

## **2016 Post-Tour de Lights Report**

We were delighted (pun intended!) by the number of comments we got from the Tour de Lights survey. Here are some of the main themes of comments and our responses:

### **The start of the parade is a mess, and the stop on the way back to re-group doesn't help**

We started this event with just over 100 participants. We have now seen more than 1,000 participants for three straight years, so we are in the process of making some necessary revisions. We plan to separate into three different staging/line-up areas (one for experienced bicyclists on Wall Ave, one for groups and beginners on Union Ave, and one for families on Market St.) to try to make the start more organized.

Traffic control is a vital part of the event. It's challenging to weigh how long we stop traffic on cross streets versus participants having to stop to re-group. The decision for 2017 has been to eliminate that stop to re-group, but the lead will have to slow down slightly on the way back into downtown. Gay St and Gay/Summit Hill will be closed for longer - we will try to alleviate that impact by providing more communication ahead of time about detours. KPD officers are instructed that if there are gaps in the parade, to allow motorists to proceed, but there are never gaps with our huge numbers! We'll revise that instruction to include times when bicyclists thin out and there are a lot of cars waiting, to stop the bicyclists briefly – especially on Broadway when there is a KAT bus trying to stay on schedule.

We understand that some participants don't like going slowly, but it is necessary to keep us together as much as possible. As it is, we are so spread out that the front of the parade is already at Luttrell/Wells by the time the last riders are leaving downtown!

Bonus: we are revising the route to avoid bicycling up the steepest hill.

All of these changes are proposed and will be finalized later in the year.

### **Better sound system for announcements:**

Sound is a challenge, due to how spread out participants are (there isn't enough room on the Square due to the ice rink). This will be an even larger challenge with the proposed changes for the start. This year, we're seeking a sponsor to provide a sound system that includes remote speakers, and so improve our process of announcements. We will also try to play holiday music before the ride on this sound system, while not interfering with the ice rink's music.

### **Start on time**

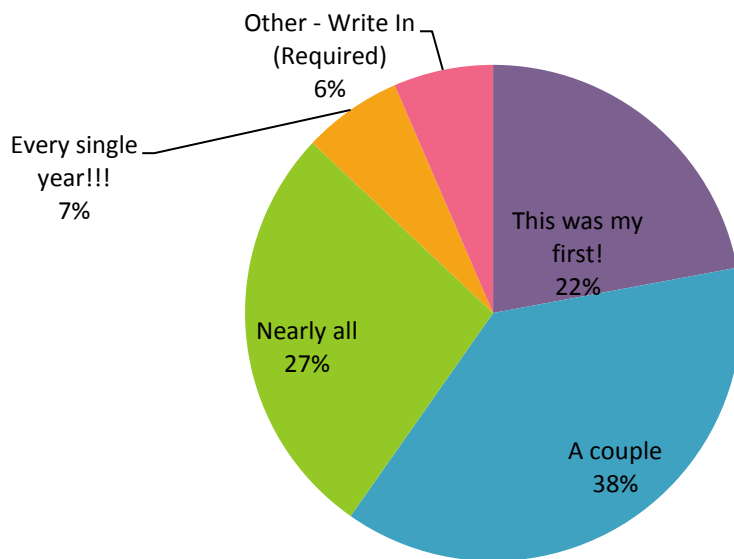
We do start about 7:05 p.m. We would start exactly at 7, but there are always people getting there at the last minute. It's hard trying to get more than 1,000 people and their bicycles to the same place!

## Change the route/longer route

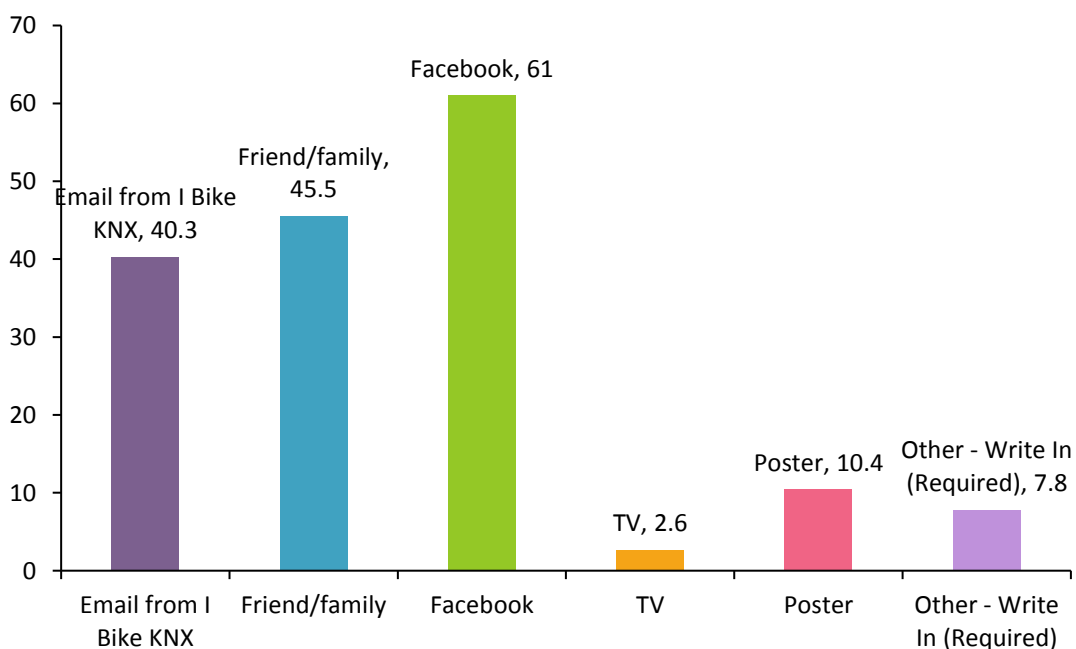
Most of our participants appreciate the current length. We attract a lot of people *because* it's a short ride. Since this is essentially a parade, we stick to the same route every year so that residents along the route can expect it and not be surprised to lose access to their houses. Also, the current route is the most inhabited (it's festive to have houses along most of the route so the residents can come out and wave/cheer) while staying under 5 miles in length.

## Online survey responses: 77 total

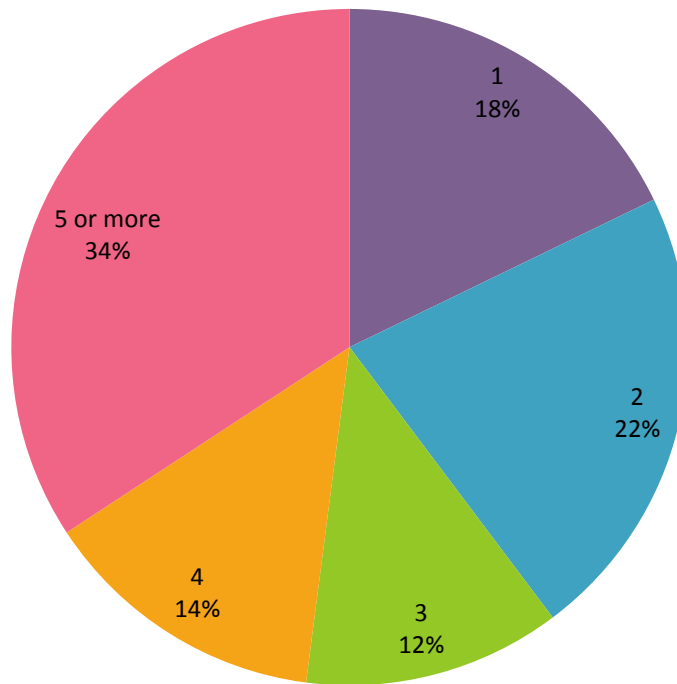
1. How many times have you ridden in Tour de Lights?



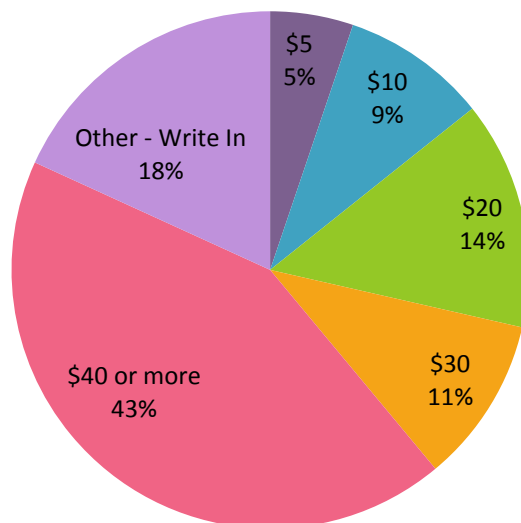
2. How did you hear about Tour de Lights? (check all that apply)



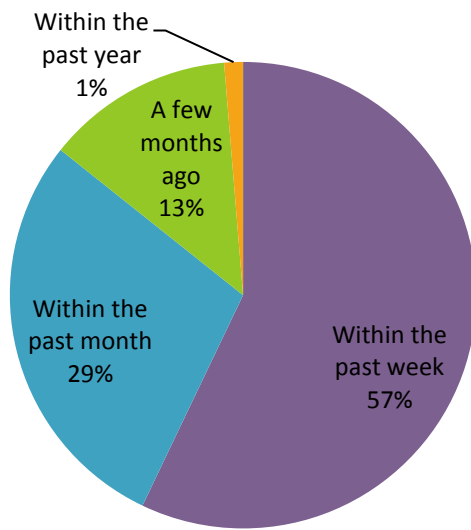
3. How many people rode with you, if you were with friends/family?



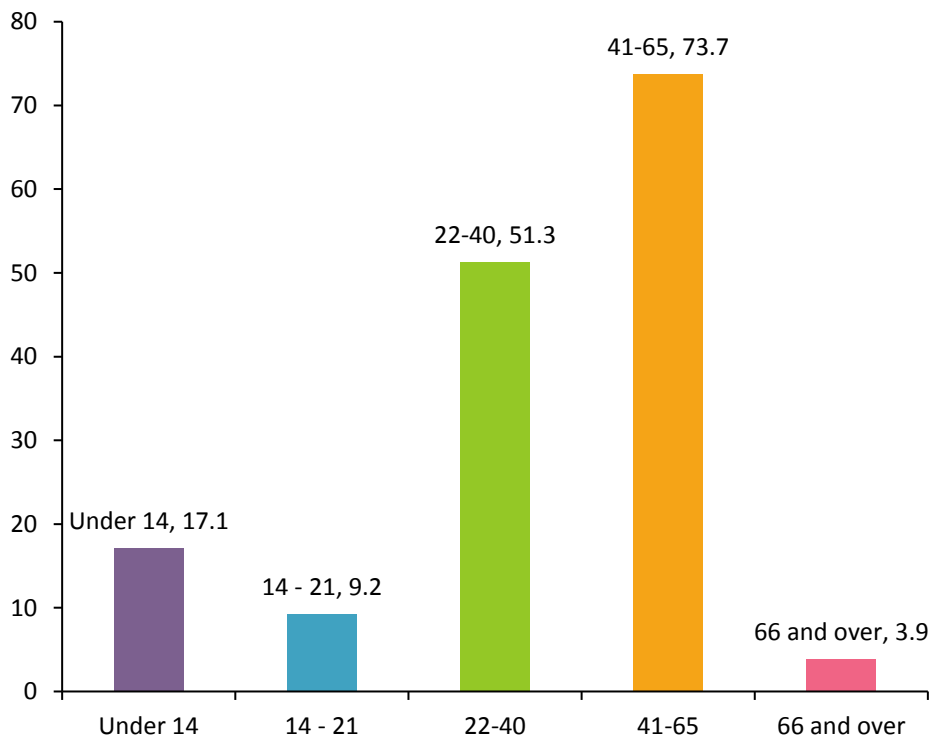
4. How much did you and your group/family spend while downtown for the event?



5. Before Tour de Lights, when was the last time you rode a bicycle?



6. What ages were the people who rode with you? Check all that apply



## 7. What would you like to see changed about Tour de Lights?

I like it do you only thing is there's about three or four street I saw a lot of people get off and have to walk . More this year than last year. Possible find a little flatter. Roads . I made it without stopping and walking but a lot of younger people as I'm over 70 . That's the only thing I seen or make a little shorter it's a fun ride not competition . That's the only thing that is hard. It seem like my first big left turn back in the in the subdivision and you have to make a right-hand turn and I think an hour left for five turns canceled going uphill seen a lot of people stop and have to walk . . Other than that that's only thing that to be wrong fun time enjoy it

1. Start on time 2. Perhaps have the start according to skill level. I had MANY riders lose control and ride into me. 3. Costume judging at beginning not end

All judged costumes must participate in the photo booth. New judging... the same person has won the same category for three years in a row with the same costume.

Better sound system for announcements and Christmas music playing while everyone is gathering to ride.

Bike award announcements before ride. It is to cold to be judged at 6pm, wait to ride, ride and then wait for awards...Especially with small children.

Can you control the weather?!

Can't think of anything. Maybe a band and some beers afterward.

Eliminate stops for mass regrouping. That just repeats the mass takeoff which is the most dangerous part of the tour. I understand that some stoppage is necessary for traffic flow.

Find a way to group the smaller push bike kids to minimize them being in the middle of a crash. A short safety briefing before the start. Prevent children from riding without head protection.

Great ride. Would be great if there were road cones in areas where people had street side debris on road.

Have another ride when it's warmer. Christmas in July, Halloween, or 4th of July.

Have the policy interrupt the ride to let cars go by at some of the major intersections .... a few minutes will not disturb the ride but it might prevent long traffic jams. I felt embarrassed for drivers

I can't think of anything that would make it more fun!

I love this event! I wouldn't really change anything.

I think it's fine. Don't over complicate a good thing.

I would like Christmas music playing while we are waiting to start the ride. Besides that it was a great ride.

I would like to see a good quality print made advertising for the tour de lights each year. Something very nice that people might frame.

It's fine. People need to be more careful!

It's great that so many people show up. Maybe it should morph into an Open Streets event.

It's too Christmas inclusive. Should be more general winter/holiday ride. Or just call it the Xmas Ride. Also, more prizes!! Age ranges, smaller gifts, more categories... promote knox bike community more somehow.

It's very "white." A person of color was a rare sight. It would be nice to alter the course to enter into other areas of Knoxville, (i.e. Partridge, Morningside Heights) that often get overlooked/stigmatized by community developers. I think reaching out to organizations in these areas that serve those communities could help diversify, open up, and be more inclusive of the REAL Knoxville community, rather than those who are simply privileged to participate. I'm happy to help serve on the board/committee of next year's Tour de Lights to help improve this efforts. You can contact me at [webster.kevin1@gmail.com](mailto:webster.kevin1@gmail.com) or 865-201-3426 -It could be helpful if there was a simple repair stand in order to tune up bikes just before the ride, perhaps by local bike shops (TVB, Dream Bikes, etc.). This may already exist and I just might not have witnessed it.

Just keep it going and growing.

Longer, more diverse route.

Make the hearse park by the Blue Coast Burrito next time, as it bottlenecked getting from Market Square on to Wall St, where it was parked this year

Maybe a different way to start out its just very congested coming out of mkt square I saw a couple of young riders fall into people .I have a blast the past 5 years now.

Maybe earlier in December but all weekends are difficult so you should make the decision based on when you think is best.

Maybe ride a little longer, otherwise everything is fantastic

More people!

More post ride festivities and beer consumption on market squire

More promoting of the event

More space for organization, instructions at the beginning of the ride. Could not hear what was being announced over the speakers at the beginning. Just started riding when everyone else did.

N/A

No changes

No changes needed.

Not a darn thing!

Not a thing. It's great!

Not that I could think of. Maybe have more sponsors. Maybe let all bikers pedal back through entire length of Gay Street and back to Market Square in order for viewers to be able to see the event in more spacious surrounding.

Nothing at all - loved it!

Nothing, it was awesome!

Nothing, it's wonderful!

Overall the event is GREAT....it gets better every year! Lighting on the awards stage could be much better. And maybe post a 'times itinerary' (judging time period, restroom locations, bike safety check tent location,wheels turning/kick stands up time,awards presentations start time etc.,)at the awards stage area for Riders for easy reference. Maybe put a string of blinking Christmas lights around the sign so it's OBVIOUS to everyone where it is.

Set radio station for the event. Mostly play familiar secular catols, but you could also live broadcast announcements.

Since this was our first year, everything seemed perfect, including the temperature.

South Knoxville and Island Home next year!

Starting on time...It was cold!!

Such a Great time ... wouldn't change a thing!

The police holding up the front of the pack is not fun on a cold night.

The start is always a little higgly-piggly. Still have issue with people racing up sides.

There's a couple of places where the tour seems to bog down and come to a stop. If that could be remedied it would be good.

Too many people and it turns to chaos!

Tour de Lights did not have anything to do with it but, the religious people (the ones that yell, I'm not sure what they call themselves) made quite a few people, in my group and others very uncomfortable. They were being aggressive and very rude. Again, this was not because of Tour de



Lights, I just wanted to let whoever know what had gone on. We Love riding in this event and Will continue to do so!!!

Vary the route year-to-year.

nothing!

two photo booths? keep it on Market Square- it is great for people who are not riding to see all the riders

## What do you love about Tour de Lights?

The fun in the Christmas spirit .

1000's of bikes, lots of lights, creative outfits and decked out bikes. A great time to get out and ride. Ever thought of doing a warm weather version?

All of it ... the lights, the gathering in Market Square, the decorations & costumes, the ride ... especially that this winds through my neighborhood & the folks in 4th & Gill who gather & cheer. The little house parties that are planned around this event. Love it!

All the decorations seeing what everyone has come up with. riding with friends and having them there having a good time.

All the great bikes and riders on Market Square and the hot coco and all the people on the route waving and greeting us and the wonderful police officers who do such a great job.

All the lights and feeling safe with all the police.

All the lights. Everybody out downtown.

All the smiles and joy!

Christmas Bikes and Lights!!! I love crafting and creating and seeing what everybody can make!

Community spirit! Just a fun thing to do, dress up and decorate your bike!

Community, festivity, geniality

Crisp evening, great setting, a chance to thank the police and the lights on bikes and homes.

Escorted ride and families along route and downtown lights.

Everything

Everything

Everything is so fabulous and the colorful lights on bikes and costumes, plus Christmas light decoration at many homes on the 5 miles route really stood out exceptionally well.

Everything!

Everything! The hot cocoa stop this year before getting back on Gay St was amazing!

Everything, everyone

Family friendly event.

Festive atmosphere

Festive, fun and great place to have fun with friends

Fun HOLIDAY time with other bikers.

Fun to see friends and be a part of the spectacle.

Fun, camaraderie, helps encourage the bike culture.

Great contests and route

Great costumes, great neighborhoods, good exercise!

Helps me get into the Christmas spirit!

Hot chocolate & cookies, all the bike lights

How everybody decorates bikes and dresses up.

I love everything about the tour de lights! The neighbors, cyclists, decor and being downtown!!

I loved not having to stop for traffic (the police presence & volunteers), light or signs, especially with my child, less stress about stopping starting. How friendly the rest of the biking community is chatting with other riders.

It gets me in the Christmas spirit and everyone is in such a good and laid back mood.

It is cool to ride bikes around neighborhoods that are nicely decorated (4th/gill, old north) but it is also cool for onlookers because it gives them something cool to see as well. Win win.

It was just a fun time all around. Everyone seemed really happy.

It's a neat community event but like the old joke, "Nobody goes there anymore, it's too crowded."

It's family friendly, encourages bicycle riding/physical activity, bicycle commuting, and community pride.

It's literally my favorite thing in the whole holiday season.

It's so fun and well attended

Looking down a neighborhood street and seeing lights on bikes as far as the street is in view - maybe 5 blocks.

Lots of fun!

Love the route and the positive atmosphere!

Love the sense of community from the experience. Truly appreciate all the safety support with the police officers

Loved seeing all the costumes/decorations and everyone's enthusiasm!

Number of people and blocked off roads.

People toting music! All the lights!

Riding bikes in mass on city streets at night in the cold. The fact that so many come out in the cold shows the real interest in biking.

Riding with Christmas lights with my daughter in downtown Knoxville at night.....awesome!!!

See the enthusiasm of the Knoxville community growing every year... even when freezing cold!

Seeing people on bikes having fun with friends and family.

Sheer Numbers!

That it's a community event, both for the riders and the neighborhoods.

That the course is closed. Parking is free. It is not a race.

The people cheering us along the route. The decorated houses.

The spectators along the route made it very fun and truly feel like a community event.

The streets being blocked off to make it safe (thank you KPD!), the casual pace and I loved seeing people out on the sidewalks watching and waving.

The wonderful costumes and decorated bicycles, as well as the hot chocolate and cookies.

We love seeing the creative and wacky Knoxville citizens come out!!

What's not to love.

free stuff from three rivers market. and folks on bikes screaming Merry Christmas to cops and sidewalk viewers

participation by all kinds of people

seeing 1000 crazy cyclists take over down town

so much creativity and community involvement- joyful fun!