



Beyond Park Boundaries: Connecting Communities to Trails

International Trail Symposium
May 9, 2017





Introductions

- Jessica Baas, Community Planner
U.S.DOT Volpe Center
- Krista Sherwood, Transportation Planner
National Park Service
- Saara Snow, Travel Initiatives Coordinator
Adventure Cycling



Agenda

- Overview of NPS “People-Powered Parks” & Active Transportation Guide (Jessica Baas)
- Leveraging Community Partnerships for Active Transportation Initiatives (Krista Sherwood)
- Implementing On-the-Ground Success Stories (Saara Snow)
- Building Public Support for Active Transportation – Open Streets Case Studies (Jessica Baas)



The National Park Service (NPS)

Established August 25, 1916

Today there are 400+ National Park Sites

NPS Manages over 84 Million Acres





NPS Visitation and Access

- In 2016, NPS sites recorded 331 million visits, and 1.4 billion hours
- Increase of 7.7% or 23.7 million visitors over 2015
- How are visitors traveling to and within National Park sites?





Benefits of Bicycling and Walking at NPS Sites

- Promotes health through exercise
- Improves air quality & natural resource protection
- Mitigates congestion & enhances safety
- Provides diverse & more equitable options for visitor experience
- Encourages partnerships & economic development





What is “People-Powered Parks”?

- Supporting bicycling and walking as active transportation to and within National Parks
- Researching and documenting community partnerships, infrastructure improvements, bicycle training/tours, bike sharing, open streets, etc.
- Developing a “how-to” guidebook for parks and partners
 - Best practices
 - Key considerations
 - Lessons learned





NPS Active Transportation Guidebook

- Guidebook Chapters
 - Infrastructure & Connectivity
 - Safety
 - Connecting Parks to Communities
 - Visitor Programs & Open Streets
 - Bicycle Share and Rental Systems
 - Employee Programs and Operational Uses
 - Emerging Topics/Innovative Technologies





Project Partners

- Multiple NPS Programs (RTCA, PFMD, DSC, Centennial Office)
- Federal Highway Administration Office of Federal Lands Highway
- U.S. Department of Transportation Volpe Center
- Adventure Cycling Association
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- City of Portland
- People for Bikes

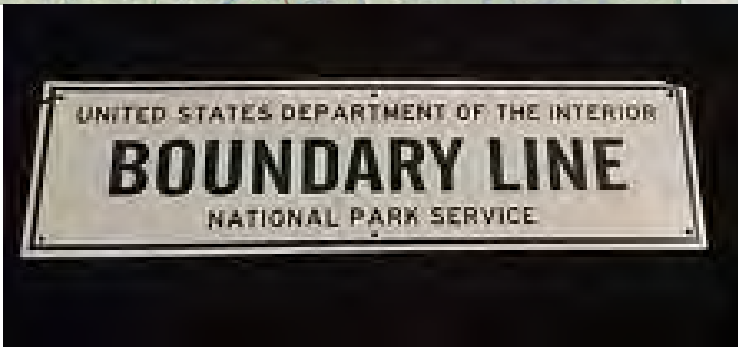
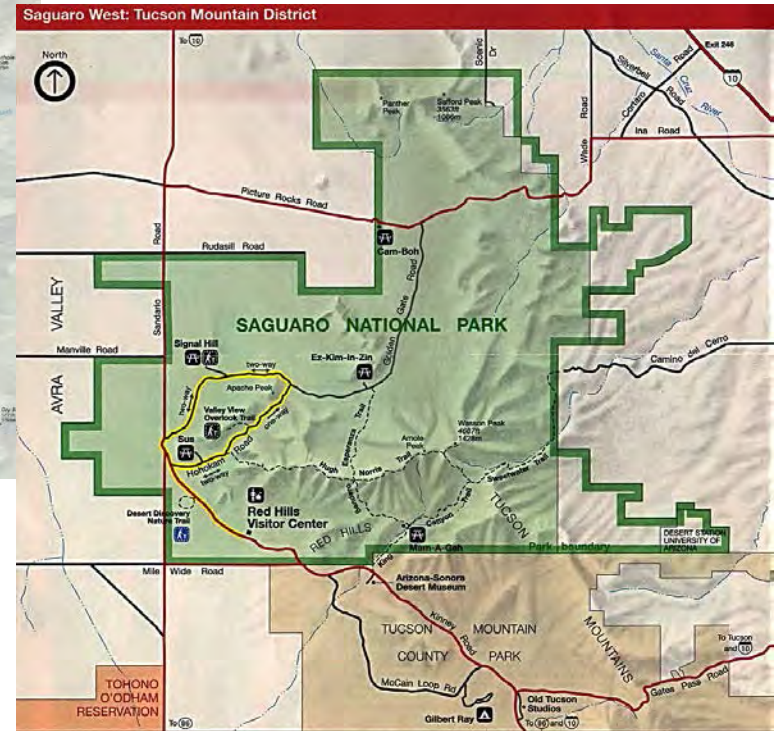




Leveraging Community Partnerships for Active Transportation Initiatives



National Park Service – Beyond Boundaries



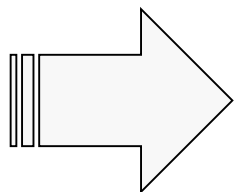


National Park Service – Beyond Boundaries



CHANGING FACTORS:

Landscapes
Increased Visitation
Advanced Technology
Demographics
Modal Preference
Climate Change



RESULTING IMPACTS:

Management of Site
Resource Protection
Visitor Experience
Natural Resources (Air Quality, Night Skies, Natural Sounds, Wildlife Impacts, etc.)
Safety
Congestion

FINDING SUCCESS THROUGH:

- **Active Transportation**
- **Gateway Community Connections**
- **Partnerships**



Leveraging Partnerships for Active Transportation Initiatives





Leveraging Partnerships for Active Transportation Initiatives







Leveraging Partnerships for Active Transportation Initiatives





Leveraging Partnerships for Active Transportation Initiatives



Connect Historic Boston

- Boston National Historical Park & City of Boston, MA
- \$23M TIGER Grant

Concept Plan

The Connect Historic Boston Trail will be a 6-mile, shared-use path connecting Charlestown Navy Yard, providing access to major transit hubs, historic trails, and National Park Service visitor centers and National Park Service Partner sites.

Also, trail provided wherever there will directly connecting Boston's central, east-west street system. The trail will provide access to outdoor from North Station or South Station to either in the Charlestown or South Station or between the two station areas. For people just getting to know Boston, the trail will provide a range of people and activities. Trail users will be able to take advantage of trail to go from site to site and return along the same route.

The trail will be separated from traffic, such as a cycle track or path, in order to provide a protected range of people and activities. Trail users will be able to take advantage of trail to go from site to site and return along the same route.

The trail will be buffered from the sidewalk path by street furniture, landscaping, or a combination of the two.

Wayfinding will direct travelers from the Connect Historic Boston Trail to other sites and the National Park Service system.

Wayfinding, bike racks, and bike parking will be provided to support the trail.

For additional cross sections, see the appendix online at connecthistoricboston.org.

CHB Bike Trail Preliminary Cost Estimate	
Design	\$1,000,000
Construction	\$12,000,000
Maintenance	\$1,000,000
Contingency	\$1,000,000
TOTAL	\$15,000,000



Precedents





Leveraging Partnerships for Active Transportation Initiatives



What is the Jamaica Bay Greenway?

Off-Street Pathways

On-Street Bike Lanes and Sidewalks



Jamaica Bay Greenway

- Gateway National Recreation Area





Leveraging Partnerships for Active Transportation Initiatives



**Arches National
Park & Moab, Utah**

**Bryce Canyon
National Park
& Bryce
Canyon City,
Utah**





Leveraging Partnerships for Active Transportation Initiatives



Aztec Ruins National Monument – Animas River Trail, New Mexico





Leveraging Partnerships for Active Transportation Initiatives



San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Texas





Potential Fund Sources:

The **Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP)** provides funds for projects to improve transportation facilities that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within federal lands.

The **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program** provides funding for transportation projects, programs, and operational strategies that reduce vehicle congestion and air pollutants.

The **Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA Set-Aside) and Recreational Trails Program (RTP)** are two important Federal Highway Administration programs that benefit NPS units and their partners. NPS units typically utilize the TA Set-Aside to fund the construction and rehabilitation of paved, multi-use trails and historic transportation facilities like bridges. The NPS typically uses the RTP to fund the development, maintenance, and restoration of recreational trails.

The **Federal Transit Administration (FTA)** offers several funding programs for transit projects, including funding for transit capital, planning, and operating assistance in urban and rural areas, and funding for buses and bus facilities.

The **Ferry Boats and Ferry Terminal Facilities Program (FBP)** provides funding for the purchase, lease, or construction of new ferries and ferry facilities, or for construction and preventative maintenance activities for existing ferries and facilities.

https://www.nps.gov/transportation/new_NPS_funding_opportunities.html



Leveraging Partnerships for Active Transportation Initiatives





People Powered Parks

Promoting Active Transportation to and within National Parks

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE • U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

People Powered Parks

PROMOTING ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION IN NATIONAL PARKS: THE CENTENNIAL AND BEYOND

The National Park Service (NPS) Park Facility Management Division (PFMD) Transportation Branch is sponsoring an effort to support bicycling and walking as active transportation to and within National Parks.

This effort will be conducted in two phases, over the next two years:

1. 2016: Researching and supporting "Car-Free" or "Open Streets" events in National Parks; and
2. 2017: Developing a Guidebook for Active Transportation and Recreation in National Parks.

More specifically, the effort entails:

- Fostering a multi-partnership endeavor;
- Promoting non-motorized access and enjoyment of NPS sites;
- Celebrating NPS Centennial events;
- Supporting park related events through stakeholder sponsorships;
- Establishing technical support teams;
- Documenting processes, considerations, & lessons learned;
- Developing a best practice "how-to" guide; and
- Conducting webinars to present final report findings.

Active transportation and recreation efforts with National Park sites across the country are providing a multitude of benefits to parks and surrounding communities. They accommodate an increase in park visitors to and within NPS sites, alleviating vehicle congestion, promoting protection of park resources, encouraging climate-friendly travel options, promoting healthy outdoor recreation and enhancing the visitor experience.

Examples include implementation of bike sharing systems to and within NPS sites, coordinating with local communities to develop multi-use trails and bicycle/pedestrian roadway infrastructure, implementing car-free events on NPS roadways, hosting bicycle safety trainings, and more. Many of these efforts are being accomplished through NPS staff and program support, as well as through support provided from local/state/national organizations and partnerships.

The guidebook will include best practice examples, lessons-learned, and key considerations of these types of efforts. It will also incorporate technical guidance from subject matter experts to assist NPS sites and partners interested in pursuing initiatives with the NPS in the future.

Partners:

- NPS PFMD Transportation Branch
- NPS Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance Program
- NPS Centennial Office
- NPS Denver Service Center
- Federal Highway Administration Office of Federal Lands Highway
- Department of Transportation Volpe National Transportation Systems Center
- Adventure Cycling Association
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Open Streets Project
- Friend's Groups or Sponsors

For additional information, please contact:
Kresta Sherwood, PFMD Transportation Branch
ph: 202-613-7234 or
kresta_sherwood@nps.gov






Beyond Park Boundaries: Partnership Success Stories





Inspiring and empowering people to travel by bicycle.

Adventure Cycling Mission



- Accomplish mutual goals
- Gain outside expertise and support
- Leverage limited time and resources
- Cross promotion and exposure

The Power of Partnerships



1. Bicycle Safety Campaigns
2. Multimodal Connectivity
3. Events & Promotion
4. Building Bike Tourism



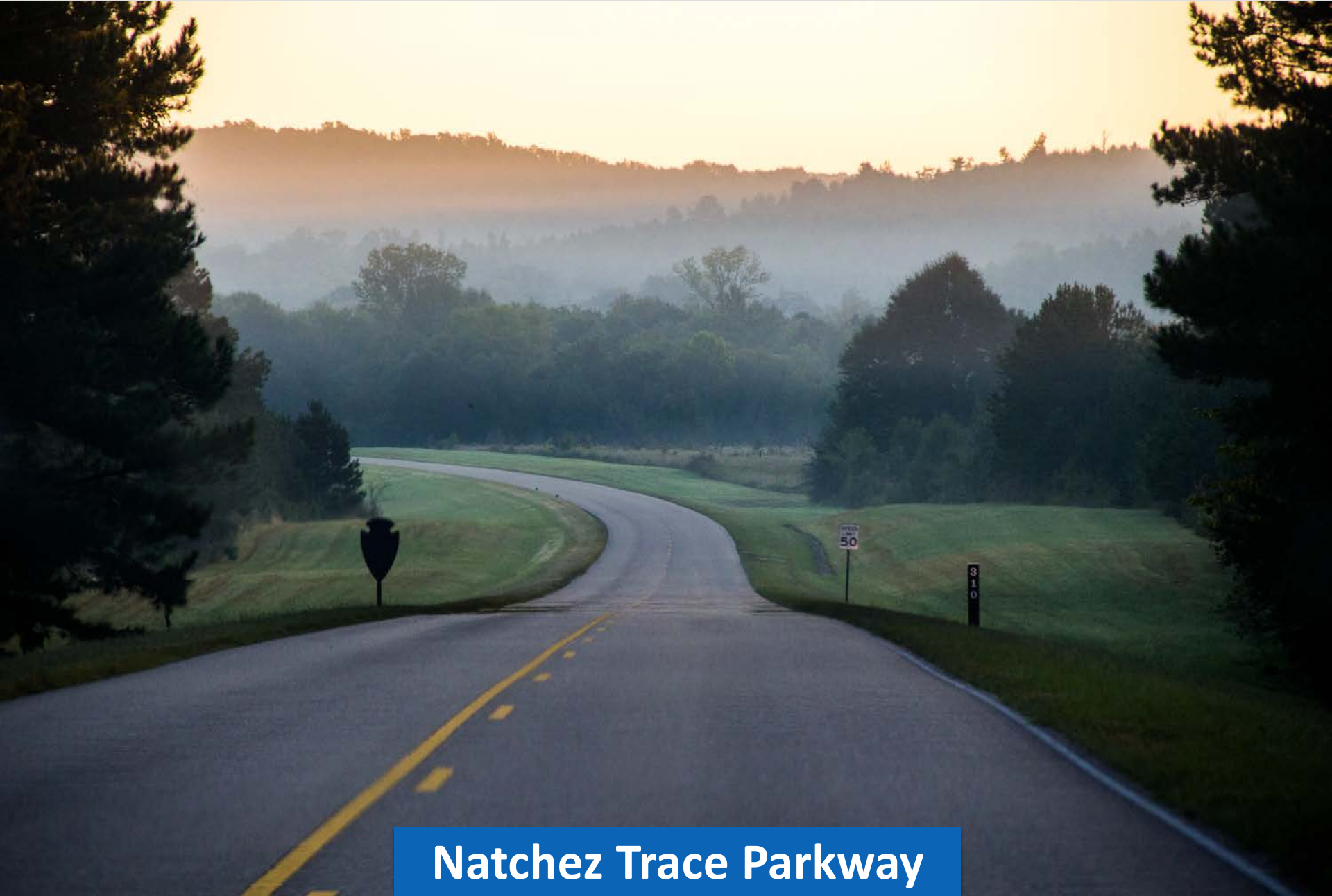
Ways to Partner



PARTNERSHIP SUCCESS STORIES



1. BICYCLE SAFETY CAMPAIGNS



Natchez Trace Parkway



Education & Outreach
Gateway Community Meetings



Signs & Sharrows
Study and Installation



Visibility
Bike Light Giveaway



Data Collection

Bicycle Counters



2. MULTIMODAL CONNECTIVITY



Glacier National Park
Shuttle Bike Trailers



Amtrak Routes
Bicycle Carry-On Service



Summit
Elevation
8,511 ft

3. EVENTS & PROMOTION



Shenandoah NP
Ride the Drive



Bike Your Park Day



4. BUILDING BIKE TOURISM



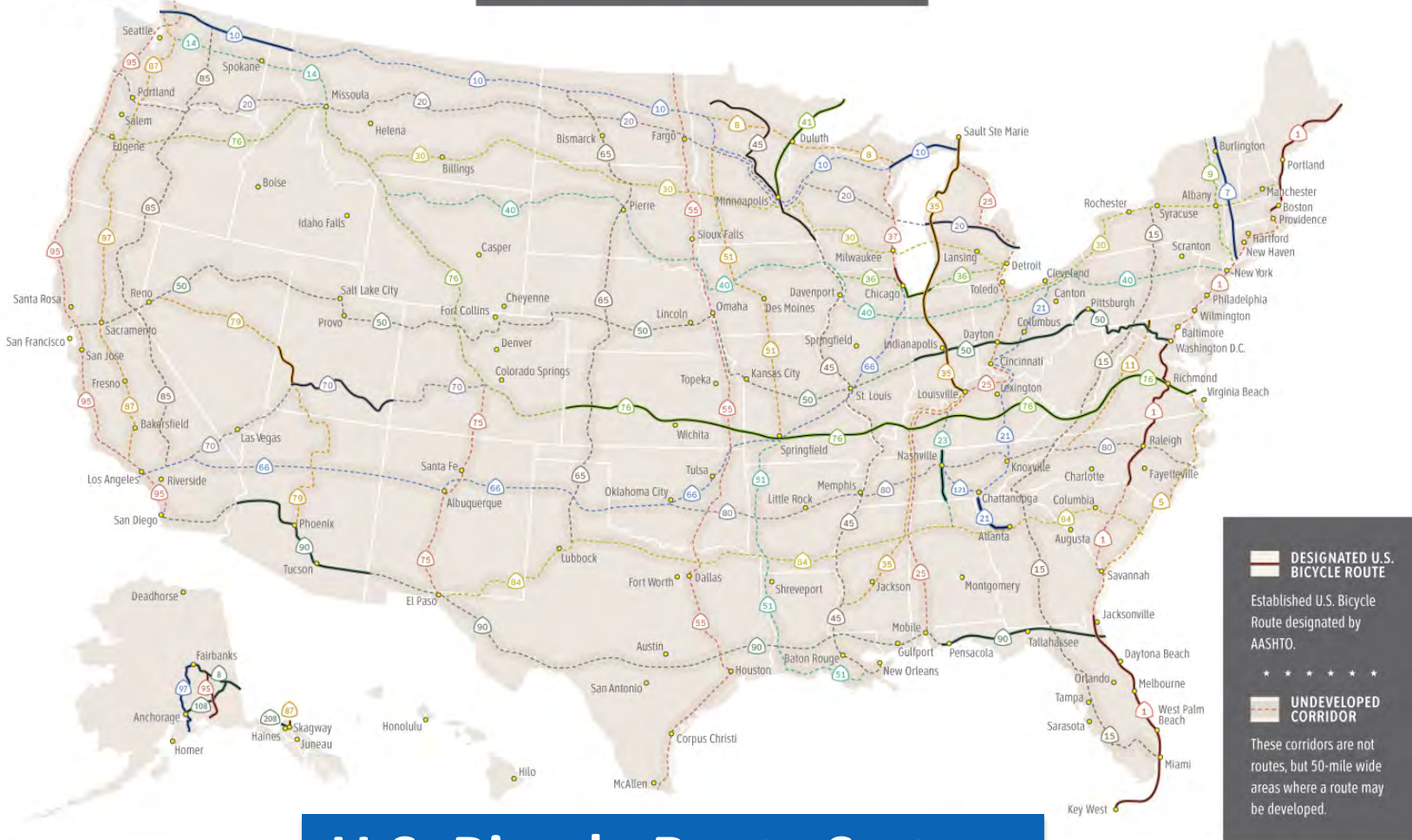
Bike Touring Routes



The goal of The United States Bicycle Route System is to connect America through a network of numbered interstate bicycle routes.

NATIONAL CORRIDOR PLAN

May 2017



U.S. Bicycle Route System



Adventure Cycling Association

- Office of Tourism
- MT State Parks
- MT Department of Transportation
- Adventure Cycling
- Bike Walk Montana
- International Mountain Biking Association
- Local tourism
- Local businesses/hospitality



Montana Bike Tourism Partnership



Proximity of Montana State Parks to Adventure Cycling Routes



Hiker/Biker Camping



Hiker/Biker Camping



THANKS!



Building Support for Active Transportation through Open Streets Events



NPS Open Streets Benefits

- Enhance visitor experience:
 - Natural sounds
 - Historic and cultural landscapes
- Safe, more comfortable environment for active recreation & biking on park roads
- Expand access during shoulder plowing seasons
- Economic benefits for surrounding communities
- Alleviate vehicle congestion





NPS Open Streets Typology

- Seasonal Opportunities
- Special Events/Opportunities
- Routine Opportunities (weekly or monthly)





Seasonal Opportunities

- Shoulder season non-motorized access to partially plowed roads
- Benefits for local communities
- Low effort required from parks
- Examples:
 - Denali National Park
 - Glacier National Park
 - Grand Teton National Park
 - Mount Rainier National Park
 - Rocky Mountain National Park
 - Yellowstone National Park



Denali National Park. NPS Photo / Kent Miller.



Lassen Volcanic National Park, July 2011.



Case Study: Mount Rainer

- Access to Sunrise Road in June/July
- Plowing to open Sunrise Road for the season begins in May/June
 - Bicycles, walkers, and skiers are allowed on the road when not being plowed
- Provides access to the east side of the park when most of it is still closed or only partially open
- Encourages visitors to come to the park when less crowded and see it in a different (ACTIVE) way
- Access is not an organized event or scheduled
- Notifications of road status posted on road and web; subject to change but access can be daily

Case Study: Mount Rainer

- Benefits
 - Starting point for parks to hold events, change policy, or expand bicycling facilities
 - Provides unique visitor access
 - Economic benefit to the gateway communities
 - Disperses visitation (time of year)
- Challenges
 - Providing real-time information about road status
 - Staffing to manage emergencies





Special Events and Opportunities

- Once or twice a year restricting a park road to nonmotorized use
- May include programming or participant support
- Level of effort for park varies widely depending on context, logistics
- Examples:
 - Acadia National Park
 - Colonial Parkway
 - Crater Lake National Park
 - Shenandoah National Park





Case Study: Crater Lake

- Two days each September
- 24 miles of road open only to bicycle and walkers
- Started in 2012; estimated over 5000 riders last year
- Partners provide logistical and marketing support
- NPS staff support emergency response and interpretation
 - Route and mileage information added to assist riders
- Shuttles provide option for bus ride back to vehicles



Rest Stops

Ride the Rim has 5 Rest Stops around the East Rim located at North Junction, Cleetwood Cove, Mt. Scott, Dutton Ridge, and Steel Visitor Center/Park HQ.

At each stop you will find:

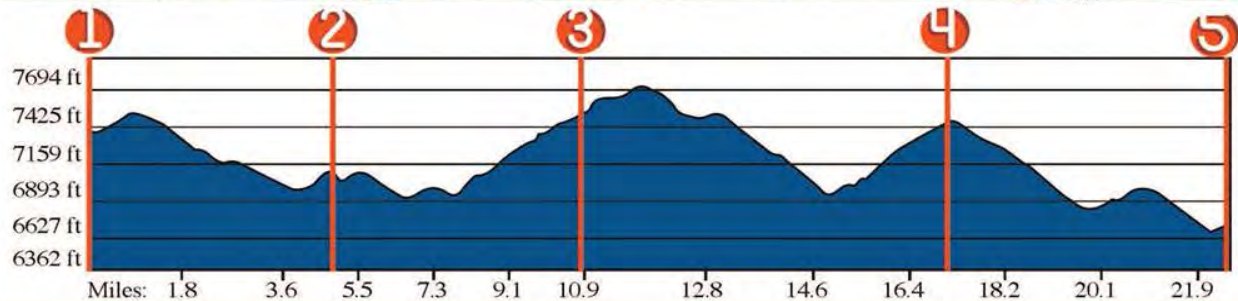
- Shade
- Snacks
- First Aid Kit
- Restrooms
- Bike Pumps
- Friendly People
- Basic Bike Tools
- Waste Receptacles
- Encouragement & Support
- Hydration (bring refillable bottles)

Disclaimers

Ride the Rim is open to all cyclists, runners, walkers and hikers. Wheelchair and child-stroller usage is permitted. Park Entrance Fees still apply. Pets allowed in pet designated areas of the park only. Ride the Rim is not a race or competition. The Park assumes no liability for injury or damage to person or equipment. Please exercise caution and obey park rules and signage at all times. Obey signals and directions of the Park Personnel at all times. Park only in designated spaces. The following modes of transportation are not allowed: motorized vehicles of any kind, horses, roller blades or roller skates, skateboards, or, any other self-propelled devices, with the exception of electric bike assistance.



Indicates Designated Parking Areas





Case Study: Crater Lake

- Benefits
 - Promotes healthy park experience for both participants and the park resources
 - Shoulder season economic benefits for the local communities
- Challenges
 - Parking for participants
 - Maintaining park experience for non-participants





Routine Opportunities

- Regularly scheduled, recurring vehicle-free access
- Park level of effort varies depending on park context
- Considerations include visitor safety, access, parking
- Examples:
 - Rock Creek Park
 - Great Smoky Mountains National Park



Cades Cove Loop Road, Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Jim Bennett photo.



Case Study: Rock Creek Park

- Since 1981, Rock Creek Park in Washington, DC, has closed Beach Drive to vehicle traffic on weekends
- The route fills a gap between the Rock Creek Trail and the Maryland state line
- Very popular with local communities
- Route is transit-accessible; park does not provide additional parking
- Routine, requires very few resources





Case Study: Great Smoky Mountains

- Dates to the late 1970s
- 11-mile Cades Cove Loop closed to vehicles before 10am on Saturday and Wednesday, May-September
- Very popular with local residents; up to 700 participants in the summer
- Requires staff resources to manage parking, safety
- Challenge of managing non-participant visitors





Open Streets Considerations for NPS

- Logistical challenges (parking, access)
- Determining an appropriate route
 - Some park roads and environments may not be suitable for all rider groups (steep, narrow roads)
- Safety and law enforcement impacts
 - It's impossible to notify everyone!
- Not violating park agreements
 - Commercial tours, lodge access, etc.
- Limitation on appropriate activities in national parks
- What happens when open streets become “too popular?”



Lessons Learned:

- Identify the level and types of support you need
 - NPS, community, regional, state, etc.
- Provide ongoing information to both participants and non-participants (press releases, maps, social media, signs)
- Where possible, provide alternative experiences for non-participants
- Work with partners (e.g, local communities, volunteers, concessionaires) throughout process
- Collect data to evaluate, recognize trends
- Use demonstrated support for events to help pursue other walking/bicycling opportunities!



Questions?





Contacts

- Krista Sherwood, Transportation Planner
National Park Service
krista_Sherwood@nps.gov
202-513-7234
- Saara Snow, Travel Initiatives Coordinator
Adventure Cycling
ssnow@adventurcycling.org
406-532-2749
- Jessica Baas, Community Planner
U.S.DOT Volpe Center
Jessica.baas@dot.gov
617-494-3464