



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY *for the* **CAPE FEAR REGIONAL BICYCLE PLAN**

2017

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. The Cape Fear Council of Governments led the development of this regional bicycle transportation plan with a planning grant from the North Carolina Department of

Transportation (NCDOT). The purpose is to identify opportunities and constraints for bicycling, and establish recommendations for improvement. The study area covers Brunswick, Columbus, New Hanover, and Pender Counties, as well as parts of Bladen, Onslow, and Sampson Counties. A steering committee of residents, MPO, RPO, County, Municipal, and State representatives helped guide the year-long master planning process.



This map shows the basic concept of connectivity for bicycling in the region; for detailed recommendation maps and project cut-sheets, please visit: www.capefearcog.org/regionalbikeplan



Plan Vision

“Bicycling is a safe and accessible form of transportation and recreation for residents and visitors in the Cape Fear Region. Key destinations are served by well-connected bikeways, increasing tourism and promoting economic development. Bicycling, as a means of recreation and transportation, enhances the health and well-being of people and communities throughout the region.”

Plan Goals



Increase Transportation Choices

Improve connectivity of the bicycle network while increasing accessibility to transit and key destinations throughout the region.



Improve Safety for All Bicyclists

Improve the quality and safety of bicycling through new infrastructure, policies and programs, for all types of bicyclists.



Improve Health and Well-being of Communities

Improve health and wellness by increasing access to bikeways, thereby offering more opportunities for recreation, active transportation, and physical activity.



Create Value & Generate Economic Activity

Promote bicycle-related tourism and economic development, thereby increasing quality of life in the Cape Fear Region.



Plan Recommendations

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

Recommended Program examples include promoting bicycle-friendly transit, bicycle tourism brochures, 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 East Coast Greenway route between Sunset Beach and Ocean Isle Beach (Beach Dr, top), and a conceptual rendering of what a shared use path 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 bicycle facility design guidelines provide a go-to resource for statewide and national best practices. A combination of federal, state, local and private/non-profit funding sources are recommended to get these projects from planning and design stages to implementation.

Public Process & Online Resources

This plan was developed through a public process, including:

- 31 steering committee members
- 2,534 visitors to the project website
- 5 outreach sessions at local events
- 50+ local organizations contacted
- 450+ comment forms
- 150+ wiki-map comments
- 8 Draft Plan public outreach opportunities
- Final Plan presentations throughout the study area

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

**[www.capefearcog.org/
regionalbikeplan](http://www.capefearcog.org/regionalbikeplan)**

