

## Transportation Benefits



As a transportation network, the U.S. Bicycle Route System provides numerous benefits including cost effective spending, high return on investments, and preferred travel routes for cyclists.

### **A Reduction in Air Pollution, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Congestion**

As a zero-emission vehicle, increased bicycle use reduces the amount of air pollution and greenhouse gases, both of which are rising. The U.S. Department of Energy reports that transportation energy is expected to increase 19% between 2010 and 2035.<sup>1</sup> Bicycles occupy much less space than motor vehicles, easing roadway congestion, and interest in bicycle travel is

increasing. The number of personal trips made by bicycle increased 30% between 1990 and 1995.<sup>2</sup>

## Cost Effective Spending

Bicycles are low cost to purchase, maintain, and insure, and require zero gasoline consumption. Public infrastructure costs are also lower than motor vehicle and public transport.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, 80-90% of the U.S. Bicycle Route System will ideally be on existing (as is) facilities. Infrastructure investment might include adding shoulders and providing access to bridges, tunnels, or other important links.

## A High Investment Return

Bicycle facilities increase tourism dollars. From 1987 to 2006, the North Carolina DOT invested \$6.7 million dollars in public funds to construct a network of bicycle facilities along Outer Banks. The annual economic impact has been \$60 million and 1,407 jobs supported, an approximate nine-fold return on the initial investment.<sup>4</sup>

## Elevated Infrastructure Priorities

Designating routes on the U.S. Bicycle Route System can increase awareness about, and the need to address, a lack of facilities and infrastructure along the route. Projects otherwise without funding might be more likely to receive funding if designated as a U.S. Bicycle Route. Furthermore, findings from a recent study indicate that higher investments in bicycling and walking transportation have a higher mode share and are safer for bicyclists and pedestrians.<sup>5</sup>

## Related Research

[New York City's Green Dividend](#) (PDF) was released by the CEOs for Cities in April 2010. The

Green Dividend is a calculation of various benefits New Yorker's enjoy due to driving less.

[Communities Benefit!](#) (PDF, 680k) showcases 10 outstanding projects that demonstrate the power of the Transportation Enhancements (TE) program to catalyze positive change and economic rebirth in local communities.

For information about liability concerns please visit our [USBRS designation](#) page.

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1) U.S. Energy Information Administration. Annual Energy Outlook 2010 Early Release. Table 2. Energy Consumption by Sector and Source (The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Washington, D.C. December 14, 2009); 2) Don Pickrell and Paul Schimek. Trends in Personal Motor Vehicle Ownership and Use: Evidence from the Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey (Cambridge: U.S. DOT Volpe Center, 23 April 1998); 3) John Pucher and Ralph Buehler. Making Cycling Irresistible: Lessons from The Netherlands, Denmark and Germany (Transport Reviews, Vol. 28, No. 4, 495–528, July 2008); 4) Judson J. Lawrie, Thomas P. Norman, Mary Meletioui, and Sarah W. O'Brien. Bikeways to Prosperity: Assessing the Economic Impact of Bicycle Facilities (TR News 242 January-February 2006); 5) Alliance for Biking & Walking. Bicycling and Walking in the United States 2010 Benchmarking Report (Washington, D.C. 2010).