



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

10 February 2021

SOULARD MARDI GRAS ORGANIZERS, CITY OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE PLANS FOR SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13

ST. LOUIS, Mo.—Soulard Mardi Gras organizers and St. Louis City officials confirmed again today that there will be no Mardi Gras Grand Parade, no sanctioned street parties, and no mass gatherings of any kind in Soulard on Saturday, February 13, 2021. Because of public health concerns that still exist due to the COVID-19 pandemic, parade day will be part of the 2021 #MardiGrasSafeAtHome campaign, which will be celebrated on Saturday with a virtual Bud Light Derby Day event. Derby Day will include a virtual pinewood derby-style racing series and the virtual Tito's Wiener Dog Derby, which benefits Gateway Pet Guardians. All Derby Day events will be streamed Saturday at 2 p.m. on Facebook Live @STLMardiGras and on the Soulard Mardi Gras [Derby Day event page](#).

Mardi Gras organizers have been working closely with the Soulard Business Association to encourage Soulard establishments to offer ticketed or reservation-only experiences on Saturday, February 13, in a limited number that complies with the city's 50% capacity restrictions. While Mardi Gras cannot mandate business operations within any individual business on February 13 (or any other day), this approach makes sense for Soulard businesses and the community. A list of participating establishments can be found on the [Derby Day](#) event page.

Mardi Gras organizers remain concerned about the possibility of "pop-up" street parties that could create a public health hazard, particularly on what is traditionally Mardi Gras' biggest day, the Saturday prior to Fat Tuesday. To that end, organizers have also been working closely with 7th Ward Alderman Jack Coatar, officials from the Department of Health, Building Division, and the St. Louis Metropolitan Police. The St. Louis City Emergency Management is also involved because of the dangerously cold temperatures predicted for Saturday.

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“We want everyone to be safe and remember that health department guidelines for bars, restaurants, and private gatherings remain in place,” Alderman Jack Coatar said. “Various city departments, Mardi Gras organizers and I are taking the potential threat to public health posed by spontaneous gatherings very seriously. Although the past year has been difficult for all of us, including our restaurants, I appreciate all the Soulard establishments who are being responsible and keeping their employees and customers safe by adhering to the city’s public health guidelines. Let’s do the right thing so we are all still around to enjoy a real Mardi Gras in 2022.”

Because there will be no parade or street festival on Saturday, there will be no street closures and no special parking programs for Soulard residents, both of which are features of a typical parade day. The efforts by city departments on Saturday in Soulard are noted below.

City of St. Louis Department of Health

Dr. Fredrick Echols, Acting Director of Health for the City of St. Louis, said that there will be health inspectors in Soulard on Saturday to monitor compliance with the city’s health guidelines and that Soulard establishments will close at 11 p.m. on Saturday (which is the normal closing time on Mardi Gras parade day).

“Our main goal is to have a healthy and safe 2021 celebration. We want to make sure we stay on our current path of decreased positivity rates for COVID-19 cases and prevent a spike in hospital admissions,” Dr. Echols said. “Wear a face covering, remember that bars and restaurants are limited to 50% occupancy and maintain social distancing.”

The city’s current COVID-19 restrictions are included as an attachment to this release. They can also be viewed on the Health Department’s [COVID-19 Coronavirus Information website](#).

St. Louis Building Division

As is the case on a “normal” Mardi Gras parade day, the St. Louis Building Division will have a presence in Soulard on Saturday to enforce all building code violations including but not limited to illegal occupancies, illegal tents, overcrowded decks or balconies, and unsafe conditions such as locked or blocked egress. Also, as usual, building inspectors will assist first responders and any other organization that requires assistance in building code violations.

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St. Louis Metropolitan Police

St. Louis Police Chief John W. Hayden noted that the Department will have additional officers assigned to Soulard on Saturday.

“While Mardi Gras will look different this year, our Department will still have officers designated to patrol the area, to support the other City Agencies, and to ensure that anyone who does decide to come and celebrate inside Soulard establishments, within the existing capacity restrictions, can do so safely,” Hayden said.

City of St. Louis Emergency Management

The weather forecast for Saturday, February 13 calls for dangerously cold temperatures. City Emergency Management reminds everyone to limit time spent outside during these extreme temperatures and sign up to receive voice, text and email emergency alerts, and notifications from the City of St. Louis including any weather advisories, watches, or warnings that may be issued. Registration can be completed at stlouis-mo.gov/NotifySTL.

Beware disinformation

Finally, Mardi Gras organizers remind the community to be careful about online disinformation. Some of this has already arisen on Facebook with a false event claiming that there will be a mass-gathering Grand Parade as in normal years. Mardi Gras has reported this false event information and the user who posted it to Facebook, which quickly removed the event.

Organizers will continue to keep an eye on this sort of thing, but it takes a team effort. Again, visit the Soulard Mardi Gras website STLMardiGras.org and social media channels—Facebook @STLMardiGras, Twitter @STLMardiGras, and Instagram @STLMardiGras for reliable, accurate information on Soulard Mardi Gras 2021 including the virtual Bud Light Derby Day at 2 p.m. on Saturday, February 13 and the virtual Purina Pet Parade at noon on Fat Tuesday, February 16.

Here’s to a safe 2021, and let’s look forward to a much-needed party in 2022. *Laissez les bon temps rouler (en 2022)!*

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