



## GEORGIA GROWN TRAIL 37/41

Bicycle Route Map Report



# Georgia Grown Trail Bicycle Route Maps

## Introduction

In 2014, the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) adopted an updated Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan with a vision “To develop safe and healthy transportation alternatives and a connected transportation network that promotes community pride and enhances local marketability.” This Regional Plan along with other recent efforts of the SGRC are part of a national award (National Association of Development Organizations 2014 Excellence in Regional Transportation Award) winning effort to better implement bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and safety education throughout the region. The SGRC Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan outlines 12 policies and 14 implementation strategies to better serve the region with bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. These implementation strategies range from developing bicycle facility assessments to developing model ordinances for local communities to adopt. One implementation strategy is to develop and print bicycle maps of the routes crisscrossing the region, where cyclists can learn about where to safely cycle for recreation and for destinations to activity centers, jobs, and other purposes.

According to the Outdoor Industry Foundation, in 2006, bicycling contributed \$133 billion annually to the US economy<sup>1</sup>. The Silver Comet Trail in Northwest Georgia has a \$461 million impact on its existing 61-mile length. A proposed 66-mile expansion of the Silver Comet Trail will increase property values by \$130 million, and add 400 more jobs to the region. This expansion is estimated to have a return on investment of 4.64:1, or for every \$1 spent on trail expansion, \$4.64 direct and indirect economic benefit is estimated to be generated<sup>2</sup>.

## What are the Georgia Grown Trails?

The Georgia Grown Trails are business associations dedicated to the promotion, preservation, and development of regional agritourism along more than 300 miles of highways through South Georgia. The Georgia Grown program is a marketing and economic development program of the Georgia Department of Agriculture. The goal of the program is to aid local agricultural economies by bringing together producers, processors, suppliers, distributors, retailers, agritourism and consumers in one powerful, statewide community. The Georgia Grown Trail was designed to highlight all of the amazing agricultural-related tourism hot spots. U-pick farms, dairies, vineyards, & wineries, farm tours, bed and breakfast inns, restaurants using local and regional products, and specialty food stores; anything related to farming and agriculture that a



<sup>1</sup> <https://outdoorindustry.org/images/researchfiles/RecEconomypublic.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.bwnwga.org/news/silver-comet-trail-study/>

visitor could partake in, learn from , and generally enjoy are all included. For more information visit the following websites:

[www.georgiagrown.com](http://www.georgiagrown.com)

[www.georgiagrowntrail37.com](http://www.georgiagrowntrail37.com)

## What is Agritourism?

The following is a statement on Agritourism from the Georgia Agritourism Association [www.georgia-agritourism.com](http://www.georgia-agritourism.com) website.

“AGRITOURISM is a unique experience that combines traditional agriculture with tourism. Mention the phrase ‘Agritourism’ to the average person, and you’ll probably get a wide range of reactions. Some might imagine waking up before dawn to help the farmer, others might picture themselves making cheese, picking fruit, or crushing grapes or olives. Others may imagine guided hunts or fishing. Many may see themselves and their families having the time of their lives (and maybe getting a little dirty, too) on an adventure packed full of excitement and fun. Whatever the case, this new ‘-ism’ is one that is fast growing! In Georgia, agriculture and tourism are our state’s top two economic generators. Agritourism as defined by GAA: Agritourism is operators, managers, landowners, landlords and tenants in shared tenancies, who is a producer of an agricultural commodity(s) and allow the public to visit the working agricultural operation for the purposes of experiencing, including but not limited to, education, entertainment, relaxation, hospitality, shopping and dining.”

## Why a Bicycle Map?

One of the Implementation Strategies of the SGRC Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is to develop and distribute educational materials on bicycle and pedestrian issues with various audiences targeted. This bicycle route map is targeted to an audience interested in recreational short-and long-distance cycling related to agritourism sites or just to experience the scenic areas of rural South Georgia. This map includes information on safety (Rights and Rules of the Road), agritourism, and information specific recreational and agritourism sites along the routes. These maps are intended to be used by residents and visitors looking to experience rural South Georgia at a leisurely pace on their bicycle.

While the Georgia Grown Trails 37 and 41 extend well beyond the SGRC region, this map was developed to highlight the areas surrounding the intersection of these two agritourism trails in Adel, GA. This maps includes sites from these trails in Cook, Berrien, Lanier and northern Lowndes Counties. By restricting the map to just this area it allows users to focus just on this area and be informed on the routes on a readable map. Future maps may be completed of other areas as these routes gain popularity.

## Methodology in Selecting Routes

The routes were selected using a basic elimination technique of state and local roadways as follows.

- All designated Georgia State Bicycle Routes were automatically included
- All dirt roads were eliminated
- Roadways connecting the agritourism sites were identified
- Roadways with rumble strips that make it difficult for cyclists were made a lower preference for routes

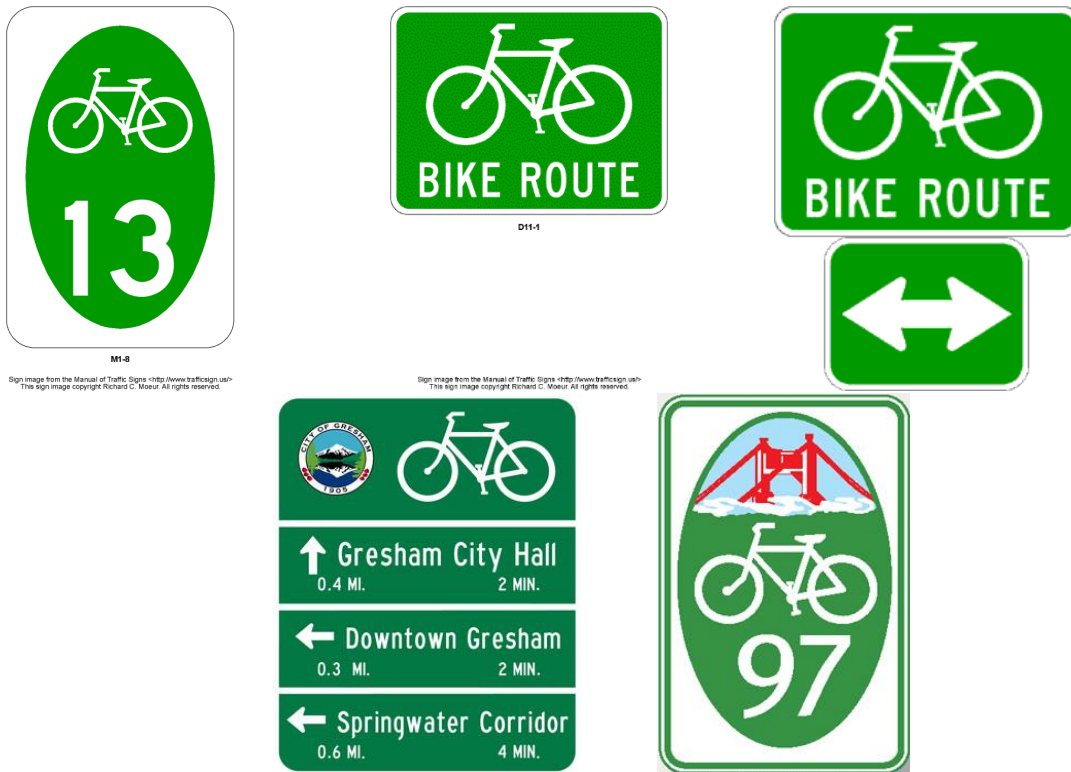
- Additional roadways were added created small loops to allow cyclists to choose a length of a ride that is appropriate for their ability.

Most all of the roadways chosen a rural, two-lane, paved roads and typically have lower traffic volumes allowing for less cyclist interaction with motor vehicles. Motor vehicle operators and bicyclists are still responsible for safely travelling the roadways and obeying the rules of the road.

## Route Signage Recommendations

While an ideal situation for promoting bicycling would be to build separated trails; wide, paved shoulders; or even striped bike lanes to improve the safety of cycling. These alternatives are all rather expensive and would require a great deal of time and engineering. Since bicycles are allowed to travel the roadways in a safe manner signs are recommended to identify the routes rather than investing in infrastructure.

In order for the identified roadway to be better utilized by cyclists it is recommended that local governments install directional signage along the routes to better promote these routes and make them easier for users. The Georgia Department of Transportation uses the following sign for its State Bicycle Routes, directional arrows are often added at intersections. Other examples are also provided below of commonly used signs.



For the bicycle routes identified in *Bicycling Georgia Grown Trails 37/41 Map* it is recommended to use the some of the signage options identify below with appropriate directional signage.

- It is estimated that Cook County (including cities) would need about 40 route signs, about 40 arrow signs and about 40 Trail Designation Signs, 40 U-channel posts

- It is estimated that Berrien County (including cities) would need about 35 route signs, about 35 arrow signs and about 35 Trail Designation Signs, 35 U-channel posts
- It is estimated that Lowndes County (including cities) would need about 15 route signs, about 15 arrow signs and about 15 Trail Designation Signs, 15 U-channel posts
- It is estimated that Lanier County (including cities) would need about 20 route signs, about 20 arrow signs and about 20 Trail Designation Signs, 20 U-channel posts

Company	Cook County	Berrien County	Lowndes County	Lanier County
Roadtrafficsigns.com	\$2,054-\$2,354	\$1,797-\$2,059	\$769-\$881	\$1,037-\$1,183

An example sign for the Georgia Grown Trail Bicycle Routes might look like the following (local jurisdictions are free to post any signs as the wish, see other examples on previous page):



## Signage Funding Sources

The most flexible source of funds for placing signs along the route will be from local governments. However, other ways are possible to fund these investments. Some of those include:

- Sponsorships by local agritourism related businesses
- Crowdfunding by local business or bicycle riders
- Funding from local business organizations
- Federal, state and private grants

## Conclusions

The SGRC has printed 15,000 copies of this map. The SGRC will make the commitment to keep the map updated and from time-to-time print additional copies if funding sources allow. The SGRC will also put each of these routes into online maps for bicyclists to use as well. The SGRC will also research funding options for signage and capital investments in bicycle and pedestrian projects in these communities upon request from local governments.