

US Bicycle Route System (USBRS)
2017 Corridor 15, Option B Assessment
Lula to Clarkesville
September 2017

Developed by:



PO Box 1720
Gainesville, GA 30503
www.gmrc.ga.gov

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INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

(Features content taken from www.adventurecycling.org)

The U.S. Bicycle Route System (USBRS) is a developing national network of bicycle routes, which connects urban, suburban, and rural areas using roads, trails, and other facilities appropriate for bicycle travel. To date, 11,243 miles of U.S. Bicycle Routes have been established in 24 states and the District of Columbia. The goal is to enable bicyclists to traverse across the country in a safer environment, and by doing so encouraging more people to travel, to encourage more outdoor recreation, and to continue the growth of this popular tourist industry.



Map of the USBRS, courtesy of www.adventurecycling.org

The USBRS involves partnerships between transportation agencies, bicycle and trail organizations, and volunteers. Routes are nominated for official designation by state

departments of transportation and approved by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). In Georgia, after the successful introduction of USBRS Route 21, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) began coordinating with the State's 12 regional commissions to formalize work on the remaining portions of the system proposed for the state.

This document concerns the corridor proposed for Route 15 through the Georgia Mountains region, which would run north and south from North Carolina down to the Athens, Ga, area and eventually down through central Georgia and into Florida. This document is the preliminary assessment of route options, preferences, obstacles and opportunities. The information collected in 2016 was used to identify Option B: Lula to Clarkesville as the targeted route and establish the implementation plan that would lead to formal designation as part of the USBRS.

USBRS PROFILE

For the past few decades bicycling and bicycle travel are booming around the world. It is currently regarded as the sixth most popular recreational activity in the U.S., with a rapidly growing niche industry catering to bicycling enthusiasts and bike-related tourism.

- According to the National Sporting Goods Association 95 million adults ride bicycles. U.S. bicyclists have a mean income of about \$60,000 and there are more bicyclists than skiers, golfers, and tennis players combined.
- Adventure Cycling Association has over 48,000 members. Over the last 10 years, the organization has seen a 27% growth in membership and a 42% growth in sales of bicycle-touring maps.
- The U.S. bicycle industry has annual sales of \$6 billion and employs roughly 100,000 people selling 16M bicycles per year according to the National Bicycle Dealers Association. Learn more about its economic impact.

In response to the increased demand for options for bicycling, many communities, governments and other stakeholders have sought to foster formal routes and trails that safely enable the activity while also creating new transportation networks. Included among these efforts is the effort to create a nationwide infrastructure with coordination from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), a nonprofit, nonpartisan association representing highway and transportation departments in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. AASHTO's Special Committee on U.S. Route Numbering reviews U.S. Bicycle Route applications from state departments of transportation and assigns a numbered designation, similar to the U.S. highway system. AASHTO's support for the USBRS is crucial to earning the support of federal and state agencies.

The National Corridor Plan is the overarching master plan for the nationwide network, and serves as a template that is used by route planners in each state to show the possible route

connections between states. It provides a visual plan for how the USBRS will look when all of the estimated 50,000+ miles of corridors have been completely developed and designated. Corridors are 50-mile wide areas that are used as templates to show planners where a U.S. Bicycle Route could be developed. Corridors are trunk lines that show where and how USBRs will eventually connect states, international borders and other USBRs. They link key destinations, urban centers, and scenic routes, and can be shifted or added by a state department of transportation with concurrence from neighboring states (if affected) and approval from the AASHTO Task Force on U.S. Bicycle Routes. Many corridors suggest development of USBRs along existing bicycle routes or networks, such as the Adventure Cycling Route Network, the East Coast Greenway, the Mississippi River Trail, and the Great Allegheny Passage, among others.

Historical Development

In 1982, AASHTO approved two U.S. Bicycle Routes: USBR 1 in Virginia and North Carolina and USBR 76 in Virginia, Kentucky, and Illinois. After these two routes were designated, no additional routes were nominated and the project lay dormant for over 20 years.

In 2003, in an effort to reinvigorate the U.S. Bicycle Route System, AASHTO formed a Task Force on U.S. Bicycle Routes, which included Adventure Cycling Association, among other organizations. By 2009, the Task Force had created the National Corridor Plan and the AASHTO application, and formalized a process that states could use to designate USBRs. Adventure Cycling began providing staff support help state partners designate routes in 2005 and continues to be the go-to resource for USBRS information and guidance.

To get a picture of what already existed, the Task Force on U.S. Bicycle Routes developed an Inventory Report and Inventory Map, which documented existing bicycle routes nationwide. The inventory included national routes like the Adventure Cycling Route Network, state bicycle routes, and local bike paths and trails. Using the Inventory Map and corridor criteria, they created the National Corridor Plan, which prioritized and defined numbered 'corridors' for cross-country cycling routes linking destinations, cities, and transportation hubs. The National Corridor Plan suggests the best placement for U.S. Bicycle Routes based on the task force's extensive research; it is intended as a guide for states wishing to implement U.S. Bicycle Routes.

There is no dedicated federal funding for the U.S. Bicycle Route System at this time, however federal funding mechanisms exist that are appropriate for USBRs. The USBRS uses existing roads and trails in order to help keep cost of implementation low, and state departments of transportation often build collaborations or use volunteer support when faced with limited staff capacity or funding. Adventure Cycling provides dedicated staff support for system development and receives small grants and donations through our May fundraiser called *Build it. Bike it. Be a Part of it.*

DESIGNATION

Designation signifies that a route is officially recognized and approved with a route number designated by AASHTO. AASHTO's Special Committee on U.S. Route Numbering does not approve the suitability of the route for bicycle travel; this is determined by state DOTs. The committee reviews the numbered designation to make sure it is standardized. For a route to receive official designation as a U.S. Bicycle Route, it must connect two or more states, a state and an international border, or other U.S. Bicycle Routes. State or international neighbors must provide a letter of acknowledgement for the route's cross-over point.

U.S. Bicycle Route designation brings significant economic, transportation, environmental, and health benefits and puts your community on the national map as a bicycle tourism destination. Designating a USBR creates interstate connections and possibilities for cross-country travel by bike, bringing out-of-state tourism spending and generating interest in your region.

State departments of transportation (DOTs) coordinate the designation process which includes selecting and documenting a route and gaining support from road owners along the route. DOTs submit an application to nominate a USBR for numbered designation through AASHTO.

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC) has been tasked with assisting the GDOT with identifying the possible and recommended route options for USBRS corridor 15. This involved field assessments of the roadways running north-south between North Carolina and the southern GMRC boundaries, where the route would connect with recommended options being assessed by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission. The primary exercise at this stage was to travel the roadways and gauge their suitability and preference as the selected route for a nationally promoted bike network. This included reviewing the roads for traffic volumes, general bike safety conditions, ease of use and connections, and the potential to connect with other area destinations or trails.

It also involved laying the groundwork for establishing eventual contacts for local governments and stakeholder groups that would be consulted in the second phase of the corridor assessment. Once the GMRC and GDOT have selected primary options the GMRC will work with area stakeholders and bike enthusiasts to refine and select the preferred route for candidacy. The GMRC will then also work with local governments in establishing their support and agreements to assist in maintenance and promotion of the USBRS route.

DRAFTING THE ROUTE: OPTION B LULA TO CLARKESVILLE

Adventure Cycling proposed general options for route criteria and an evaluation method that has been developed to start drafting candidate routes:

- Use state or local bicycle route maps which often show more routing options than state highway maps. This is where the local knowledge of bike clubs and cyclists can be very helpful.
- Review your state or local trail systems and determine what might fit into the route. Trail surfaces must be suitable for touring bikes (pavement or crushed, hard-pressed gravel) and trail connections must be easy to locate. It might take local knowledge to ensure suitability of trails for bicycle touring.
- Assess whether there are existing bicycle touring routes along the chosen corridor such as an Adventure Cycling route.
- Assess need for infrastructure improvements and consider alternative routes. If the roads along your draft route need long-term improvements to be suitable according to USBR route criteria, consider temporary or alternative routes as a short-term solution. Realignment of the USBR can be made once the improvements are completed. In addition, if there are excellent opportunities to include options, alternative routes may be included in the designation.
- Make the draft route available to stakeholders for comment, suggestions and buy-in using an online and/or printed map. Instructions and tutorials for drafting routes using Google Maps is available upon request. Draft routes can also be incorporated into Open Cycle Map.

In 2016 the GMRC considered route recommendations and criteria based on other resources provided by AASHTO and Adventure Cycling (listed in appendices) and used these to help assess potential roadways throughout the process.

Given the general location of the proposed USBRS 15 corridor, the GMRC first recognized the crossover opportunities with portions of the Georgia Statewide Bicycle Highway (SBH) network. SBH Routes 55 and 85 are north-south proposals that would provide on-road routes with eventual plans for dedicated bike lanes along select State routes and local roads. These routes were identified based on their connections with key destinations, an existing level of riders, and the level of safety provided for cyclists available on these routes. Building off of the existing SBH network would foster stronger support for bike routes along the designated corridors and lead to a more bona fide dedicated bicycle infrastructure, in terms of both lanes and trails as well as supporting amenities such as trail heads and signage.

Building off of this approach, then, the GMRC staff explored roadway options that would connect the suggested southern terminus (near Maysville and Commerce) to either of the two prominent northern connections with North Carolina: US441 near Dillard or SR75 near

Hiawassee. Either option has its merits and issues and will be reviewed in conjunction with contacts in North Carolina as they designate their preferred route.

In assessing roadway options the GMRC tried to stick with State Routes as the preferred type, both to ensure a standard of road design but also to simplify the long-term maintenance of the USBRS facilities and keep their design and oversight under the auspices of GDOT rather than local governments. However, some local roads have been targeted both for the efficiency of the route and for possible access to area attractions.

Where possible the GMRC stayed away from main arterials, so as to minimize the volume and severity of bicycle-vehicular interactions. Most routes identified are two lane roads through rural scenes and small towns.

The result of the GMRC field assessment in 2016 was a pair of options, A and B, which differ solely, based on the different connection points in North Carolina. Option B, the selected route was determined more on the preferences in NC as they weigh the concerns and options within more mountainous terrain and further assessed in this document for implementation in 2017.

USBRS OPTION B LULA TO CLARKESVILLE POINTS OF INTEREST

1. Lula:

- 1A. Veteran's Park: 6007 Main St.
- 1B. At the Tracks Restaurant: 6009 Main St.
- 1C. Lula Pharmacy & Ice Cream: 6102 Banks St.

2. Alto:

- 2A. City Park: 155 S. Grant St.
- 2B. Alto Grocery (Convenience Store): 3705 Gainesville Hwy.

3. Baldwin:

- 3A. Mitchell Gailey Memorial City Park: 155 Willingham Ave.
- 3B. Stew N Que Restaurant: 1065 Willingham Ave.
- 3C. Dairy Queen: 154 US-441
- 3D. Taqueria el Mexicano: 1484 Willingham Ave.

4. Cornelia:

- 4A. Depot Splash Park: 102 Grant Pl.
- 4B. Fenders Diner: 631 Irvin St.
- 4C. Bigg Daddy's Restaurant and Tavern: 137 Hodges St.
- 4D. Food Factory on Main: 150 Main St. N.
- 4E. Cornelia Pharmacy: 103 Clarkesville St.

5. Mt. Airy:

- 5A. Mt. Airy Railroad Car Park: 877 Dicks Hill Pkwy.
- 5B. Lake Russell Convenience Store: 1321 Dicks Hill Pkwy.
- 5C. Mt. Airy Express Convenience Store: 2085 Dicks Hill Pkwy.
- 5D. Dollar General: 2347 GA-197

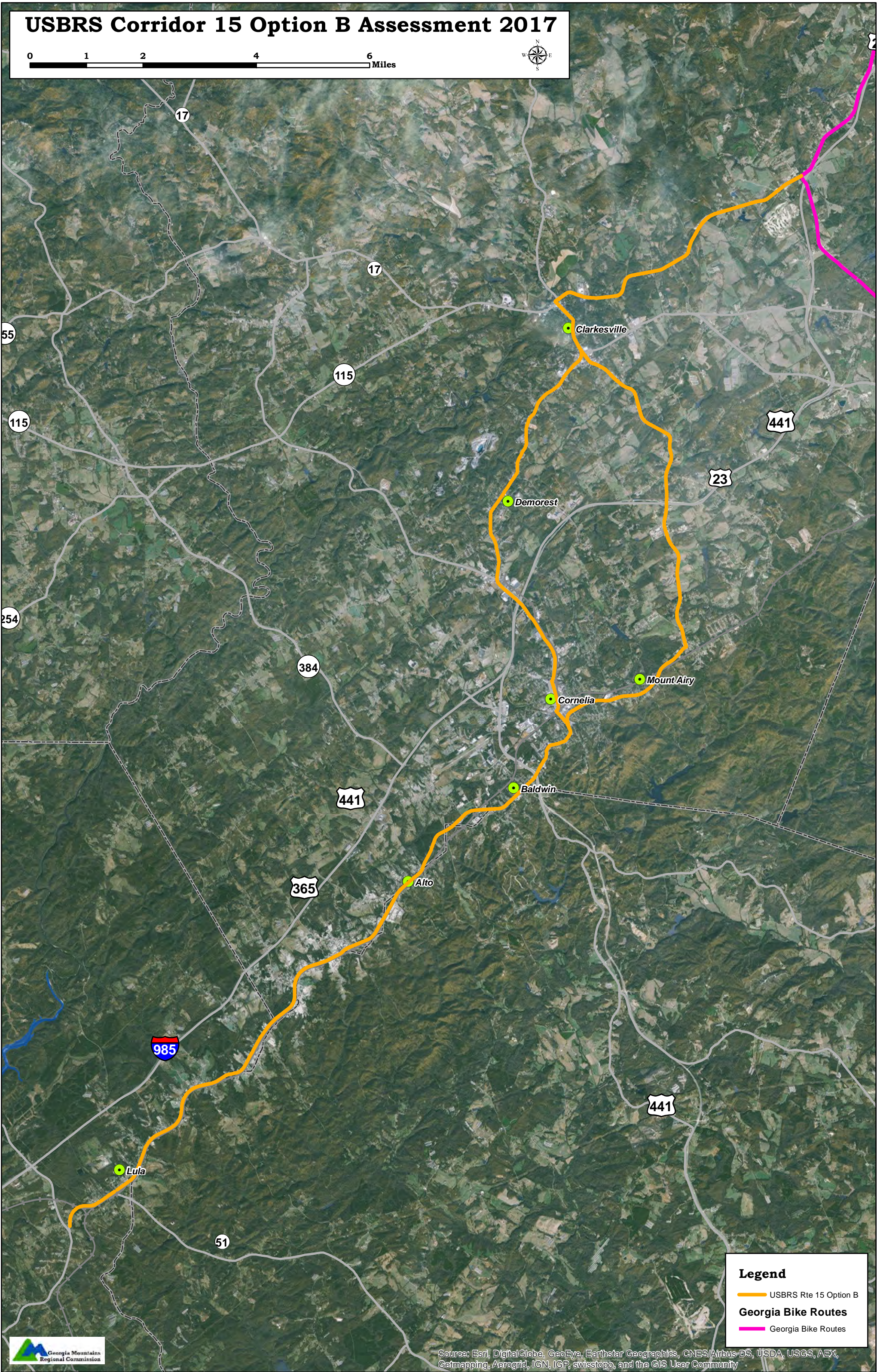
6. Clarkesville:

- 6A. Pitts Park: Columbus Ave.
- 6B. Stoney's Restaurant: 389 Washington St.
- 6C. Huddle House: 459 Washington St.
- 6D. Rite Aid: 1235 Washington St.
- 6E. Downtown Clarkesville: Washington St.

7. Demorest:

- 7A. Demorest Springs Park: 559 Georgia St.
- 7B. Sweet Breads: 579 Georgia St.

USBRS Corridor 15 Option B Assessment 2017



Legend

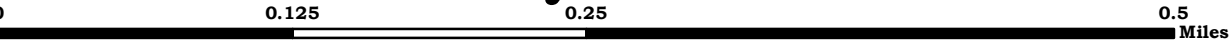
- USBRS Rte 15 Option B
- Georgia Bike Routes
- Georgia Bike Routes



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

USBRS Corridor 15 Option B Assessment 2017

City of Lula



Legend

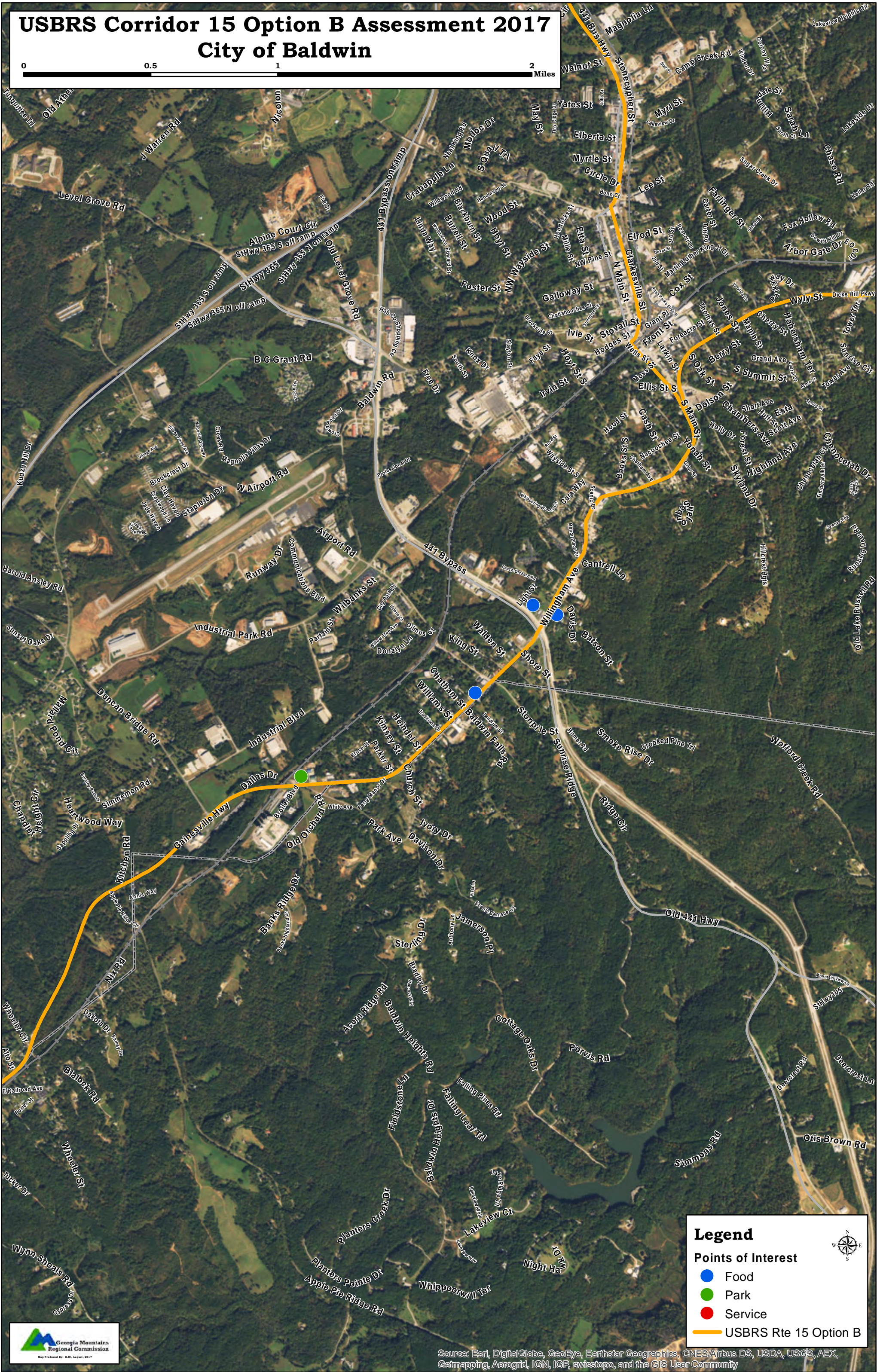
Points of Interest

- Food
- Park
- Service
- USBRS Rte 15 Option B

N
S
E
W

USBRS Corridor 15 Option B Assessment 2017

City of Baldwin



Legend

Points of Interest

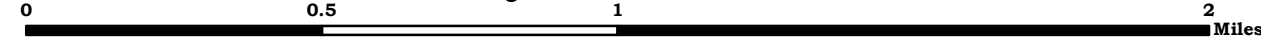
Food

Park

Service

USBRS Rte 15 Option B

0 0.5 1 2 Miles



USBRS Corridor 15 Option B Assessment 2017

City of Mt. Airy



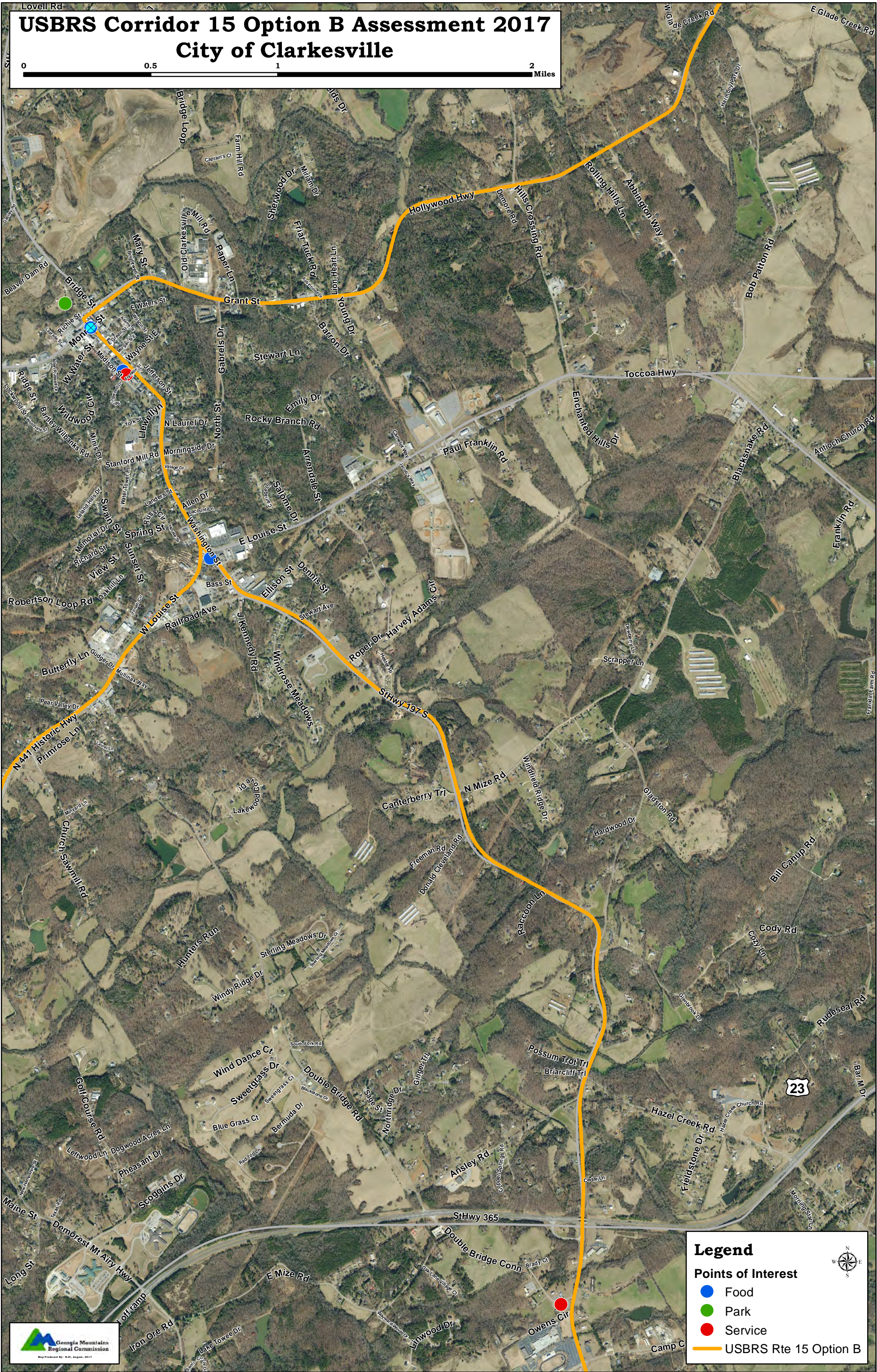
Legend

Points of Interest

- Food
- Park
- Service
- USBRS Rte 15 Option B

USBRS Corridor 15 Option B Assessment 2017

City of Clarkesville



Legend

Points of Interest

- Food
- Park
- Service
- USBRS Rte 15 Option B



0 0.5 1 2 Miles





Figure 1. Lula Gateway.



Figure 2. Lula historic downtown along bike route.



Figure 3. Lula historic downtown and Veteran's Park.



Figure 4. Lula historic depot.



Figure 5. Veteran's Park: 6007 Main St.



Figure 6. At the Tracks Restaurant: 6009 Main St.



Figure 7. Lula Pharmacy & Ice Cream: 6102 Banks St along bike route.



Figure 8. Lula downtown historic character along the route.



Figure 9. Alto gateway.



Figure 10. City Park: 155 S. Grant St.



Figure 11. Route through Alto.



Figure 12 Alto Grocery (Convenience Store): 3705 Gainesville Hwy.



Figure 13. Route through Alto past the Alto grocery store.



Figure 14. Baldwin gateway.



Figure 15. Mitchell Gailey Memorial City Park: 155 Willingham Ave.



Figure 16. Stew N Que Restaurant: 1065 Willingham Ave.



Figure 17. Dairy Queen: 154 US-441.



Figure 18. Taqueria el Mexicano: 1484 Willingham Ave.



Figure 19. Historic house along bike route in Baldwin.



Figure 20. Cornelia Gateway.



Figure 21. Irvin Street Park.



Figure 22. Depot Splash Park: 102 Grant Pl.



Figure 23. Cornelia Depot and Splash Pad seating.



Figure 24. Fenders Diner: 631 Irvin St.



Figure 25. Bigg Daddy's Restaurant and Tavern: 137 Hodges St.



Figure 26. Food Factory on Main: 150 Main St. N.



Figure 27. Cornelia Pharmacy: 103 Clarkesville St.



Figure 28. Mt. Airy gateway.



Figure 29. Mt. Airy Railroad Car Park: 877 Dicks Hill Pkwy.



Figure 30. Lake Russell Convenience Store: 1321 Dicks Hill Pkwy.



Figure 31. Mt. Airy Express Convenience Store: 2085 Dicks Hill Pkwy and GA-197.



Figure 32. Dollar General: 2347 GA-197.



Figure 33. Route along GA-197.



Figure 34. Route along GA-197 and overpass for Hwy 23.



Figure 35. Route along GA-197.



Figure 36. Clarkesville gateway.



Figure 37. Pitts Park: Columbus Ave.



Figure 38. Stoney's Restaurant: 389 Washington St.



Figure 39. Huddle House: 459 Washington St.



Figure 40. Rite Aid: 1235 Washington St.



Figure 41. Downtown Clarkesville: Washington St.



Figure 42. Demorest gateway and Piedmont College.



Figure 43. Bike route through Demorest.



Figure 44. Demorest Springs Park: 559 Georgia St.



Figure 45. Sweet Breads: 579 Georgia St. in downtown Demorest.

IMPLEMENTATION

Each city along the bicycle corridor was consulted to review and offer suggestions regarding the proposed route and what type of implementation measures such as signage could aid in the corridors success. Positive feedback has been received for the project as it helps the cities achieve greater walkability and tourism throughout the region.

Habersham Bicycles, which has a shop in Alto and Gainesville, was also consulted to review the route from a “users” standpoint. Many bicyclists who frequent the shop in fact already utilize the route and enjoy the moderate terrain and support such a designation.

APPENDICES

Corridor and Route Criteria for U.S. Bike Route System

US Task Force on Numbered Bicycle Routes

Revised June 2006

Tips For Bikeway Designation

By Michael E. Jackson

Director of Bicycle and Pedestrian Access

Maryland Department of Transportation

Adventure Cycling Association's Route Philosophy

Bicycle Shops within the Georgia Mountains region

Corridor and Route Criteria for U.S. Bike Route System

US Task Force on Numbered Bicycle Routes

Revised June 2006

It is the aim of the AASHTO Task Force on Numbered Bicycle Routes to encourage the development of a coordinated system of interstate bicycle routes. The Task Force is charged with developing a recommended national systems level or corridor-level plan for use in designating potential future U.S. bicycle routes. In developing this corridor plan, the task force recognized the need to establish guiding principles for selecting and/or recognizing routes for inclusion.

The Route/Corridor Criteria provide guidance to the Task Force for developing the corridor-level plan. The Specific Route Criteria may be incorporated at a local level as the corridor plan is adopted by state and local agencies and state routes are designated. The criteria are broken down into Primary and Secondary considerations in order to prioritize the criteria.

While the following criteria provide a guide for consistency, they are not intended to supersede state and local agencies' policies on designing cycling facilities nor are they intended to create a uniform approach which might be determined unfeasible, given the expanse and varying terrain and population densities across the U.S. When choosing a corridor/route and the specifics of a given route implementation, the totality of the route must be considered. It may well be that portions of a route do not meet these criteria but that when taken all together, they represent the best choice to achieve the goal of the route.

Corridor Criteria

Corridors should meet as many of the following Primary Considerations as practicable:

1. Meet the planning, design, and operational criteria in the *AASHTO Guide for Development of Bicycle Facilities*.
2. Access destinations and regions with high tourism potential, including routes that incorporate important scenic, historic, cultural, and recreational values.
3. Link major metropolitan areas to connect key attractions and transportation nodes.
4. Reasonably direct in connecting cities or attractions.
5. Make natural connections between adjoining states, Canada, and Mexico when possible.
6. Have more or less even distribution north to south, east to west, though route density will need to consider both population density (greater populations may equal higher route densities) and available, suitable roads.
7. Include major existing and planned bike routes, including both on-road facilities and off-road shared use paths and trails that are suitable for road bikes.

8. Offer services and amenities such as restaurants, accommodations, camping, bicycle shops, and convenience/grocery stores at appropriate intervals. *(Secondary Consideration)*

Specific Route Criteria

Specific Routes should meet as many of the following Primary Considerations as practicable:

1. Meet the planning, design, and operational criteria in the AASHTO Guide for Development of Bicycle Facilities. .
2. Offer services and amenities such as restaurants, accommodations, camping, bicycle shops, and convenience/grocery stores at appropriate intervals.
3. Go into the centers of metropolitan areas, using low-traffic and/or off-road bikeways when possible. Bypass routes could be considered to accommodate users who don't wish to enter the city or who are seeking a less urban experience.
4. Include spurs to target destinations (universities or other educational institutions, recreational areas, or other attractions) and to multimodal nodes such as airports and rail, bus, and transit stations.
5. Follow natural corridors and provide terrain suitable for cycling, avoiding extremely hilly and limited visibility winding roads when feasible.
6. Consider appropriate combinations of low daily traffic, low truck traffic, wide paved shoulders, lane striping, adequate sight distance, and traffic speed in order to be bicycle friendly.
7. In urban areas, be suitable for utility cycling (commuting, access to shopping, schools and universities, recreation centers, etc.). Consideration should be given to bicycle routes that can be used as evacuation routes for emergency situations.
8. Include major existing and planned bike routes, including both on-road facilities and off-road shared use paths and trails that are suitable for road bikes.
9. May include short stretches of high quality unpaved roads if needed to connect highly desirable paved road sections. (These roads should maintain the standard of road bike suitability). *(Secondary Consideration)*

Tips for Bikeway Designation

By Michael E. Jackson

Director of Bicycle and Pedestrian Access

Maryland Department of Transportation

Bikeway Selection Factors

SHA's Bicycle and Pedestrian Design Guidelines provides detailed help with bikeway selection.

Many decision makers may not have ridden a bicycle since they obtained a driver's license. This lack of having a recent "*handlebar perspective*" may complicate decision-making regarding bikeway designation. If a decision maker doesn't personally feel safe riding a bicycle along roadways under consideration for bikeway designation, they may feel uncomfortable encouraging others to ride along those roadways. Furthermore, under such conditions some traffic engineers may feel that bikeway designations may open them and their agencies to liability suits in the event someone gets injured on the designated bikeways.

Additionally, when designing a bikeway network overlaid on an existing roadway network, physical and financial constraints may prevent the creation of an ideal bikeway. Also, political considerations, such as resistance to the removal of on-street parking, or adjacent property owners' opposition may pose challenges to bikeway creation.

The AASHTO Guide offers eight criteria to consider when contemplating the establishment of designated bike routes. They are:

- a. The route provides through and direct travel in bicycle-demand corridors.
- b. The route connects discontinuous segments of shared use paths, bike lanes and /or other bike routes.
- c. An effort has been made to adjust traffic control devices (e.g. stop signs, signals) to give greater priority to bicyclists on the route, as opposed to alternative streets. This could include the placement of bicycle-sensitive detectors where bicyclists are expected to stop.
- d. Street parking has been removed or restricted in areas of critical width to provide improved safety.
- e. A smooth surface has been provided (e.g. adjust utility covers to grade, install bicycle-safe drainage grates, fill potholes, etc).
- f. Maintenance of the route will be sufficient to prevent accumulation of debris (e.g. regular street sweeping).
- g. Wider curb lanes are provided compared to parallel roads.
- h. Shoulder or curb lane widths generally meet or exceed width requirements included under Shared Roadways.

Sometimes the best choice or only choice for bikeway designation may be a roadway that does not meet all, or even most of these criteria. However, less than desirable roadway characteristics can sometimes be mitigated. For example, if a narrow curb lane cannot be widened for a short distance, a SHARE THE ROAD assembly could be installed to inform motorists that bicyclists might be operating farther to the left and possibly occupying part of the motor vehicle lane.

Drainage grates of the type that can snag bicycle wheels can be improved by welding cross pieces of metal atop the grates if it is impractical to replace the grates. The more of these criteria that are met, the better bicyclists will be served by the facility. Engineering judgment is often needed to determine the best way to accommodate bicyclists in an imperfect world.

Adventure Cycling Association's Route Philosophy

Rural back roads are generally chosen over wider, more highly engineered roads which carry large amounts of traffic (even if the latter has wide shoulders). It is occasionally a somewhat arbitrary judgment call, for we do sometimes use highly engineered roads. In reality, however, rare is the occasion when we have to choose one type over the other; there are usually good reasons for having made the choice we did.

Using gravel/dirt/unpaved roads is avoided on our touring routes, unless there is no other option. It should be the minimum amount of unpaved road possible.

Where available, separated paths, such as rail-trail conversions and urban pedestrian/bicycle paths, are occasionally incorporated into our routes. But we rarely change the course of a route simply to take advantage of separated paths. They tend to be isolated and often times do not feed into other good cycling byways. Furthermore, we believe in advocating that bicyclists and motorists share the roads.

Route Selection Criteria:

Not all of the following are always possible; in fact, some may seem contradictory. A route is chosen using the best combination of criteria possible. Again, this sometimes demands judgment calls by office or field personnel. (The reality is that, in a multi-hundred mile route, we end up using a little of almost every kind of road there is.)

1. The new route should connect into the Adventure Cycling Route Network.
2. The route should be designed to follow "corridors of attraction," i.e., scenery, cultural/historic points of interest, varieties of geography, terrain, and inhabitants.
3. Our routes should try to retain a rural nature whenever possible. Where convenient, the route should pass near, but generally not through, large centers of population. There are exceptions to this, of course, when major population centers offer various historic and/or cultural opportunities that might enrich the cycling experience.
4. Spurs from the main route into cities can give the cyclist a choice if they want to partake of a city's services.
5. Where convenient, routes can incorporate existing paved rail-trails and urban pedestrian/bike paths.
6. Services should be available at least every 40 to 60 miles, or an average day's ride apart. In certain less-populated areas, this criterion cannot be met, but in such cases the route should be chosen with the least amount of distance between services as possible.
7. The route should be as direct as possible, after fulfilling points one through five above.

Objective criteria are listed below, but are generally considered secondary in importance to the above points.

1. The selected roads should carry fewer than 1,000 vehicles per 24 hours.
2. Smooth paved roads and shoulders with good bituminous surface are preferred.
3. The optimal road width is 24' wide (two 12'-wide lanes), with 2' to 4' of paved shoulders on each side. In reality, however, the sort of rural roads we seek out are rarely of this high standard. If they were, they'd probably carry too much traffic for our liking.
4. Roads with 2"+ drops between the traffic lane and shoulder should be avoided.
5. Visibility is important - we try to avoid extremely hilly and winding roads which have higher traffic counts.
6. Length and percentages of grades on hills are secondary factors.
7. Whenever possible, we try to avoid roads which carry a high number of trucks and commercial traffic. Again, in certain areas, the road we choose might be the only paved road available, so we have to use it.

Bicycle Shops in GMRC Region

Habersham Bicycles
2480 Limestone Pkwy, Gainesville, GA 30501
habershambicycles.com

Habersham Bicycles
152 Anderson Cir, Alto, GA 30510
habershambicycles.com

Wrenched Bicycles
302 Broad St SE, Gainesville, GA 30501
wrenchedbicycles.com

Bike Town USA
1604 Dawsonville Hwy, Gainesville, GA 30501
biketownusa.com

Sam's Club
3839 Mundy Mill Rd, Oakwood, GA 30566
samsclub.com

Reality Bikes
Cumming 400 Shopping Center, 20 Tri-County Plaza
Cumming, GA 30040

Prowheelbuilder.com
105 Enterprise Drive B, Cumming, GA 30040

Northstar Bicycle
471 Quill Drive #110, Dawsonville, GA 30534
northstarbicycle.com

Woody's Mountain Bikes
457 GA-356, Helen, GA 30545
woodysmtb.net

Blairsville Bikes & Hikes
49 Blue Ridge St, Blairsville, GA 30512