

Grow Our Bicycle Tourism Conference
February 5, 2015
Meeting Notes

Welcome, Overview, Goals

The meeting was opened by hosts Supervisor Steve Bennett, Ventura County First District and Supervisor Salud Carbajal, Santa Barbara County First District.

Economic Benefits of Bicycle Tourism

Marlyss Auster, Executive Director of Ventura Visitor & Convention Bureau presented us with information, including a Powerpoint describing the demographics of bicycle riders and tourists, their spending, the \$57 Billion bike tourism industry in Europe, the positive economic impact of bicycle tourism in other states and regions such as Oregon with more than \$400 million/year.

Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties Marketing Together

Kathy Janega-Dykes, President/CEO of Visit Santa Barbara presented on the two counties working together, including a Powerpoint with an overview of visitors to the area, regional marketing benefits, other regional examples and a variety of bike tourism opportunities such as tours, events, a website and social media.

What Bike Tourists Look For

Kate Faulkner of Channel Islands Bike Club gave a presentation from the Cyclists perspective. Her Powerpoint included desired amenities bicyclists look for such as transfer to/from airport, healthy meals, laundry service, secure bike storage and high-end bike rental.

Kelly Pasco & Tim Rhone of The Mob Shop gave a presentation, including Powerpoint, from the Tour Operator Perspective describing the need for scenic beauty, a variety of trails and well-maintained roads for various cycling interests and levels of expertise, and the importance of providing a rider-safe and bike-friendly riding environment.

Supervisor Bennett made a brief presentation about the economic benefits that resulted when residents in Twin Bridges, Montana made bicyclists feel welcome with bike camping and other simple amenities.

How to Move Forward

Supervisor Bennett led the group Brainstorm session about what Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties need to do to attract more bicycle tourists. Once the list was created, the group discussed how to move forward. The group decided to meet again in 2-3 months, recruit a speaker from an area that has developed a successful bicycle tourism program, and form 3 workgroups to move the Santa Barbara/Ventura effort forward. A brief discussion touched upon which Workgroup(s) might tackle the ideas out of the Brainstorming session. Details below:

Brainstorming Suggestions on What's Needed from Bicyclists' Perspectives (Workgroup in parentheses. M = Marketing and Public Relations, W = Wayfinding, I = Infrastructure and Safety)

- Apps; e.g., My City Bikes (M,W)
- Include entry-level cyclists (M, W, I)
 - 10-20 mile trips
 - Signage indicating mileage and difficulty
- Transportation Network (W, I)
 - Ages 8-80
 - Commuters
 - Recreational Riders
 - Vacationers

- Website(s) (M)
 - Comprehensive lists
- Road conditions (I)
 - Smooth pavement & wide shoulders
- Bike Friendly Business (M)
 - Welcoming, secure bike parking, art
- Hwy 33 onramp blocks direct bike and pedestrian access to coastal bike/hike route (W,I)
- More bike lockers and charging stations (I)
- Increased bike storage on mass transit (I)
- Combined bike map for Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties with amenities listed on reverse (W,M)
- Coordinate Ventura and Santa Barbara county bike maps and apps (M)
- Bike route rating system – similar to France (W,M)
- Improved, consistent signage on coastal route (W,I)
- Build event partnerships between counties; e.g., CycleMAYnia (M)
- More bike events; e.g., Great Western Bike Rally multi-day event (M)
- More opportunities for people to start cycling; e.g., Santa Barbara Open Streets (M)
- PCH needs a Class 1 bike path for Gaviota (I)
- Signage suggestion: “Bike to Sea” (W,I)
- Bigger photo presence (M)
- Hwy 33 improvements in Oak View (I)
 - Eliminate 2 lanes
 - Make a connection to bike trail
- Hwy 101 (I)
 - Bike path to fill existing gap from Santa Clause Lane to Rincon
- Micro-sites for Gold Coast Bike Route (M)
- National Bike Conference attendance & involvement (M)
- Amtrak – more bike friendly partnership, more bike storage (M, I)
- Friendly and Safe biking for women (M)
- Buses – more bike racks (I)
- Explore State funding (M, I)
- Advocacy for State & Federal funding (M, I)
- Channel Islands Bike Club Grant Program available for funding some projects (M, W, I)
- Hwy 150 and Hwy 192 – Improved bike safety – shoulders, signs, enforcement (I)
- Education campaign about value of Bike Tourism and catering to Bicyclists (M)
- Promoting opportunities to bike (M)
- Joint website (M)
- Best Practices – learn from others successfully promoting Bike Tourism; e.g., Adventure Cycling (M)
- Special focus on youth – future riders, positive impact on obesity epidemic (M)

Next Steps Brainstorm:

- This group meets again:
 - Break into specific workgroups
 - Reconvene in 6 months to report progress
- Ventura & Santa Barbara counties highlight small events
- Designate a month such as “July” as Coastal Bike Tourism Month
- Bike Friendly City designations
- Bike Friendly Business designations
- Meet monthly to accelerate process as done in some other jurisdictions
- Have a speaker from a successful bike tourism effort to address group and advise; e.g., Oregon Tours

The group agreed they'd like to meet again and break into work groups. The following suggestions were made for possible workgroups:

- Signage (There is suggestion to include with infrastructure.)
- Connections
- Itineraries, Photos
- Website Development
- Events
- Marketing
- Infrastructure Improvements
- Public Relations/Educating Public
- Benchmarking/Research
- Funding/Grants

Group decided they would meet again in 2-3 months, same approximate time of day

- First part of meeting would be a speaker with advice based upon their successful program
- Second part of meeting break into workgroup – approx. 2 hours

Group agreed to start with 3 workgroups and then subcommittees, if needed for specific efforts

1. Marketing/Public Relations
 - a. Itineraries
 - b. Photos
 - c. Website Development
 - d. Events
 - e. Educating
 - f. Benchmarking and Research
2. Wayfinding
 - a. Signage - then move to infrastructure
 - b. Connections – then move to Infrastructure
3. Infrastructure and Safety
 - a. Signage - after Wayfinding determines needs
 - b. Connections – after Wayfinding determines needs
 - c. Funding and Grants

Participants agreed to be part of Next Steps and selected a Workgroup as follows:

1. Marketing and Public Relations
 - Marlyss Auster
 - Cheryl Bagby
 - Brian Brennan
 - Jeff Byers
 - Grant Cunningham
 - Robin Elander
 - Kent Epperson
 - Eric Friedman
 - Kathy Janega-Dykes
 - Barbara Kennedy
 - Pauline Krovinko
 - Sylvia Munoz Schnopp
 - Fred Shaw
 - Joe Sohm
 - Tim Rhone

2. Wayfinding

Cindy Cantle
Kate Faulkner
Kalon Kelley
Lynda Lang
Foster Nagaoka
Leslie Ogden
Diane Stein
Shelley Sund
Lindsay Thomson

3. Infrastructure and Safety

John Avery
Peter Brown
Tyson Butzke
Matt Dobberteen
Rachel Morris
Steve Offerman
Kelly Pasco
Jeremy Tittle
Derek Towers