UNC Charlotte Cyclists

UNC Charlotte Cyclists is a newly-formed group of students, staff, and faculty that exists to promote and foster bicycling as everyday transportation in and around the UNC Charlotte Campus. Our aim is to encourage and enable bicycle use as a means of commuting to and from campus, and as a fast and convenient way of getting around campus. We know that cycling is easy, healthy, inexpensive, joyous, and good for the environment! Cancel parking headaches, shrink your carbon footprint, enjoy your surroundings, and get on your bike!

UNC Charlotte Cyclists recognizes that – barring the greenways – the region around our campus is not bicycle-friendly, and that many potential bike commuters are (quite rationally!) deterred by the four-lane highways and fast-moving traffic. Campus itself has few bike lanes, limited bike racks and other facilities such as bike lockers or showers. UNC Charlotte Cyclists is dedicated to creating a new culture of bicycle use by working with Facilities Planning, Parking and Transportation, and the Sustainability Office to develop and implement a comprehensive bike plan for campus. We are also forging links with community bicycle activists – notably Charlotte Area Bicycle Alliance (CABA) and Charlotte’s Department of Transportation – with the aim of improving the zone around campus for bikes and creating a real bicycle route between uptown Charlotte and campus.

The Future

The UNC Charlotte Transportation Office is currently researching a bike lending program for campus. The scope of this plan could be anything from a few bikes that one could rent for a semester, to racks of bikes at major locations around campus one could borrow and return with a swipe of one’s ID card.

The CATS light rail (the “Blue Line”) is going to be extended all the way from Uptown Charlotte to the UNC Charlotte campus, though the timeline for this project was recently extended to 2019. There is a plan in place (though not yet guaranteed) that would provide a safe bicycle route alongside or close to the tracks. UNC Charlotte Cyclists is participating in the City’s Blue Line Extension stakeholder group to insure that cyclists are well accommodated in the plans.

Ultimately we envision a comprehensive network of bike routes, bike lanes, bike crossings and other bike facilities that would enable easy transit

- On campus between halls of residence, classrooms, research buildings and other campus facilities such as the Student Union, connecting to greenways, and public transit hubs
- Off campus between local apartment complexes, businesses and services connecting to bike-friendly campus entrances
Now

Despite being somewhat hilly in places, campus still pretty rideable and a bike is a great way to get around. Bike from the dorm to class, or if you’re off campus throw a bike on a bike rack on the back of your car and park in a remote lot or near campus. You’ll find it’s a whole lot quicker and easier to get around campus with a bike!

For mountain bikers there are trails in the wooded areas at the northwest of campus.

Toby Creek Greenway is opening soon! The new Greenway will run directly through campus along Toby Creek, and connect to the seven-mile Mallard Creek Greenway which stretches and forks north of campus. This will make commuting from these points north a breeze. We are not yet certain on the timing of the Greenway Opening, but word is it should be toward the end of the Fall 2010 semester. UNC Charlotte Cyclists is planning to celebrate the event in style so watch this space.

Tips for Bicyclists

Wear a helmet.

Always give pedestrians right-of-way.

Remember you have a right to the full use of the lane—same as a car, but ride courteously, obey traffic all laws, use hand signals and lights at night (it’s the law).

Lock up your bike and quick-release wheels. Remember it only takes a second to steal an unlocked bike!

Wear something bright at night.

Avoid the “door zone” (stay four feet from parked cars – a suddenly opening car door is not your friend).

On multi-use pathways pass on the left, ring your bell or call out “on your left” as you approach pedestrians or slower-moving vehicles from behind.

For safety and ease of riding keep your tires inflated and your bike in good shape.

Get to know your local bike shop: Bike Line is across from campus in the Harris Teeter Mall: http://charlottebikes.net/