



# Cycling Research Report

June 2020

Research for this report was conducted by KCCI with support from the 2020 Bike Park Community Catalyst members.

**Betsy Couch**  
KCCI Executive Director

**Mike Pate**  
KCCI Consultant

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# Overview & Table of Contents

Research for this report was conducted by KCCI (the Knight Creative Communities Institute) with support from volunteer 2020 Community Catalyst members.

The goal of this report is to provide a generalized assessment of Tallahassee's bicycling opportunities and offer recommendations that could guide planning, development and investment decisions, with the view toward helping bicycling amenities in Leon County continue to thrive and serve as economic drivers for the community.

These recommendations are based on the feedback from a representative sample of more than 1,700 Leon County citizens, gathered via in-person and virtual meetings, informal interviews, group meetings, and an online electronic survey.

The findings show multiple opportunities for improved bicycling infrastructure, connectivity, and a new approach via the creation of a bike park community amenity – all of which could help create transformational change and continued progress in Leon County in regard to public health, public safety, and quality of life.

Community leaders can use the study's findings to improve Tallahassee's branding as a top bicycling destination, maximize bicycling strengths and Blueprint's Bike Route Project, and address challenge areas to improve community health, attachment to place and economic growth.

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# 1.About KCCI & Community Catalysts

## KCCI

Established in 2007, KCCI is a local organization committed to positive placemaking and community collaboration in Tallahassee. KCCI's goal is to engage citizens in contributing to sense of place projects that attract and retain talent and increase entrepreneurship in the community. The projects have generated hundreds of millions of dollars in economic development, including the regionally recognized TLH letters, Discovery in Cascades Park, Frenchtown Farmers Market and Get Gaines Going, among others. For more information, visit [KCCITallahassee.com](http://KCCITallahassee.com).

## KCCI Community Catalysts

Each year, KCCI connects a diverse team of community “Catalysts” to implement a sense of place project. Interested individuals apply and are selected by the KCCI Advisory Board for the annual “Catalyst Class.” Catalysts are change agents who volunteer their time to collaborate with the community in bringing each project to life. The 2020 volunteer KCCI Community Catalyst class is working to create a new educational community bicycle park.

The 2020 Catalyst Class includes: Theresa Bender, attorney; Bo Courtenay, retired U.S. Treasury Department Special Agent; Tarsha Davis, small business interior design owner; Chris Edwards, MidSouth Bank; Bill Eichhoefer, the office of the Leon County Property Appraiser; Richard Fetchick, Office of Economic Vitality; Suzannah Grasel, Architects Lewis + Whitlock; Eric Katz, Marlin Engineering Inc.; Molly Lord, United Way of Big Bend; Patrick O'Bryant, Holland & Knight; Jamiron Richardson, Capital City Bank; Jessica Sorenson, Nelson Mullins Broad and Cassel; and Callie Watson, DAG Architects.

## The Research Process

The research process included first stakeholder interviews. Then, an electronic survey was created and conducted with the general community. Finally, more interviews were conducted along with general community conversations with various groups.

## 2. Key Recommendations

Drawing upon a multi-method approach, KCCI staff, with support from the 2020 KCCI Community Catalyst team members, canvassed the community to ask what business, community members and bicyclists thought about biking in Leon County, tactics to improve safety, and the potential for a future bike park. Based on this research, the group identified key issues and discussed numerous ideas about how to best develop popular ideas from the interviews.

The key findings of this study can be summarized as follows.

### Stakeholder Interviews and Group Meetings Stressed the Importance of:

- Building non-motorized facilities that are suitable for all ages and abilities such as shared paths and separated bike lanes (FAMU Way is a perfect example).
- Prioritizing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure on routes that lead to schools, parks, and major employment centers.
- Creating a bicycle park that provides multiple skills levels and connects to existing trail systems.
- Continuing to develop an interconnected Leon County multi-use trail system.
- Using volume data to prioritize safety enhancements for infrastructure such as rapid flashing pedestrian beacons, raised crosswalks, mid-block crossings, lighting, shade, and other important bicycle/ pedestrian traffic calming features.
- Incorporating bicycle safety and education tips at multiple venues and platforms.
- Adding information about existing cycling amenities at or near trailheads.

One of the most popular ideas from the community feedback was *a new, educational bike park in Leon County*.

During the stakeholder interviews specific *themes emerged* as those most important to these various stakeholder groups. These are discussed in detail starting on page 8, but include: *economic benefits, positive branding impact, education and safety training potential, entertainment potential and importance of being active outdoors*.

Since stakeholder feedback stressed the positive benefits of a bike park, the KCCI team set forward and conducted an electronic survey based on initial stakeholder suggestions and input. This short, electronic survey about a possible future bike park



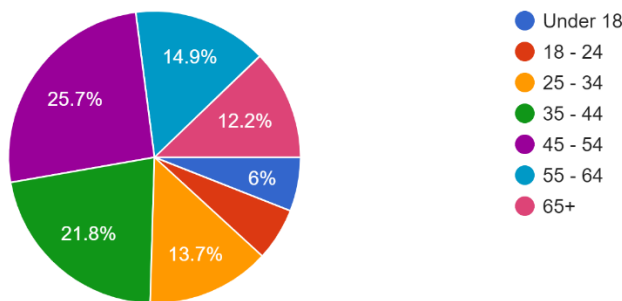
included imagery preference and bike use questions to influence park design needs. The survey also requested location feedback with an open-ended question. 1,323 respondents from all age groups completed the electronic survey from 18 of the 20 zip codes in Leon County. The survey was open between February and May 6, 2020.

## Bike Park Survey Findings Emphasized:

- The majority of respondents (60%) selected imagery that displayed all-terrain tracks.
- In the open-ended question of “Where would you like to see a bike park located?” the majority of responses stated they would like to see an educational bike park on the: “North Side,” “Market District,” or “Killearn area.”

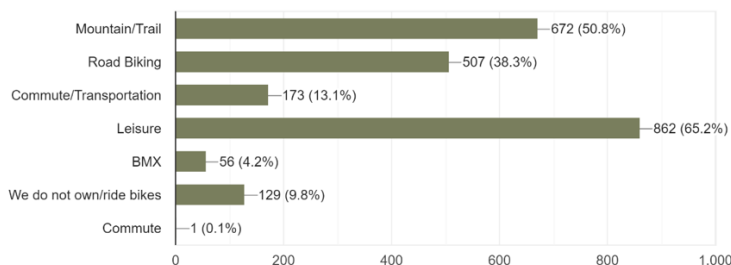
What is your age?

1,323 responses



Do any members of your household ride bicycles? If so, for what purpose(s)?

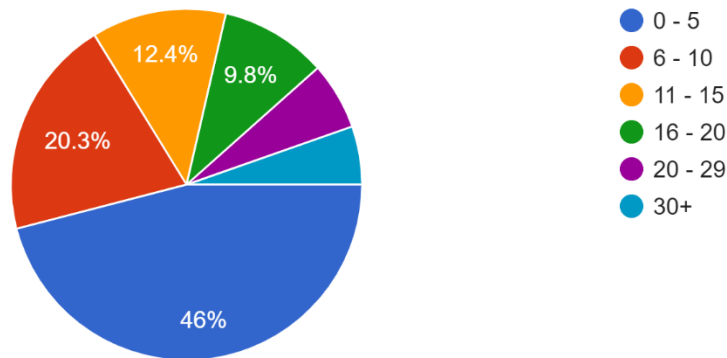
1,323 responses



**Note: Commute is listed twice because a respondent added it as an answer for other, which is the bottom mention.**

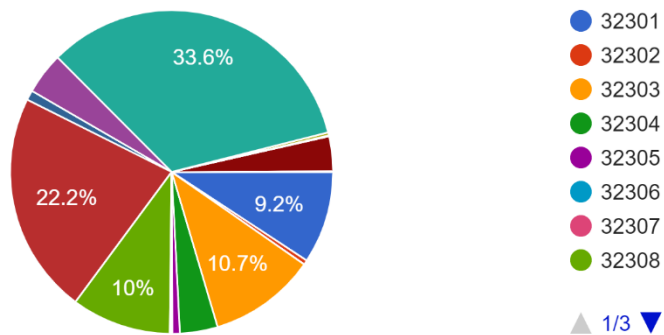
In a given month, how many times do members of your household ride a bicycle?

1,323 responses



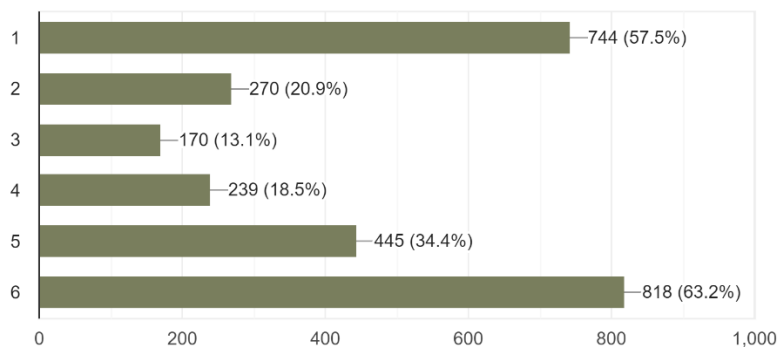
Which area of Tallahassee do you live in? (Please select your ZIP Code from the drop-down list)

1,323 responses



Imagining a "bike park", what aligns most closely with your vision? (Select as many as apply)

1,294 responses



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



One of the open response questions asked: "If you have a suggestion for a location where you envision the above "bike park" please leave that location in the space here:"

### Top Suggested Locations:

- North side of town (including Market Square District, Bannerman area, near Chiles, Killearn area)
- Tom Brown Park
- Southwood
- Cascades Park
- Elinor Phipps Park/Forest Meadows

### 3. Stakeholder Priorities

Between January and June 2020, KCCI staff and Community Catalysts spent 700+ hours conducting research. This included engaging more than 1,700 individuals from various public and private organizations across Leon County. Based on these various stakeholder interviews, KCCI also hosted group engagement sessions.

The purpose of these interviews and engagement sessions was to:

- 1) help KCCI get a better sense of the various dynamics, issues and opportunities related to cycling in Leon County;
- 2) seek input regarding the KCCI Community Catalyst community survey.

KCCI purposefully sought input from groups that might have a vested interest in the success of cycling in Leon County. These interviews were informally structured and intended to allow the interviewees to aid KCCI and the Community Catalysts in identifying key issues, dynamics, logistics, and aspirations.

Once the popularity of a future educational, bike park became evident, and top locations were identified, KCCI purposefully sought input from constituents that might have a vested interest, concern with or opinion of a future bicycle park.

During the initial stakeholder interviews, respondents were typically asked open-ended questions such as:

“What do you think about bicycling in Leon County?”

“What do you think would most benefit bicycling in Leon County?”

“What needs to be done to maximize the effectiveness of your group’s investment to improve bicycling in Leon County?”

During the bike park constituent interviews, questions such as the following were asked:

“What do you envision for Leon County when you think of a bike park?”

“What suggestions do you have for success of a bike park?”

“What location suggestions do you have for a bike park?”

“What elements should be included in a bike park?”

“Who else should we touch base with?”

Based on feedback received during these interviews, the following themes emerged as those most important to the various stakeholder groups:

- Potential Economic & Branding Impact
- Educational Potential
- Entertainment
- Being Active Outdoors

**Read more details below.**

## Potential Economic & Branding Impact

According to many stakeholders providing better-connected network of trails and a community destination bicycle park will elevate Leon County's status as a bicycling destination. Many key stakeholders discussed how the future bike park's brand identity would be important in maximizing the effectiveness and benefits made available through the park. Access to active transportation choices, such as bicycle parks, support civic trust, civic engagement, and safety.

Leon County has an opportunity to improve and expand bicycling infrastructure, connectivity among current trails and increase cycling awareness among younger residents and students.

A destination bicycle park (or parks), along with a better-connected trail system, will strengthen local branding efforts for cycling and our community's national cycling ranking. Many individuals, both within and outside of the bicycling community, immediately believed that an amenity like a destination bike park would provide immeasurable benefit to our community. In addition, other features were also identified that could elevate our national ranking such as if a large cycling ramp was created and installed, that would offer Tallahassee the needed "elevation" status to increase Tallahassee's U.S. mountain-biking designation rank.

*"I am excited to voice my support for the Bike Park Project and am happy to report that the proposed concept by KCCI's team is in line with the industry's "cutting edge" in innovation and sustainability for public bike recreation infrastructure. The recent success of the Velosolutions Asphalt Pumptrack at Tom Brown Park, and the extremely high visitation reported there, indicates that the local demand for more sustainable bike infrastructure is real. This project would complement that facility and is a great next step in Tallahassee's pursuit of becoming a regional destination for cyclists. Beyond that, I believe that a community focused Bike Park like this would produce tangible positive impacts on the local community as it aims to create an inviting atmosphere for all riders to learn, grow, and connect with their neighbors in a positive environment, which leads to a stronger community and improved quality of life for all local residents."*

*- Tim Babcock Vice President - Professional Trail Builders Association*



*"Higher Ground supports the Bike Park Project. We think this project, in this proposed area in the Market District, will greatly benefit our community. This park would be another step in the right direction to make Tallahassee a future cycling destination in the Southeast."*

*– Todd May, owner of Higher Ground Cycling Shop*

Individuals who consider themselves very active in bicycling often wanted to ensure that there was improved connectivity and safety features available to get to and from the community bike park space. Thus, it will be important to have a clear vision for any future bike park and how it can offer different experiences from those already available in Leon County.

*"The goal is to create a bike park that appeals to a broad range of ages and backgrounds where it appeals to beginner cyclists and avid cyclists. I learned how to ride a bike in college and now use it as my main form of transportation. The bike park can be a place for Tallahasseeans, students, and visitors."*

*– Jessica Sorenson, administrative assistant at Nelson Mullins Broad and Cassel and avid cyclist.*

Many felt that more could be done to promote existing trails. For example, multiple stakeholders recommended putting in educational signage and signage that promotes other trails at each trailhead.

Cyclists in the U.S. are, on average, young, affluent (median household income of more than \$80,000), highly educated, and brand loyal. Furthermore, the cycling population is a growing population. In the United States, there are now over 90 million cyclists with nearly 10% of them considered avid cyclists who ride at least once a week on average. Cycling is not a gender-specific sport [55% are male and 45% are female].\*

*\*Source: Velonews, Bicycle Business Journal, Bicycle Manufacturers Assoc of America, Bicycle Market Research Institute, Bicycle Retailer & Industry News, Cycle Press, National Bicycle Dealers Association, National Sporting Goods Association and US Department of Commerce.*

## **Being Active Outdoors**

Many stakeholders pointed out that a bike park could be the focal point for increased physical and health-related activities for the Tallahassee community, while also serving as a destination draw.

*“Cycling has brought me many benefits, including but not limited to, decreasing my overall stress level, my body mass index has decreased, and my cardiovascular and flexibility has increased, not to mention the great friends I have made along the way.”*

*– Billy Miller, Avid Cyclist*

Furthermore, many individuals identified the need of balancing a future park space with passive and active uses and recognized potential in utilizing the bike park space to host other events such as bike-related events, 5Ks or farmer's markets.

*“At Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare and Premier Health & Fitness, we are proud to support projects that promote physical activity and well-being. The Market District bike project will be a significant improvement to the area and a great community resource.”*

*– Stephanie Derzypolski, Vice President/Chief Communications Officer at Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare*

## **Educational Potential**

A bicycle park has the potential to offer a safe, explorative environment for children and adults to learn how to ride bikes. If developed correctly, the bike park space could serve as a living classroom for public and private school children and could further complement the educational bike component that Leon County Schools offers.

*“When I was presented with the Educational Bicycle Park project at Maclay Boulevard, I thought it a brilliant idea. The Bicycle Safety Project will provide a guided educational locale safe from auto traffic for parents and guardians to train all ages of youth to ride safely. The park would draw many more families and promote a healthy outdoor lifestyle. It would be a great place for a kiosk to educate families on the existing bicycle trails and resources we have throughout the city. It would be a great location for a kiosk guiding visitors to the County/City website to educate families and individuals more opportunities for safe riding and exploring our town. [www.biketallahassee.com](http://www.biketallahassee.com)*

*Placing the Bicycle Safety Park at the Maclay Boulevard location will also build on the bike route attraction and destination opportunity which would support small businesses in the area. There are opportunities to pair breakfast, lunch or dinner at a local eatery which are too numerous to list here paired with an hour or two of fun and education at bike park. There is a nearby bicycle shop where parts and clothing for safe bike riding can be found. There are so many opportunities to build on healthy activities existing in this area.”*

*- Colleen Castille, Commercial Real Estate Consultant, former Secretary of Florida Department of Environmental Protection*

Educational signage about cycling rules, cycling etiquette, and safety tips is highly beneficial. Signage could also educate residents about other existing cycling amenities in Leon County or the region. In addition, this type of signage could be placed at existing trailheads or at future and existing bike parks.

## Entertainment

Many of the stakeholders or groups interviewed discussed the need for more outdoor entertainment options in Leon County, especially health-related options.

Tallahasseeans and visitors crave more outdoor activities, especially during this new COVID-19 world. People are seeking ways to incorporate multiple-entertainment options all in one outing and many believed that a bikepark, especially if located near an entertainment area with shops, restaurants and trails, would become a popular activity for people from a variety of ages and skill levels.

*"My husband and I enjoy bike riding together, and a park like this would provide a wonderful recreation benefit for not only us, but our children and parents. We are always looking for entertaining ways to spend time with our children outdoors and look forward to having a park like this nearby." - Wiley & Eva Horton*

## 4. Sample Images from Community Engagement

The following images show KCCI active in community outreach. Photos include interactive presentations at elementary and middle schools, hand-drawn sketches from some of the in-person sessions, and pictures from virtual meetings.



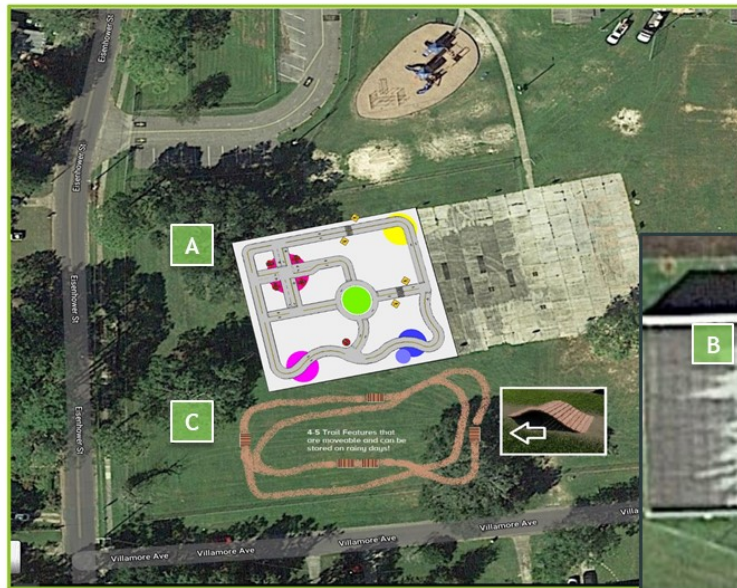


## 5. Goals

### Short-term Goals

KCCI recommends that in the short term more be done to educate the community about cycling safety. It is also recommended that the community continue with enhancements for connectivity and wayfinding among trails. KCCI will support this safety education effort by creating and implementing the Educational Bicycle park at Sabal Palm Elementary School in Leon County.

### Proposed Sabal Palm Elementary Bike Park



- A) Bike Park
- B) Educational cycling space under pavilion
- C) Off-roading experience



KCCI recommends that the community work to:

- Incorporate bicycle safety and education tips at multiple trails, venues and platforms.
- Add information about existing cycling amenities at or near trailheads.
- Coordinate more closely with Visit Tallahassee about existing or upcoming cycling amenities so they can be promoted.
- Repaint or brighten cross-walk infrastructures or cycling lane markings.
- Add additional wayfinding markers and signage along existing trails and connector pathways.

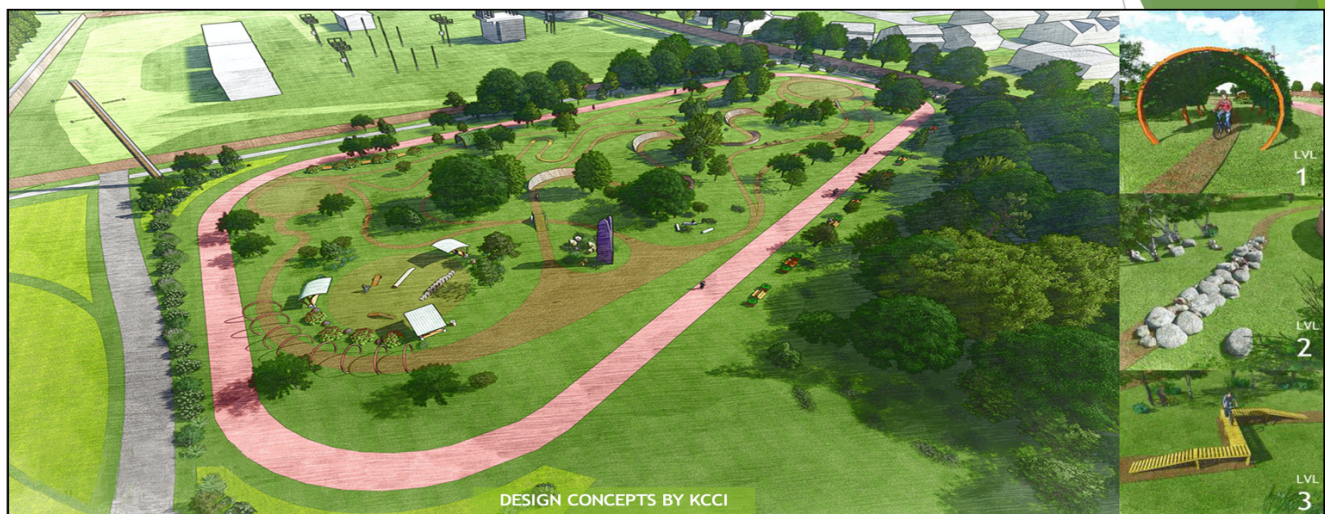
## Long-term Goals:

Based on the community feedback the recommendation is to:

- Prioritize bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure on routes that lead to schools, parks, and major employment centers.
- Build non-motorized facilities that are suitable for all ages and abilities such as shared paths and separated bike lanes (FAMU Way is a perfect example).
- Continue to develop an interconnected Leon County multi-use trail system.
- Using volume data to prioritize safety enhancements for infrastructure such as rapid flashing pedestrian beacons, raised crosswalks, mid-block crossings, lighting, shade, and other important bicycle/ pedestrian traffic calming features.
- Create a bicycle park that provides multiple skills levels and connects to existing trail systems while also being near current multi-use infrastructure.

Note: Diverse members of KCCI's volunteer 2020 Community Catalyst team donated their time to design the following 2.5 acre educational bike park conceptual design for a green space within the market district area near 319 and 1-10. The proximity to this major road and interstate allow it to serve as a destination and provide ease of access to a variety of users. This educational, bike park design has been reviewed by more than 50 business leaders and Progressive Bike Ramps, which is a nationally-recognized leader in the bike park development industry.

## CONCEPTUAL DESIGN





## CONCEPTUAL DESIGN - ARRIVAL



## CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

