



# The Greater Good

16th Annual

**Silver Room Sound System Block Party<sup>®</sup>**

**ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT**







@stoptime.live

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# INTRODUCTION

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The Greater Good. The 16th Annual Silver Room Sound System Block Party was held in Downtown Hyde Park on July 20, 2019. The Silver Room and its sponsors, in association with the University of Chicago Commercial Real Estate Operations (CREO), Downtown Hyde Park and the South East Chicago Commission (SECC), presented a unique, impactful opportunity for corporate and private organizations to contribute to The Greater Good.

The Greater Good was a perfect thematic posture for The Silver Room as a business, community leader and event producer. The theme also framed the goal of the planning team which was “to ensure that Chicago’s youth are engaged and inspired, witnessing what’s possible when businesses, artists, civic organizations, and municipalities collaborate to build equity and inclusion through the prism of cultural diversity.”

The Silver Room Sound System Block Party<sup>®</sup> is a free, family-friendly community event that celebrates cultural diversity and empowerment through music and art. The Block Party is known well beyond greater Chicagoland. It now hosts friends and families traveling from cities throughout the US and internationally.

This year’s Block Party gathered nearly 46,000 attendees, which represents 7,500 additional attendees (19%) over the estimated 38,500 attendance from 2018.

To accommodate the growing interest in the Block Party, organizers maximized the footprint and collaborated to offer more activations and vendor space. In addition to Harper Court and Harper Court Ave, this year’s event blocked off 53rd Street from Old Lake Park Ave to Dorchester Ave and utilized Hyde Park Bank’s surface parking lot to activate roller skating, basketball, kids games and a food truck.

Downtown Hyde Park (SSA #61) has been a sponsor for four consecutive years. The Block Party receives funds, promotional marketing, data collection, reporting and advisory from the SSA. Ultimately, the SSA would like to ensure that businesses in the district can benefit from a new and growing customer base while all attendees and residents have a safe and positive experience.

The SSA occasionally sponsors public events that demonstrate a measurable benefit to the business district and the surrounding community. The economic impact, community outreach, social engagement and brand recognition from the Block Party are independently and collectively growing each year!

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The following report analysis and insights were produced by CEI Media Group to evaluate the benefits, qualify the significance and quantify the economic impact of the Block Party from the perspective of Special Service Area #61. South East Chicago Commission is the service provider for SSA #61. This is the fourth consecutive year for review.



# THE BLOCK PARTY

Founded in 2002, the Silver Room Sound System Block Party<sup>®</sup> celebrates its 16th year with the spirit of community and togetherness, culminating in this year's theme, "The Greater Good." The Block Party presents a cultural experience that uplifts our community through avenues of partnership, creative collaboration & social engagement. "The Greater Good" honors a sense of sacrifice for the sake of unity and collective ownership. Silver Room Sound System Block Party<sup>®</sup> is an acknowledgement and celebration of the rich & diverse culture of Chicago and a testament to the great work that can be done when people come together for the sake of building.

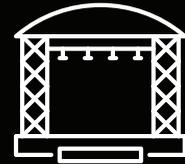
On July 20, 2019, the 16th Annual Silver Room Sound System Block Party included 3 stages, more than 90 vendors, and over 150 artists/performers. Outdoor stages and principal performances were scheduled from 12 noon to 10:00 pm, with the official late night after party (21 years and older) from 10:00 pm to 3:00 am at The Promontory.

# NEARLY 46,000 ATTENDEES

This year included the 3rd Annual Silver Room Block Party Film Festival. Cinema 53, directed by Jacqueline Stewart, UChicago professor of Cinema and Media Studies, and Harper Theater presented 25 indie films as part of the Silver Room Sound System Block Party. This unique showcase introduced an incredible array of film and video works, local makers, and media programmers for a full day (12:00 pm to 10:00 pm) of viewing and conversation.



46,000  
Total Attendees



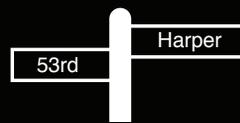
3 Stages



90+ Vendors



150+ Artists/Performers



6 City Blocks



90% Chicago-Based  
Artists



8+ Satellite  
Locations



25+ Indie Films



25 Play &  
Learn Activities



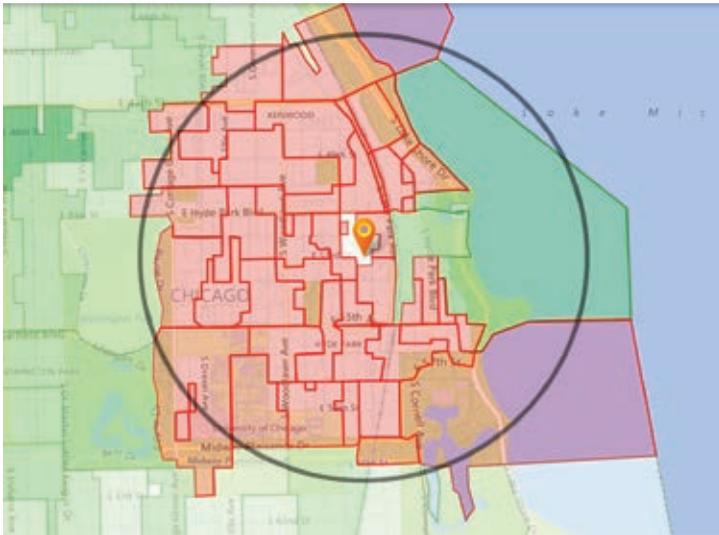
250+ Volunteers



10,000 Sq Ft Skating Rink  
1,000+ Roller Skaters

# THE BUSINESS DISTRICT

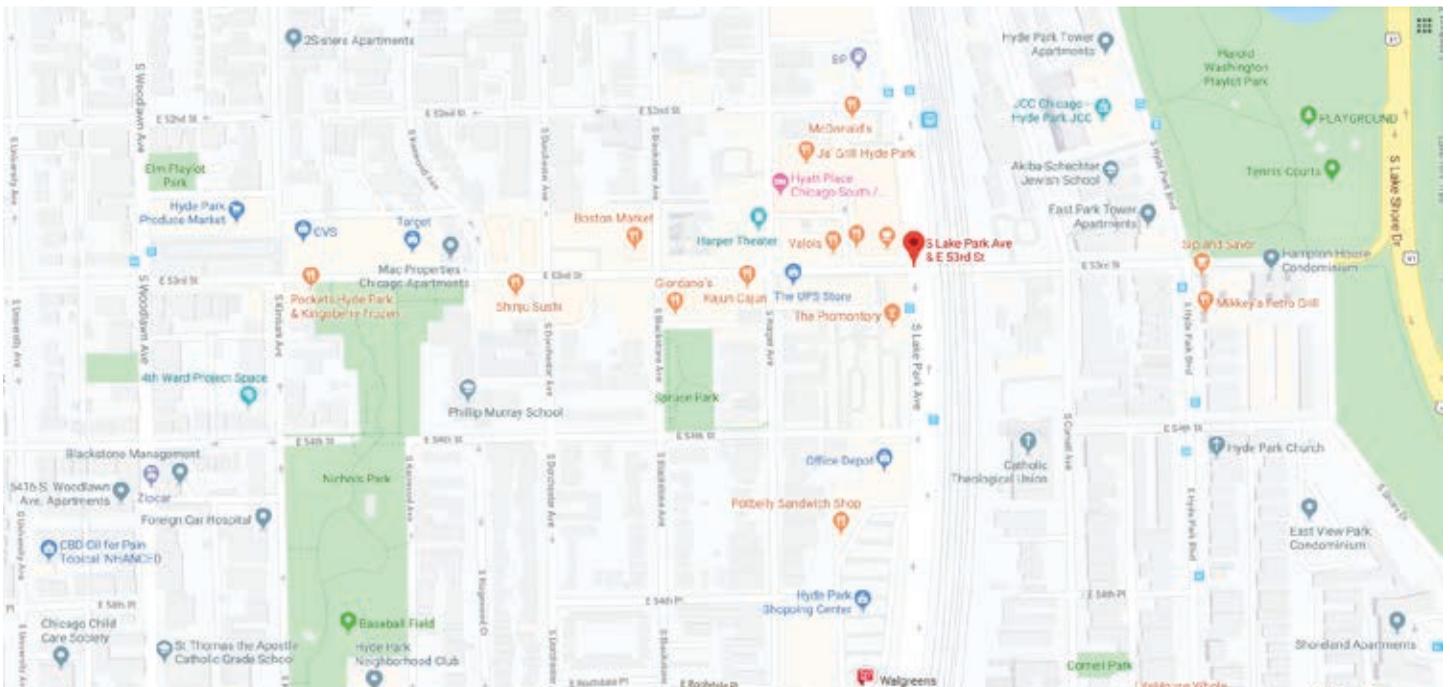
Special Service Area #61 is comprised of the 53rd and 55th Street corridors connected by Lake Park Avenue. While the Block Party is hosted in Downtown Hyde Park (SSA #61), the direct impact to the neighborhood is considerably larger than the business district.



There are more than **20,000** residential households and **700 local businesses** within 1.5 miles of the Block Party's epicenter.

The Block Party footprint covered more than six “city blocks” of square footage. The area included: 3 blocks on 53rd Street (Old Lake Park Ave to Dorchester Ave); 1 block on Harper Ave (52nd to 53rd Street); 1 square Surface Parking lot; 1 block interior of Harper Court (east and south); and the Hyde Park Bank Parking Lot

The SSA business district and adjacent areas continue to evolve with new residential and commercial development that continues to change the landscape. Block Party producers and partners make significant accommodations for residents and local businesses with a sharper focus on logistics management each year.



# THE DESTINATION

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Downtown Hyde Park has grown into a recognizable destination through successful branding, on-going public relations and event collaborations. Downtown Hyde Park's association with the Block Party includes its role as a physical destination and as a virtual destination for online engagement. In both instances, public experience and perception is important.

**PARKING.** Vehicle parking is a significant and still growing challenge. There are usually less than 400 public parking spaces available in garages and surface lots located within 1/2 mile of the Block Party. This year's attendees took advantage of more than 100 spots in the Hyde Park Shopping Center surface lot which was vacant due to the closure of Treasure Island grocery store. Due to the scarcity of parking, available space has created an economic opportunity for property owners, including local gas stations, commercial buildings, and homeowners.



**TRANSPORTATION.** The growth of the crowds has drawn more attention to the mode of transportation as attendees arrive (ingress) and exit (egress). Reducing or minimizing vehicular traffic remains a very high priority. Block Party producers have adapted each year to the challenges by:

- Encouraging local residents and hotel guests to walk to the location.
- Promoting Metra packages and CTA bus lines.
- Organizing ride-sharing drop-off and pick up locations on the perimeter of the Block Party.
- Offering racks for personal bicycle parking and contacting Divvy regarding bike sharing.
- Introducing shuttle transportation. 2019 offered rides to/from the Silver Room Wicker Park pop up store.
- Hiring additional Traffic Control Aides.



**EMERGENCY TRAFFIC.** While the Block Party has not been faced with major emergencies, the producers comply with legal requirements to actively plan and manage fire lanes, mobile EMS stations and security for immediate and organized responsiveness.

Organizing the experience at this destination is essential to ensuring that Downtown Hyde Park can accommodate the large crowd. Collaboration and communications are both essential to ensure residents, neighbors, and visitors have a positive, memorable experience.

## Block Party Satellite Locations

- The Silver Room
- Harper Theater
- Hyde Park Records
- Hyde Park Bank
- Connect Gallery
- JoJayden
- The Promontory



# COUNTING THE CROWD

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To ultimately discern the economic impact, the SSA must quantify the size of the audience. A wide spectrum of data was analyzed to ensure the crowd size estimation was rooted in objectivity.

## **Influences and considerations:**

- Audience characteristics (individual adults, adult small groups, adults with kids)
- Arrivals and departures (including mode of transportation) over time.
- Access points and volume of entries and exits at those points over time.
- Volume of people in specific areas over time.
- Available occupancy for streets and outdoor spaces in the footprint.
- Available occupancy inside nearby locations.
- Parking availability and distance from the destination.
- Headcount inside official and non-official satellite locations over time.

Transportation data (Metra, CTA, Divvy, Uber/Lyft/Taxi) was not available for inclusion.

Crowd monitoring included evaluating square footage and street/spatial occupancy. Outdoor crowd growth was monitored using overhead drone footage captured at four different points of time. Geotag data from digital still photos and manual counting provided data to track indoor attendance. Saturation of the area and spillover into parts of the business district outside the footprint was also included for evaluation.

# THE CROWD FACTORS

## WEATHER AND TIME

This year's weather played a pivotal role in attendance levels and time of attendance. The Summer air temperature grew to 96 degrees during the first five hours of the Block Party. A very brief rain helped to drop the air temperature after 5:00 pm. The temperature fell to 90 degrees by sunset at 8:21 pm. It remained just above 80 degrees at 11:00 pm, creating a very warm evening.

While there may be a perception of significantly more attendees than last year's Block Party, the noticeable difference was in the time and the "staying power" of the crowd.



The attendance analysis tracked arrivals and exits over the course of 12 hours, including 2 hours after the expected 10:00 pm ending.

The footprint of the Block Party was essentially the same between 2018 and 2019. However, there was increased utilization of Old Lake Park Ave for vendors and Hyde Park Bank's parking lot for activations. This created more space for the larger crowd.

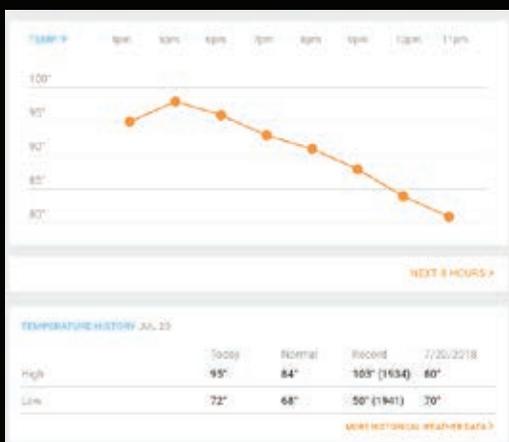
With the exception of families with small kids who began leaving after the kids activations ended at 6:00 pm, 2019 saw very few departures before the event ended.

The hot weather seemed to delay arrivals, and also kept more attendees inside of nearby homes, restaurants, businesses and areas of shade.

As the temperature cooled off, the attendance picked up rapidly. Attendees continued to arrive late in the evening as the Block Party was officially ending.

The exit rate was significantly less than expected after the stage music ended.

Collectively these factors created a swell in the audience after sunset and created a new challenge of ushering away a happy crowd that had no plans on dispersing immediately.



# VIRTUAL DESTINATION

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As an online destination social media-savvy businesses in the district can reach a large population of prospective customers visiting Downtown Hyde Park Chicago.

Social networks are vital to public relations and public experience before, during and after the event. The Block Party audience engages in a variety of channels, networks, and online properties. This year's wide spectrum of engagement created impressions nearly 200 times the actual attendance.

## Social Networks:

Facebook | Instagram  
Twitter | Snapchat

## Hashtags:

#TSRBlockParty | #srbp2019  
#SilverRoomBlockParty  
#SilverRoomBlockParty2019

## Social Media Location Tags:

@ The Silver Room  
@ The Silver Room Block Party  
@ Downtown Hyde Park Chicago  
@ Hyde Park, Chicago  
@ 53rd Street

## Facebook Event:

16th Annual Sound System Block Party

## Websites:

[www.thesilverroomblockparty.com](http://www.thesilverroomblockparty.com)  
[secure.squarespace.com](http://secure.squarespace.com)  
<https://www.gofundme.com/f/2019TSRBP>



## THE SILVER ROOM

**16,000 FACEBOOK FRIENDS** | **14,000 INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS**

# ONLINE OUTREACH

Block Party content and conversations are evidence of powerful outreach on social networks: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Facebook and Instagram seem to be the primary focus.

Although Twitter was secondary, this platform is a treasure of opinions and testimonials. A review of the reach and exposure data from Facebook and Twitter, specifically, created surprising insights.

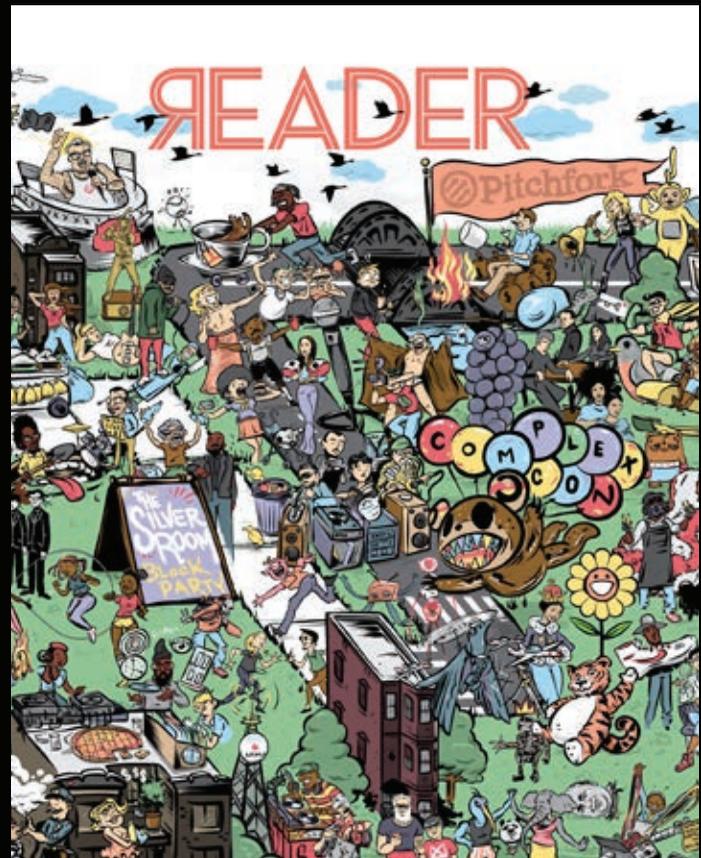
In 2016 and 2017 an evaluation of the top 100 tweets (Twitter posts) within 24 hours of the event date, showed strong reach and exposure. \*In 2018, 357 tweets were evaluated, to show the magnitude of one single (yet primary) hashtag. For analysis #silverroomblockparty was the only hashtag tracked solely to compare against previous years.

#SilverRoomBlockParty		
YEAR	EST. REACH	EST. EXPOSURE
2016	71,148	91,402
2017	155,960	295,969
2018*	994,266	1,611,158

The widespread use of various hashtags (official and unofficial) in addition to posts without hashtags required a different point of analysis for 2019. This year we reviewed Twitter posts that simply discussed “Silver Room Block Party” between July 14 – July 23. Results showed 957 tweets and 8.9 million impressions with 70% of those impressions originating from the Chicago Reader.

**8.9 MILLION IMPRESSIONS** silver room block party via Twitter July 2019

Conversations and engagement were dispersed over several hashtags, multiple social destinations, and multiple social networks. Facebook data for the 16th Annual Silver RoomBlock Party event promotion was also very impressive.



The Chicago Reader’s 22 tweets generated 42 retweets from followers which created 6.2 million impressions for the Block Party.

# COMMERCE

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## RETAILERS AND VENDORS

The Block Party creates an enormous opportunity for restaurants, retailers, and service providers in the business district. For nearly all of these businesses (with the exception of The Silver Room), the cost of customer acquisition and the risk compared to the benefit is next to nothing.

**“WE SAW A 600% INCREASE IN SALES.”**

**-THE SILVER ROOM**

Interested businesses capable of marketing to the Block Party audience can benefit on the day of the event and for future sales cycles with execution of great customer service, bounce back marketing and successful customer retention strategies.

Each participating business has their own individual approach, goals, and sales results. While the financial details were unavailable for reporting or analysis, the activity, shopping and consumer interest was apparent and documented in photos.

**“Some stores experienced up to 500% of normal same day sales.”**

**- ERIC WILLIAMS, THE SILVER ROOM**

Without receiving financial contributions directly from the businesses throughout the district, the Block Party depends on vendor fees to offset costs and expand the offerings available to attendees. Some of the Block Party vendors may not be retailers in the district, but they are a part of the local Chicago small business community, extending the financial impact throughout the city.

The Hyde Park Shopping Center’s Sidewalk Sale was July 18-20, overlapping with the Block Party on Saturday. This promotional opportunity continues to become a worthy investment to draw shoppers to nearby stores adjacent to the Block Party.

# ECONOMIC IMPACT

## PRODUCTION INVESTMENT

The Silver Room Foundation, Inc. is the host of this year’s Silver Room Sound System Block Party<sup>©</sup>.

To execute the Block Party experience contributions are needed from all stakeholders, including donations from the community. While the total amount of donations has not been published, online GoFundMe donations included 108 donations averaging \$33.13. Additional contributions were made directly via silverroomblockparty.com/donate and on-location (at entrances and inside of The Silver Room). Donations are used to cover costs including:

- Sound System
- Generators and permits
- Lighting and visuals
- Artists fees
- Stage and backline rentals
- Sanitation and Disposal
- Festival and Permit & application fees
- Security
- Muralist needs & fees to name a few

**PRODUCTION BUDGET**  
UP TO  
**\$200,000**



ESTIMATED  
**\$2.3 MILLION**  
ECONOMIC IMPACT

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

An economic impact analysis (EIA) examines the effect of an event on the economy in a specified area, ranging from a single neighborhood to the entire globe. It usually measures changes in business revenue, business profits, personal wages, and/or jobs. In an official letter entitled “Economic Impact Analysis for the 15th Annual Silver Room Block Party presented by Downtown Hyde Park Chicago,” SSA #61 reported an economic multiplier of \$52.00 last year.

Using the same \$52.00 multiplier as a comparative, the 2019 Block Party produced an estimated economic impact of \$2.3 million with nearly 46,000 attendees.

### Examples of Common Expenditures:

Entrance Donations	\$5	Vendor (Art, Gifts, Music, etc)	\$40
Vendor (Food/Beverage)	\$20	Parking or Transportation	\$20
Restaurant (Food/Beverage)	\$30	After Party Entrance	\$20
Retail Shopping	\$25	After Hours (Food/Beverage)	\$20
Grocery / Supplies	\$30	Hotel Room	\$200

In addition to common expenditures by the event attendees and vendors, economic impact also includes the total costs of producing the event, plus taxes, permits, fees, and temporary/contract jobs. Vendor spaces were sold out, suggesting the need for more space or high vendor fees. Hotel rooms within the central radius were sold out. This report acknowledges but does not include the additional impact of promotional events leading up to or held after the single day of the Block Party.

## NOTATIONS

Illinois’ 19-cent-per-gallon motor fuel tax doubled to 38 cents beginning July 1, 2019. Over the last 12 months, the Chicago area all items CPI-U increased 1.0 percent. The food index and the all items less food and energy index rose 2.0 percent and 1.0 percent, respectively, over the year.

# COMMUNITY IMPACT



The Block Party has a powerful community impact directly and indirectly. The event increases the economic, social and cultural capital of its producers, performers, and audience. Its structure of collaboration fosters a sense of collective identity and teamwork. Its social equity motivates crowd funding contributions and promotes volunteerism. At the same time, this special event encourages self-expression and enjoyment.

Children are being exposed to art, which can improve school performance, define their interests, and improve their individual pride and confidence. Families have a safe environment to enjoy summer outside. Artists are exposed to large, diverse audiences. Businesses benefit from increased income and new customers that will help sustain or grow employment in the area.

# NEWS & MEDIA

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The Block Party has generated an enormous amount of positive discussion about Hyde Park Chicago. Thousands of photos and countless hours of video were shared by amateur and professional photographers. The storytelling of the event is a powerful social connection for the audience, the artists, businesses, and the City of Chicago.

Broadcast news media did not cover this event as much in previous years. That actually benefited the producers by avoiding too much exposure that could cause uncontrollable growth or attract disruptive crowds.



This year broadcast news coverage spread the word quickly to viewers and listeners when Eric Williams appeared on WCIU The Jam and WGN Radio. Radio stations like WGCI 107.5 FM and Ed Lover's morning show on 104.3 FM also announced the event.

Local news publications including, but not limited to, the Chicago Reader, Chicago Defender, Rolling Out, and Hyde Park Herald all distributed news coverage about the event that was frequently shared in social media.

Striking the right balance with media and promotion is worthy of close monitoring. Based on the current attendance and the capacity of the footprint, the media outreach strategy should be evaluated and implemented strategically to ensure the target audience is reached without overexposure.

Block Party producers, artists and attendees are the true curators of media content. The uniquely personal testimonials authenticate the Block Party's impact as a phenomenal cultural experience.

# CONTRIBUTIONS

Collectively, the Silver Room Block Party is a team effort that culminates in benefits that extend well beyond the SSA business district, Hyde Park and the City of Chicago. While this report is not intended to document every direct and indirect contribution, the contributions of producers, sponsors, partners, and creators are nonetheless remarkable and worthy of acknowledgement.

## THE SILVER ROOM FOUNDATION INC. AWARDED 2019 SCHOLARSHIPS:



## SILVER ROOM PUBLISHED “OUR GRATITUDE” CONTRIBUTIONS BY:



### NOTABLE DATA POINTS:

- Attendees (2019): 46,000
- Age Range (60%): 18- 44
- Hyde Park Median Income (2015): \$49,058
- Event Economic Impact (2016): \$2.3 Million
- Social Media Reach: 10 Million +
- Population in Hyde Park: 94,000 (including students)
- Residential Households in Hyde Park: 41,000 +

**PHOTO CONTRIBUTIONS.** There are thousands of photos and countless hours of video online from the Block Party community. The creative images within this report are the work of truly excellent photographers. While not every photo could be traced to the specific photographer, ownership and credit belong to creator. Photos included in this report were sourced from public distribution, provided by the Silver Room or produced by CEI Media Group. Special thanks and salute to the great artistry of: Christopher Dylan Andrew, Akeem Pottinger, George Mulcahy, Sonya Lee, Stephanie Jensen, Fred Brown, and Marc Monaghan.

More information or details on the artists, entertainment or contributors, please visit: [thesilverroomblockparty.com](http://thesilverroomblockparty.com)

# AUTHOR'S NOTES

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This report was written and published by CEI Media Group for the benefit of Special Service Area #61. This report serves to independently evaluate and document the significance and impact of the Block Party from the perspective of Downtown Hyde Park Chicago (SSA #61). The author has no stake in the outcomes and has no investment in The Silver Room. Any subjective comments are the professional opinion of the author and may or may not be shared by the producers or sponsors.

## **CALCULATING ECONOMIC IMPACT**

Economic impact measurement has become a powerful and persuasive tool for those looking to capture and evidence the financial benefits that can result from the hosting of a major event. Measuring economic impact not only allows public sector bodies to evaluate their economic return on investment, but it also demonstrates how events drive economic benefits – allowing event organizers to develop practices which maximize these benefits.

The ‘economic impact’ of a major event refers to the total amount of additional expenditure generated within a defined area, as a direct consequence of staging the event. For most events, spending by visitors in the local area (and in particular on accommodation) is the biggest factor in generating economic impact; however, event producers and vendors spending is another essential component.

## **CROWD SIZE AND IMPACT**

Calculating the audience size is a difficult and complex task. The classic method for estimating crowd sizes is called the Jacobs’ method. Herbert Jacobs was a journalism professor at the University of California, Berkeley in the 1960s. The Jacobs’ method is simple but is unable to account for complexities of varying crowd density in an area, crowds that move, growth/attrition over time, etc.

With professional cameras, custom formulas, and personal counts, the crowd size review is a detailed examination of people in motion over time in a large footprint of square footage inside and outside of buildings.

Exaggerating crowd sizes can be common practice for the purposes of public relations. However, the author has not exaggerated the size because that practice compromises the reliability of data and distorts critical factors in decision-making. Exaggerating crowd sizes would also overstate the economic impact and the resources required to produce the event.

## **GROWTH AND CAPACITY**

While there were great success stories of sales increases, new customer acquisitions, and businesses reaching capacity, there are still understandable concerns within the district. The growth of this event has been effectively managed to ensure that crowd saturation does not compromise the safety or the enjoyment of participants, artists and producers. New commercial and residential development, limitations for street closures as well as Summer construction plans will present a significant challenge to accommodate this growing event.

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### **About the Author**

CEI Media Group, a Chicago-based, digital intelligence firm, provides creative marketing, communications, and data management services. CEI Media Group is a minority-owned, Illinois corporation founded in 2002. Contact: Jared L. Kelly. [www.ceimediagroup.com](http://www.ceimediagroup.com)



**The Greater Good**



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[www.DowntownHydeParkChicago.com](http://www.DowntownHydeParkChicago.com)