



2026

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides   



**River to the
Sea Bikeway**
North Carolina



River to the Sea Bikeway

North Carolina

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The River to the Sea Bikeway (WMPO Bicycle Route 1) is an 11-mile, on- and off-road bicycle route that follows the Historic Beach Car Line, which carried vacationers from downtown Wilmington to Wrightsville Beach by trolley. The bikeway is comprised of neighborhood residential streets, off-road multi-use paths, and a few busy arterial roadways.

It begins at the foot of Market Street at the Riverwalk, with the Battleship USS North Carolina visible across the Cape Fear River. The bikeway then traverses the Old Wilmington, Bottom, and Forest Hills neighborhoods before crossing Independence Boulevard and passing by Empie Park. In the park, you can connect to the [Gary Shell Cross-City Trail](#), a 15-mile route that links other parks, Wrightsville Beach, the UNC-Wilmington campus, and

the Autumn Hill community.

From Empie Park to South Kerr Avenue, the bikeway follows Park Avenue, a quiet local street that passes by Audubon Station. After merging with South Kerr Avenue and crossing South College Road, the bikeway passes through the Winter Park area on Pine Grove Drive and McMillan Avenue before joining up with Park Avenue again. Between Wallace Avenue and 52nd Street, the bikeway uses an off-road path, with a spur to the University of North Carolina at Wilmington (WMPO Bicycle Route 1A) via Wooddale Drive.

Between 52nd Street and Hinton Avenue, the route follows on-road bicycle lanes on Park Avenue. Beyond Greenville Avenue, the ride is much more uncomfortable for recreational cyclists. Oleander Drive and Wrightsville Avenue are busy arterial roadways with few bicycle facilities and high-speed traffic, and there are several bridges to cross. This section is not recommended for recreational cyclists.



River to the Sea Bikeway

North Carolina

States: North Carolina

Counties: New Hanover

Length: 11miles

Trail end points: Market St & Water St to Lumina Ave at US 74 (Jonny Mercer's Pier)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Mountain Biking

Parking & Trail Access

To reach the downtown Wilmington trailhead, follow U.S. Highway 74 toward Wilmington; take the Wilmington DOWNTOWN exit. Proceed south on North 3rd Street. Take a right onto Market Street and follow it west to Riverfront Park. Parking is available on-street or in the city of Wilmington parking deck located at Market Street and North 2nd Street. The bikeway begins at the foot of Market Street at North and South Water Street. Follow the bicycle Route 1 signs.

To reach the Empie Park parking area, follow U.S. Highway 74 to Independence Boulevard northbound. Take a right onto Park Avenue and an immediate left into the park driveway. The bikeway is on Park Avenue. Follow the bicycle Route 1 signs.

To reach the Wrightsville Beach trailhead, follow U.S. Highway 74 toward Wrightsville Beach. At the intersection of Salisbury Street and North Lumina Avenue, continue straight on Salisbury Street to the on-street parking area. The bikeway begins on Salisbury Street west of North Lumina Avenue. Follow the bicycle Route 1 signs.

There is also parking at the Wrightsville Beach municipal complex at the intersection of Salisbury Street and Seawater Lane.



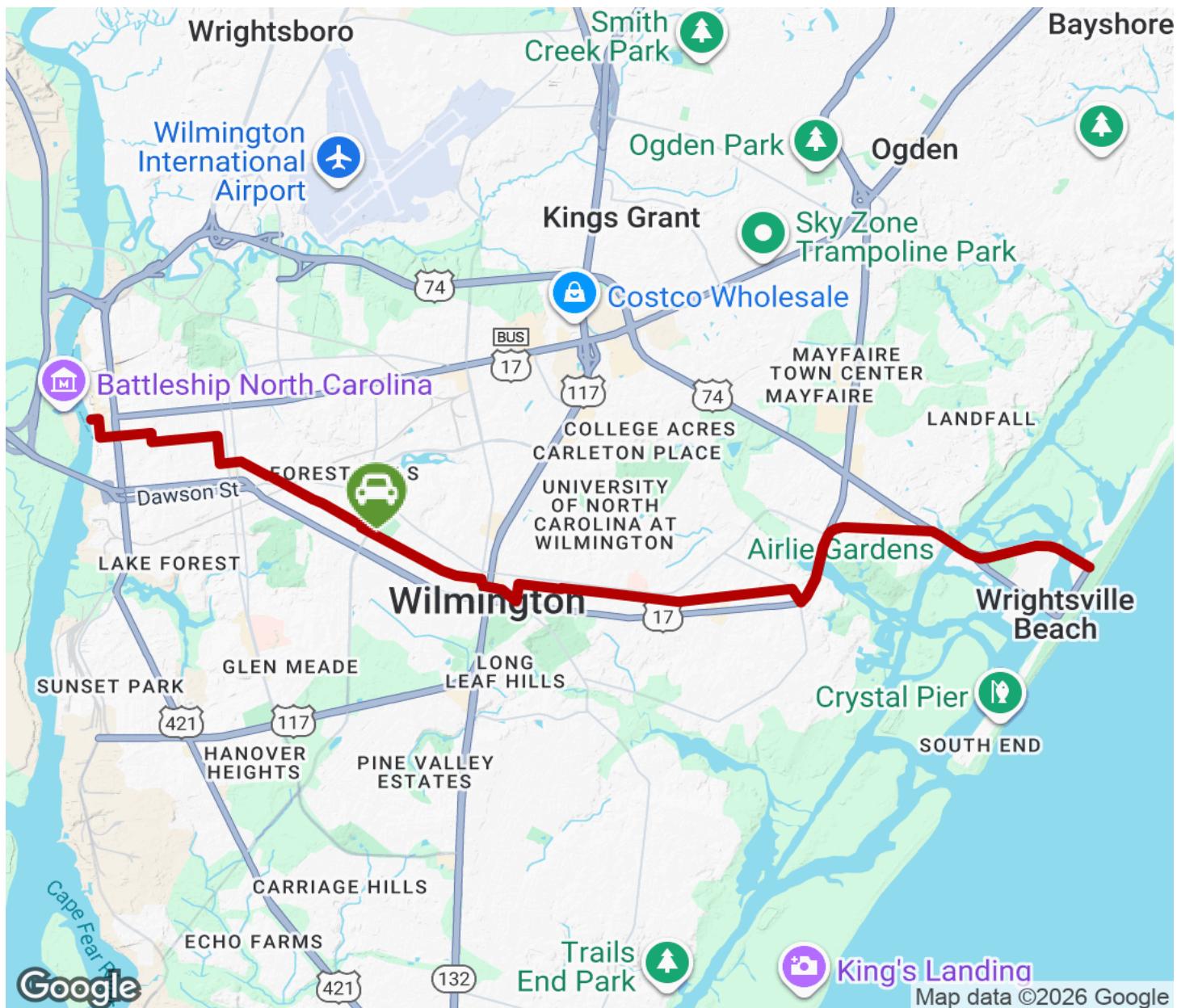
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River to the Sea Bikeway

North Carolina



Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



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