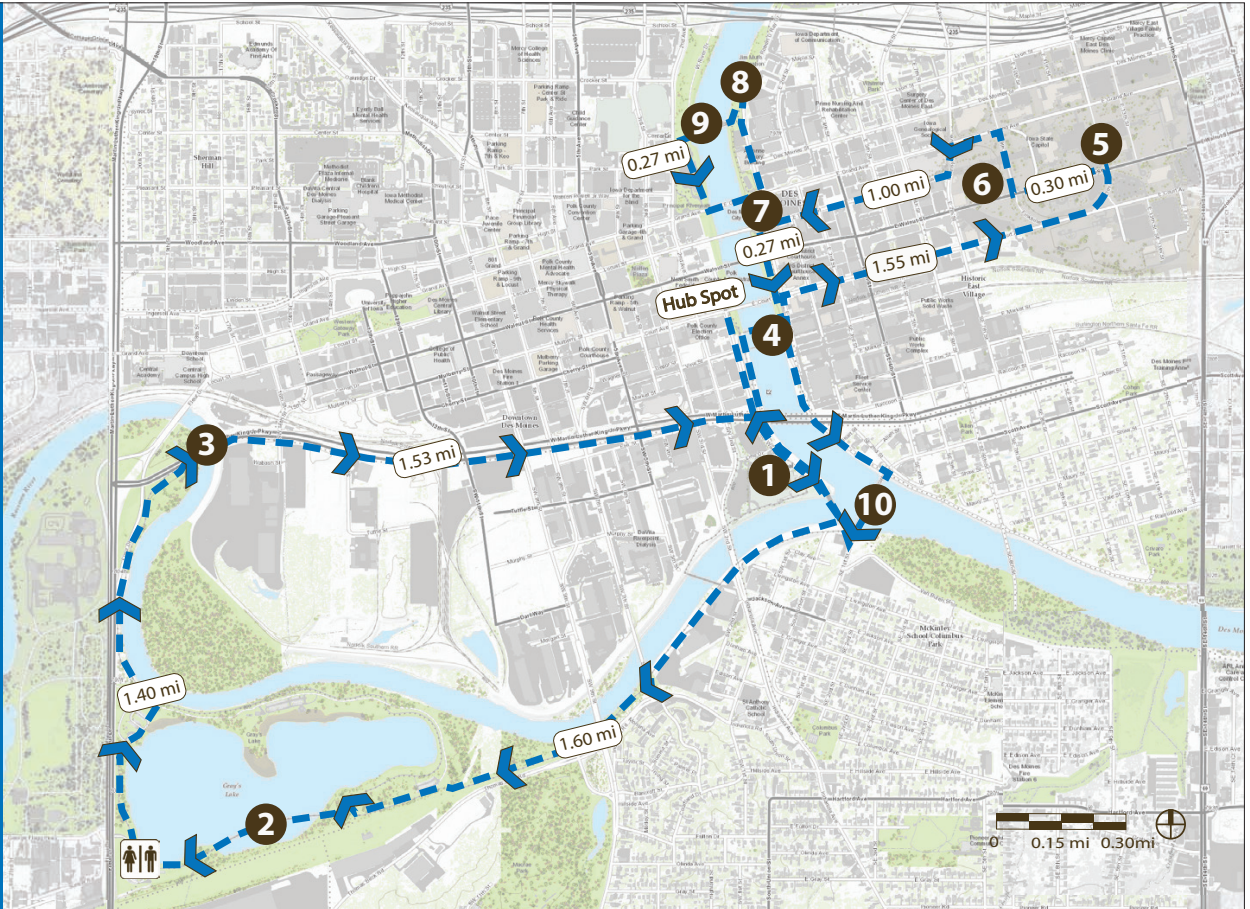




# DES MOINES BEHIND HANDLEBARS



Top view of the city 9.0 miles

This tour incorporates the best of downtown Des Moines: two rivers, one lake, nine bridges, (five bike- and pedestrian-only crossings), plus the Iowa State Capitol and City Hall. And just one hill!

From the Hub Spot, head south on the lower trail along the Des Moines River. You will pop up near **Principal Park (1)**, home of the Iowa Cubs, the Triple-A affiliate of the Chicago Cubs. Continue south around the ballpark, cross the Racoon River on the First Street Pedestrian Bridge to Mullet's, then head west on the Meredith Trail to **Gray's Lake Park (2)**. There, you'll cross the lake on the stunning 1/4-mile bridge that casts color stripes by day and illuminated colors at night.

Use the map and Central Iowa Trails signs to follow the Meredith Trail out of the park and along Fleur Drive. You'll soon cross the blue **George Washington Carver Bridge (3)** and head east on the sidepath toward downtown.

Before crossing the Des Moines River, turn left (north) and bike along Water Street to the red **Union Railway Bridge (4)**. Cross the bridge, then turn left (north) at the Des Moines Police Station, then right again. Pedal up the Court Avenue hill.

Make your way to the **Iowa State Capitol (5)**, completed in 1886. Take a short break on the east side and ring the Liberty Bell replica, presented to the state in 1950 to thank Iowans for their 10-year campaign for war bonds.

Follow the map around to the west side of the capitol (count the five domes), then work your way through the beautifully landscaped **West Capitol Terrace (6)**, which was a parking lot until 2006.

After pedaling through the East Village retail district, turn right (north) at **City Hall (7)** and along the river to the **Robert D. Ray Asian Garden (8)** honoring the former Iowa governor.

After a short ride across the **Iowa Women of Achievement Bridge (9)**, pedal south along The Principal Riverwalk. At Grand Avenue, return to street level, then cross Grand Avenue to Long Look Garden between City Hall and the river.

From here, follow the Riverwalk south past the Police Station and pick up the trail along the levee. Cross the Des Moines River on the **Scott Avenue Bridge (10)**, which immediately connects to the First Street Pedestrian Bridge. (Remember Mullet's from earlier? It will be on your left). Head back up along Water Street to the Hub Spot.

**Route Scout** Deb Amenson, Wild Women Bike Club