

Slow Roll Cleveland



- **Sponsoring Organization:** Slow Roll Detroit & Detroit Bike City
- **Type:**
 - Health & fitness
 - Accessibility & socializing
 - Culture & history
- **Description:** A weekly social ride that is accessible for everyone. It follows traffic laws and respects other road users.
- **Year Started:** 2013

County: Cuyahoga
District 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10



Slow Roll Cleveland originally came to be as a result of a conversation on Facebook and a fascination with the City of Detroit. The conversation was basically proposing, well suggesting, starting and having Slow Roll happen in Cleveland as a result of how it had grown in Detroit. As I came to find out, Detroit was the origin of the Slow Roll ride concept. The two people in the above mentioned conversation never did anything beyond say, “wouldn’t it be nice if,” and that’s when I came in and said that if no one starts a group within a day that I would start it. Thus, Slow Roll Cleveland was started. I then got in contact with the leaders of Slow Roll Detroit/Detroit Bike City and eventually was able to meet with them and got to see the ride in action. That helped to create a more concrete idea of how I would begin the ride here in Cleveland. From there, I started to lead the ride, simply meeting once every few weeks and picking out a general route to ride. This year, I actually worked on organizing and delegating responsibility to make the ride truly grow in a meaningful way.

The best practice in my own estimation is to organize early, often, and with much detail. This prevents many of the problems that spontaneity of the “Hey, Let’s ride” idea. Another best practice is to follow the example of those who have blazed the trail first in order to avoid many of the problems of being first on the block (aka working out the kinks).

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Slow Roll Cleveland



Participants: Anywhere from 10 to 50 folks but still growing. We have riders of all types, ages, and ethnicities.

Staff & volunteers: Volunteers and two leaders

Location: East & West Sides of Cleveland and inner ring suburbs. We ride on the road mostly but have used paths and trails.

Program frequency: We ride Weekly on Monday evenings

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One of the beautiful parts of our ride is the diversity of our riders. We have young, old, retired, working full time, rich, poor, and a good range of ethnicities and race represented on our rides.

Our staff and volunteers situation is such that no one is paid to do the job of organizing and leading. All that help with the ride are volunteers however there are two overall leaders, per se, that deal with 95% of the behind the scenes work.

We ride all over the city of Cleveland and inner ring suburbs like Lakewood, Cleveland Heights, and Shaker Heights. We choose to ride mostly on the road to help drivers become more adjusted and comfortable with us being on the road.

The frequency of our rides are once a week on Monday evenings at 7PM. We are however considering adding extra rides including once or twice a month on Saturday for those who can't make it out on Mondays and those who want to ride more with us.

The cost of running the ride is as follows. There is a Meetup website that we use to promote the ride and that costs \$20 a month. The cost of a Facebook group page, Twitter page, and Instagram is nothing as none of these charge a fee. The equipment recommended includes a bullhorn

(megaphone), walkie talkies, and printed out route sheets. These vary in cost depending on how one goes about running the group and what quality of each above mentioned piece of equipment the group wants for the ride. I was able to attain 2 quality Motorola Talkabout Walkies and 3 basic Motorola walkies for around \$150 from Target. The megaphone I paid around \$30 on Amazon. The printed out route sheets cost nearly nothing, aside from the cost of the paper and ink.

On the optional side, T-Shirts and stickers help to promote the ride but can be a loss if you do not sell all the t-shirts and stickers. I cannot give you a quote on T-Shirts as we have not come up with shirts yet but stickers are quite cheap to have made. 200 stickers for \$20 would be a good example for stickers.

The amount of time those of us who have organized is probably dependent on the week and what there is to do. If one is searching for venues to host the ride, it can take some decent amount of time because you actually should go to the venue and talk with someone in charge at that particular place. I'd say I spent a total of 10 hours searching for venues and speaking to business owners. If you are looking about planning a specific route, this can take anywhere from 10 minutes all the way to a couple hours. This depends on if you want to go ride the route beforehand to make sure there are no surprises (like major potholes or major construction).

Slow Roll Cleveland



- **Unique!** First true weekly ride in Cleveland
- **Benefits, Goals and Results:** Getting more people comfortable riding bicycles in general and in the greater Cleveland through comfortable, no pressure rides. Growing the cycling culture to include everyday, casual, and otherwise hesitant riders. Starting healthy habits by cycling socially.
- **Transferability:** Very easy to transfer with motivated individuals and effort

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Like I stated, this is the first truly open to all, weekly social bicycle ride in Cleveland, a testament to where cycling is heading and where we are trailblazing. Where Critical Mass in Cleveland had provided the kindling we now take on the mantle of improving cycling through social rides.

We have been able to become inclusive and open to all, whether it be race, ethnicity, gender, age, socioeconomic status, or rider type. Long had there been rides for serious road bike riders, mountain bike riders, and BMX'ers. However there wasn't until very recently any attempts at rides for all.

The goals of getting more people to be comfortable and wanting to ride are bearing their fruit. I look at the riders in my group. Not all were enthusiasts who could devote a ton of time or energy to riding all the time. However, through patience and more riding, they became comfortable and confident on a bicycle and enjoyed themselves.

Another benefit I was unable to convey in this was the social/friendship benefit. Multiple people that would not have met otherwise came to know each other and became familiar as a result of joining this group. Most people in the group now know more people than they did before and are on friend basis with each other as a result.

One benefit that was mentioned in this was starting healthy habits. By creating an atmosphere that

encourages inclusion, kindness, and looking out for one another, one can get on the long path to healthy habits as a start by cycling. It takes a small stone to create a ripple that can then affect many.

One last great benefit is to the local business we support through our patronage each ride. We pick a different venue each time and ride starting from the venue and end back at the venue. We then go in and support the venue through our food and beverage purchases. This makes us a pathway for goodwill between the businesses we interact with and the cycling community.

As far as Transferability, it can be easy to advance and start this concept elsewhere (especially with the help of Slow Roll Detroit/Detroit Bike City like I had). However it takes a lot of time, dedication, and sacrifice to grow the idea and the ride itself.

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-Prosperity Social Club stated that they loved having us there to support a local business and that they are glad to support cycling.

-Nano Brew Cleveland actually sought us out to have a ride, sponsored by them, that supports their mission as a cycle friendly business.

-Porco Tiki Lounge also sought us out to be a host venue.

-Facebook Post on Slow Roll Cleveland wall from Kara Kaleta: "I just want to say, thank you everyone for a great time. It was my first Slow Roll and won't be my last. I had a blast! Everyone is so kind and most of all fun to be with. I was never a bike rider up until just now...haha. I am really enjoying it, and the people."

-Facebook Post on Slow Roll Cleveland wall from Greg Mack: Thank you so much for the work you put into planning/putting on these rides! I'm glad I found out about the Slow Roll! Can't wait for Monday!

- Twitter: 154 Followers, multiple Retweets by followers, and multiple Tweet Favorites
- Facebook: 418 Group Members, multiple event and post shares by members

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As far as Facebook, we have grown to the 418 members we have now since the Facebook group page's start in September 2013.

As far as Twitter, we grew to 154 followers since February of this year.

Prosperity Social Club, in addition to what was spoken of above, was supportive of hosting us again as a venue to start and end the ride at.

In addition to the Facebook comments mentioned, there were many people in support on Facebook and in person.

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