



LAKE NORMAN REGIONAL BICYCLE PLAN

Executive Summary





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The Lake Norman Regional Bicycle Plan is the culmination of years of work. The concept it describes was first envisioned nearly seven years ago as a means for bicyclists to travel around Lake Norman through Mecklenburg, Iredell, Catawba and Lincoln Counties. NCDOT contracted with Centralina Council of Governments (CCOG) in early 2009 to write a regional bicycle plan for the Lake Norman area. This was to be the first plan of its type in North Carolina. The process used for its development is intended to serve as a model for the creation of similar plans in other portions of the State. Participating communities involved in the Study included:

- Catawba County
- Town of Cornelius
- Town of Davidson
- Town of Huntersville
- Iredell County
- Lincoln County
- Mecklenburg County
- Town of Mooresville
- Town of Troutman



Also deeply involved in the development of the Study were the regional transportation organizations that serve these communities. Those organizations included (1) Unifour Rural Planning Organization (Catawba County); (2) Lake Norman Rural Planning Organization (Iredell and Lincoln Counties, Mooresville and Troutman), NCDOT Division 10 and Division 12 and Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville and Mecklenburg County). Carolina Thread Trail staff also served on the Steering Committee. Thread Trail plans were being developed for Lincoln and Mecklenburg Counties at roughly the same time as this Plan was being written and their input was incorporated into the Plan.

The plan was written in 2009, with adoption by NCDOT in 2010. Centralina staff assembled a Steering Committee of representatives from transportation, land use, recreation, and environmental perspectives. Interested citizens were also given an opportunity to attend and participate in Study discussions. Ultimately, 120+ persons showed interest in the Study's development and asked to be included on the distribution list for Steering Committee meetings. The Steering Committee met monthly throughout 2009. They assisted in the development and review of background information, text for the plan, and route recommendations.



The actual route chosen to circumnavigate Lake Norman was split into *Initial* and *Ultimate* routes. The *Initial Route* includes those segments that are already appropriate for bicyclists, or will be with limited improvements. The NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation intends to install signage along the *Initial Route* in 2010. The *Ultimate Route* includes future segments of the Carolina Thread Trail and improved roads, such as NC 150 and Perth Road that together create the ideal route around the Lake. The two routes are shown on the Recommended Routes map.

The Initial and Ultimate Routes together contain approximately 50 segments that will require many years and millions of dollars to construct. To focus limited resources, the Plan prioritizes these segments and identifies a high priority list that represents moderate cost capital projects for communities to reference when applying for grants. Total cost for implementation of each of the nine high priority projects is currently estimated to be approximately \$15 million. The Plan includes a range of funding strategies to implement the Route. Some of these strategies involve coordination with private development, NCDOT road widenings and resurfacings, grant applications, and local funding.

In recognition of the many years likely to be required to implement the Plan, and the number of local governments and organizations necessarily involved, NCDOT asked that an enduring organization be created to sustain interest and coordinate activities among each of the affected parties. The Lake Norman Regional Bicycle Route Task Force was created to provide a forum for those parties to meet periodically after the Plan's adoption and to coordinate efforts on the Route, including recommending route amendments and sanctioning bicycling events along the route. The Task Force includes each of the organizations and communities directly affected by the Plan.

The Lake Norman Regional Bicycle Plan could not have been developed without the continued participation by each of the communities and organizations involved. Their comments helped to develop an informed and practical bicycle route plan that reflects the needs of those communities while providing specific guidance to all affected entities on how to implement its recommendations.

