

# Michigan Municipal League Tour de Troit



michigan municipal league  
Better Communities. Better Michigan.



## PROJECT DETAILS:

### NAME:

Tour de Troit

### LOCATION:

Detroit, Michigan

### DATE:

2002-Present

### CATEGORIES:

Transportation  
Infrastructure

### THE GIST:

Utilizing Michigan's largest one-day cycling event, organizers have raised the profile of non-motorized transportation as well as helped fund green infrastructure upgrades.



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# Tour de Troit

## PROJECT SCOPE:

### Inspiration:

How do you utilize an annual event to promote the use of non-motorized transportation as well as build infrastructure to promote safer streets?

### Overview:

The Tour de Troit has grown from a small group of people exploring Detroit by bike to Michigan's largest bike ride and an important tool to promote safer streets for non-motorized users. The event raises awareness of cycling as a mode of transportation; publicizes the growing greenways network in the city of Detroit and throughout southeastern Michigan; and raises funds for greenway development in Detroit, including the Southwest Detroit Greenlink and the GREEN Taskforce Vision for Greenways on Detroit's Lower Eastside.

Founded in 2002, Tour de Troit, only had 25 riders its inaugural year. The ride has grown steadily since its inception, and in 2013 hosted over 6,000 cyclists through the streets of Detroit. Beyond getting people to explore the city by bike, and promoting non-motorized transportation, the event has grown to be an important tool for funding the development of bike lanes across Detroit. Since 2005, the event has raised over \$160,000 for green infrastructure in the area.



Over the past decade the event has grown from a modest project of the now defunct, Greater Corktown Development Organization, into a stand-alone nonprofit. The non-profit now partners with a series of other nonprofits around Detroit to carry out cycling events, raising funds and awareness along the way for non-motorized transportation routes across the city.

The event draws both biking enthusiasts and casual riders looking to explore new parts of the city and being part of something positive in Detroit. To cater to both advanced and amateur cyclists, the event has rides of 30 miles and 62 miles.

#### **Accomplishments:**

- In just over ten years, the annual event has grown from 25 riders to over 6,000.
- Has raised over \$160,000 for bike lanes and greenlinks in Detroit since 2005.
- Gets thousands of people to explore the city and get exercise at the same time.
- Helped fund 17.2 miles of new bike lanes in the city of Detroit.
- Raising \$20,000 for a replicable wayfinding system for neighborhoods across Detroit.
- Created one of the most positive and highly anticipated events in the city.
- Funds raised are going to a replicable wayfinding system in the city.

#### **Budget:**

Roughly a \$200,000 annual budget of which police escorts account for 40%.

#### **Organization:**

The stand-alone nonprofit has nine board members. The board members were strategically selected to cover the groups such as bike advocacy, business community, events planning, and civic and nonprofit institutions.

#### **Participants:**

Cycling advocates, police, ambulance services, hundreds of volunteers.

#### **Actions Taken:**

##### **1) CONSULT CITY ABOUT PERMITTING:**

If your event is successful, you will have a significant and immediate impact on your city, closing down streets and potentially inconveniencing non-participants. It is important to be as above board as possible and consult city officials as to what permission is needed to carry out the event.

##### **2) REACH OUT TO CIVIC LEADERS:**

You are going to need outside advocates on your side to get through the planning, permitting, and execution of your event. Reach out to civic leaders early on in the process. It is important to have leaders in the community and city hall be familiar with your event and be comfortable with you as the organizer.





### **3) TARGET SPONSORS:**

Securing sponsorship is a major component of organizing any event. Tour de Troit and many like it look to raise enough in sponsorship funds, or have enough in-kind donations, that the major costs of the event are covered and registration fees go entirely or primarily towards the charitable cause. When thinking of sponsors, look to businesses that are civically minded with strong roots in your community, as well as health care providers and other medical-related businesses that can provide in-kind services.

### **4) DEVELOP RULES AND STICK TO THEM:**

People will come up with all kinds of scenarios that will make your life as an organizer a nightmare. To keep things simple, establish a set of rules regarding registration, participation, and anything else covering the event, to make your life easier.

### **5) LINE UP INSURANCE:**

When you have thousands of people take to the streets of a city via bicycles, a lot can happen. Be sure to have your organization, yourself, and the other organizers covered by securing adequate event insurance.

### **6) PUBLICIZE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF INFRASTRUCTURE:**

What makes the Tour de Troit special is the impact it has beyond the day of the event. Be sure when promoting the event and approaching sponsors and city officials to stress the long-term physical benefits of your cause.

### **7) ENSURE SAFETY:**

The best way to ensure the long-term health and growth of your event is to ensure the safety of the participants. Work with volunteers, police, and emergency care professionals to ensure the route is safe and medical help can be provided in the most efficient means possible.



**Lessons Learned:**

- Press for solid estimates from vendors: Your event can be swamped by vendors that only offer estimates and then run up prices closer to or after the event. Tour de Troit operators have had troubles with knowing what to budget for police escorts due to fluctuations over the years and loose estimates up front.
- Seriously consider the need to be a stand-alone nonprofit. Having to work with fiduciaries over a long period of time can be restricting.
- When fundraising, shoot for sponsorship to cover costs and fees to be the source of fundraising.

**Expert:**

Kelli Kavanaugh at [www.tour-de-troit.org/contact](http://www.tour-de-troit.org/contact)

**Documents:**

2013 Waiver

# The Center for 21st Century Communities

## Building 21st century communities

Experts from around the world—in academic, business, and public sectors alike—agree that investing in communities is a critical element to long-term economic development in the 21st century. Michigan’s future depends on its ability to attract and retain knowledge-based workers. Central to attracting this priceless commodity is *place*. Research proves that successful 21st century communities effectively leverage the assets summarized in this brochure. Learn more and stay engaged at [mml.org](http://mml.org).

## Who we are...

The Michigan Municipal League is the one clear voice for Michigan communities. We are a nonprofit, but we act with the fervor of entrepreneurs; our people are dynamic, energetic, and highly approachable, passionately and aggressively pushing change to achieve better communities and a better Michigan.

## What we know...

Never before have so many diverse interests, from academic researchers to the business community to government leaders, shared a single conclusion: Michigan’s future depends on its ability to attract knowledge-based workers. And what is central to attracting this priceless commodity? *Place*, specifically vibrant 21st century communities.

## What we offer...

Through its Center for 21st Century Communities (21c3), the League provides education, technical assistance, public outreach, and unprecedented access to experts and resources. The 21c3 is a “one-stop-shop” for communities interested in creating and sustaining livable, desirable, and unique places that attract the highly skilled, creative, and talented workforce of the next century.



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