

I am a native of Henderson County. I have been riding on the road since I was a kid. I have ridden roads through Henderson, Buncombe, Transylvania and Polk Counties. Twice as a teen I rode from Rockingham NC to Myrtle Beach to raise funds for the MS Society. Last year I recreated that experience by riding from Greensboro to Myrtle Beach. I have traveled to Upstate NY, Ohio, West Virginia and Pennsylvania to cycle. But the majority of my riding is commuting to and from work multiple days a week. Because I cycle I have all the usual clothing to do it. You're going to see me on the road to work and I'm not going to look any different than anyone else recreationally cycling. But that doesn't matter. In fact, it's no one else's business why I am cycling on the road. It's a federally protected means of travel across all 50 states (save fully controlled highways). I know how NC General Statute section 20 outlines how cyclists and cars should interact. I guarantee you that anyone coming up here to speak out against cyclists doesn't have a clue what that section of the law states. If the county wants to involve itself in dealing with the complaint of people using the Tuxedo Park parking lot while not using the Park itself and restrict use, fine, I think that's a wonderful idea. They mention people using the Church Parking Lot, isn't that a private business matter? I lost 100lbs while cycling to be healthier for my kids. The people coming before you today to speak out against cyclists are putting their inconveniences above my life and telling you that they have a greater right to the road than I do. NC is a share the Road state, not Share the Lane. Their unsafe driving around cyclists should be ticketed as I believe that riders without helmets should be ticketed, riders who ignore traffic control engineering (traffic lights and signs) should be ticketed. The riders who act outside the law should be ticketed, but riders 2 abreast, riders that don't ride on the extreme right of the lane of travel, riders that position themselves to prevent cars passing on blind curves, approaching hill tops and at intersections are doing their lawful duty to keep themselves safe while doing what the state and federal law protects them doing. I urge each and every one of you to turn your backs and look at the pictures of my family whenever someone else stands up here to tell you cyclists and runners don't belong on the road.

This Joan Meadow who started this whole thing talks about resident's "rights," but from what I've seen of her comments on her own public facebook posts, she's not willing to state what her "rights" are and I'd be willing to bet she's not willing to discuss her responsibilities to society that go hand in hand with those "rights." Interesting to see that she brought this issue to the forefront during National Bike Awareness Month and Mental Health Awareness month. I cycle for my mental health.

Lastly, I would urge you to have the Sheriff's Department create a Liaison Position between the department and the local cycling groups like Blue Ridge Bicycle Club and others to better understand issues and work with Cyclists to understand that some PSA or campaign to raise awareness of the laws that protect cyclists and inform motorists what to do around bikes and pedestrians be spread far and wide. A cyclist is assaulted every day by a motorist in this county. It's criminal, and there is little that is done because no one sees it happen.