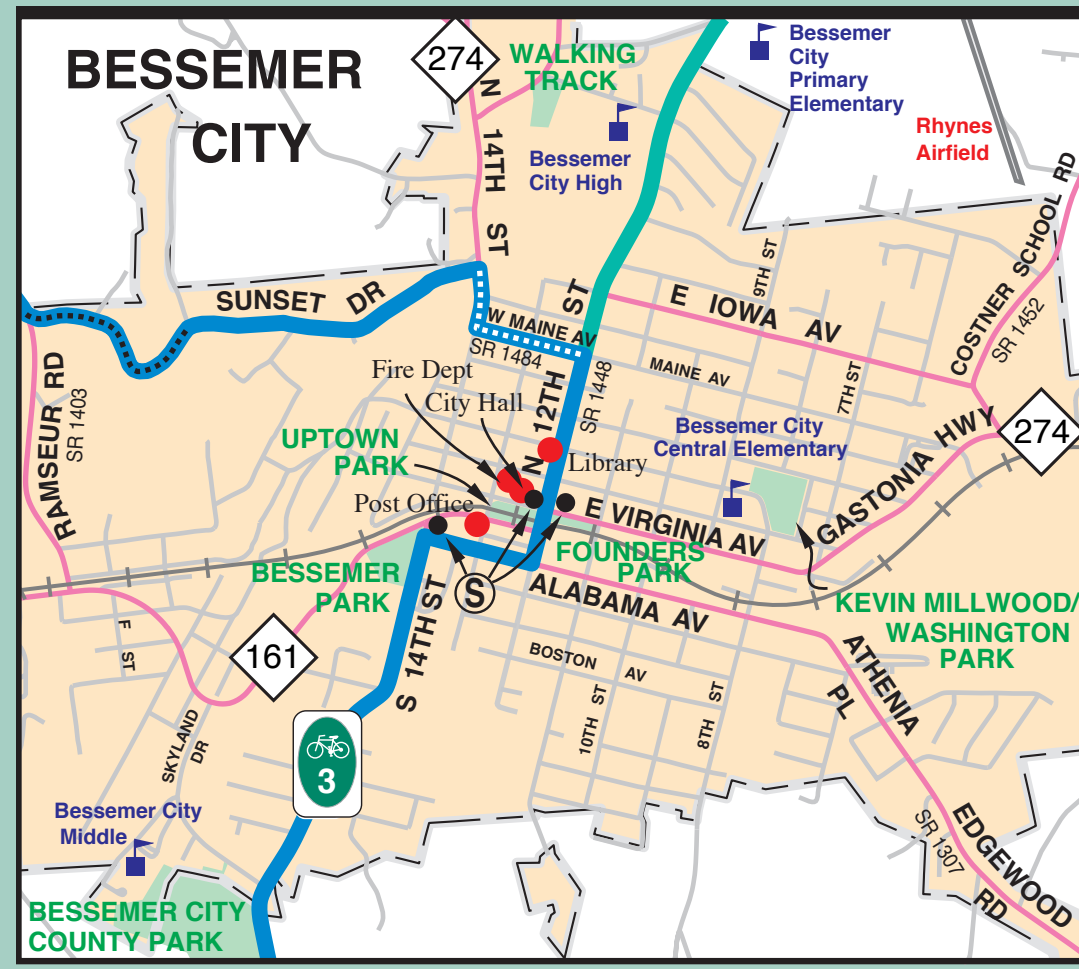


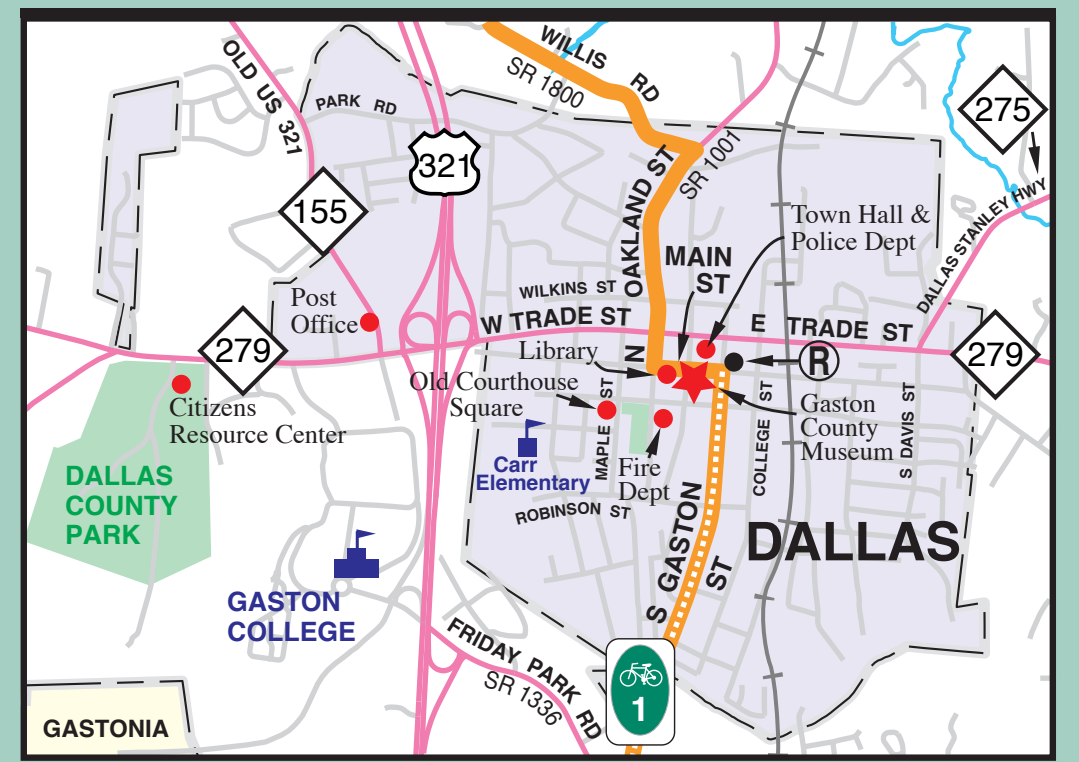
Gastonia



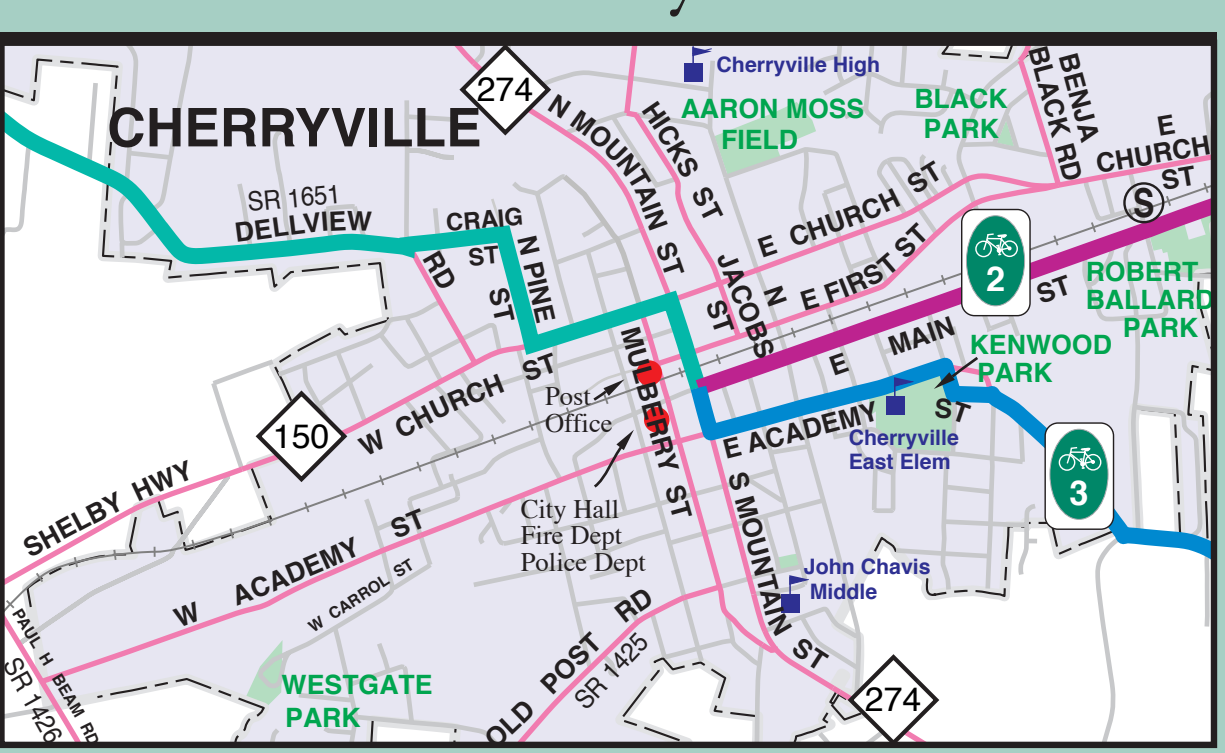
Bessemer City



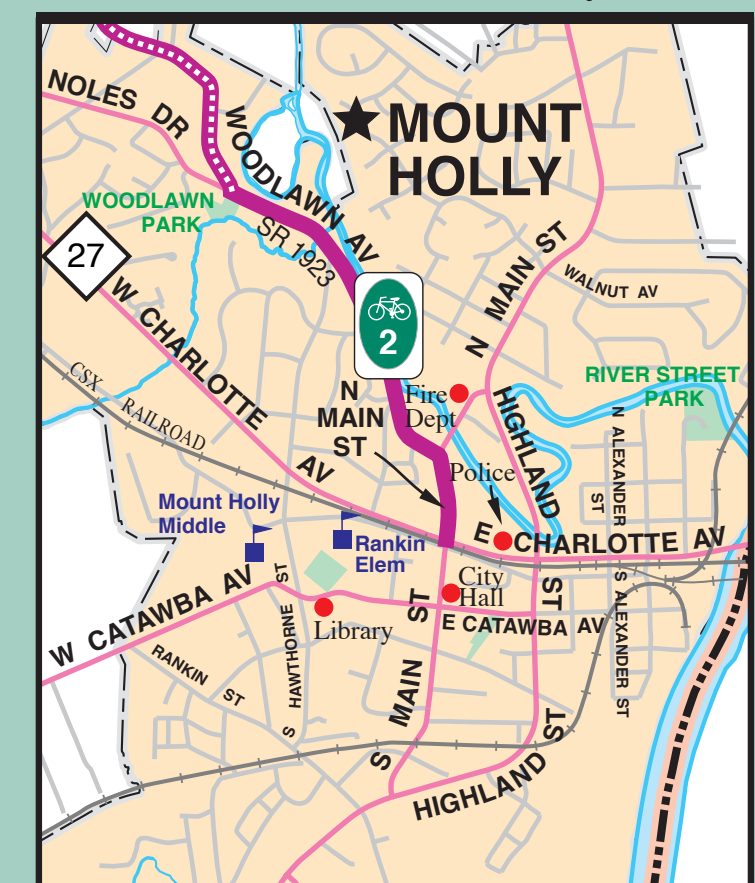
Dallas



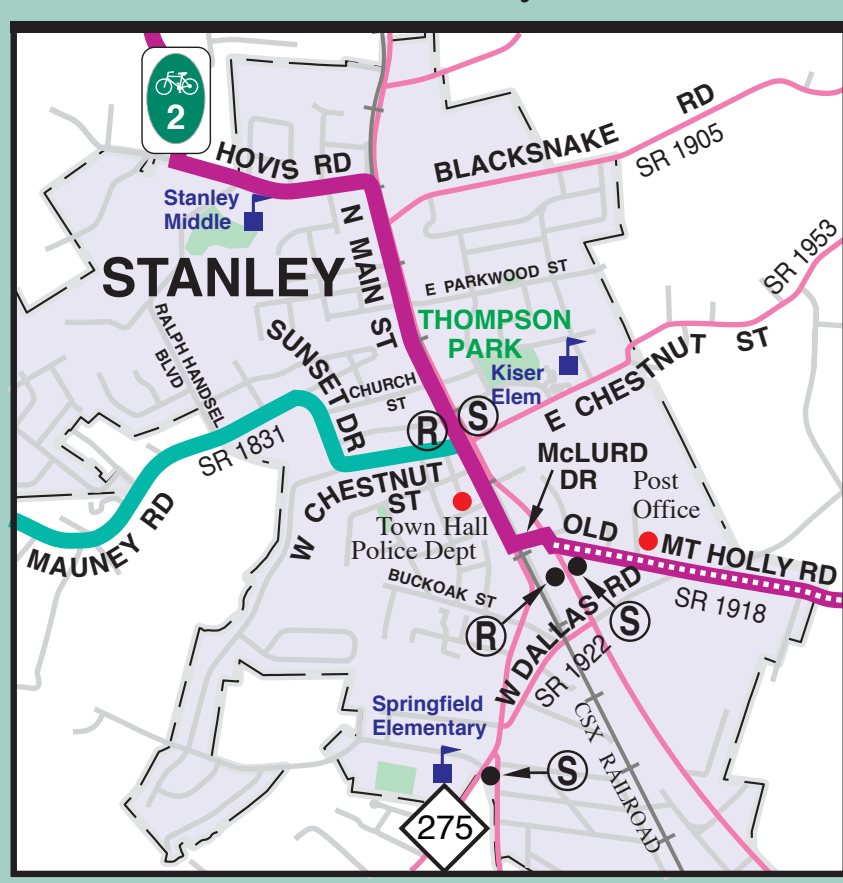
Cherryville



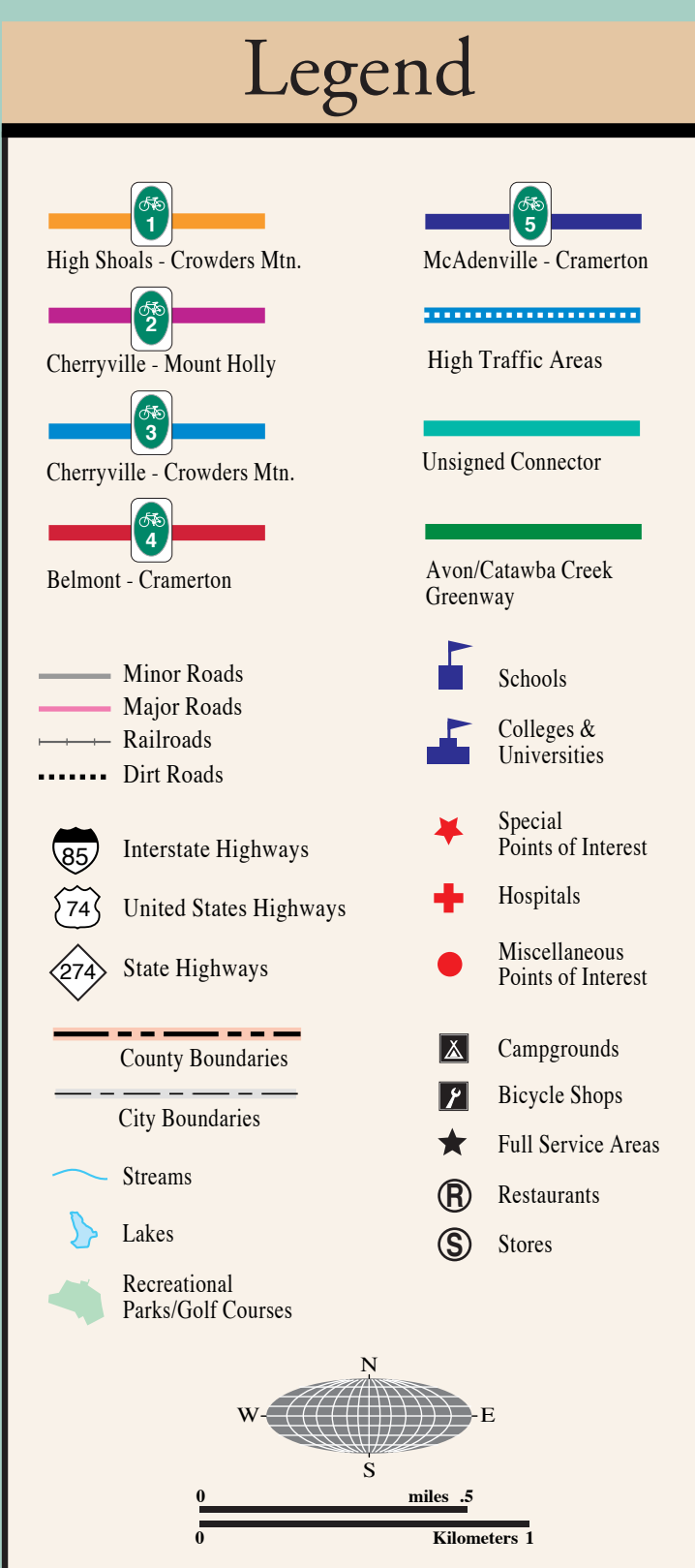
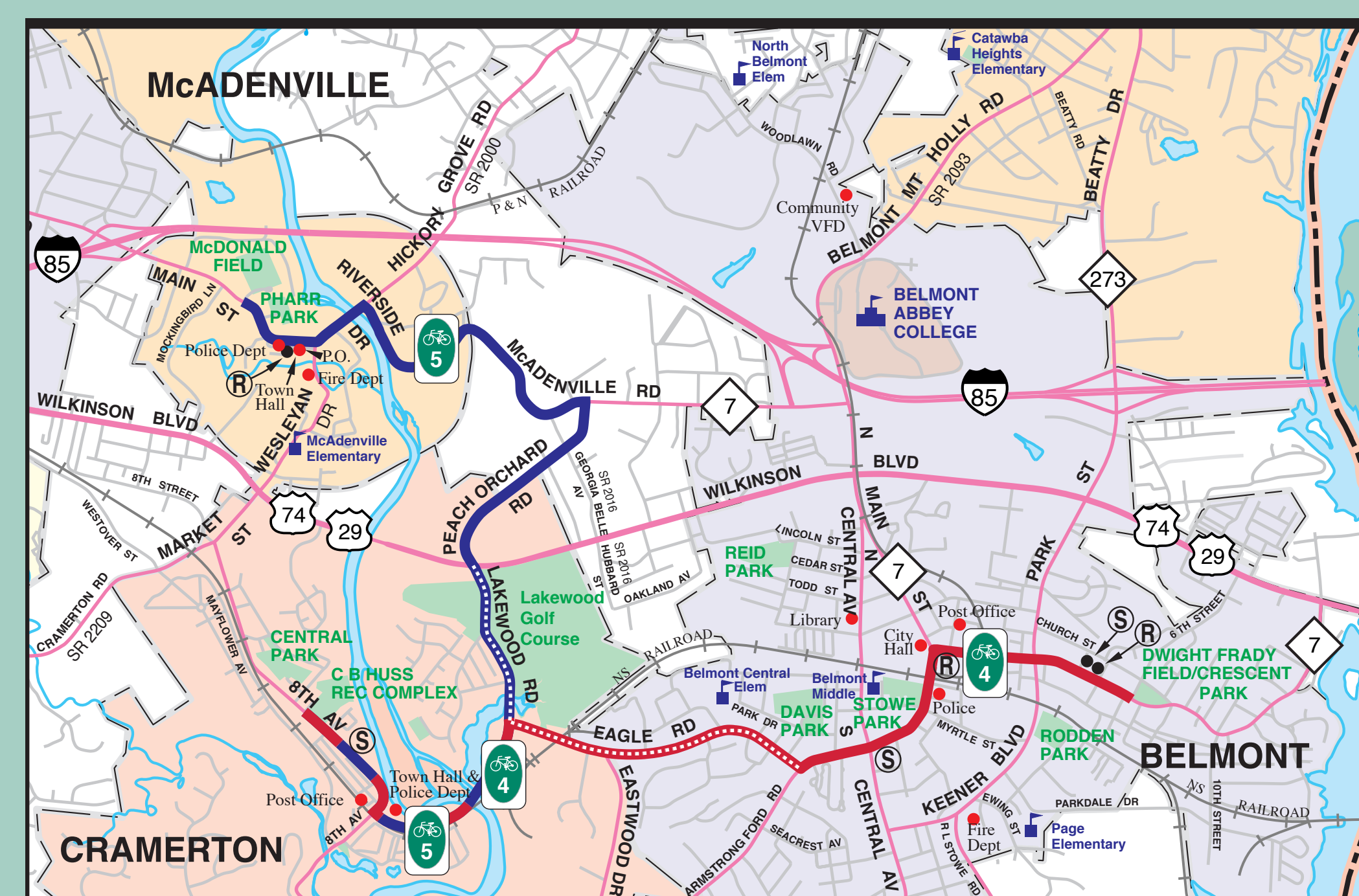
Mount Holly



Stanley



McAdenville/Belmont/Cramerton



Bike = Vehicle

In North Carolina, your bicycle is a vehicle and you are its driver. You share the rights and the duties with all other drivers as you use the State's roadway network.

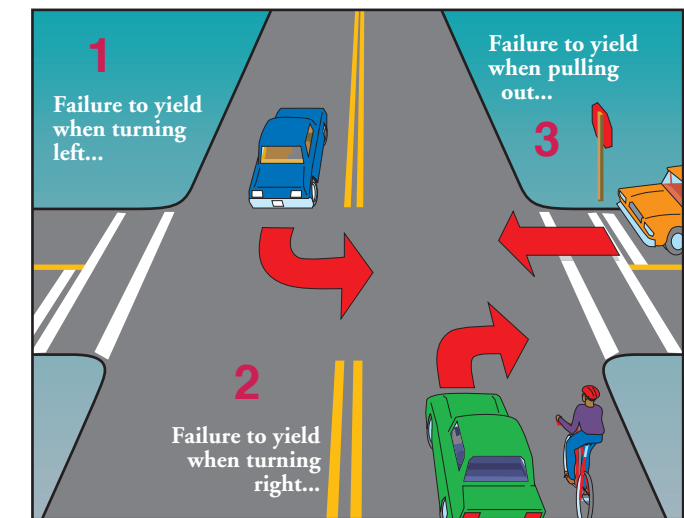
### Follow The Road Rules

- Ride on the right side of the road, going with the flow of traffic.
- Obey all traffic controls — like stop signs, traffic lights, and one-way signs.
- Signal whenever you intend to turn, merge to another road position, or stop.
- Yield the right-of-way whenever you enter the road or when you change lanes or road position.
- Use a good set of lights and reflectors whenever you ride after dark.
- Don't ride your bike on sidewalks and treat pedestrians with respect.

Watch for motorist errors

Drivers often do things that endanger bicyclists, usually without intending to. Knowing what to look for can help you navigate through traffic more safely. Ride predictably and in a visible location.

- Watch motorists coming towards you who might turn left. Pay particular attention to their road position and, of course, any turn signals.
- Keep an eye on the motorist coming up on your left who might turn right. Listen for hints that the car might be slowing down.
- Watch for movement that could indicate a car is coming out of a driveway or side street.



Ride defensively

Anticipate other people's moves — and their likely mistakes. Keep your eyes moving over the traffic scene, use a mirror, and be ready to take evasive action. Establish eye contact with drivers around you to let them know you are there. Shout if necessary.

Use good equipment

You don't need an expensive bike to get around... just one that works and that can be repaired and adjusted.

Your brakes should work smoothly and should stop you well even when it's raining. When you squeeze the lever, it shouldn't "bottom out" against the handlebars. And when you let go of the lever, the brake should come away cleanly from the wheel's rim.

Your "drive train" (cranks, pedals, shifters, chain, and gears) shouldn't creak, clunk, or hesitate. The chain shouldn't jump as it goes around. Shifting should be smooth and precise.

To ride at night, you need reliable lights and reflectors. You need a headlight that lets others see you and that lets you see hazards on the road. You need a rear reflector or tail light (both would be a good idea).

The new flashing halogen tail lights are becoming quite popular. It's also a good idea to use pedal reflectors and some people like the wheel reflectors. Being visible at night is essential.

Nothing on your bike should be loose or rattle. To test it if it's "road ready," pick it up a few inches off the ground and drop it to see if it makes any noise. Grease and oil in the right spots to keep your bike running smoothly and to reduce wear and tear.

In short, keep your bike in good condition!

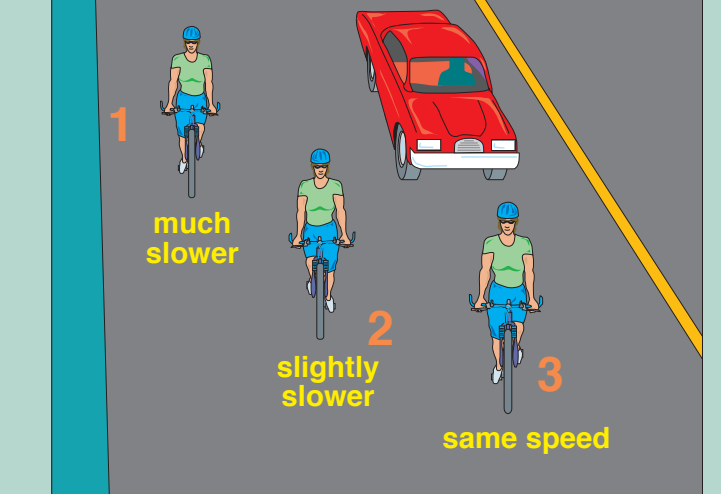
Basic Traffic Riding Techniques

Riding confidently and skillfully in traffic takes practice and an understanding of some basic ideas. One of the most important ideas is road position. Just where you ride on the roadway depends on several important things: your speed, the width and condition of the road, and your destination.

Speed and road position

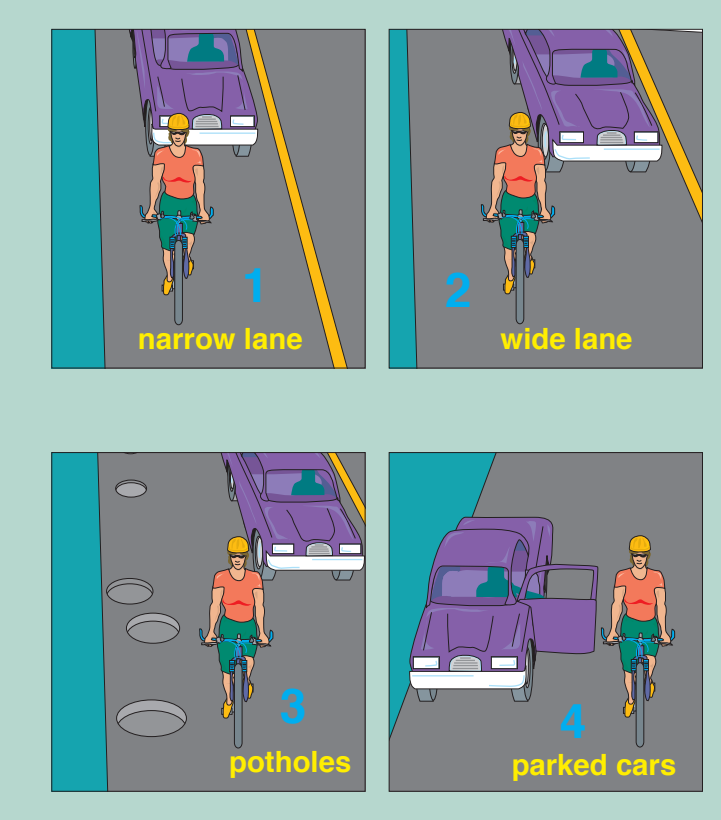
The closer you go to the speed of traffic, the closer you should ride to that traffic.

- When everyone else is going a lot faster than you, keep well to the right.
- When they're going a little faster, ride near traffic. This encourages right-turners to slow and wait instead of passing at the last moment and cutting you off.
- When they're going the same speed as you, ride in the line of traffic. This is your most visible position and ensures you'll be where drivers look for traffic. There's no reason to ride fast near the curb and a lot of good reasons not to.



Width and road position

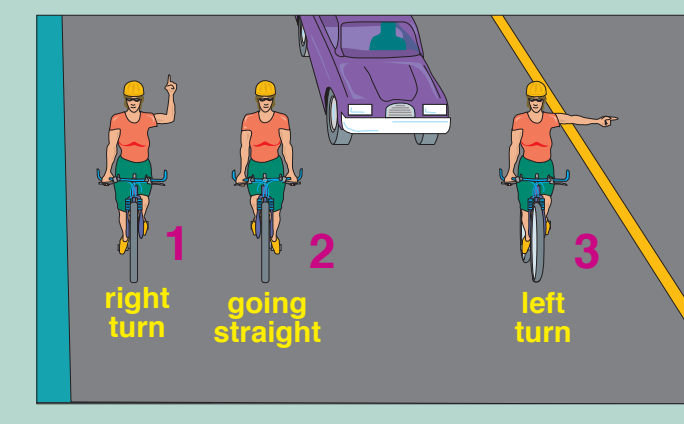
- On a road with very narrow lanes, ride far enough from the edge to discourage dangerously close passing. Many expert riders ride in the car's right wheel track.
- On a road with wide traffic lanes, ride just to the right of the traffic stream. This allows easy passing but reduces the danger caused by turning or crossing traffic.
- On a road with gravel, debris, or potholes on the right side, ride on the smooth pavement to the left of them.
- Always ride a good door's width from parked cars.



Destination and position

Near intersections, it's a good idea to let your road position tell others where you're going.

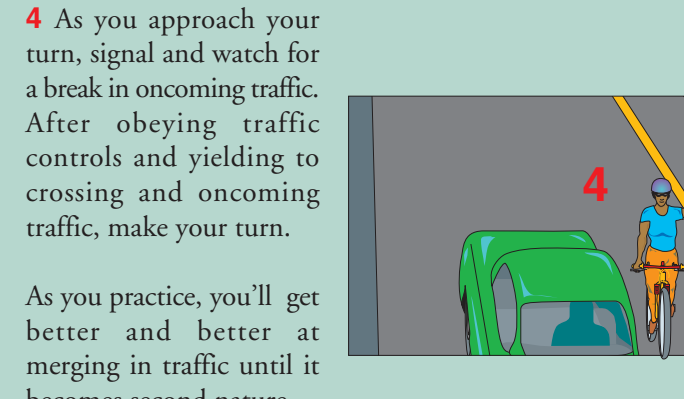
- To turn right, move towards the right edge of the roadway.
- To go straight, keep at least three feet from the curb and stay out of right turn lanes.
- To turn left, ride about three feet right of the center line or, if there is one, use the left turn lane.



Making left turns

Making left turns is tricky but can be learned. Start on quiet streets and work up to busier ones.

- As you approach an intersection where you want to turn left, look back. If someone is coming, decide whether you can move left across the lane before they arrive.
- If you can cross before they arrive, signal and move across into a left turn position near the center line or in a left turn lane.
- Once you've merged to a left turn position, ride straight and watch what's going on around you.
- As you approach your turn, signal and watch for a break in oncoming traffic. After obeying traffic controls and yielding to crossing and oncoming traffic, make your turn.



Left turns on fast roads

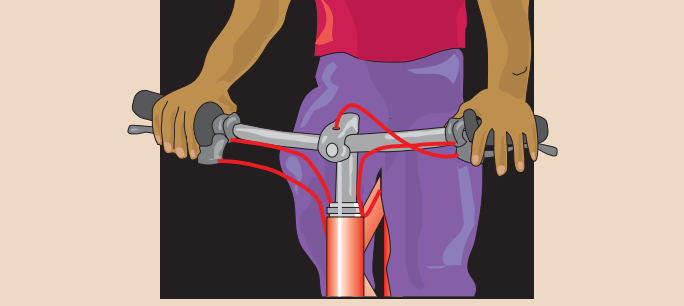
On busy high-speed roads, it's very difficult to negotiate your way across traffic. In this case, it's a good idea to make your turn like a pedestrian and walk across when safe.



Bike Handling

Stopping your bike

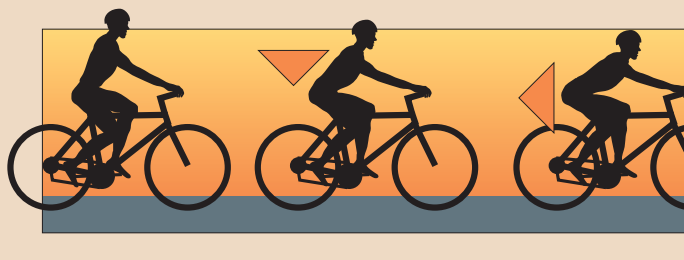
To stop, use both brakes equally. In an emergency stop, slide back on the saddle and get low. Gradually squeeze harder on the front brake but let off a bit of the rear wheel lifts.



Going uphill

You may be able to sprint over short hills but long hills take patience. Shift into a low gear and steadily spin the pedals at a rate you can keep up the whole way.

Since you may be going slowly, keep over to the right side of the road and don't veer back and forth. If you have to walk, either get off the road completely or cross over and walk facing traffic.



Share the Road

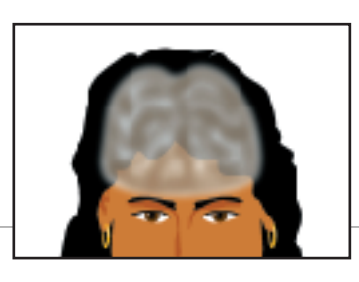
Cars and bicycles frequently must Share The Road. On roadways with high levels of bicycle traffic, but relatively demanding conditions for bicyclists, Share The Road signs have been installed. These signs are intended to increase motorists' awareness of bicyclists on a roadway without designating that roadway as a preferred route.



Bicyclists, however, must also be aware of the importance of sharing the road with motorists. If someone comes up behind you, move to the right when safe to allow them to pass. In groups, bicyclists should ride cooperatively and help motorists pass safely.

Wear a Helmet!

If you don't already have one, get a bicycle helmet today! If you have one, wear it every time you ride. Today's helmets look good, are very light, and let in those cooling breezes... all while protecting your head and brain! Helmets cost as little as \$15 and could be your most important piece of equipment.



Why

In a word: protection. A good bike helmet can protect your brain. That's important if your head hits a hard surface... like a road, a curb, or a car. Brains are fragile and once damaged may not mend.

What

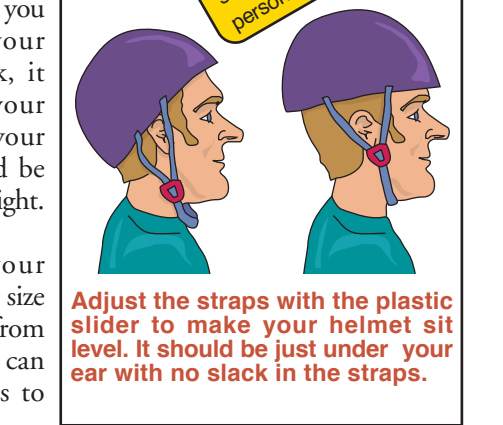
Get one that fits snugly but is not tight. Make sure it has CPSC stickers, which prove that it's passed the tests.

How

You should be able to see the front edge of your helmet when you look up. If your helmet tips back, it won't protect your forehead. Also, your neck strap should be snug but not too tight.

Make sure your helmet is the right size and doesn't rock from side to side. You can add interior pads to fine tune a fit.

Adjust the straps with the plastic slider to make your helmet sit level. It should be just under your ear with no slack in the straps.

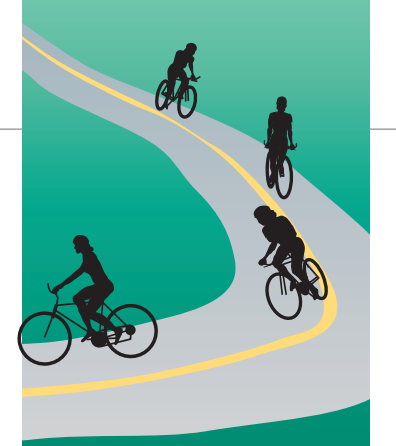


Dealing with Hills

The speed you gain while going downhill can make bike handling — especially turning, and braking — more difficult and potentially more dangerous. By contrast, going uphill can challenge your climbing ability, your fitness, and your low-speed bike control.

Going downhill

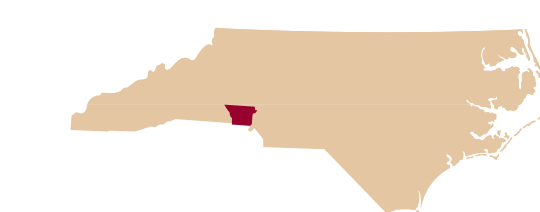
Speed control is very important. But rather than riding your brakes all the way down, use them often with a light touch to keep your speed under control.



Gaston Cycling Resources

- City of Gastonia Planning Department
- City of Gastonia Parks and Recreation Department
- Gaston County Chamber of Commerce
- Gaston County Department of Tourism
- City of Gastonia Planning Department
- City of Gastonia Parks and Recreation Department
- Gaston County Chamber of Commerce
- Gaston County Department of Tourism
- NC DOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation
- Gaston County Parks and Recreation Department





### About the Routes

The Gaston County bicycle routes were developed with two primary goals in mind: to identify safe, scenic, and inviting places to ride via lightly traveled roads and to designate routes that serve a transportation function by connecting the various municipalities and points of interest in the county. Due to the high traffic volumes of some of the roads in the county however, it was not possible to connect all the points of interest and towns to each other. During commute times, traffic volumes along some portions of the designated routes are higher than desirable. These sections of routes are marked on the map and are posted with Share the Road signs on the road.

There are five signed bicycle routes in Gaston County totaling 85 miles. An additional 42 miles of unsigned connectors and the 2.5-mile Avon/Catawba Creek Greenway off-road trail provide many opportunities to enjoy bicycling throughout the county. The following section provides information helpful in planning rides, and highlights some of the points of interest you will encounter along the way. On the road look for signs like the one shown above that mark the routes.

In addition to showing the bike routes, the map pinpoints the locations of various services throughout the county including country stores, campgrounds, restaurants, and bike shops. Towns that provide overnight accommodations, restaurants, grocery stores and other amenities are marked with a star and are designated as "designated areas". Enlarged detail maps are shown for Gastonia, Bessemer City, Dallas, Mount Holly, Stanley, Cherryville, and the McAdenville/Belmont/Cramerton area to further help you to navigate these areas and locate points of interest. Additional useful information on bicycle safety, proper riding techniques, bicycling equipment, and the laws pertaining to the operation of a vehicle in North Carolina is also provided on the reverse side.

### Route Descriptions

#### Route 1 - High Shoals to Crowders Mountain (28 miles)

This north/south route bisects the county connecting High Shoals, Dallas, Gastonia, and Crowders Mountain State Park. Cyclists will travel through the charming downtown of Dallas, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which includes the original Gaston County Courthouse and Gaston County Museum of Art and History. The museum features an 1884 Edison dynamo, the first hydroelectric power generator in the South, and the longest running one of its kind in the world. Another feature is the Daniel Stowe Carriage House with North Carolina's largest collection of horse drawn vehicles. The museum is open Tuesday-Friday from 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, Saturday from 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm, and every fourth Sunday from 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm (704.852.6025). Traveling south through Gastonia, cyclists will pass Sims Park, once home to various minor league semi-pro baseball teams, and the newly constructed County Courthouse and Department of Social Services Buildings. Cyclists will also wind through downtown Gastonia, past restaurants, shops, and the historic Firestone Mill.

The terrain along the southern portion of the route becomes mountainous with many sharp curves along the way, making for a challenging yet rewarding ride. A special feature of this route is Crowders Mountain State Park, open from 8:00 am to sunset all year except for Christmas Day (704.853.5375). Once the boundary between the hunting grounds of the Catawba and Cherokee Indians, the peaks of Crowders Mountain and Kings Pinnacle were included within the State Park in 1977 and 1987 respectively. In 1803, gold was discovered in this area and in fact, North Carolina led the nation in gold production until the California gold rush of 1849. There are two park entrances along the route, providing access to the many recreational opportunities that the park offers such as hiking, climbing, fishing, canoeing, and camping. The Linwood Road Access provides a trailhead for various hiking trails linking the Crowders Mountain with the Kings Pinnacle. The Springs Road entrance is where the main park headquarters is located, with a ranger station, campground, a lake with canoe rentals, hiking trails to Kings Mountain Pinnacle, picnic areas, and restrooms. Kings Mountain National Military Park can also be accessed from the southern portion of the route, and is approximately 5 miles from the begin/end point of the route at the South Carolina State line. Kings Mountain was the site of a battle between an irregular army of American colonists known as the "over-mountain men" and British loyalists. The battle, fought on October 7, 1780, was a rousing victory for the colonists and was one of the first battles of the Revolutionary War.

#### Route 2 - Cherryville to Mount Holly (30 miles)

This east/west route connects the towns of Cherryville, High Shoals, Stanley, and Mount Holly, passing various recreational areas along the way including the picturesque falls at High Shoals and Robert Ballard Park in Cherryville. The route traverses the gently rolling countryside along the Lincoln/Gaston County line. Access to the Cross-state Piedmont Spur, a state designated bicycle route, is provided along an unsigned connector route to the north. In terms of attractions along the route, there are shops, stores, and restaurants in downtown Cherryville, Stanley and Mount Holly for cyclists to enjoy. In downtown Cherryville, the C. Grier Beam Truck Museum chronicles the history of the Carolina Freight Corporation. The museum, which was founded in 1982 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the company, is open Friday from 10:00 am - 5:00 pm and Saturday from 10:00 am - 3:00 pm (704.435.3072). In Stanley, the Brevard Station Museum features the history of Stanley in various exhibits, highlighting the discovery of the large leafed magnolia tree by the famed French botanist Andre Michaux in 1785. The museum is only open on Wednesdays from 12:30 pm - 4:30 pm (704.263.9801).

#### Route 3 - Cherryville to Crowders Mountain (20 miles)

This north/south route, at the western edge of the county, passes through Cherryville and Bessemer City ending at Crowders Mountain State Park. Along the route between Cherryville and Bessemer City are on the lookout for Tryon County Park and a nearby country store. In Bessemer City, cyclists will pass The County Park, Founders Park, Upton Park, and various shops providing ample opportunities to take a break. The topography of the northern portion of the route, while gently rolling and sharp curves on the southern portion near Crowders Mountain State Park (see description in Route 1). The main park entrance, off of Sparrow Springs Rd. (SR 1125), provides access to various hiking trails to Kings Mountain Pinnacle, restrooms, a lake with canoe rentals, a trailhead to access primitive camping, and a ranger station.

#### Route 4 - Belmont to Cramerton (4 miles)

This east/west route connects the downtown areas of Belmont and Cramerton. Along quaint Main Street, in Belmont are antique stores, pubs, a general store (serving ice cream for those hot sunny days), and the Piedmont Carolina Railroad Museum. The Railroad Museum, open Wednesday through Saturday 10:30 am - 4:30 pm and Sunday from 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm, is located in an old railroad station and features a locomotive, a passenger car, and a caboose (704.825.4403). Near the terminus of the route at Belmont's Dwight Frady Field you pass by a restaurant and a store, as well as, another old textile mill getting a second lease on life as condominium housing. Cramerton too, offers a store downtown on Eighth Avenue.

#### Route 5 - McAdenville to Cramerton (4 miles)

This north/south route connects the historic downtowns of McAdenville and Cramerton, providing access to various parks and recreation centers in both towns. As you leave the small, yet active, downtown of McAdenville with its shops and a restaurant, you cross the South Fork River. As you approach Cramerton, you go back across the river and into downtown. Near the end of the route, at the C.L. Huss Recreation Complex, which includes a passenger car, and a caboose (704.825.4403). Near the terminus of the route at Belmont's Dwight Frady Field you pass by a restaurant and a store, as well as, another old textile mill getting a second lease on life as condominium housing. Cramerton too, offers a store downtown on Eighth Avenue.

#### Unsigned Connector Routes (42 miles)

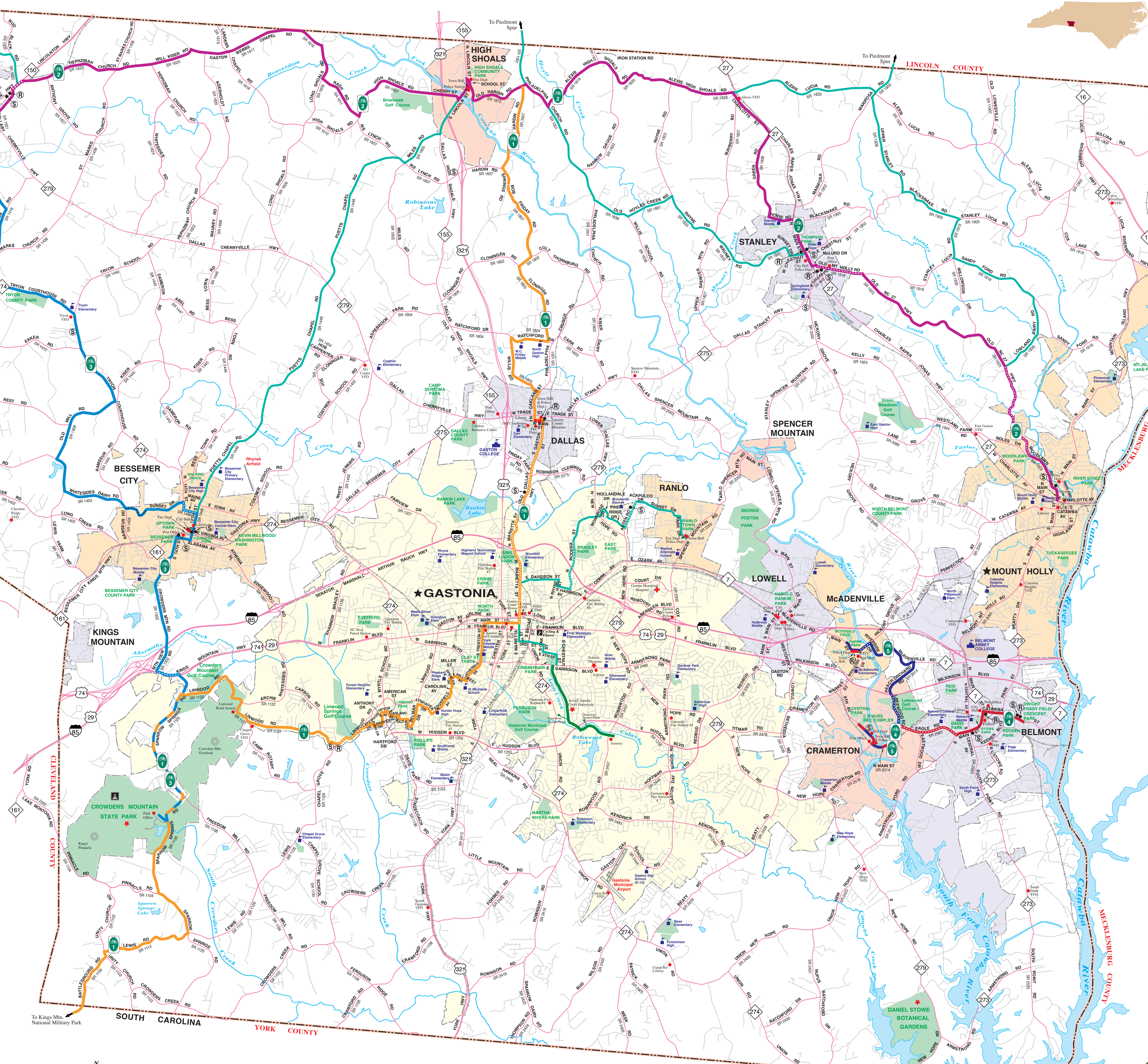
These routes, which are not signed, are shown on the map to provide alternative links between the various marked routes in Gaston County. Use them to create an endless assortment of bicycle rides throughout the county. In the Northeast corner of the county, two unsigned connectors provide cyclists access to the cross-state Piedmont Spur Route, which runs approximately 5 miles to the north, in Lincoln County.

#### Avon/Catawba Creek Greenway

Cyclists will enjoy the scenic atmosphere along this greenway, as they ride through an urban park with tall stately trees and many beautiful plantings. The short route begins/ends at either the National Guard Armory or Linsberger Park in Gastonia. The route follows the Avon and Catawba Creek along a paved trail. Park benches and picnic tables are situated along the greenway for those interested in stopping for a break or to enjoy a meal. The route is 2.5 miles in length.

### Legend

Legend containing symbols for various features: High Shoals - Crowders Mtn., McAdenville - Cramerton, Minor Roads, Major Roads, Railroads, High Traffic Areas, Interstates Highways, United States Highways, State Highways, Schools, Colleges & Universities, County Boundaries, City Boundaries, Streams, Lakes, Recreational Parks/Golf Courses, Special Points of Interest, Hospitals, Miscellaneous Points of Interest, Campgrounds, Bicycle Shops, Full Service Areas, Restaurants, Stores.



### Mileage Matrix

Table with 7 columns (Route 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Unsigned, Greenway) and 13 rows listing distances between towns such as Belmont, Bessemer City, Cherryville, Cramerton, Crowders Mountain State Park, Dallas, Gastonia, High Shoals, etc.

### Parks Matrix

Parks Matrix table with columns for various parks like Avon Moss Field, Ashland High School, etc., and rows for different amenities such as Basketball, Baseball, Soccer, etc.

### A Note of Caution

The highlighted bicycle routes shown on this map follow roads of the North Carolina highway system. These roads do not include any special accommodations for bicycles such as paved shoulders or designated bike lanes. Care has been taken to select more highly traveled roads. In a few places, however, short sections of busier roads are used to make connections where no other options exist. These areas are marked with "Share the Road" signs, like the one shown here, to alert motorists to the presence of cyclists on the road. The Gaston County bike routes are not intended for use by children, as their ability to judge traffic conditions and driver actions is not well developed.



Scale in Miles and Kilometers, and a North arrow with an inset map of the state of North Carolina.