



Participant Guide | the overGRound 2025

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*About this guide: this document is intended to be the one place you need to go for information about this unofficial running event. It is ****subject to updates****, but the core information should remain the same. Any major changes will be communicated with all participants via email.*

What is the overGRound marathon/relay?

Description

The overGRound is a free, unsanctioned marathon and marathon relay through the city of Grand Rapids whose route showcases the variety of GR's features and neighborhoods.

This is an inclusive, supportive, and free running event celebrating community and a grassroots, no frills spirit of running and free fitness. It is a co-hosted event featuring the many wonderful running and fitness communities of Grand Rapids. Together, participating clubs can invite people out to run, cheer, and support runners on the course. The public is warmly welcomed to participate.

This year's participating clubs include (so far) Lyon Street Run Club, November Project GR, Friendship Miles, Society Track Club, Village Rec Club, and No Surrender Running Club.

This year the overGRound will be held October 26, 2025 at 8am, starting and ending at Veterans Memorial Park. The [subject to updates!] [carefully designed course](#) passes the many coffee shops that host Lyon Street Run Club, a variety of neighborhoods, cityscapes, and parks, and ends by passing November Project Grand Rapids' home of Lyon and Bostwick before returning to Veterans Memorial Park.

This is the second running of the overGRound; 2024 was the inaugural year and the first (known) marathon held fully within GR city limits.

Whether you run the marathon, organize a team to run the relay, or just show up to support the runners, let's make it once again a fun, unique, out-in-the-open Grand Rapids event that goes beyond the norm.

More details:

- All paces welcome to participate, with every participant from last to first getting a welcome back at Veterans Memorial Park
- This is mostly a self-supported event, but there will be a map, some signage and aid stations on course, and bikers who will check in with runners
- The marathon relay is open to any team configuration or leg distances; the coffee shops make good changepoints but do what works for you
- We encourage you to bring your own bibs and have fun with them
- You are reading the 2025 Participant Guide; please refer to it first for any questions
- The [Facebook event is HERE](#) for reference
- You are welcome to do any combination of the following: a) run the marathon, b) run as part of a relay marathon, or c) volunteer to help this event be a success, d) come out and cheer (just show up on the course, or at Veterans Memorial Park, on race morning).

Key Links/Reference

- [Event Site & Sign Up](#) (RunSignUp)
- [Facebook Event](#)
- [Strava Event](#)
- [Course Map](#)
- [Promo Kit](#)

What is the vibe?

This is a free grassroots “race” but it’s more like a fun community run experiment. Not polished, not professional, not apologetic about it. It’s a bit of a potluck event; bring your good energy and we’ll have a good time. [The kinds of support offered are listed below](#). But **we’re all self-sufficient and adaptable people, so expect to approach the event that way** - clubs and teams and runners will need to figure out transport, what to bring, how to adjust on the fly, and where they can contribute to making it a fun event for everyone. The course is dog- and stroller-friendly. **If it works for you, it works for us.** Everyone who is down to try this is welcome and there will be a finish line contingent until the last athlete is back. Inclusive, supportive, fun. Community.

Club Participation

Grand Rapids is home to a thriving running and free fitness ecosystem, with a variety of clubs that meet throughout the week. The overGRound marathon/relay, though it began as a Lyon Street Run Club-November Project GR venture, is intended as a ‘big tent’ community event shared by the various participating clubs.

What does club participation entail?

Each club can decide on its level of participation, but at minimum, participating clubs agree to:

1. Be listed as participating clubs and co-hosts on the Facebook event, and
2. Share the event with their members

Other ways clubs can participate include:

- Organize a relay team representing the club
- ‘Adopt’ an aid station and staff it with volunteers (clubs can also team up on a station!)
- Invite club members to spectate along the course and cheer on the runners
- Promote the event widely using their channels

To participate, a club’s leadership can opt in by simply emailing: theoverGRoundgr@gmail.com.

Which clubs are participating?

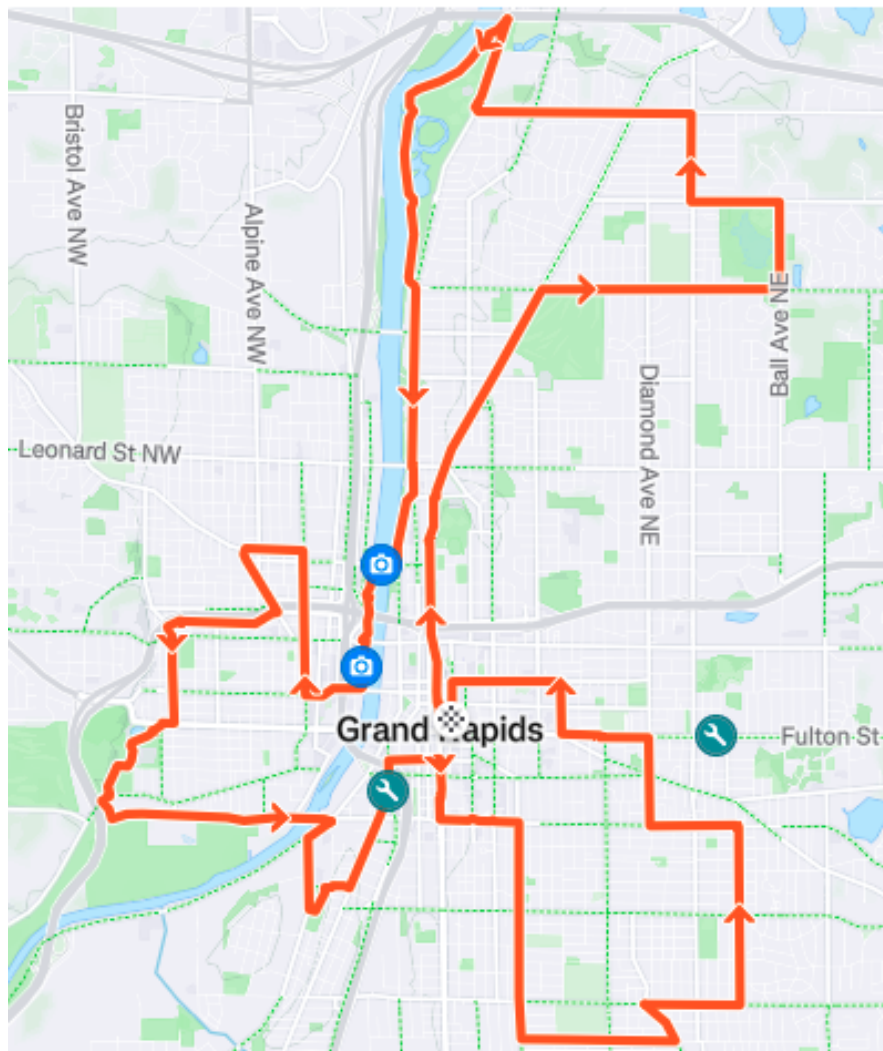
To date, the following clubs have opted in to participate (alphabetical order):

1. Friendship Miles
2. Lyon Street Run Club
3. No Surrender Running Club

4. November Project Grand Rapids
5. Society Track Club
6. Village Rec Club

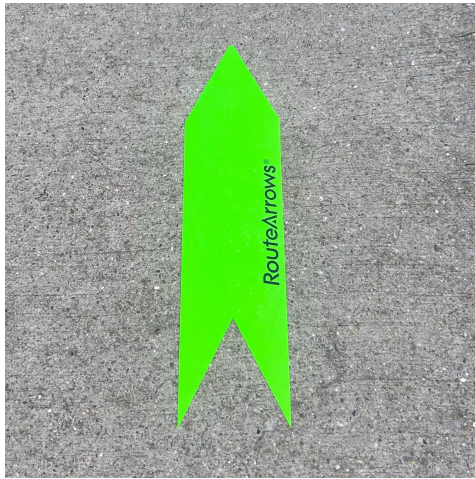
Course Info

The 2025 course can be viewed and downloaded [here](#) (from Strava):



Why this course? In designing it, the goal was neighborhood diversity and (originally) to visit the various coffeeshops that host Lyon Street Run Club and to cover the various neighborhoods of the city. Less important was a flat or fast course. (The elevation of the original course was, coincidentally, 616 feet. Not far off now!) Last year's course has been updated for a smoother start-finish, fewer turns, and to account for the closure of the Oxford Trail due to construction. Much of the original course remains, but we think you're going to like the improvements.

The course is dog- and stroller-friendly. It will be marked to the extent possible with arrows like this (look for these only on the ground):



The course will be marked, but [here are step-by-step written directions](#), with some printed copies available at the start line. Of course there is also the [Strava/gpx export version of the course](#) if you'd prefer digital.

PLEASE review your sections in advance and watch for on-course markings. We want you to have a good time racing, not navigating.

Cheer/Aid Stations

While cheering can take place anywhere on the course and is encouraged anywhere, supported Aid Stations (which include restrooms!) will be at the following locations:

- Station 1 (~mile 5): Huff Park (staffed by No Surrender Running Club)
- Station 2 (mile 9): Riverside Park (staffed by Cousin Brunch)
- Station 3 (~mile 15): Rise Authentic Bakery (staffed by Friendship Miles)
- Station 4 (mile 19): Lantern Coffee (staffed by November Project GR)
- Station 5 (mile 22): Last Mile Cafe (staffed by various volunteers)
- Station 6 (mile 24): Squibb on Wealthy (staffed by Society Track Club)

What do we mean by an 'aid station'? At least:

- A table with water (station lead to provide if possible), a first aid kit (aid station lead to bring if possible), and volunteers who will be ready to cheer for you
- Any extra nutrition the station volunteers wish to provide
- Located at or near a coffee shop which knows about the race, and supports it

- A toilet: either a public toilet or use of the coffee shop's restrooms (shared with regular patrons, of course)
- A volunteer who can text or call the next station *and* comms coordinator (Nate, 734-660-6008) with updates on who has passed through the station

Relay Teams & Proposed Paradigms

Some runners may choose to take on the challenge of running the full 26.2 miles themselves. But most participating athletes will choose to tackle the distance as part of a relay team.

This being an unofficial and grassroots race, there are not strong stipulations on how to complete the relay. At minimum, a relay team must: a) be at least two people, b) complete all 26.2 miles of the course without skipping any segments. Other than that, you may break up the distance however you like! Here are some ways you and your run pals might do that:

- Two runners do 13.1 miles each (exchange on the West Side at Roots Brew Shop at 12.8 (note that Roots is not an official aid station))
- Three runners do an average of between 8.7 miles each (exchange, for example, at the Riverside Park aid station around mile 9, and at Roberto Clemente Park around mile 17.4 (Roberto Clemente Park is not an official aid station))
- Four runners do an average of 6.5 miles each (exchange, for example, at the Riverside Park North parking lot (not an aid station), Roots Brew Shop at 12.8 (note that Roots is not an official aid station), and at the Lantern aid station at around 18.8.
- Five runners do an average of 5.2 miles (exchange, for example, at the Huff Park aid station at 4.6, Riverside Park aid station at 9.1, Rise aid station at 14.8, and the Lantern aid station at 18.8 or Last Mile aid station at 22.2.
- And so on

We think the four runner team or the five runner team will work well for many relay teams. Here are the suggested paradigms in more detail:

Four Runners (avg. of 6.5 miles each)

1. Runner 1: start at Veterans Memorial Park to the Riverside Park North parking lot aid station at mile 7.5 (total of 7.5 miles)
2. Runner 2: Riverside Park North parking lot at mile 7.5 to Roots Brew Shop at 12.8 (total of 5.3 miles)
3. Runner 3: Roots Brew Shop at 12.8 to Lantern aid station at mile 18.8 (total of 6 miles)
4. Runner 4: Lantern aid station at 18.8 to finish at Veterans Memorial Park (total of 7.4 miles)

Five Runners (avg. of 5.2 miles each)

1. Runner 1: start at Veterans Memorial Park to Huff Park aid station at 4.6 (total of 4.6 miles)
2. Runner 2: Huff Park aid station at mile 5.3 to Riverside Park aid station at 9.1 (total of 4.5 miles)
3. Runner 3: Riverside Park aid station at 9.1 to Rise aid station at 14.8 (total of 5.7 miles)
4. Runner 4: Rise aid station at 14.8 to Lantern aid station at 18.8 (total of 4 miles) or Last Mile aid station at 22.2 (total of 7.4 miles)
5. Runner 5: Lantern aid station at 18.8 or Last Mile aid station at 22.2 to finish at Veterans Memorial Park (total of 7.4 miles if Lantern, total of 4 miles if Last Mile)

But again, as noted: *divide the distance among your team however you wish!* Relay teammates can also overlap miles with one another, as long as the total distance is covered end to end.

One final note on relays: some people would rather run their leg with a friend rather than just on the same team in a “paired relay option.” **Feel free to run in pairs, or combine teams so you can run your leg with your preferred run buddy.** Really, however you want to get creative with it. Organizers will reach out to registrants who have not claimed a team yet to offer pairing, but for the most part, sorting out the configurations and logistics is up to you :)

Safety & Support Expectations

Waiver

All participants—marathon runners, relay team runners, volunteers—must sign a waiver (as part of [the RunSignUp registration](#)). This is the one place we are acting ‘official.’ Short version: race organizers are not liable for safety to this event—you run it at your own risk. This said, the goal is a safe and fun time. Keep reading.

What can I expect?

We want everyone to have a great time. This is an unsanctioned, at-your-own-risk event. We are a bunch of friends and community members meeting up to do a novel running challenge in a neat city, whether or not it’s your running home. It is an inclusive, supportive, and free event. Supportive means a few things, but related to on-course support, here’s what you can expect:

- You will have access to the official route information and directions that can be printed, downloaded as a .gpx, or viewed on a phone.
- The course will have turn markings and/or signage.
- Course attendants will be biking on the course and can be sent to you if need requires.
- There will be medical personnel at the race event and can be sent to you if need requires.

- The aid station nutrition and provisions will vary, but if you want your own nutrition at a station, make advance arrangements with someone to have it there.
- Aid stations include access to a toilet.
- Aid station leads will send forward reports on your progress so we can try to account for everyone.
- Whether you are the first or last runner, you will be welcomed back to the finish.
- IF YOU WOULD LIKE SOMEONE TO RUN WITH YOU, whether as a relayer or a full marathoner, let us know and we will work to pair you with a volunteer buddy if you don't already have people in mind.

Here's what we'd ask of you so everyone can have a safe and fun time:

- Run with a phone if possible.
- Have the Day-of-Contact information handy. Call or text Nate (734-660-6008) if you encounter problems, will not make it to the next aid station, decide to end your race, or to share any important course news.
- If there is an emergency, call 911 first.
- Follow course markings and map.
- Follow the rules of the road and obey traffic laws as you would a normal run.
- Carry adequate fueling and stop at aid stations as needed.
- Dress appropriately for the conditions and please let others know if you need supplemental clothing or gear.
- Bring your own bib if possible! We will have some extras at the start/finish area.

Race Day

Where, How, What if?

The race will start and end at Veterans Memorial Park in downtown Grand Rapids (101 Fulton St E, Grand Rapids, MI 49503). It will begin at 8am with club recognition and key details before sending marathoners and leg 1 relay runners on their way from Veterans. HAS HEART, the coffeeshop on the park square, has graciously agreed to open for us at 7:30am for coffee and restrooms and will remain open all race.

Everyone who is part of the race — runners, supporters, volunteers — are welcome to be at Veterans Memorial Park for the start, and we expect it to be hype but also an unofficial race. You can meet up and intersect with the race anywhere on the course and still be full participants. For example: a leg 3 runner can go straight to the handoff point they've pre-determined with their team. They can run their leg and go to Veterans Memorial Park afterward for their teammate's finish. Or a volunteer with a club can bypass the start-finish and go straight to their aid station. Etcetera.

In any case, we hope everyone feels they are participating in pulling off a neat event and can choose what that looks like for them on the day.

Please note that no services are provided for getting people to or from the start/finish — teams can coordinate, and carpooling and other modes of transit are encouraged. Parking at the downtown start/finish is on one's own.

What about inclement weather? While cold, hot, wet, or windy conditions may be less fun, we will still run in them (and you may feel more badass for it...Michigan runners, ya know?). But the race is completely voluntary and free. The only reason we will cancel or suspend is if it is truly unsafe out there. It would probably have to be lightning, tornado, extreme temps, or bad air.

Day of Contacts

During the event, any emergencies or important logistical questions should go to:

- Nate Rauh-Bieri (Communications/Course Update Coordinator): 734-660-6008
- Tammy Lee (Start/Finish Coordinator): 616-262-1757

Photographs

There is no 'official' photography service on site, but volunteers of course may take some photos and we'd love for any of your photos from the day to feature as well. Or invite us to be on a collaborative post :)

For any photos or posts you'd like to share during or after the race, please feel free to tag:

- [@theovergroundgr](#) on Instagram
- [The overGRound Marathon/Relay](#) on Facebook
- [The overGRound](#) on Strava

And/or, upload photos to [THIS FOLDER](#) if you'd like!

Post-Race Party

We are pleased to share that we will have a post-race celebration (besides what will be at the finish line) to revel in the post-race vibes. Thanks to the generosity of [City Built Brewing Company](#), we will have their private room reserved from 4-6pm for anyone to drop in, purchase food/drinks (they have good NA options if you prefer), exchange stories and experiences, and meet other participants and teams. Spectators/significant others, volunteers, any friends of the overGRound are warmly welcome! (Purchases are on one's own, since we have no registration fee and budget to cover this :) Also Tammy wants to note that it's a bye week for the Lions!

Time: 4-6pm on race day

Place: City Built Brewing Company (820 Monroe Ave NW STE 155, Grand Rapids, MI 49503)

Other

Gear Order

NEW this year! If you'd like an overGRound-branded item for purchase this year, please [order it via this form](#) by NOON on October 17th to ensure we get it in time to give you on race day.

NOTE: this is now closed but if there's interest we can put in another order after race day. Drop us an email at theovergroundgr@gmail.com if you're interested in a post-race order.

FAQS

Whatchall got? Let us know, and we will do our best to add them here or provide a response.