



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IsothermalBikePlan.com

Introduction

Communities across North Carolina and throughout the U.S. are investing in bikeways because of their obligation to promote health, safety, and welfare, and because of the growing awareness of the many other benefits of a bicycle-friendly region, including overall livability. To this end, the Isothermal Planning & Development Commission and the North Carolina Department of Transportation are working together

to create safer and more connected routes for bicycling through the development of a regional bike plan. The plan was developed through an open and participatory public process, covering Cleveland, McDowell, Polk and Rutherford Counties in North Carolina. A steering committee of residents, MPO, RPO, County, Municipal, and State representatives helped guide the year-long master planning process.

MAP 3.1 PRIORITY PROJECTS

This map shows some key recommendations for bicycling in the region. For details, please see Chapter 3 of the full plan; available at: IsothermalBikePlan.com

PRIORITY PROJECTS

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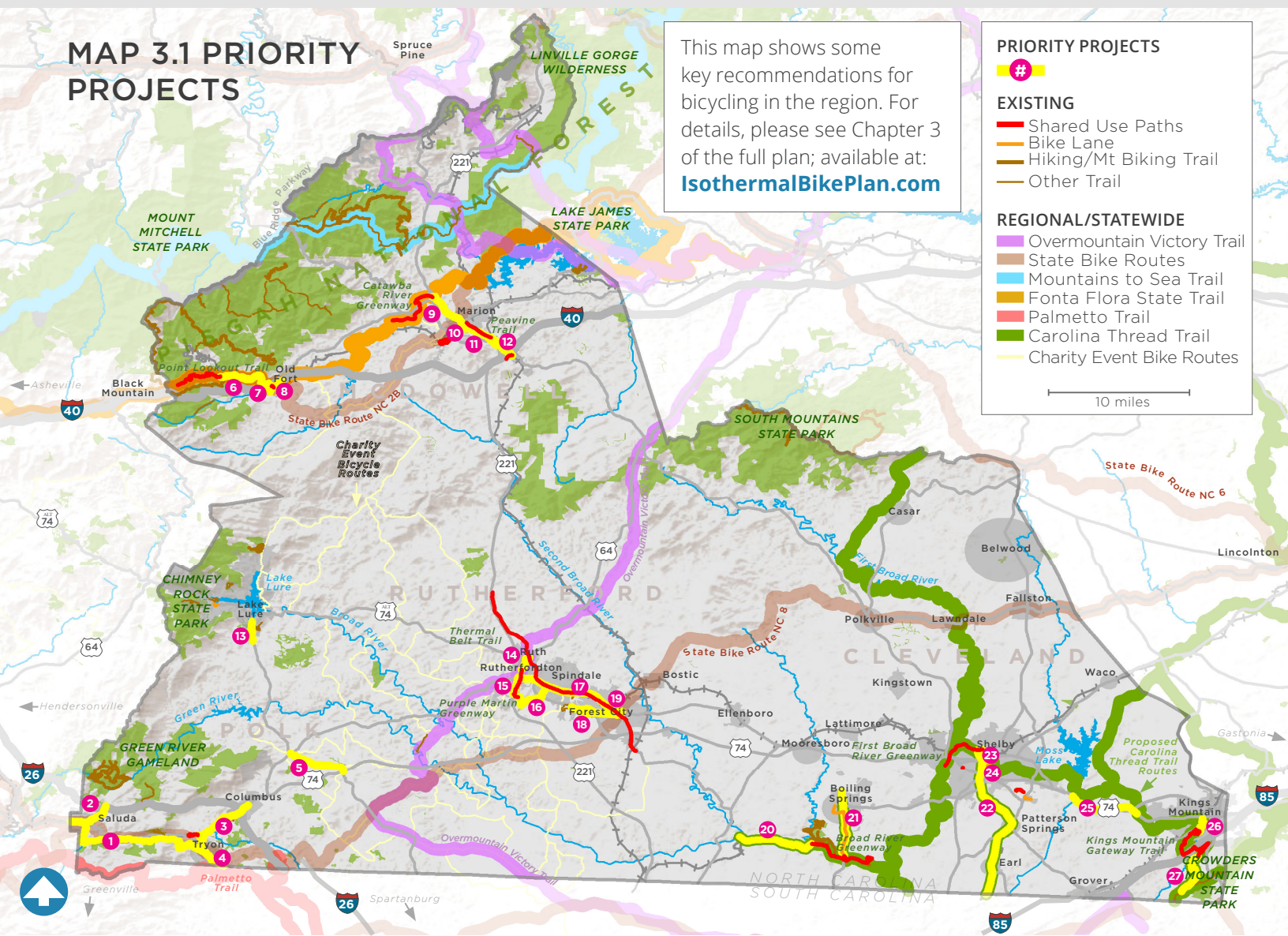
EXISTING

- Shared Use Paths
- Bike Lane
- Hiking/Mt Biking Trail
- Other Trail

REGIONAL/STATEWIDE

- Overmountain Victory Trail
- State Bike Routes
- Mountains to Sea Trail
- Fonta Flora State Trail
- Palmetto Trail
- Carolina Thread Trail
- Charity Event Bike Routes

10 miles





Plan Vision

Bicycling is an accepted, normal, and safe means of traveling in the Isothermal Region. Bicycling allows residents to experience the beauty of the region and to live healthy lifestyles. Bicycle networks, programs, and events attract people to the Isothermal region, boosting tourism and economic development.

Plan Goals



Mobility

Bicyclists will have a connected network of bicycling infrastructure for transportation and recreation purposes.



Safety

Bicyclists of all ages and abilities will experience greater separation from motor vehicles and a culture of bicycling acceptance.



Economy

Bicyclists will help diversify and boost the regional economy through tourism and increased business revenues.



Quality of Life

Bicyclists will have greater opportunity to live healthy lifestyles and have access to the beauty of the Isothermal region.



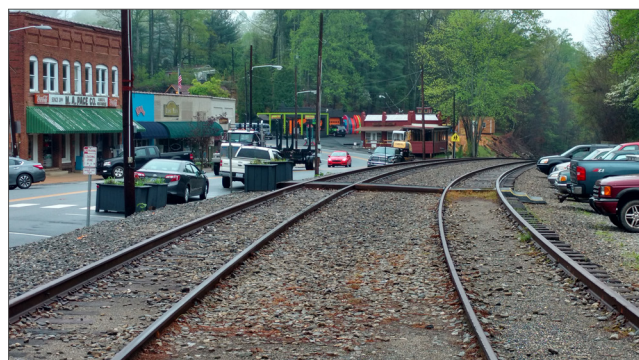
Bicyclists in Downtown Rutherfordton; Photo courtesy of the Rutherford Outdoor Coalition.

Plan Recommendations

The Regional Bicycle Network features short-term (5 to 10-year) priorities to begin linking communities and local destinations, along with a long-term (30-year) plan for regional connectivity. The short-term “catalyst” projects have the greatest impact in terms of safety and connectivity (see Map 3.1). Examples include bicycle lanes, paved shoulders, bicycle shared-lane markings, side paths, greenways, rail-trails, and similar facilities. These projects have the potential to spur momentum for the longer-term projects.

Recommended Program examples include promoting bicycle tourism, capitalizing on bicycle events, active routes to school programs, bicycle signage, and promoting bicycle safety through messaging and enforcement.

Policy Considerations include complete streets, accommodating bicycle facilities with new development, bicycle parking, connectivity, and bicycle-friendly rumble strips.



Example Recommendation: Existing conditions along the Saluda Grade Rail Bed that stretches from Saluda to Tryon in Polk County (top), and a conceptual rendering of what the Saluda Grade Rail Trail could look like along that route (bottom). This type of facility could help support local businesses through increased walking and bicycling traffic along the route.

Plan Implementation

Successful implementation will require a consistent, coordinated effort by regional planners, NCDOT, and the many counties, municipalities, private partners, stakeholders, and advocates in the region.

Implementation entails:

- Stakeholder coordination
- Project development opportunities
- Organizational framework
- Priority action steps & performance measures

The plan's action steps, policy table, cost estimates, cut-sheets, and list of design guides serve as go-to resources for implementation partners. A combination of federal, state, local and private/non-profit funding sources are listed in the appendix to get these projects from planning and design stages to implementation.

Public Process & Online Resources

This plan was developed through a public process, including:

- 39 steering committee members
- 700+ visitors to the project website
- 4 outreach sessions at local events
- 9 stakeholder interviews
- 500+ comment forms
- 200+ mapping comments
- 4 Draft Plan public open house workshops
- 5+ Final Plan presentations

Please visit the project web page for more information, including the full planning document, detailed recommendation maps, and user-friendly bicycle tourism maps:

IsothermalBikePlan.com



Division of
Bicycle &
Pedestrian
Transportation

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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