

A watercolor illustration of a bicycle. The frame is white with colorful washes of blue, green, and yellow. The wheels are also white with colorful segments in shades of yellow, orange, red, and blue. The background is a mix of green and yellow washes. In the bottom right, there are blue and purple swirling lines.

Drive Less, Live More

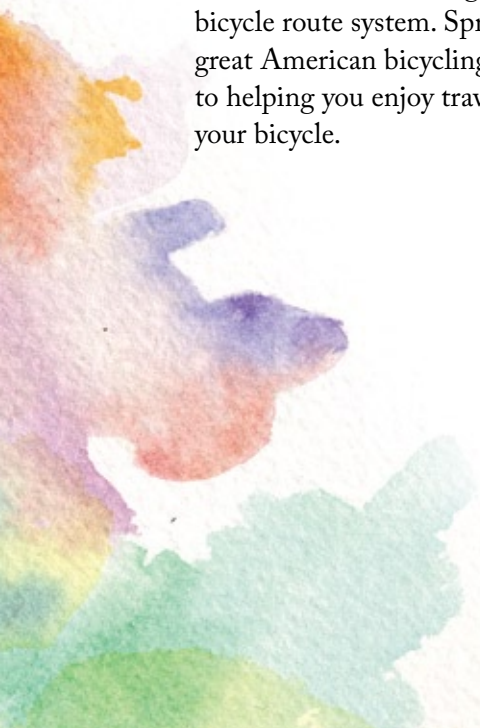
Bicycling in Springfield



Introduction

Tis a privilege to live in the Ozarks

Many of us think the Queen City of the Ozarks—Springfield—is the best of the best. Here is another reason to be happy you live here: in Springfield it is easy to ride a bicycle as basic transportation. We have good streets, flat terrain, and a grid system that make bicycling a smart option. Add to that a growing bicycle infrastructure, including greenways, bicycle lanes, and a bicycle route system. Springfield is poised to become a great American bicycling city. This booklet is dedicated to helping you enjoy traveling around Springfield on your bicycle.



Benefits

Recent traffic studies have shown that half of all car trips made in the United States are less than two miles, and 28% of trips are less than one mile. These are easy distances to travel by bicycle. The benefits are numerous and include:

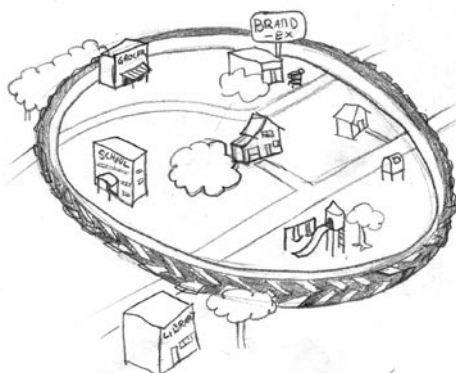
- **Saving money:** Cars are expensive to run, especially for short distances. Besides gas, also consider the cost of oil, wear and tear, and insurance.
- **Improving your health:** Bicycling is a low-stress exercise that almost anyone can enjoy.
- **Fighting pollution:** Cars belch out the most pollution in the first few minutes of running.
- **Getting in touch:** A car isolates you from the community and the natural world. Bicycling is a great way to connect with your neighborhood.
- **Making life better:** The more people use bicycles for short trips the more these benefits help the entire community.

The 1-Mile Solution

You might be thinking those benefits sound like a good deal but that riding a bicycle for basic transportation—called ‘utility bicycling’—seems really difficult. The truth is that utility bicycling is far easier than many people think. You don’t need a fancy bicycle. You don’t need special clothes. You don’t need lots of gear. All you need is a bicycle and an idea: an idea we call the 1-Mile Solution.

Find your home on a map. Draw a circle with a 1-mile radius around your home. Try to replace one car trip per week within that circle by riding a bicycle or walking. At an easy riding pace you can travel one mile on a bicycle in about seven minutes. That’s it.

After seeing how easy that mile really is you may be encouraged to replace more car trips per week or to venture farther from home. You may even wish to commute to work by bicycle. Turn the page and begin discovering for yourself the benefits of riding a bicycle in Springfield.



Bicycle Facilities

Whether you want to ride a bicycle as basic transportation or enjoy the pleasures of recreation and exercise, Springfield offers facilities to make your ride safe, efficient, and enjoyable.



bike on a street



bike route

Streets

All streets can be used by bicycles. Bicyclists must be aware of the character of traffic and conditions on each street. Bicyclists must evaluate the degree of risk they are willing to accept in sharing the roadway with other traffic. The most suitable streets have wide outside lanes, low traffic speed, low traffic volume, few high-volume cross streets and driveways, and no obstacles in the path of the bicycle such as storm water grates and uneven pavement. Nearly all local residential streets are suitable for bicycling.

Bicycle Routes

Streets that traffic engineers have determined to be suitable for bicyclists have been marked with bicycle route signs. These are streets that provide access to major destinations and continuity to travel across neighborhoods. Approximately 57 miles of streets are signed as bike routes. Refer to the Bicycle Route Map in this booklet.



Bicycle Lanes

There are approximately four miles of marked lanes for bicyclists on city streets. Refer to the Bicycle Route Map in this booklet.



bike lane



MSU bike path



multipurpose path

Bicycle Paths

Bicycle paths are provided on the campus of Missouri State University.

Shared Roadways

Streets that have higher speeds and/or traffic volumes, but deemed suitable for experienced bicyclists, are marked with SHARE THE ROAD signs.

Multipurpose Paths

The Springfield/Greene County Park Board maintains off-street paths for use by non-motorized modes of travel, including bicycling, roller-blading, running, and walking. Signs indicate where multipurpose paths intersect with the street system. Refer to the map with the Ozarks Greenways Trails in this booklet.



shared roadway sign

Rules of the Road

Traffic statistics show that bicyclists who follow the rules ride safely with other traffic. Your chances of being in an accident, however, greatly increase when you break the rules. Following the rules of the road also shows respect for other people who use the road. Bicyclists who follow the rules make life on the road better for all of us.

- 1 The rights and duties of people operating bicycles on a roadway are the same as the rights and duties of the driver of any vehicle on the roadway.
- 2 Any person operating a bicycle shall obey the instructions of official traffic control signs, signals, and markings. When dismounted, the bicycle operator shall obey all rules for pedestrians.
- 3 A bicycle should only carry the number of people for which the bicycle is equipped with seats.
- 4 Bicycles must be operated near the right-hand side of the roadway no more than two abreast.
- 5 The bicyclist entering a roadway from an alley, driveway, or building shall yield to all traffic in the roadway and pedestrians in the roadway or on a sidewalk.
- 6 No person shall ride a bicycle on a sidewalk within a business district. Whenever a person is riding a bicycle on a sidewalk, such person shall give an audible signal (such as stating "on your left") before overtaking and passing a pedestrian.
- 7 Each bicycle operated during darkness must be equipped with a light and reflectors.

Bicycle Safety on the Streets

Is bicycling on Springfield's streets dangerous?

There is no easy way to answer that question. On the one hand, accident statistics show that bicycling is very safe compared to driving, walking, and many other things we do daily without thinking about safety. On the other hand, when a 4,000-pound car strikes a 40-pound bicycle the bicycle loses every time. This doesn't mean bicycling is dangerous. It means you, the bicyclist, need to take responsibility for your safety. One thing, however, is clear: bicyclists are safer when they follow traffic laws.

As a beginning utility bicyclist you may feel nervous about some streets. That's good. That shows a healthy respect for your own safety. The following section will teach you how to ride in traffic and avoid the dangers.

When we follow the rules and act responsibly, bicycling is one of the safest modes of transportation.

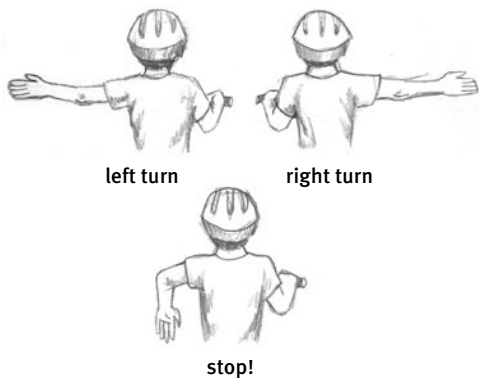


**two well-outfitted
bicyclists**

1. Protect yourself. Be noticed. Wear bright clothing. Use lights and reflectors on your person and bicycle in low light. Wear a bicycle helmet. Use your eyes and ears to detect traffic, trains, and warning signals.

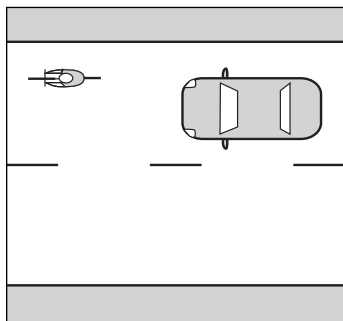
2. Obey all traffic rules. Bicycles are not toys. They are legal vehicles. Those who operate them on city streets must obey the traffic laws. Stop at all stop signs and red lights. Yield to traffic according to the Missouri traffic code. Yield to pedestrians when appropriate.

Safety on the Streets

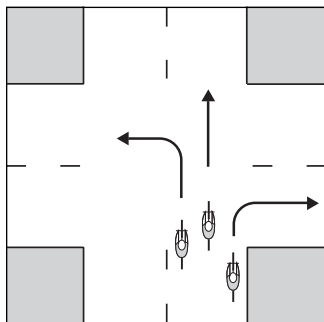


3. Be predictable. Use the proper hand signals about 100 feet before making turns and stops.

4. Drive on the right-hand side of the street in the same direction as automobiles. Normal lane positioning is two to four feet from the curb or roadway edge and four feet from parked cars.



4. Lane position on an open road



5. The rule of thirds in an intersection

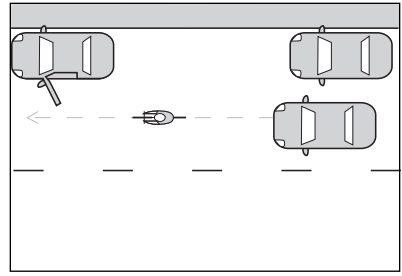
5. Position yourself in your approach to an intersection appropriately for your intended direction of travel. Use the rule of thirds. If turning right, use the right side of the lane. If crossing the intersection, position just to the right of center in the lane. If turning left, use the center of the left turn lane or left side of a shared road. Bicycle lanes, where provided, end near the beginning of left turn lanes. Bicyclists should position themselves in the through lane or the appropriate turn lane as they approach the intersection.

6. Always check behind. When changing lanes or your position in a lane, always check behind for vehicles. Never move left on a bicycle without checking behind. Use a mirror. But also look.

Safety on the Streets

7. Position in the lane for speed.

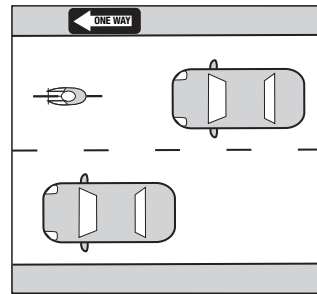
If slower than other traffic, stay to the right. If riding the same speed as traffic, use the center of the lane. If faster than other traffic, overtake on the left.



8. Stay out of the door zone.

When riding along a line of parked cars, allow four feet between yourself and the cars.

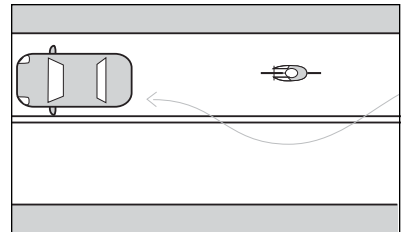
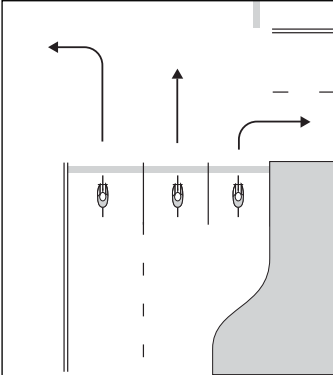
8. Stay where you can be seen by drivers and evade opening doors



9. Take the lane when appropriate.

The law says bicyclists, as slower traffic, “shall ride as near to the right side of the roadway as safe.” There are times when taking the lane is necessary for the safety of all traffic.

9. Taking the lane: on a one way street (above), a narrow road (below), and in turn lanes (left).



10. Don't forget safety in bicycle lanes and on bikeways and greenway trails.

Dedicated lanes and trails for bicycles provide safe and efficient routes in certain areas of Springfield. Be aware of other users of these facilities—especially pedestrians.



The Usual “Buts”

Children love to ride bicycles. Learning to ride offers them their first taste of freedom. Bicycling for children is much like swinging: pure joy. So what happened to so many of us after childhood? Why do we stop riding even for pleasure? Let’s take a look at a few of the “buts.”

1. But I have a junky bicycle. It’s true that a well-maintained bicycle is a safe bicycle. We have many excellent bicycle shops in Springfield that can keep your bicycle in good repair for a modest price. All that is required of you is to check your tire pressure at least once per week and check that all nuts and quick-release levers are tight and secure. Check the resources section of this booklet for information about do-it-yourself maintenance and safety checks.

2. But isn’t it dangerous to ride in traffic? It certainly can be dangerous if you do not follow the rules. Bicyclists who follow traffic laws and the safety advice in this booklet will find that riding in modest traffic is a safe and fun way to get around town.

3. But won’t motorists honk and get angry if I ride in traffic? It may surprise you to learn that drivers in Springfield are remarkably tolerant of bicyclists. That may be because they understand that bicyclists have an equal right to the road and an equal responsibility to follow the law. Every once in a while a driver may honk or get angry. The best advice in this situation is to avoid confrontation.

4. But if I ride to work won't I get all sweaty? This is one of the biggest misconceptions of using a bicycle as basic transportation. A human being riding a bicycle is an efficient moving machine in terms of the speed and distance you can achieve for very little effort. If you ride modest distances (five miles or less) at modest speeds (about 10 to 12 miles per hour) you will arrive at your destination as fresh as you started. On very hot and humid days you will sweat doing just about anything, including walking to your car and waiting for the air conditioner to work.

5. But won't it take a long time to get where I'm going? As this booklet points out, half of all car trips in the United States are less than two miles. A bicyclist traveling at modest speeds, and following the traffic laws, can cover that distance in less than 15 minutes.

6. But I'm out of shape. Again, a human on a bicycle is an efficient moving machine. As long as you are not trying to race the wind, you will find traveling modest distances at modest speeds is very easy. And bicycling is an excellent, low impact exercise. You won't be out of shape for long.

7. But what if the weather is bad?

Practicing the 1-Mile Solution does not require that you ride when conditions are bad. You will discover, however, that adequate clothing will keep you dry, warm, and comfortable if you choose to ride in bad weather.

8. But where will I park my bicycle?

Finding a good place to lock your bicycle can sometimes be a challenge. The City of Springfield, however, has made great progress in providing bicycle parking—especially downtown. You will also find many retailers provide bicycle racks. If there is no bicycle rack at your favorite destination, call and ask for one. Providing bicycle parking is just good business.

9. But don't I need a lot of expensive equipment? You just need a bicycle, a helmet, and the desire to ride. If you plan to ride after dark, you will need lights that conform to Missouri law (refer to the law section of this booklet).

10. But I need help doing this. Not a problem. Reading this booklet is a good first start. Also be sure to check the internet resources listed here. You will also find that your local bicycle shop is always happy to help. You will find a list of these shops in this booklet along with other helpful resources.

Gear and Tools

All you really need to ride the streets of Springfield is a bicycle, a helmet, and lights.

1. Your bicycle.

The best bicycle for riding the streets of Springfield is the bicycle you like to ride. Be sure that the bicycle fits properly and that the saddle is adjusted to your height. Bicyclists who specialize in utility bicycling, however, generally prefer mountain bikes, hybrids, cruisers, or town bikes for basic transportation.



2. Your helmet.

Wearing a helmet is a good idea.

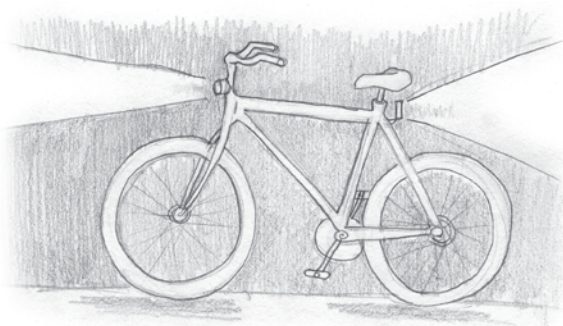
Helmets are not a substitute for safe, lawful riding. Replace your helmet if it becomes damaged or every five years.

Be sure your helmet fits properly. It should be snug but not tight. It should not slide or wobble.



3. Your lights.

Missouri law requires you to use lights from one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise.



A white headlight and red tail light or reflector meet Missouri's requirements for bicycling at night.



Extras

You may wish to add some helpful gear as you become confident in your ability to travel around Springfield by bicycle.

1. Your baskets and panniers.

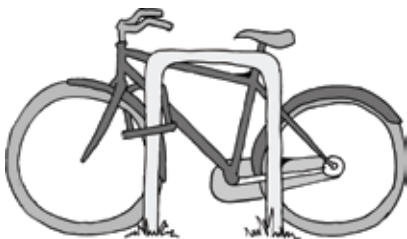
Adding a basket and/or panniers to your bicycle allows you to safely carry many types of items. They come in handy for shopping and running general errands.

2. Your lock.

If you plan to park your bicycle and leave it (even for a short time), you should use a good bicycle lock. Cable locks are popular but are also vulnerable to tampering. Steel U-locks are easy to use, inexpensive, and make your bicycle difficult to steal.

3. Your fenders.

Fenders are a great addition to a utility bicycle. They keep you and the bicycle much cleaner.



Make sure your lock goes around the rack, your frame and one wheel.



4. Your tool kit.

As you gain confidence and begin riding farther from home, you will want to carry a small tool kit. Your kit should include at least a multi-purpose tool made for bicycles and a tire patch kit. You can find these tools at your local bicycle shop.



Resources for Bicycling in Springfield

Ozarks Greenways

PO Box 50733, Springfield Mo. 65805
417-864-2015
lori@ozarkgreenways.org
ozarkgreenways.org

Springbike Bicycle Club

Box 9823, Springfield, Mo. 65801
springbike.org

Missouri Bicycle Federation, Inc.

Post Office Box 104871
Jefferson City, Mo. 65110-4871
816-695-6736
director@mobikefed.org
mobikefed.org

Ozarks Transportation Organization

117 Park Central Square, Suite 107
Springfield, Mo. 65806
417-836-5442
ozarkstransportation.org

Ozarks Commute

ozarkscommute.com

Springfield Public Works

Traffic Engineering Division

840 N. Boonville Ave.
Springfield, Mo. 65801
417-864-1980
traffic.springfieldmogov.org/bike

Missouri Dept. of Transportation Bicycle and Pedestrian Program

[modot.mo.gov/othertransportation/
bike_ped/Bikepedintro.htm](http://modot.mo.gov/othertransportation/bike_ped/Bikepedintro.htm)

Carbon Trace: Utility Bicycling Blog

carbontrace.net

Local Bicycle Shops

A&B Cycle

3620 S. National Ave.
Springfield, Mo. 65807
417-866-6621
abcycle.com

Cycles Unlimited

2002 E. Republic Road
Springfield, Mo. 65804
417-887-3560
cyclesunlimited.net

Queen City Cycles

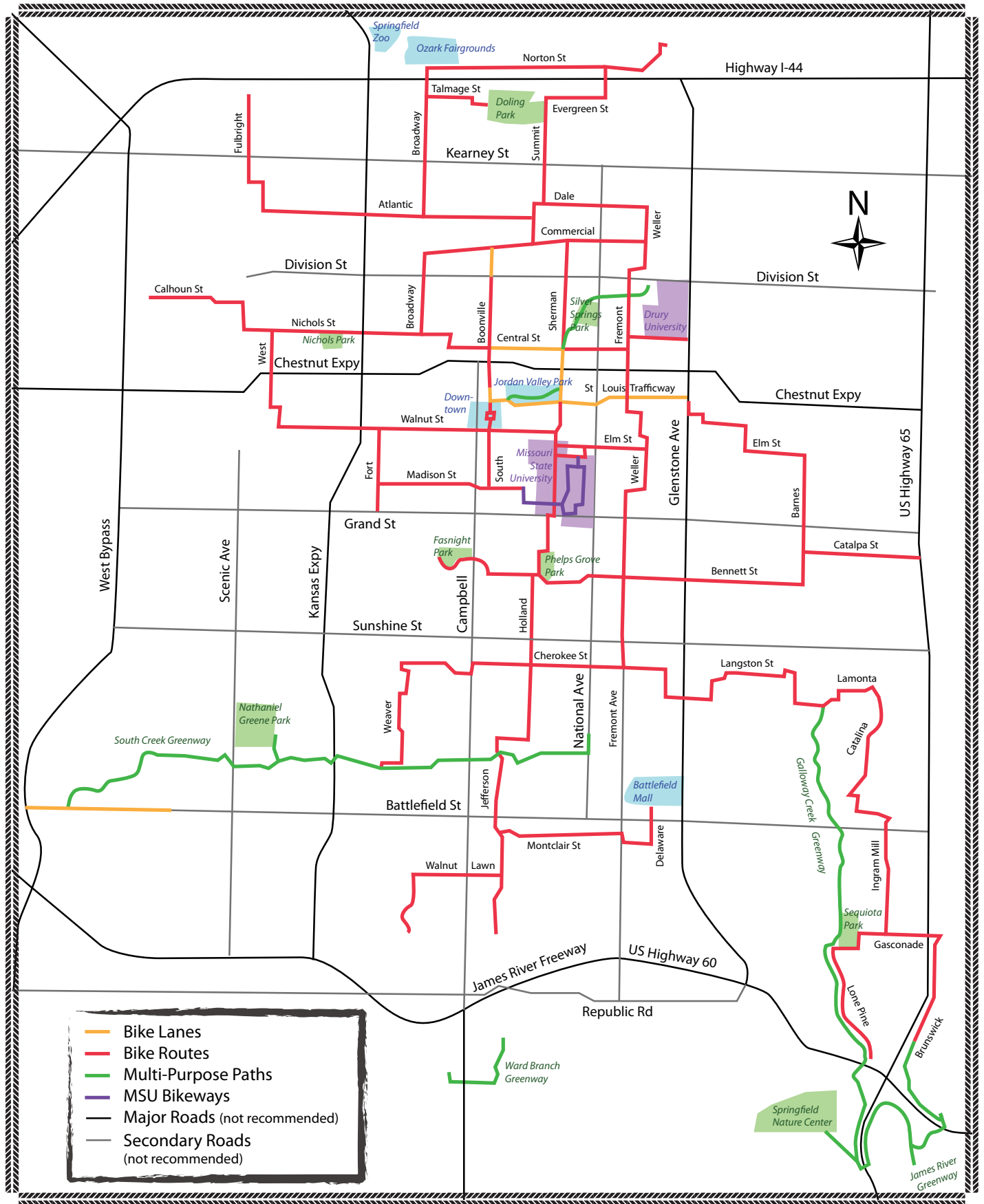
301 W. Walnut
Springfield Mo. 65806
417-831-0800
queencitycycles.com

Springfield Bicycle Company

3201 S. Campbell
Springfield, Mo. 65807
417-883-8100
springfieldbicycle.com

Sunshine Bike Shop

1926 E. Sunshine
Springfield, Mo. 65804
417-883-1113
sunshinebike.com



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Special thanks to the City of Springfield for permission to reproduce material from the Springfield Bicycle Route Map. Thanks to A&B Cycles for help with photography.

Written by Andy Cline

Designed by Annie DeGraff

