

Detroit Legacy Tours Launches New Walking Tours Celebrating the City's History

Award-winning urban planner and researcher Rod Arroyo debuts small-group tours of downtown Detroit

DETROIT, MI, UNITED STATES, July 22, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Detroit Legacy Tours, a new small-group walking tour company, invites locals and visitors alike to explore the streets, landmarks, and neighborhoods that have shaped one of America's most storied cities.



Detroit Legacy Tours Logo

Founded by researcher and urban planner Rod Arroyo, Detroit Legacy Tours offers guided walking tours. Each tour goes beyond familiar landmarks to surface the untold stories, hidden connections, and lasting legacies of the men and women — known and forgotten — whose vision and hard work helped to build Detroit.

“

Detroit's legacy is shared one block, one building, and one story at a time”

Rod Arroyo

“Detroit's legacy is shared one block, one building, and one story at a time,” said Arroyo. “Our tours are designed to help people see the city differently — to connect today's Detroit to the resilience and creativity of the people who came before.”

Two Tours Launching in July and August

Launching in July 2026, Downtown Detroit Walking Tour. From Griswold Street — once known as the “Wall Street of Detroit” — to the historic Black Bottom neighborhood, this tour traces the city's journey from boomtown to bankruptcy to resurgence. The tour explores early city plans and the struggles to make them a reality; it covers a forgotten theater where jazz history was made, and features some of the finest 1910s and 1920s skyscrapers ever built. A visit to the western edge of the historic neighborhood known as Black Bottom reveals stories of resilience, commerce, and struggle to freedom on the Underground Railroad.

Downtown, Paradise Valley & Black Bottom: This second tour, which will launch the first week in

August, visits downtown highlights including Campus Martius and Grand Circus Park before journeying into the historic neighborhoods of Paradise Valley and Black Bottom, once home to thriving jazz and blues clubs, cohesive communities, and Black-owned businesses, later disrupted and destroyed by urban renewal and freeway construction. As tour participants walk around the streets adjacent to Comerica Park, Ford Field, and other nearby locations, they will hear stories and see images of a thriving entertainment and business district that once was. Arroyo will share his research, including maps and documentation of over 50 jazz clubs and hundreds of Black-owned businesses in the Paradise Valley, Sugar Hill, and Black Bottom neighborhoods during the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Tours run approximately two hours and fifteen minutes and cover about 1.5 to 2.0 miles on foot, rain or shine. Groups are limited to 14 guests, with discounts available for groups of six or more and private tours offered by request.

About Rod Arroyo

Rod Arroyo is a former urban planning consultant and former partner with Giffels Webster, a multidisciplinary consulting firm based in downtown Detroit. He holds a Master of City Planning degree from Georgia Tech and is a Fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners (FAICP). He is also a former adjunct professor at Wayne State University, where he continues to guest lecture. Arroyo is a jazz archaeologist and, alongside Lars Bjorn and Jim Gallert, has worked to document and preserve Detroit's jazz and blues heritage through detroitjazzhistory.com. He and the late Karin Risko released the book, "A History Lover's Guide to Detroit" (History Press), in 2018, and Arroyo has extensively researched Detroit's Paradise Valley, Sugar Hill, and Black Bottom neighborhoods. He has lectured on his research at the Detroit Public Library, the Charles Wright Museum of African American History, Wayne State University, Michigan Jazz Festival, and the Ford House. Arroyo's Detroit research blog is www.city-photos.com/blog2.

About Detroit Legacy Tours

Detroit Legacy Tours is a small business that offers small-group walking tours of downtown Detroit and its adjacent historic neighborhoods. Grounded in original research, the tours are designed for adults, with topics such as urban renewal and civil unrest discussed alongside Detroit's musical, entrepreneurial, and cultural heritage. Detroit Legacy Tours is accredited by the Better Business Bureau with an A+ rating. Most tours depart at 10 a.m. on weekdays, 2:00 p.m. on Mondays and Fridays, and 11 a.m. on some Saturdays. Check the website for availability.

Tour schedules, pricing, and online booking are available at www.detroitlegacytours.com.

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