know you definitely want a fire it's a good idea to bring newspaper, firestarters, and/or lighter fluid (hand sanitizer also works in a pinch). Whoever is the last one to leave should be sure to put the fire out completely. Just fill up one of the watering cans from the big water jug. If you start a fire and then leave while people are still sitting around it please make sure to pass that info on.

Lighting

There are a few small string lights on the fence near the fire-pits. Otherwise the space doesn't have any lighting. This might be something we address soon, but for the summer it hasn't been a huge problem since it stays light so late. A headlamp is a good idea if you have lots of small items of gear to pack up.

Scheduling

Scheduling for the Strip is done via a google calendar, which can be accessed via our linktree (<https://linktr.ee/TheLandingStrip>). When you are planning your event just pick any open time/day and message the IG, email, and/or anyone you know who helps maintain the calendar. Some of the events we have can easily overlap with other stuff, so feel free to reach out and ask if you are unsure. One note about the IG/email; messages: both accounts are monitored by a few different people, so sometimes messages slip through the cracks. Don't hesitate to send a follow-up if it's been a few days.

Promotion

Tell your friends! We can post a flyer to the IG, but this isn't enough to ensure a well-attended event. Personally I've noticed that unless an event is hosted by a friend who has told me directly, I'm not likely to go to an event until I've heard about it 2 or 3 times in multiple different ways (i.e. word of mouth, text, a flyer in a cafe, social media). It's an inexact science, but typically I start promoting an event about two weeks out. This gets on people's radar before their whole week is planned out, but is not so early that your flyers/posts get buried and people forget about the event by the time it happens. For physical flyers it can be hard to tell how much it's worth the effort, but I think it's good to at least hit the hot spots and carry some around with you to put up in the places you frequent. Also seek out specific locations based on your event. For example, I've had luck putting up flyers for movies outside the Trylon, as obviously lots of movie nerds pass through there and are excited to hear about more movies (especially free movies, undercutting the Trylon lol). And I def recommend getting a staple gun! They're useful for many things, and in my experience flyers stapled to telephone poles often last longer than flyers taped to electrical boxes or other surfaces. The ReStore often has them for like \$2-3.

Money

There haven't really been many intentional conversations about this, so everything I say here is completely my own opinion. Generally my sense is that events at the Strip should be accessible to everyone and generally non-commercial. However we also totally want people to be able to support themselves and continue to play shows, host workshops, and all the other wonderful stuff that takes a lot of time and effort. So my feeling is that people should have a suggested donation/cover for their events if that feels necessary for the event to be sustainable. I just think it is important to make clear that cover fees really are suggested and nobody will be turned away if they have more pressing things to spend their money on. This is tricky though, as I don't feel like I've seen a good solution to the social problem of how to manage that, as obviously making people say they can't or don't want to pay can be anxiety-inducing for a variety of reasons. So I don't know, just something to think about.

Weather

Check the forecast! There's no right or wrong approach to when/how to postpone an event so you just have to feel things out. Feel free to request a rain-date when you originally schedule your event, though we may have to double-book. Be aware that fewer people will come to an event if it looks iffy, even if it has totally cleared up by the time the event comes around. I've done a few events where it rained for like 20 minutes in the morning and then cleared up completely but still very few people showed up :(e

Hosting

I think it's important to be intentional about talking with people who show up and generally making an open space for people to engage. This doesn't have to be a big deal, but just saying hi if you haven't met them before and letting them know to feel free to ask questions can go a long way towards encouraging people to come back and actually invest in the space. Like with the grilling, I think depending on the size and type of event it can be wise to have someone take this on as a specific role. I feel like I'm often trying to host at the same time as troubleshooting my projector setup and I don't end up doing it well.

A Checklist For Hosting Movies

Obviously this will vary based on your set-up.

Basic Gear

- Projector
- Projector Screen
- Generator
- Computer
- DVD/VHS player
- Speaker/PA
- Movie file/DVD/VHS

Cables and Connectors

- Computer charger
- Projector power cord
- PA power cord

-Video cable: HDMI? VGA? Adapters to connect to computer?

-Audio cable, plus adapters?

-Power strip!!!

-Extension cords (lots)

Misc

-Bug spray!!!

-Food

-Drinks

-Lighter/kindling for fire

-Extra chairs/picnic blankets

-Twine to secure screen from wind?

-Microphones for post-screening discussion?

-A box to set the projector on, or a chair works

-Headlamp

Other disorganized movie tips:

-Download your file ahead of time, at least the day before.

-Sometimes the wind will fuck with your screen. Put bricks or sandbags on the screen's feet or otherwise figure out a way to secure it, and if it's really bad tie the bottom corners of the screen to more bricks via twine to create makeshift guywires.

-Double check that your computer is plugged in, and turn off f.lux or any other nightshift apps

-What time to put on the flyer can be confusing. For concerts I feel like it's understood that the music usually starts an hour after the advertised time. But for movies sometimes people aren't on punk time and show up 15 min early like at a real theater and act grumpy when the movie doesn't start right on time. Generally I aim to start the movie like 15-30 min after the advertised time. Or I'll have the flyer say something like "8 PM: Food/Doors, 9 PM: Movie"

-Generally I aim to show up an hour and a half before the movie starts. This is often overkill, but it feels much better to set up when I'm not in a rush, plus then I have a cushion if something goes haywire and I have to troubleshoot or run back home or to Target for a cable or something. Plus, being fully set up before anyone shows up makes it easier to then prioritize just talking to people.

-I like to do the most complicated technological set-up first, as this has the highest potential to go wrong and thus I'll have more time to troubleshoot. So I'll get the generator, computer, projector, and PA running and make sure it's all behaving. Then I'll usually turn the generator off if I still have a lot of time to save gas, and then focus on arranging the chairs nicely, setting out food, talking to people, etc. Then 10 minutes or so before showtime I'll boot everything back up and make sure it's still good to go.

-Projectors can be finicky in lots of ways! One relevant thing is that especially in hot weather they want to have ample time to cool down. This means it's important to keep the projector plugged in and the generator running, turn the projector off in the normal way, and then wait until you hear the fan stop (sometimes it might be a minute or two, though all projectors are different) before you pull the

plug/turn off the generator. Not entirely sure how important this is but I think you risk blowing out the bulb if you let it get too hot.

-When people are leaving and you're breaking down after a movie, it is surprisingly helpful lighting-wise to just make your computer project pure white onto the screen, like a blank finder tab or word doc. But of course you'll still have to clean more stuff up after killing the generator so a headlamp is still a good idea.