
Appendix B: Showcase Areas

Memorandum

Date: January 5, 2021
To: Tyler Summersett, Tuolumne County Transportation Council
From: Kari McNickle, Fehr & Peers
Subject: **Proposed Bicycle Tourism Focus Areas**

WC20-3704

The Interregional Bicycle Tourism Study aims to evaluate the opportunities to develop and expand bicycle tourism across five counties in the central region of California: San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, Calaveras, and Alpine. The study area stretches across a broad swath of diverse geography, from the relatively flat agricultural lands of the Central Valley, onto the windy, hilly roads of the foothills, and climbing across multiple high passes across the Sierras. With such a unique range of communities and opportunities, the project team recommends that five bicycle tourism showcase areas be established, with one in each County, as a way to provide a more focused set of recommendations and planning tools, while also creating a roadmap (or bike map) to replicate these recommendations in other, similar communities in the region.

This memorandum documents the data and criteria reviewed to identify a list of potential focus areas and presents a recommendation on which areas should be advanced to a more in-depth level of analysis.

Identifying Potential Focus Communities

A list of potential focus communities was developed based on stakeholder identification, the presence of destinations and accommodations to support tourism, and existing levels of bicycle activity.

Destinations and Lodging

Destinations and lodging were mapped for the five-county study area to assess two key components of tourism – what visitors want to do and see, and places for them to stay. For the purposes of this study, campgrounds were included as lodging opportunities. Bicycle shops, as a unique need/supportive amenity to support tourists traveling by or using bicycles, were also mapped and identified. A combined map with these three components was shared for steering



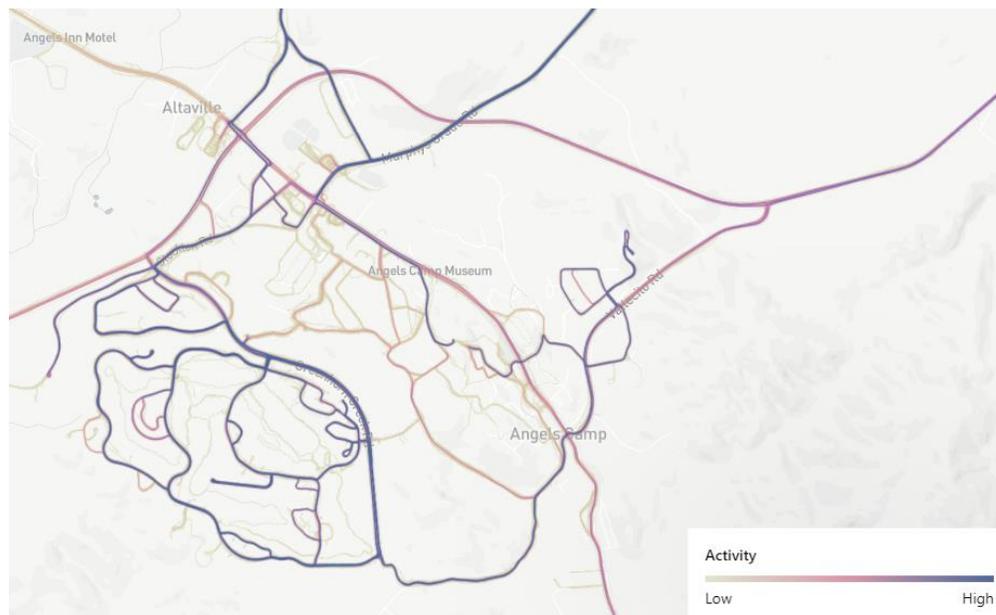
committee review and comment, and graphically illustrated as a heatmap to show the relative concentration of attractions within a given area. Both maps can be seen in **Attachment A**.

Bicycle Activity

Data on existing bicycling rides and cycling groups was collected by the project team and CalBike. Many communities within the study area already host bicycling events in some form, ranging from organized rides to benefit local nonprofits (such as the Pedaling Paths to Independence Ride in San Joaquin County) to those that draw a large number of visitors including those from out of state (such as the Death Ride in Alpine County). Several other established cycling training routes are present in the area, such as Patterson Pass in the western portion of Stanislaus County.

The project team was also given access to Strava data for each County through the Strava Metro platform. Strava is an app and internet service used for tracking cycling and running trips through GPS data. The Metro tool aggregates and anonymizes this data at countywide scale and can provide a perspective on where and how frequently users are riding within a given region. Historically, we have seen that the data can overrepresent recreational cycling done by “Strong and Fearless” style riders, but it still provides a powerful perspective on where bicyclists choose to ride.

A sample of what the Strava Heatmap feature looks like for the Angels Camp area is shown below, where roadways shown in darker blue are those that experience a higher degree of trip logs.



Source: Strava Metro, December 2018 - November 2020.



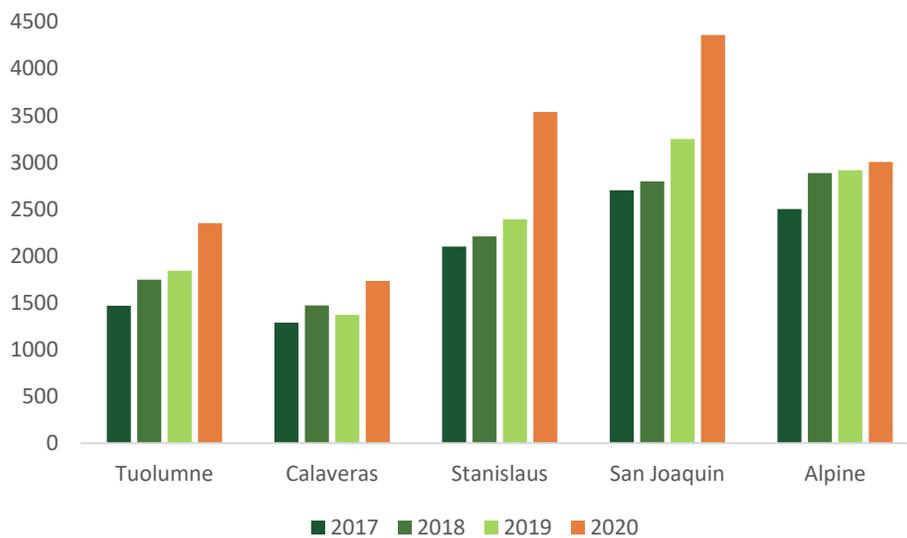
Strava data also categorizes trips made by “locals” and those made by “visitors”, with a user’s home location identified as the area in which they have logged the majority of their trips within the preceding six months. The Strava data shows a significant uptick in bicycle trips identified as being taken by locals in 2020 as compared to prior year data for each County. This is likely due to the impact of COVID-19, with many area residents seeking ways to recreate and exercise within their communities during statewide travel restrictions. A comparison of year over year data for each county is shown in **Table 1** and **Figure 1**.

Table 1: Strava Trip Logs per Year, by County

	2017	2018	2019	2020
<i>Tuolumne</i>	1468	1747	1842	2350
<i>Calaveras</i>	1288	1471	1371	1733
<i>Stanislaus</i>	2099	2209	2390	3537
<i>San Joaquin</i>	2701	2797	3248	4360
<i>Alpine</i>	2501	2885	2916	3004

Source: Strava Metro, Fehr & Peers, 2020

Figure 1: Strava Trip Logs per Year, by County



Source: Strava Metro, Fehr & Peers, 2020.



Candidate Areas for Further Study

To illustrate the existing successes for bicycle tourism in the study area and identify high potential for future investment, we are recommending the development of five “showcase areas,” one per County. These areas are envisioned as the near-term locations with the greatest tourism potential and will also serve as templates for additional tourism expansion should communities and agencies be interested in that investment in both destinations and infrastructure. A list of candidate showcase areas is shown in **Table 2**. Communities or areas on this list were identified as areas with existing tourism activity or cycling activity. The inclusion of an area was also weighted against population, with a focus on smaller, more rural, or unincorporated areas, as opposed to larger population centers such as Stockton or Modesto. Each community was subsequently evaluated on a low, medium, high scale for the concentration of tourism attractions within the area, as well as the level of Strava activity.

Table 2: List of Candidate Showcase Areas

Area Name	County	Density of Attractions	Strava Activity Level
Bear Valley	Alpine	Med	High
Hope Valley	Alpine	Low	Med
Markleeville	Alpine	Low	High
Angels Camp	Calaveras	High	Med
Arnold	Calaveras	High	High
Murphys	Calaveras	High	High
Valley Springs	Calaveras	Low	High
San Andreas	Calaveras	Low	High
Lockeford	San Joaquin	Low	Med
Lodi	San Joaquin	High	High
Woodbridge	San Joaquin	Med	High
Oakdale	Stanislaus	Med	Med
Knights Ferry	Stanislaus	High	High
Patterson	Stanislaus	Low	Med
Columbia	Tuolumne	Med	High
Groveland	Tuolumne	Med	High
Jamestown	Tuolumne	Med	High
Sonora	Tuolumne	Med	High



Recommended Showcase Areas

From the preliminary list, a Showcase Area for further study in each County was identified based on the following criteria:

- Potential to attract/appeal to multiple types of bicycle tourism rider types (as defined in “Best Practices for Bicycle Tourism Promotion”)
- Existing bicycle tourism activity or promotion
- Existing recreational bicycling activity
- Density of attractions/destinations

In some instances, candidate showcase areas were combined due to close geographic proximity and the potential for mutual benefit.

San Joaquin County: Woodbridge/Lodi Area

The Lodi wine region has a high degree of existing infrastructure to support tourism from the Lodi Wine & Visitor’s Bureau and previous efforts undertaken by local community organization Bike Lodi, including efforts to map routes for visitors arriving to the community on bicycle. The roadway network surrounding the City of Lodi, including the unincorporated community of Woodbridge, serves several existing organized bicycle rides and events. While perhaps the best example locally of a community accommodating and seeking to attract bicycle tourism, the area still has several opportunities for further advancement and the potential to catalyze visits to other nearby regions in the study area.

Stanislaus County: Oakdale/Knights Ferry

The roadways traveling from and around Oakdale offer incredible scenery en route to the historic destinations around Knights Ferry. The area sees high levels of bicycle activity from groups like the Stanislaus Bicycle Club, and Knights Ferry itself is a popular day trip destination for local residents and visitors from nearby counties. This focus area can also include Woodward Reservoir Park. Together, improvements in this area could increase bicycle tourism while also unlocking access for residents wishing to travel by bike to popular recreation destinations in the area. This area is also a strong starting point for a potential interregional connection with Tuolumne County.

Calaveras County: SR-4 Angels Camp - Murphys Corridor

The segment of State Route (SR) 4 stretching from Angels Camp to Murphys offers access to multiple tourism destinations ranging from caverns to wine tasting rooms. This focus area has the opportunity to consider long term improvements to a state route that also serves as an alternative “main street” for these smaller communities, as well as identify potential side routes and paths for



bicycle tourists who may be seeking quieter roadways. SR-4 already has a reputation among cyclists for scenery where it crosses Ebbetts Pass and links to Alpine County, and the focus area is also developing a positive reputation among local gravel and mountain bike enthusiasts.

Tuolumne County: Jamestown-Columbia-Sonora

Tuolumne County offers several top contenders for bicycle tourism – perhaps the most of any County within the study area. The proximity of the three communities of Jamestown, Columbia, and Sonora makes this an combined showcase area, with roughly 15 miles separating the three if ridden together. For bicycle-minded visitors headed to Yosemite National Park, this area would be an additional cycling destination that can also offer alternative lodging to the often-sold-out lodging within Yosemite Valley. Looking ahead to interregional connectivity, this focus area is also centered between Murphys and Knights Ferry, with roughly 20 miles separating each destination from the Jamestown area.

Alpine County: Safety on State Routes

Alpine County is unique among the five counties of this study. It has the smallest population – less than 1,200 people per Census data – which more than triples each summer when the Death Ride takes place and brings its riders and associated spectators along. While certainly a popular event, improvements along the many mountainous routes and passes the route covers can improve safety for those seeking to cycle the roadways outside of the organized event, or create opportunities for additional road cycling events. Safety improvements along these corridors would also benefit residents in places like Markleeville and Woodfords Community, and other residential areas where State Routes commonly serve as “main street”.