

# AGENDA ITEM 6

# TxDOT Bicycle Tourism Trails Study Update

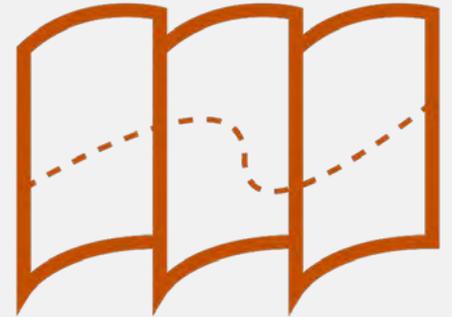
A close-up, shallow depth-of-field photograph of a bicycle's rear wheel and drivetrain. The focus is on the black cassette and chain, with a yellow rear dropout and a silver axle nut visible. The spokes of the wheel are blurred in the foreground and background, creating a sense of motion and depth.

April 2017 BAC Meeting

April 10, 2017

# Agenda

- Approval of interim products
  - Present study vision statement, goals, and study objectives
  - Present project stakeholders of statewide significance
- Example tourism trails done by other states and statewide approaches
- Summary and next steps



# Vision

*A network of bicycle tourism routes collaboratively developed to provide safe, non-motorized access to and connectivity between statewide/regional destinations and support economic development across Texas.*



# Goals



Identify bicycle tourism trail routes



Foster the development of safe bicycle tourism trails



Identify benefits of bicycle tourism trails



Engage stakeholders

# Goal 1: Identify bicycle tourism trail routes

## Objectives:

- 1.1 Establish criteria for route locations
- 1.2 Connect existing bicycle, transit, rail, vehicle, and pedestrian networks with potential tourism trails
- 1.3 Identify statewide/regional destinations and annual bicycling events
- 1.4 Identify existing and potential routes
- 1.5 Map routes



## Goal 2: Foster the development of safe bicycle tourism trails

### Objectives:

- 2.1 Establish design criteria for various bikeway accommodations
- 2.2 Provide estimated costs associated with development of various bikeway accommodations
- 2.3 Establish procedures for considering state-maintained roadways for inclusion in the USBRS
- 2.4 Provide guidance for local jurisdictions and other agencies to develop proposed bicycle tourism trails



# Goal 3: Identify benefits of bicycle tourism trails

## Objectives:

- 3.1 Identify economic benefits
- 3.2 Identify health benefits
- 3.3 Identify environmental benefits
- 3.4 Identify transportation/travel benefits



# Goal 4: Engage stakeholders

## Objectives:

- 4.1 Consult and coordinate with state agencies (including Texas Economic Development and Tourism Office and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department)
- 4.2 Coordinate with other government entities
- 4.3 Engage statewide bicycle interest groups



# Who are project stakeholders?

## Stakeholder involvement:

- Identify potential routes
- Review route selection criteria
- Review design criteria
- Identify issues or concerns
- Comment on TxDOT's draft Texas bicycle tourism trail map

## Stakeholder qualities:

- Has knowledge of regional bikeways in Texas
- Has expertise in bicycle tourism
- Has responsibilities related to development, promotion and implementation of Texas bicycle tourism trails
- Has potential to be affected by bicycle tourism routing

# Potential project stakeholders

## Texas Parks & Wildlife

- Knowledge of recreational trails and other long-distance cyclist destinations throughout Texas
- Received almost \$4 million (about 5%) of TA Set-Aside funding for recreational trails

## Texas Historical Commission- *Community Heritage Development Division*

- Knowledge of long-distance cyclist destinations: Texas Main Street program and the Texas Heritage Trails program

## Texas Economic Development and Tourism Office

- Knowledge of previous and current tourism efforts or economic development incentives

## BikeTexas

- Knowledge of previously considered bicycle tourism trail routes
- Valuable partner for future support and promotion of BTTS Routes

## Regional Planning Organizations

*Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Councils of Governments (COGs)*

- Knowledge of local planning efforts, bicycle project development, and valuable local GIS data

## Texas Department of State Health Services

- Knowledge of public health issues and future partner during future promotion phases

## Users

- Knowledge of bicycling needs

# Example bicycle tourism routes done by others

## National/ Regional Routes

- East Coast Greenway
- Mississippi River Trail
- Great Allegheny Passage (Pennsylvania and Maryland)
- Katy Trail (Missouri)

## State Networks

- North Carolina
- Oregon
- Minnesota

# East Coast Greenway

## Overview:

- 3,000 mile long spine that links urban areas together from Maine to Key West, FL
- Accompanied by 2,000 miles of *complementary* routes
- Currently, 30% of entire length is shared use path (“on trail”), while remaining portions use low-volume roadways (“interim routing”)

## Ultimate design accommodation:

- Build bicycle/pedestrian accommodations for all ages and abilities
- Off-road shared use paths
  - Where shared use paths are not feasible, shared roadways, bike lanes, and sidewalks will be used



# Mississippi River Trail / USBR 45

## Overview:

- Generally parallels the Mississippi River, from the river's headwaters in Minnesota to the it's mouth at the Gulf of Mexico, through MN, WI, IA, IL, MO, KY, TN, AR, MS, and LA.
- No current leadership, multi-state coalition fell apart

## Accommodation description:

- Minnesota portion is designated as USBR 45
- For adventure touring cyclists (advanced users)
- Bikeways include low-volume roadways with shared lanes, shoulders, and off-road shared use paths



# Great Allegheny Passage (Pittsburgh to DC)

Two trails with historic/regional significance for skill levels ranging from average to road warrior cyclists

## Great Allegheny Passage

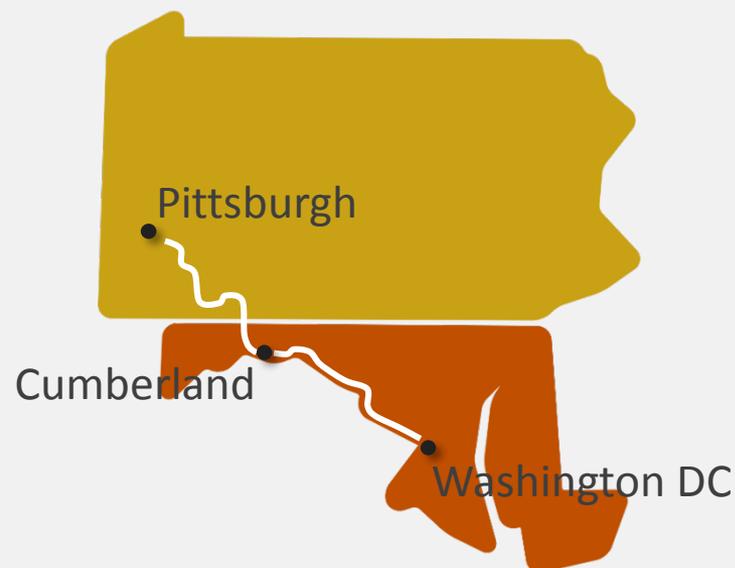
150 miles- between Pittsburgh, PA and Cumberland, MD

- Abandoned railroad conversion
- Flat terrain, scenic, off-road shared use path with a crushed limestone surface

## C&O Canal Towpath

185 miles- between Cumberland and Washington DC

- Parallels historic C&O canal tow path
- Hilly terrain, off-road shared use path with crushed limestone or natural surface
- Designated as USBR 50



For more info: <https://gaptrail.org/>

Slides intended for discussion purposes only

# Katy Trail - Missouri

## Overview:

- 237 mile route across Missouri generally paralleling the Missouri River on an abandoned railroad corridor
- Included in two of Adventure Cycling's cross-country routes: *Lewis & Clark* and the *American Discovery Trail*

## Accommodation description:

- Flat terrain, scenic, off-road shared use path with a crushed limestone surface
- For recreational and adventurous cyclists alike



# State approaches to bicycle tourism

Three bicycle tourism approaches were identified in reviewing efforts in other states

- Long-distance bicycle tourist approach
  - Focus on long distance bicycle travelers with minimal accommodations
- Short distance bicycle tourist approach
  - Focus on weekend and short-distance travelers
- General approach
  - No specific focus, but generally led by tourism department. Different agencies providing different levels of leadership/resources/accommodations/etc.

# North Carolina - DOT

Long-distance bicycle tourist approach

## State approach:

- Cross-state system of recommended bike routes covering 3,000 miles (nine identified routes)
- Routes cyclists on lower-volume roads, generally parallels highways.
- Limited bikeway accommodations (shared lanes and wide shoulders) with limited signage

## Promotion:

- DOT interactive online trip planner map with elevation, turn-by-turn instructions, difficulty, roadside bike amenities, etc.



**9** 105

SANDHILLS SECTOR

**DISTANCE:** 125 Miles  
**DIFFICULTY:** Moderate  
**ELEVATION**

Distance (Miles)

The western terminus of the Sandhills Sector is its connection with NC 6 near the Pee Dee River and the town of Albemarle. Ending near the Cape Fear River at its connection with NC 5, this route traverses ~125 miles of sandhills terrain characterized by rolling topography rising from 500 to 700 feet above sea level.

[FIND OUT MORE >](#)

# Oregon – Tourism Department

Short distance  
bicycle tourist  
approach

## State approach:

- Focus on short, weekend, or daily rides
- Inclusive of different types of bicycle trails:
  - Mountain biking, gravel rides, paved roads, and scenic bikeways

## Promotion:

- Printed and interactive online maps with photos, text descriptions, turn-by-turn instructions, ride difficulty, planned bicycle events, etc.
- Highlights businesses along routes (economic development focus)
  - Roadside attractions
  - Food, bicycle retail & repair, and lodging

The screenshot shows the search interface for the Ride Oregon Ride website. It is divided into four sections by dashed lines:

- Search by Ride Location:** A text input field with the example text "Ex: Portland or 555 State St. Salem 55025".
- Select a Ride Type:** Four radio button options: "Mountain Biking Trails" (gear icon), "Road Routes" (black circle icon), "Gravel Rides" (blue circle icon), and "Scenic Bikeways" (green circle icon).
- Select a Ride Length (in miles):** A range slider with "1" on the left and "100+" on the right.
- Search Rides:** A large dark button with the text "Search Rides".

# Oregon



# Minnesota – Multiple agencies

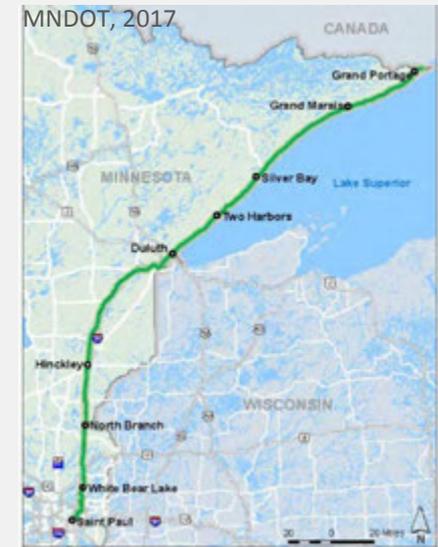
General approach

## State approach:

- Focused on creating a few key routes with minimal accommodations on low-volume roads (USBR 41 and 45)
- State parks feature trails/ off-road shared use paths for locals and tourists

## Promotion:

- *Tourism department*: provides interactive maps with amenity information and ride-finding tools
- *MNDOT and each county*: provides static (pdf) bicycle map with roadway ADT and shoulders
- *Dept. of Natural Resources*: provides static maps of off-road trails and shared use paths within state and national parks
- *Non-profit partners*: provides interactive and printed ride maps



For more info:

20 <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike/maps.html>

Slides intended for discussion purposes only

# What approach should Texas take to address bicycle tourism?



# State approaches to bicycle tourism summary

	North Carolina	Oregon	Minnesota	Texas
<b>Bicycle user focus</b> <i>(advanced cyclists vs 8-80)</i>	Long-distance (advanced cyclists)	Short-distance/ recreational (varies)	Multiple user focus	?
<b>Lead agency</b>	DOT	Tourism	No lead. Shared between DOT, Tourism, Parks, Counties	?
<b>Making information available/ Promotion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated website (single location)</li> <li>• Interactive online trip planner map with extensive cyclists info</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated website (single location)</li> <li>• Printed and interactive online maps with extensive cyclists info</li> <li>• Highlights businesses along routes and planned bicycle events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maps/ resources in various locations</li> <li>• Printed and interactive resources with extensive cyclists info (not a one-stop shop for information)</li> </ul>	?
<b>Inter-agency coordination*</b> <i>DOT • Parks and Wildlife • Tourism • Local Gov't Bike advocacy group(s)</i>				?

# This afternoon's working group meeting

## Topics

- Mapping exercise:
  - Routes identified by the working group
  - Previously proposed Texas tourism trails
  - Potential bicycle tourism destinations
- Discussion on criteria for route selection



# Action items

## TxDOT-PTN & CH2M:

- Continue outreach and data collection process with identified stakeholders
- Report back on the results of this afternoon's meeting



## BAC:

- Email information/ data related to previously proposed bicycle tourism trails in your area

# Questions



Thank You!!

**Bicycle Advisory  
Committee**

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