

Basic Traffic Riding Techniques

Riding 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 destination, the width and condition of the road, and your speed.

Destination and Road Position

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

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

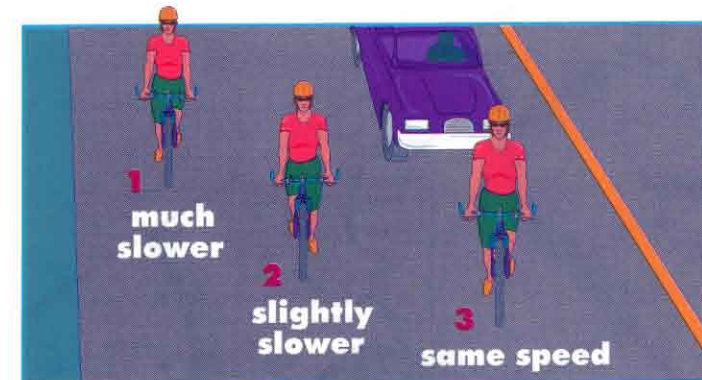
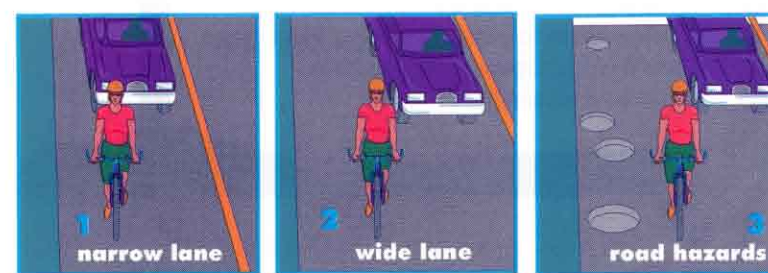
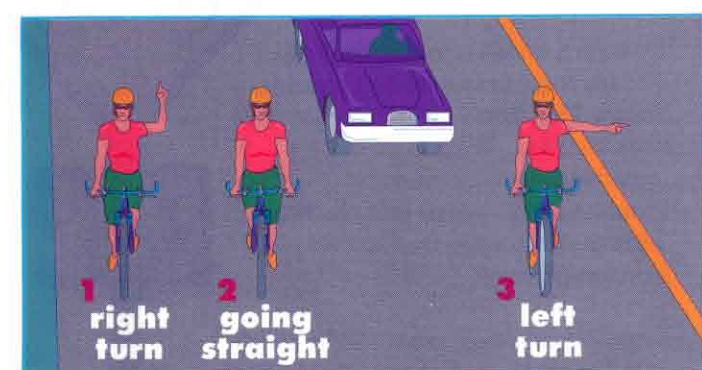
Width and Road Position

- 1 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.
- 2 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.
- 3 On a road with unsafe drain grates, gravel, debris, or potholes on the right side, ride on the smooth pavement to the left of them.

Speed and Road Position

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

- 1 When everyone else is going a lot faster than you, keep well to the right.
- 2 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.
- 3 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.

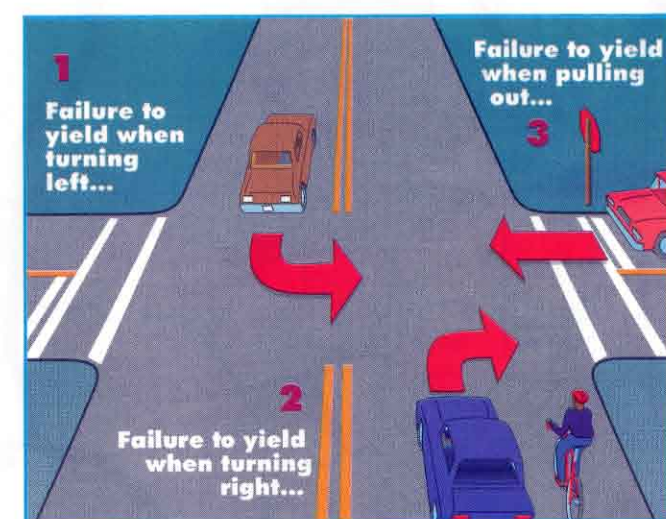


Watch For Motorist Errors

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.

Keep your eyes open for the following mistakes and be ready to take evasive action!

- 1 Watch motorists coming towards you who might turn left. Pay particular attention to their road position and, of course, any turn signals.
- 2 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.
- 3 Watch for movement that could indicate a car is coming out of a driveway or side street.



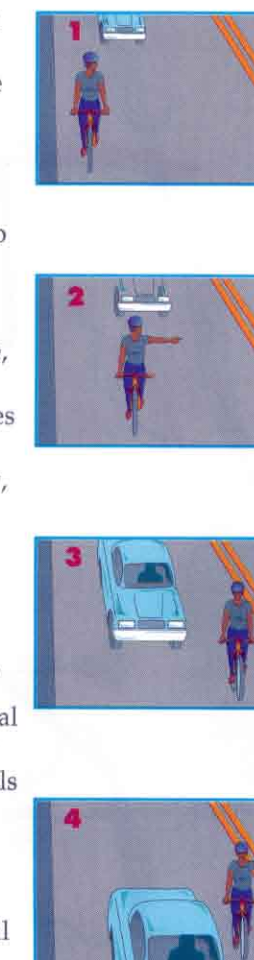
Making Left Turns

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

- 1 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.
- 2 If you can cross before they arrive, signal and merge across into a left turn position near the center line or in a left turn lane.
- 3 Once you've merged to a left turn position, ride straight and watch what's going on around you.
- 4 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.



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 \$10 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.

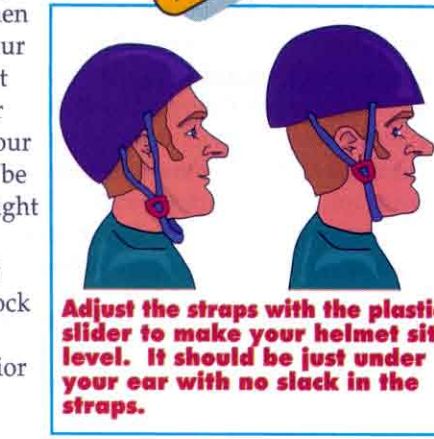


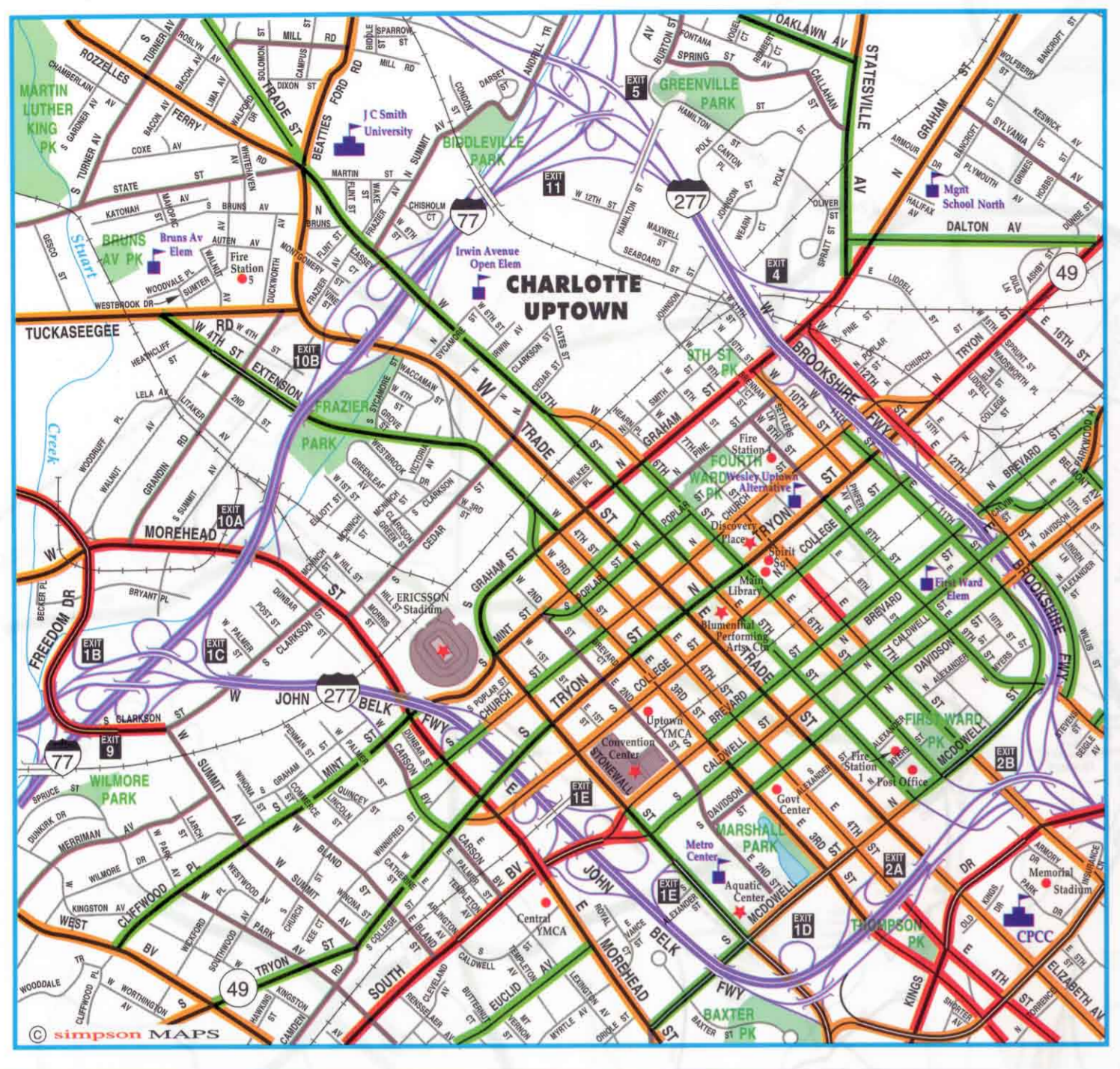
What

Get one that fits snugly but is not tight. Make sure it has ASTM, ANSI, or SNELL stickers, which prove that it has 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.





Map Usage Information

Welcome to the Bicycle Suitability Map for Mecklenburg and Western Union Counties. As you know, bicycling can be fun, economical, relatively safe and good exercise. Furthermore, it is non-polluting and helps everyone to save money and energy.

This map will help cyclists use the network of existing roadways to travel throughout the area. As you begin to experience the roadways of the Mecklenburg / Western Union area, you will realize that conditions which impact your safety can vary from street to street, but bicycles and motor vehicles can share many streets comfortably.

We have designed the Bicycle Suitability Map for Mecklenburg and Western Union Counties to assist bicyclists in choosing routes according to their own bicycling needs, preferences, experiences and abilities. It is not the intent to designate certain streets as official bicycle routes. At this time, there are no roadways marked with bike lanes in any part of the mapped area. Bicycle routes do exist in the area but are part of a state network and have no specific accommodations for the cyclist on the roadway.

The information for this map was collected by a volunteer group focused on improving bicycling in the area. This effort was supported by the North Carolina Department of Transportation, with traffic volume statistics and other valuable resources provided by the Charlotte Department of Transportation. This map's development required identification and classification of all area thoroughfares and selected collector roads by taking into account factors such as traffic speed, traffic volume and lane width. To a lesser extent pavement condition, the number of curb cuts or driveways (which increase the amount of side traffic) and the residential or commercial nature of the roadway were considered.

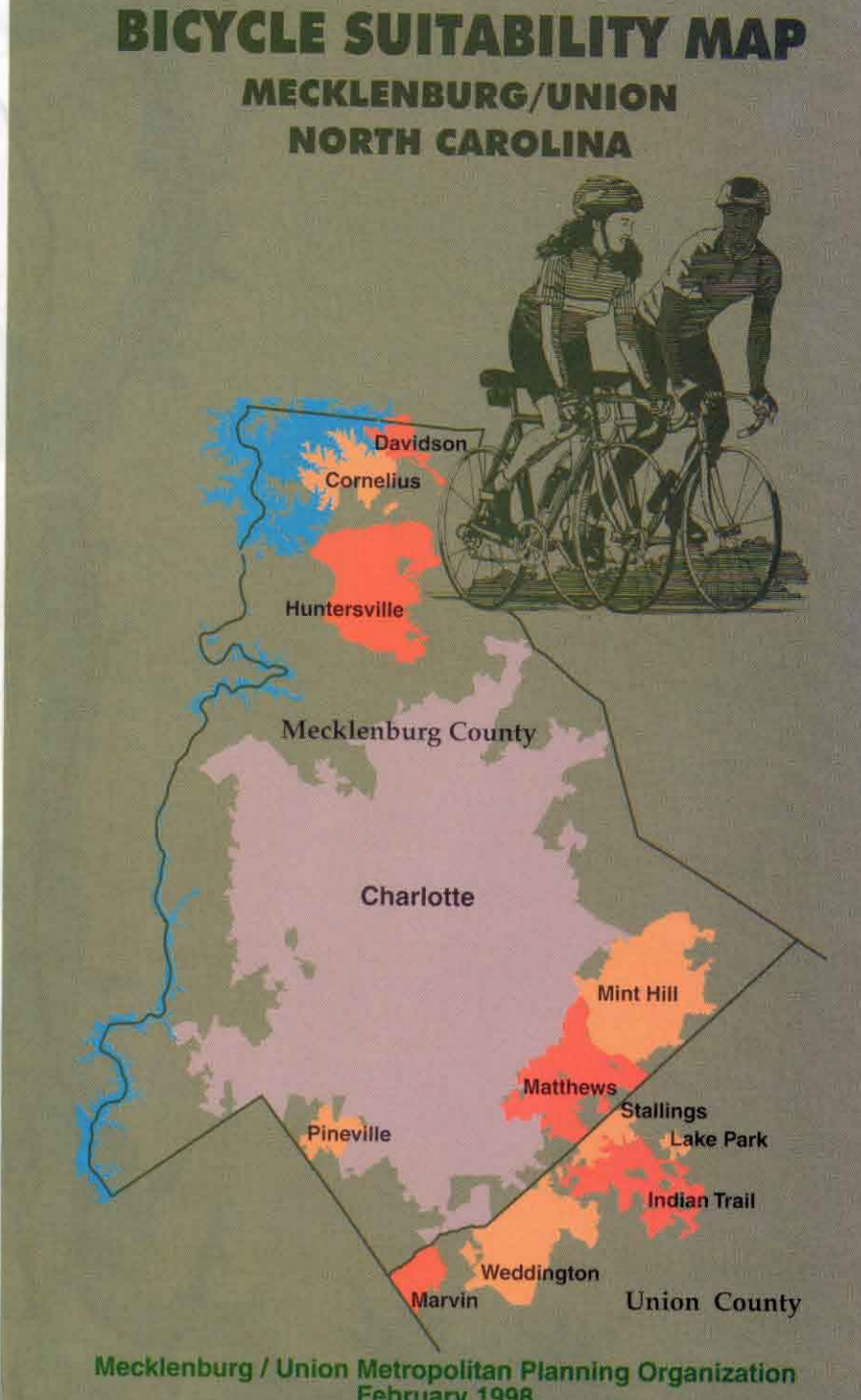
The primary purpose of this rating system is to distinguish different levels of difficulty among the roadways surveyed. Most collector streets depicted on the map were not rated or evaluated for suitability given their reduced traffic volume and local character. Cyclists can only assume that collector streets are as good or better than others until personally experienced.

This map is intended to be a planning tool for navigating the roadways based on individual cyclist's judgment and ability. Although some roads may be coded with similar difficulty ratings, not all roads in each category are represented for the same reasons. Local streets (ones that usually do not directly connect to a thoroughfare) are not rated nor do their names appear on this map, but are geographically represented to assist you in your planning and navigation. Bicyclists should be aware that morning and afternoon commuter traffic is generally heavier, so be aware of the time in which you choose to ride.

Please take the opportunity to review the valuable information provided in this map. The safety information, the rating system, and other information provided will benefit the beginning cyclist and the most experienced cyclist. We hope that all of you will find this map a useful tool for cycling in the Mecklenburg and Western Union County area. Enjoy your ride! Be Safe! Wear a Helmet!

Funding for this map was provided by the North Carolina Department of Transportation Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation as a part of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). 67,000 copies of the map were printed at a cost of \$44 each. Map published February 1998.

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Special Points of Interest

| | |
|--|---|
| Blockbuster Pavilion | 707 Pavilion Boulevard |
| Charlotte Coliseum | 100 Paul Buck Boulevard (off Tyvola Road) |
| Charlotte Convention Center | 122 East Stonewall Street |
| Community House Cabin | Community House Road |
| Discovery Place / Omnimax | 301 North Tryon Street |
| Duke Power Energy Explorium | 13339 Highway 73 (Cornelius) |
| Ericsson Stadium | 800 South Mint Street |
| Hezekiah Alexander HomeSite | 3500 Shamrock Drive |
| James K. Polk House & Memorial | 308 South Polk Street (off Highway 521) |
| Mecklenburg County Aquatic Center | 800 East Second Street |
| Metroolina Expo | 7100 Statesville Road |
| Mint Museum of Art | 2730 Randolph Road |
| North Carolina Blumenthal Performing Arts Center | 130 North Tryon Street |
| North Davidson Street Galleries | 3000 Block North Davidson Street |
| Paramounts Carowinds | 1-77 & Carowinds Boulevard |

Selected Major Parks

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Catawba River Park | 1-85 and Moores Chapel Road |
| Freedom Park | 1900 East Boulevard |
| Hornets Nest Park | 6301 Beatties Ford Road |
| Jetton Road Park | 1900J Jetton Road |
| Latta Plantation Park / Raptor Center | 5225 Sample Road |
| Mallard Creek Community Park | 3001 Johnston-Oehler Road |
| McAlpine Park & Greenway | 8711 Monroe Road |
| McDowell Park & Nature Preserve | 15222 York Road (Highway 49 South) |
| Nevin Community Park | 6000 Statesville Road |
| Park Road Park | 5300 Clossburn Street (off Park Road) |
| Reedy Creek Park & Nature Preserve | 2900 Rocky River Road |
| Revolution Park / Golf Course | 2800 Barringer Drive |
| York Road / Renaissance Park | 1536 Tyvola Road |

About The Area

The Mecklenburg Union Planning area covers 660 square miles including all of Mecklenburg County and the western part of Union County. This area occupies a significant place in the history and economy of North Carolina and offers a rich diversity of modern urban life, suburban amenities, and rural charm. Dominated by Charlotte with a 1997 population of over 500,000, the metropolitan area, with a population of 1.3 million, forms the nation's 5th largest urban region.

The region's mild climate, abundant water resources, and rolling topography, indicative of the Piedmont Carolinas, provided an excellent home for both the Catawba and Waxhaw nations. European settlers arrived in the mid 1700s along the Great Trading Path and the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road. The settlers took an aversion to English rule, purportedly adopting a Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence in 1775. During the Revolution, the constant harassment of British troops led Cornwallis to call the area a hornets nest of rebellion. Gold was discovered in 1799 and until the California gold rush, Charlotte was the largest U.S. producer. Perhaps that led to the city's current position as the nation's second largest banking center. The health and distribution industries also strengthen the region's economy.

The area is home to the NFL Carolina Panthers, the NBA Charlotte Hornets, and the Charlotte Motor Speedway, a NASCAR mecca. Symphony, opera, theater and dance events provide entertainment for the region. Institutions of higher learning such as UNC Charlotte, Johnson C. Smith University, Queens College, Davidson College and Central Piedmont Community College, an excellent public library system and numerous museums and cultural opportunities provide lots of cycling destinations. Parks cover over 12,000 acres with opportunities for soccer, football, baseball, basketball, golf, tennis, hiking, cycling, and swimming.

Average annual rainfall of 43 inches and average highs and lows in January of 31°F and 50°F and in July of 69°F and 88°F mean that cycling is possible year-round. Come ride with us!!!

- ### Mecklenburg/Union Resources
- Bicycle Shops** (arranged in order of location on map from north to south)
- 1 The Wheel 428 S. Main St. (Davidson)
 - 2 University City Bike Shop 10901 University City Blvd.
 - 3 Bicycles East 3204 N. Sharon Amity Rd.
 - 4 Myers Schwinn Bicycle Shop 1500 E. Morehead St.
 - 5 The Bike Gallery 2500 Park Rd.
 - 6 International Bicycle 5326 E. Independence Blvd.
 - 7 BikasSource 4301-A Park Rd.
 - 8 Bicycle Sport 2902 Schwynn Av.
 - 9 The Bicycle Shoppe of Matthews 2326-B Matthews Township Pkwy (Matthews)
 - 10 Bicycle Sport 8042 Providence Rd.
 - 11 Bicycles South 8914 Pinesville-Matthews Rd. (Pineville)
 - 12 Ultimate Bicycle & Fitness 10420-H Centrum Pkwy. (Pineville)
- Bicycle Clubs / Organizations**
- B.I.K.E.S. of Charlotte 6000 Rose Valley Dr. Charlotte, NC 28210
 - Mecklenburg Cannonball's Cycling Team 617 N. Summit Av., Suite 211 Charlotte, NC 28216
 - Tar Heel Cyclists P.O. Box 35392 Charlotte, NC 28235
 - Tar Heel Trailblazers P.O. Box 35273 Charlotte, NC 28235
- Mountain Biking Opportunities**
- Catawba River Park
 - York Road / Renaissance Park
 - UNC Charlotte
- Some private lands are open by special permission. Call your local bike shop or the Tar Heel Trailblazers.
- To Report Problems**
- Street Hazards:** Charlotte 336-3893, Cornelius 892-6031, Davidson 892-7971, Huntersville 875-6541, Matthews 847-3640, Mecklenburg 596-6900, Mint Hill 545-9726, Pineville 889-2291, Union County 289-1397
- Dangerous Driveways:** Mecklenburg County 336-3190, Union County 283-3789
- Animal Control:** Mecklenburg County 336-3786, Union County 283-2308
- Charlotte/Mecklenburg County:** General Information 336-7600, Parks / Greenways 336-5800
- Additional Copies and Other Local Maps**
- Copies of the Bicycle Suitability Map Mecklenburg / Union North Carolina may be obtained at the following locations:
- Bicycle Shops listed above
 - Local government locations: Charlotte DOT, Charlotte Mecklenburg Planning Commission, Mecklenburg County Engineering and Building Standards, Union County Planning Department, Selected Recreational Centers.
- For maps of cross-North Carolina, regional and county routes, urban bike maps, calendar of events, and other bicycle information, contact:
- Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation
North Carolina Department of Transportation
PO Box 25201
Raleigh, NC 27611
- Phone: (919) 733-2804
Fax: (919) 715-4422
- Map Suggestions and Corrections**
- This map will periodically be revised and reissued. If you notice any needed corrections or have suggestions for future maps, please call 336-3893 and let us know.
- Disclaimer**
- The persons and organizations involved in the development of this map in no way warrant the safety and accuracy of the highways, streets, greenways, or facilities on this map. All of the roads are used by automobiles and trucks and most have no special lanes provided for bicycles. At all times, bicyclists assume the risks of their own safety when using the roadways and/or facilities indicated on this map. The City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, Union County, the State of North Carolina, SIMPSON MAPS, and individuals and other organizations involved in developing the map shall not be held responsible for any damages whatsoever arising from its use.

Bicycle Suitability Ratings

COLLECTOR Compared to the thoroughfares below, traffic volumes are generally lower and it is assumed these roads are at least as suitable as the moderate thoroughfares. Collector roads were not rated.

MODERATE Compared to other thoroughfares, bicyclists and motorists may more safely share the road as traffic tends to be lighter and/or slower.

ADVANCED Traffic on these thoroughfares is generally heavy at peak times. In rural areas while traffic volume may be lighter, the pavement width is often narrow and speed limits are generally higher requiring a bicyclist to have more experience to safely share the road with motorists.

EXTREME CAUTION Traffic volumes and speeds are both high on these roads leaving little margin of safety for sharing the road. Only very experienced bicyclists should venture onto these roads. Use utmost caution and avoid peak traffic times.

NOT RECOMMENDED Traffic volumes and speeds, or other road conditions, are usually such that bicyclists and motorists cannot safely share the road. Bicyclists should avoid these roads.

PROHIBITED North Carolina law forbids bicyclists to ride on these limited access highways.

Ten-minute Bike Ride

| | |
|--------|-----------|
| 5 mph | 0.8 miles |
| 8 mph | 1.3 miles |
| 10 mph | 1.6 miles |
| 12 mph | 2.0 miles |
| 15 mph | 2.5 miles |

approximately:
1 inch = .82 miles
1 mile = 1.22 inches

approximately:
1 centimeter = .32 kilometers
1 kilometer = 1.92 centimeters

The ground distance between these lines on the map is 1 mile.

Map Symbols

- 4 or More Lanes Divided
- 4 or More Lanes Undivided
- 2 or 3 Lanes Major Road
- Local Roads
- Roads Proposed or Under Construction
- Railroads
- Interstate Highways
- Federal Highways
- State Highways
- City Route
- County Boundaries
- City Boundaries
- Streams and Creeks
- Lakes
- State Bike Route 6
- Piedmont Spur Route of the North Carolina Bicycling Highway System
- AMTRAK Station
- Bicycle Shops
- Golf Courses
- Recreational Parks & Greenways
- Public & Private Schools
- Colleges & Universities
- Hospitals
- Shopping Centers (S/C)
- Special Points of Interest
- Park 'N' Ride Lots (P 'N' R)
- Miscellaneous Points
- Neighborhoods / Subdivisions

Share The Road

Cars and bicycles must share roadway space. This is often difficult in Mecklenburg and Union Counties where many of the roads are required to handle large traffic volumes.

Therefore, on some major roadways that are commonly used by bicyclists, **Share The Road** warning 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 motorist pass safely.

Bicycles Are Vehicles

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

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

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.