



Procession Team Captain Welcome Packet

Dear Team Captain,

Welcome to the Welcoming WNC Procession! We are so glad that you are joining us. There is certainly a lot of excitement mounting in the community.

This packet provides basic planning information. We will be following up with additional instructions a week or two ahead of the event.

This packet was put together for groups large and small. Don't feel that you need to be as lavish as some of the instructions imply. You are welcome to just show up! But we encourage you to find ways to have fun while making an important statement. We want the world to WNC bursting with PRIDE and welcome.

We look forward to seeing you on the 28th. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me:

Warm Regards,
Perry

Perry Martino

Procession Director

Email: Procession@BlueRidgePride.org | Cell Phone: (631) 334-8036



PREPARING FOR THE PROCESSION

Organize

Register	Establish a team captain to organize the effort and to communicate with us. Individual participants are their own team captain. Captains should register online .
Form your team	We've provided a form you can use. But you don't need to register your team members with us. [Procession Invitation Flyer]
Create your theme	You are welcome to just show up. But many teams like to add a little pizzazz. Is there a theme you want to communicate? A cheer you want to share? Get creative!
Assemble your props	Create signs and banners. Bring out your tee shirts, caps, and buttons. <i>[Note: If you have things you want to hand out, be sure to read and follow our restrictions below.]</i>

Advertise

Post to social media	Get your team to like and share our Facebook Event . Mark that you will be attending.
Recruit others	Download this one-page announcement and share it with friends and colleagues. Share a link to our Procession Home Page and Registration Form . Contact friends at other organizations. Get them to sign up, too.

Prepare

Plan Your Team Photo	This year, we have added time so that larger teams can procession in front of the stage and quickly pose for a photo opportunity. We will need to keep the flow moving, so make your photo pose a simple one. .
Submit your team profile	Shortly before the festival, we will send a link to team captains that you can use to give us information for announcing your team.
Watch your numbers	We will be continually monitoring estimated headcounts. If your team size changes appreciably, please keep us informed. [Procession Inbox]
Stay in touch	If there are issues that affect the procession (e.g., severe weather), we will send an email and/or a text to our primary contacts. We will also post updates to our website.

Restrictions on Signs & Banners / Distribution of Materials

Public Streets / Sidewalks: While we are on public roads, procession walkers cannot hand things out or throw things to the crowd. If you want to distribute anything on streets and sidewalks, you need a non-walker to do so. Walkers must stay in formation. This is a safety issue.

Once the festival begins at 11:00 am, festival rules apply: No posters or signs are allowed and no distribution of materials within the festival boundaries is allowed, except by approved exhibitors and vendors within their booths. Once the procession is over, all sign and banners must be put away. We will offer a storage area by the main stage if you need it.

Consistency with Diversity & Inclusion: Any materials deemed antithetical to a spirit of welcome, diversity & inclusion will not be permitted in the procession.



Before the Procession: Organize Your Team in the Parking Lot at 23 Grove

- ❑ **Check in.** When you arrive at the parking lot, the team captain should report to the registration table. We will tell you the numbered parking space you should use to gather your team.
- ❑ **Get Your Team to Their Spots by 9:30.** We will be on a tight schedule. Please bring only those who are walking to the lot. Send others directly to the sidewalks and park.
- ❑ **Be Ready to March by 9:50.** We will use a bullhorn to issue updates and to launch the procession.

During the Procession: Safety First

There is important an important difference between a parade and procession. For a parade, all streets and sidewalks are blocked off. For a procession, they remain partially open. Police provide an escort, and block each intersection as we approach it. We own the east-bound half of the street. There may be west-bound traffic on part of the route.

- ❑ Because sidewalks are open, people cannot bring chairs or block intersections.
- ❑ Because cars can continue westbound, it is critical that we maintain a tight formation.
- ❑ Because we are being protected from the front and rear by a traffic detail, we need to keep together, especially at intersections.

After the Procession: Shift to Festival Rules

Once the festival begins, the procession ends. You need to gather all signs and put them away. You need to stop leafletting and distribution within the park (Exhibitors may distribute leaflets within their space.)

Why is this so important?

We cannot discriminate in our application of festival rules. If we allow some signs into the festival, we have to allow all signs in. If we allow some leafletting, we have to allow all leafletting. This is why hate groups must remain on the perimeter of the festival. They aren't allowed to bring their horrid signs into the festival because no one is allowed to bring signs into the festival. Please help us with this. Thank you!



THE PROCESSION, STEP-BY-STEP



- 1. Walkers should plan to meet at the parking lot across from 23 Grove Street between 9:00 and 9:30 am.** We will use the time between 9:30 and 10:00 to review safety, check banners and ensure that we are within the capacity limit of our permit. You cannot park in this parking lot, so be sure to arrive in time (See Parking Map at back of packet). We will have a port-a-john, water, and a trash can at the lot.
- 2. Start** We will start the procession promptly at 10:00 AM. This has been negotiated to create minimal disruption to public transportation.
- 3. Public Streets** While we are on public roads, please maintain a clear formation. If we wander into crowds, they will wander into our procession. If we throw things or hand them out, people may take it as a sign that they can do the same. Let's stay safe.
- 4. Park Entry** Once we enter the park, things are a bit looser. You can mingle a little and hand things out; you can toss beachballs and hand out beads, buttons, and information cards to people in the crowd [until the festival starts – see below].
- 5. Main Stage** This year, we are allowing more time to introduce and photograph organizations in front of the main stage. As the festival nears, we will be collecting information from team captains. How do you want to be introduced? Do you want to be photographed? You need to keep things moving, but think about a team pose that you can carry off very quickly. If you have a photographer or videographer, make sure they capture you as you parade in front of the stage.

After the stage ceremony is over, we require everyone to return any signs and banners to their cars or booths, or to store them by the stage. Once the festival begins at 11:00 am, festival rules apply: no posters or signs are allowed and no distribution of materials within the festival boundaries, except by approved exhibitors and vendors within their booths.



Is the Procession an LGBTQ-only Event?

No. It's bigger than that. While the festival celebrates our LGBTQ community, we have organized the procession to be inclusive of everyone. No doubt, it will have a pronounced LGBTQ accent. But everyone who supports a welcoming community is encouraged to represent themselves. We are stronger together.

What Can We Bring? What Can We Carry?

- ❑ **Banners, Signs & Props:** You are welcome to bring banners and signs. But bear in mind that you are limited to the width of the eastbound lane and that we will be walking in fairly close quarters. Please don't bring a banner that is so complicated to carry that it could endanger our flow.
- ❑ **Organization Logos:** These are encouraged. We want the world to know that we have a lot of groups, businesses, schools, organizations and communities that believe in diversity and inclusion. Wear and carry your organization identifiers with PRIDE!
- ❑ **Clothing & Costume:** There is no specific dress code. This is about diversity. But please keep it tasteful and family-friendly.

What Shouldn't We Bring? What Shouldn't We Do?

- ❑ **Handouts:** While on Patton Avenue, please don't carry things to distribute or throw. It's a safety issue.
- ❑ **Tone:** We encourage you to avoid negative protest signs. Such signs focus attention on "them". This day, we want to focus on "us" – on our community and what we aspire to. Focus on what stand for, rather than against.
- ❑ **Family- and Community-Friendly:** We leave this to your interpretation. By all means, be you. Express yourself. But try to do so in a way that doesn't distract attention from our message or intentionally provoke discomfort. This is about creating an inclusive environment in a very public space.
- ❑ **Vehicles / Pets:** We're sorry, but city ordinances don't allow either in the park for festivals.

What About People with Special Needs?

We want everyone to be able to take part in this procession. Unfortunately, our procession route does involve a series of intersections, stairs, and hills. Please contact us. We will find a way to include them. A great spot to join a group is near the stage-left area at the end of the procession.

What If Hate Groups Arrive?

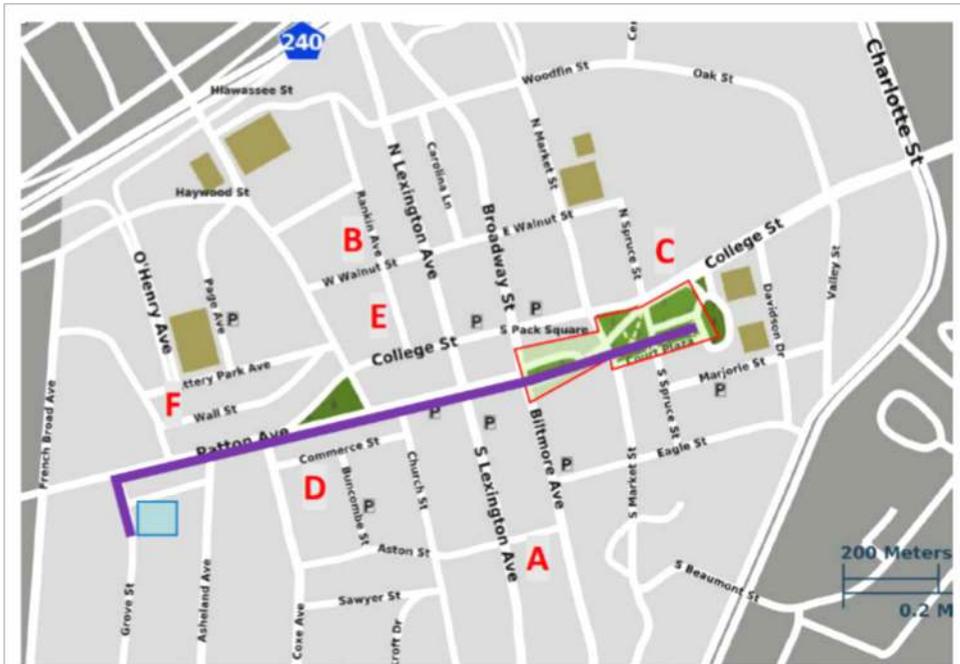
Sadly, some groups target joyful events like ours. Their overriding objective is to destroy the joy and to provoke violence and fear. As the following articles attest, remaining joyful and loving seems to be the most effective response to hate.

- Clowns Kicked KKK Asses <http://www.neatorama.com/2007/09/03/clowns-kicked-kkk-asses/>
- LGBTQ activists bring the dance floor to the streets <https://wagingnonviolence.org/2016/09/lgbt-brings-dance-floor-streets/>
- Why joy is the perfect resistance to a politics of fear <https://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/joy-resistance-politics-fear-fascism/>
- How to Roll Back Fanaticism - The New York Times <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/15/opinion/fanaticism-white-nationalists-charlottesville.html>



Parking for the Procession

You will not be able to park at the lot where we are gathering. Please arrive early enough to park and get to the lot between 9:00 and 9:30.



Map Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/69/Asheville_downtown_map.png

Public Garages (Spaces)

- A. Biltmore Avenue (247)
- B. Civic Center (340)
- C. College Street (276)
- D. Coxe Avenue (410)
- E. Rankin Avenue (138)
- F. Wall Street (122)

P. Private Garages

- Procession Start (23 Grove)
- Procession Route
- Festival Area

Procession Route

