One way to look at the economic impact and benefits of investing in bicycle routes and systems, such as the U.S. Bicycle Route System, is to look at the economic impact of previously established bicycle routes and networks, both domestically and abroad. Several states have commissioned surveys, reports, and summaries of the economic effects of bicycle travel, while several other such reports have looked at the success of cycling investments abroad. Below are the economic figures from several of those reports.

EuroVelo: $57 Billion/Year: Impact of Cyclists on the European Cycle Route Network

The European Cyclists Federation coordinates the EuroVelo network which is signed, numbered, mapped, well promoted and supported by numerous governments across the continent. This economic impact study conducted in 2012 was funded by the European Parliament.

Wisconsin: $533 million from out-of-state visitors

Over all, this study tracked in health and economic benefits for bicycling at $1.5 million annually with $924 million (and $533 million in direct impact) attributed to tourism and recreation and $410 million for health. The employment impact, as measured by full-time equivalent jobs, is 13,193. Valuing Bicycling's Economic and Health Impacts in Wisconsin (PDF/876k) (The Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment, University of Wisconsin-Madison, January 2010).

Iowa: $1 million per day

Iowa brings bicycle tourism to their state through RAGBRAI, their developing trail infrastructure, and emerging city networks. The Economic and Health Benefits of Bicycling in Iowa.

Oregon: $400 Million Generated By Bicycle Tourism in Oregon

Travel Oregon commissioned a study, The Economic Significance of Bicycle-Related Travel in Oregon, Detailed State and Travel Region Estimates (2012) to look at the economic impact of bicycling across Oregon, including mountain biking, scenic bikeways and local bicycle amenities.

Vermont: $83 million for bicycling

A report from Resource Systems Group and Local Motion shows that, in 2009, biking and walking created at least 1,400 jobs, $41 million in personal income (wages) and $83 million in revenue. In addition, their research finds, the health and property value benefits could bump that up by more than $400 million in economic impact.

Minnesota: $427 Million from Recreational Cycling

The University of Minnesota Tourism Center released a 2009 study on the Economic Impact of Recreational Trail Use (PDF) and a 2008 analysis of Minnesota Road Biking (PDF). Putting two reports side-by-side, the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota reports 5,000 jobs and $1 billion in revenue

attributed to bicycling.

New Jersey: $497 Million Generated By Active Transportation

The department of transportation in New Jersey contracted Rutgers to explore the economic impact of active transportation related infrastructure, businesses, and events on the state's economy.

Québec: $134 million generated on La Route Verte

La Route Verte cyclists spent a total of $95.4 million in 2000 and estimates brought the impact total to $134 by 2006, which corresponds to over $38 million in government revenues and helps support 2,861 jobs. Retombées économiques de la Route Verte. (March 2003. Read summary.)

North Carolina: $60 million and 1,407 jobs from Outer Banks

A nearly nine-fold increase on the initial $6.7 million in public funds invested in construction of bicycle facilities. Judson J. Lawrie, Thomas P.Norman, Mary Meletiou, and Sarah W. O'Brien. Bikeways to Prosperity: Assessing the Economic Impact of Bicycle Facilities (TR News 242 January-February 2006).

Maine: $36.3 million & 67 Daily Website Hits on Bike Book Page

Maine department of transportation's (DOT) Bicycle Tourism in Maine: Economic Impacts and Marketing Recommendations (Executive Summary, April 2001) documented $363 million in economic impact in 1999. Maine's DOT bicycling website which links to their state-wide bicycle touring guide, gets 30,000 visitors; 22,000 unique per year, equaling 67 hits per day.

Great Allegheny/C&O Canal Towpath: $98 per day:

$98 per day is the average amount spent by cyclists on the Great Allegheny/C&O Canal Towpath when traveling by bicycle for more than one day. Businesses along the trail attribute one quarter of their gross income to trail users for a total economic impact of $40.6 million in gross revenue in 2008. Campos Inc., The Great Allegheny Passage Economic Impact Study (PDF/1.2M) (2007–2008) (The Progress Fund/Job #07-294, 7 August 2009).

Illinois: $30.40/Day Mean Trail User Expenditure on 6 Illinois Trails

Trails for Illinois studied the triple bottom line (economy, environment, and health) on six trails; 35% of trails users spend money in restaurants/bars and a majority bought accessories for trail use (shoes, bikes, clothing, camping gear, etc.). Most telling: 70% of trail users found out about the trail through word of mouth or happenstance; only .3% learned about the trails from tourism or visitors bureau and 3% learn of the trail through a local park or trail agency.

Florida: $32.556 million for Orange County Trails

Between 2010-11, an economic impact survey (PDF) performed on three trails in Orange County

Florida estimated 1.7 million people use the trails each year, providing $32.556 in impact for the county's economy.

Related Research

Economic Benefits of Trails and Greenways (PDF) is a composite of studies done about rail trails across the U.S. and highlights economic benefits, property values, business investment, and quality of life.

The Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) at the University of Montana which conducts non-resident surveys through the state of Montana, compiled data based upon visitors in 2012. Road and tour biking impact for Missoula County is estimated at $19.4 million or 8% of the county's nonresident expenditures. ReadITRR analysis and summary (PDF), Cyclists spending per night (PDF), Nonresident spending by cyclists (PDF).

Bicycle Tourism and Rural Community Development: An Asset Based Approach (PDF, 679K) by Sally Broadaway is a graduate study that demonstrates how communities can use existing assets to build bicycle tourism. Case studies of two unique communities, Collinwood, TN, and Farmington, MO, provide the model for other rural communities to meet the needs of bicycle travelers.

Bicycle Tourism as a Rural Economic Development Vehicle (PDF/1.9 MB) by Heidi Beierle, MCPR at University of Oregon. This study examines the different kinds of self-contained bicycle tourists, their spending patterns and the benefits to communities along the TransAmerica Bicycle Trail.

Estimating the Employment Impacts of Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Road Infrastructure (PDF) — The Political Economy Research Institute compiled data provided by the city of Baltimore to write this case study. They found that on-street bike lanes and pedestrian measures created more direct jobs, more indirect jobs, and more induced jobs per dollar than either road upgrades or road resurfacing.

Guidelines for Analysis of Investment in Bicycle Facilities (PDF/4.4m) — A compilation study by the National Cooperative Highway Research Program, includes literature reviews, cost-benefit analysis, etc.

Rural Friendliness Pays Dividends is the story about how the small town of Twin Bridges, Montana, has embraced bicycle tourism and benefited.

Shoppers on Bikes Good for Business (PDF/1.1m) is an article claiming that patrons arriving by bicycle and on foot spend more money than those coming by car.