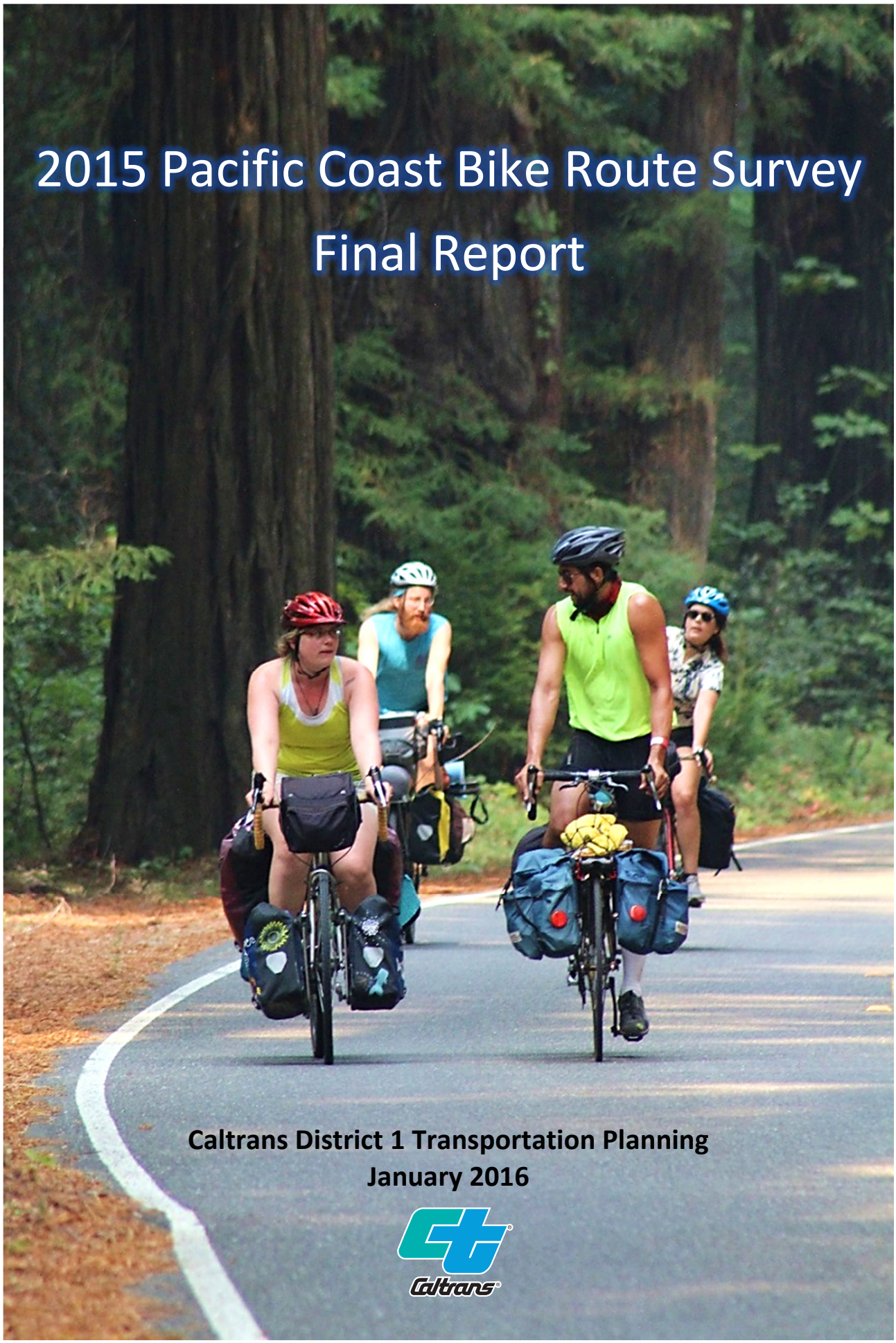
2015 Pacific Coast Bike Route Survey

Final Report



Caltrans District 1 Transportation Planning

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Acknowledgements

Thank you to all of the cyclists who took the time to take our survey and talk with us during your ride on the Pacific Coast Bike Route last summer. And thank you to all of the businesses and organizations that helped disseminate the surveys and were supportive of this effort. Your participation and contributions have been key to making the 2015 Pacific Coast Bike Route Survey for Caltrans District 1 successful.

Project Team:

Tatiana Ahlstrand, Associate Transportation Planner
tatiana.ahlstrand@dot.ca.gov, (707) 441-4540
Project Lead, Photographs

Lisa Hockaday, Transportation Engineer
lisa.hockaday@dot.ca.gov, (707) 441-2059
District 1 Bike Coordinator, Traffic Census Lead

John Thurston, Transportation Planner
john.thurston@dot.ca.gov, (707) 441-2009
District 1 GIS Coordinator, Maps

Rex Jackman, Senior Transportation Planner Planning South
rex.jackman@dot.ca.gov, (707) 445-6412

Note: All data collected during the 2015 Pacific Coast Bike Route Survey is available upon request.

Executive Summary

In the summer of 2015 Caltrans District 1 Office of Transportation Planning surveyed 535 touring cyclists riding the Pacific Coast Bike Route in Del Norte, Humboldt and Mendocino Counties. The survey had three components: An online version, a paper version, and in-person interviews. The goal of the survey was to capture data beyond the numbers. We asked the touring cyclists questions about demographics, how they are using the route, any potentially difficult experiences, if they could identify improvements that would help, which navigation tools they are using, and if they had any positive feedback they were willing to share.

This document is a summary of the information collected, identification of the lessons learned, and a list of opportunities and next steps that align with the survey findings. We are pleased to report that several of the 'next steps' have already been set in motion. Considering no such effort has been done at this scale and with the amount of surveys collected, the District views the outcome as a success. The information collected will have many uses to Caltrans and our partner agencies.

In summary, the results found there to be seven overarching issues identified by the touring cyclists who took the survey. These issues include improvements to the highway shoulders, improvements to the route signage, maintenance of the highway shoulders, establishment of alternate routes, more information about the route, development of tools for navigation, and encouragement of better driver behavior.

Introduction

The Pacific Coast Bike Route (PCBR) is a cycling route that runs from the border with Canada to the border with Mexico. The route was legislatively designated by the State in 1976 to commemorate the nation's 200th birthday. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is responsible for determination and signing of the route in California. In Caltrans District 1, the route follows U.S. Highway 101 from the Oregon border through Del Norte and Humboldt Counties and into Mendocino County to its junction with State Route 1 and through Mendocino County on SR 1 to the Sonoma County border. It follows state highways, freeways, and city or county roads. The route serves both long-distance touring cyclists and commuters.

In a 1982 document that was a joint effort between the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission of California and Caltrans, the Director of Caltrans included the following passage to help explain the character of the route:

> *The Pacific Coast Bicentennial Bike Route is a 1,000 mile long journey into the history and future of California. On this route you will find California's past, its Spanish, Russian, Mexican and early American heritage. You will pass forts, lighthouses, missions, old mining and lumbering areas. You will pass through rich agricultural land and busy cities and towns, filled with the richness of the past and bustling with life of today.*
>
> *This route was selected as the Department of Transportation's way of participating in the nation's Bicentennial. Although it is primarily recreational, portions are useful as daily commute routes. It is also the Department's way of saying "thank you" to all bicyclists because the earliest public support for all-weather paved roads came from bicyclist groups.*

Although the route no longer includes 'Bicentennial' in its title, the PCBR continues to serve as an important resource for the California Pacific Coast. Caltrans District 1 views the PCBR as a significant asset to our region for recreational, economic and tourism purposes.

The District has an established Non-Motorized Census program which collects count data from non-motorized users. However, information beyond the numbers about who is riding the PCBR was lacking. Thousands of cyclists come through our region every year and it is advantageous to learn more about the riders, how they use the route and which improvements they recommend.

In the summer of 2015, District 1 Office of Transportation Planning conducted a survey of touring cyclists to gather this information. A total of 535 cyclists were surveyed and information about demographics, how the route is being used, any potential difficult experiences, improvements that would help most, navigation tools and positive feedback was collected.

We expect the information Caltrans collects to have many uses. First, it will help enrich future grant applications such as for the Active Transportation Program (ATP) grants. Second, it will help Caltrans build a navigation tool for PCBR users. Third, it will provide better communication between Caltrans and the traveling public. And by Caltrans having a better understanding of how our facility is being used, it will help to improve the communication between the Department and our local partners. One example of an opportunity for improving communication is during the Local Coastal Plan coordination. The outcome of this survey will help fulfill goals outlined in the Department's Complete Streets Implementation Action Plan (CSIAP) 2.0, which is a living document that lays out the structure for

integrating complete streets into all Caltrans functions and processes. And last, the study can be used to help support decision making regarding design standards and exceptions.

The PCBR will have its 40th anniversary in 2016 and Caltrans will continue to celebrate the route and its important history and future potential.

Break time! Touring cyclists' bikes parked along State Route 1 in Mendocino County.

Previous and Ongoing Efforts

District 1 Non-Motorized Census:

District 1 established the Non-Motorized Census, which is a regular count schedule that collects data from non-motorized users, including cyclists on the PCBR. The locations for this census effort were chosen with a goal of having the entire District represented on a continuous, three-year rotating basis. The non-motorized data represented in this report is from 19 locations along the PCBR in District 1. The counts were taken for 2-3 days and an average was formed. The following table summarizes the count data:

County-Route-PM	Location Description	Date of Counts	Average Daily Bike Count
DN – 101 – 43.30	Near the Oregon Border	06/14	7
DN – 101 – 27.01	Northcrest Drive in the City of Crescent City	06/14	23
DN – 101 – 25.83	Elk Valley Road in the City of Crescent City	06/14	19
DN – 101 – 5.31	The community of Klamath	07/14	23
HUM – 101 – 125.92	South Entry of Newton B. Drury Parkway	07/14	16
HUM – 101 – 121.38	Dryden Avenue in the community of Orick	07/14	24
HUM – 101 – 97.35	Crannell Road near the Hammond Trail in McKinleyville	07/14	17
HUM – 101 – 79.44	4th and V Streets in the City of Eureka	07/14	5
MEN – 1 – 105.57	State Route 1 at the junction with U.S. Highway 101	07/12	30
MEN – 1 – 74.50	South of the community of Westport	07/12	19
MEN – 1 – 69.97	The north approach of Ten Mile Bridge	07/12	27
MEN – 1 – 62.24	The approach to the Pudding Creek Bridge	08/12	43
MEN – 1 – 61.56	The downtown of the City of Fort Bragg	08/12	53
MEN – 1 – 59.84	State Route 1 at the junction with State Route 20	07/12	91
MEN – 1- 53.90	South of the community of Caspar	06/12	12
MEN – 1 – 40.93	North of the junction of SR 1 with State Route 128	06/12	13
MEN – 1 – 17.20	South of the community of Manchester	06/12	14
MEN – 1- 15.4	In the community of Point Arena	06/12	8
MEN – 1 – 2.55	North of the community of Gualala	06/12	17

Several additional locations have been counted but have yet to be processed due to lack of funding in the budget. The goal of the Non-Motorized Census effort is for it to grow over time and for more count locations to be added as resources allow.

Pacific Coast Bike Route Study:

The Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) was awarded a State Planning and Research (SPR) grant in 2002/03 and completed the "Pacific Coast Bike Route Study" in March 2003. A survey was a component of this study and 110 touring cyclists were surveyed in a format very different than the template used this time. Both surveys, however, identified similar issues. As a result of the

survey in 2003, some of the recommendations outlined in it were subsequently implemented by the District to make improvements to the PCBR.

The Pacific Coast Bike Route/California Coastal Trail Engineered Feasibility Study:

The "Pacific Coast Bike Route/California Coastal Trail Engineered Feasibility Study" was developed by Caltrans District 1 and the Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) in February 2013. The study identifies a series of improvements, mostly pertaining to the widening of the highway shoulder through the Mendocino County portion of the PCBR. It also contains segment overview maps, preliminary cost estimates and potential improvement segments. The document can be found on the Caltrans District 1 webpage at: http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist1/d1transplan/system_planning/pcbr-cct.htm

Photographs from the cover of the PCBR/CCT Engineered Feasibility Study.

Shoulder Widening Pacific Coast Bike Route:

Based on the priorities outlined in the 2013 Engineered Feasibility Study, Caltrans developed a Project Study Report (PSR) in June 2014 that identified widening the shoulder of a section of the Pacific Coast Bike Route. The location is in Mendocino County near the City of Fort Bragg from Pudding Creek Road to Ocean Meadows Circle. It proposes to widen the existing shoulders to eight feet. The project was intended to be funded through the Transportation Enhancements (TE) program, which is no longer a viable funding source. The successor to the TE program is the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and State Departments of Transportation are not eligible applicants for TAP funding.

District 1 will pursue funding this and other shoulder widening projects along the PCBR through the Asset Management Program in the State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) in future cycles. Another funding opportunity would be to pursue federal Department of Transportation funds through the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) discretionary grant program, which funds bicycle and pedestrian projects.

PCBR Paddle Delineators:

From a recommendation printed in the 2003 PCBR Survey for more signage, Caltrans District 1 obtained Transportation Enhancements (TE) funding to improve signage and wayfinding on the PCBR in 2004. The new signs were Type 1 flexible delineators that were targeted specifically for cyclists. A total of 19 signs were placed at intervals of about one every hour of travel along a given segment of the route in Mendocino County. The signs display symbols for camping, food, and services, along with the mileage to reach those services.

Bicycle Touring Guide for the California North Coast:

The District Bicycle Touring Guide contains safety information, attractions, campgrounds, route maps and profiles for all sections of the four counties in the District. As noted in the "Opportunities and Next Steps" section of the document, this guide will be updated in the coming year. The guide can be found on the Caltrans District 1 webpage at: http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist1/d1transplan/bikeped/bikeguide/

Two riders share the shoulder on US 101 south of Eureka.

Survey Methodology

The survey duration was from mid-July through September 30, 2015. The survey had three components: An online version, a paper version (Appendix A and B), and in-person interviews. The audience between the formats varied considerably and this report reflects those variations.

The online survey was intended for cyclists who had already completed their tour on the PCBR in the past, where the paper version was intended for cyclists currently touring on the route. If a cyclist did not want to complete the report in the field, there was a QR (Quick Response) code on the bottom of the paper survey that provided a link to the online version.

The paper surveys were distributed to 24 locations throughout Del Norte, Humboldt and Mendocino Counties. Half of those locations were private businesses and the other half were public agencies. Caltrans staff also conducted over twenty extensive, in-person interviews with touring cyclists in the field. This gave us the advantage of obtaining additional information not in the surveys. We set up stations where we had the District 1 Bicycle Touring Guides, fresh fruit and water to offer the cyclists who we interviewed.

The total number of paper surveys collected: 226. The total number of online surveys collected: 309.

Survey station and signs. Caltrans staff talking with touring cyclists in the field (the community of Elk, Mendocino County).

The survey was designed to ask questions that would reveal information about who was riding the route and how they were using it. In an effort to make changes and improvements in the future, we asked them to identify any hardships they've had during their tour or any improvements they would like to see be made in the future.

Survey Locations:

Paper surveys were disseminated to the following locations throughout the District:

Location	Post Mile	Surveys Returned
KOA Crescent City Redwoods	DN – 101 – 32.09	7
Back Country Bikes, City of Crescent City	DN – 101 – 27.87	1
Crescent City Information Center	DN – 101 – 26.26	1
Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park, Mill Creek Campground	DN – 101 – 20.2	16
Redwood National and State Parks, Thomas H. Kuchel Visitor Center	HUM – 101 – 120.0	8
California State Parks, Patrick's Point Campground	HUM – 101 – 106.2	18
Hotel Arcata	HUM – 101 – 86.7	10
Adventure's Edge, City of Arcata	HUM – 101 – 86.7	1
Revolution Bicycle, City of Arcata	HUM – 101 – 86.7	9
KOA Eureka	HUM -101 – 83.37	1
Sport & Cycle, Eureka	HUM – 101 – 77.35	21
Sport & Cycle, Fortuna	HUM – 101 – 61.1	0
Humboldt Redwoods State Park: Visitor Center, Burlington, Hidden Springs, and Albee Creek Campgrounds	HUM – 254 – various	4
Richardson Grove State Park Campground	HUM – 101 – 1.6	1
Standish-Hickey State Recreation Area Campground	MEN – 101 – 93.9	4
KOA Westport Beach	MEN – 1 – 78.3	4
Westport Community Store	MEN – 1 – 77.5	41
KOA Manchester Beach	MEN – 1 – 66.8	0
Fort Bragg Cyclery, City of Fort Bragg	MEN – 1 – 61.4	104
The Elk Store	MEN – 1 – 33.9	22
Gualala Point Regional Park	MEN – 1 – 0	12
In-Person Interviews	GENERAL	22
Paper survey submitted via email	GENERAL	1

(8.4% of the surveys were returned from Del Norte County, 23.6% from Humboldt County, 60.5% from Mendocino County)

Announcements encouraging participation for the survey were posted online at the following sites: Caltrans District 1 Facebook page, the California Association of Bicycling Organizations (CABO) forum, the Adventure Cycling Association (ACA) Twitter feed, the Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) website, the Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) website, and the Shasta Regional Transportation Agency Twitter feed.

Thank you letters accompanied by a short summary of the survey findings were mailed to all of the agencies who helped disseminate the survey on November 3, 2015 (see Appendix C).

Locations in Del Norte, Humboldt and Mendocino Counties where the surveys were distributed.

Presentation of Data

Overview and Background:

Overall the majority of the survey respondents provided very positive feedback regarding their trip and many of them were grateful to have the opportunity to voice their opinions about the PCBR.

The project team made the decision not to combine the results of the online and paper surveys because the information we collected from the two formatted surveys is very different. Part of that is because they captured different audiences and timeframes. The following are some examples of how the surveys differed:

1. The online survey was designed for an audience of cyclists who had already finished their ride on the PCBR, whether that be one week ago or several years in the past. The paper survey was designed for riders to complete in-person at spot locations during their ride.
2. The online survey had drop-down boxes for some of the questions (for example, "where did you stay?") which kept the options to a contained minimum. On the other hand, the paper survey was open-ended that allowed for more variables and quantifying the answers together became difficult.
3. Some of the survey questions between the two formats were worded slightly different, potentially generating a different reaction to the question. For example, the online survey asked if they had encountered any issues along the route, while the paper survey asked if they had encountered any particularly difficult locations or incidents during the trip so far.
4. It is likely that the online survey did not make it to an international audience and therefore the breakdown of where the respondents are coming from to ride the PCBR differs greatly between the two survey formats. The online survey was posted predominately on California-based websites, and in turn had a much higher percentage of respondents from California. Additionally, the two surveys captured different audiences just within the State of California. Several of the online respondents did not ride sections of the PCBR within District 1 and were concerned with areas in Southern or Central California and their answers focused on those issues.
5. Respondents of the online survey tended to report a higher number of miles ridden each day.

The project team recognizes there can be issues with data collection. The following are some examples of potential issues with the data collection:

1. Our partners who helped disseminate the surveys may have been more likely to hand out a survey to a cyclists if it was clear they were not from the area.
2. Depending on the location where the paper survey was completed, the respondent may not have encountered an incident that was ahead of their current location that they would have otherwise reported.
3. Due to the anonymous nature of the survey, there was no way to control for multiple responses from the same person.
4. The open-ended nature of the surveys left some of the answers open for interpretation. For example, location descriptions in the "Difficulties Identified" section tended to be general in nature due to lack of a post mile or other defining feature.

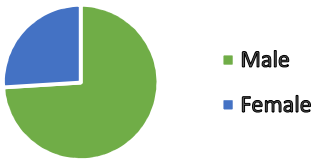
5. It was inferred that "narrow road" as a description of a difficult feature meant there were issues with the shoulder width. In some cases the answers were entirely too vague to tabulate into any one category.

There were many lessons learned and we found that some businesses were more willing to help disseminate the surveys than others. For example, some of the private bike shops were enthusiastic about the project and very willing to help with our effort (see more in the "Lessons Learned" section).

Survey Respondent Demographics:

This section summarizes the data collected regarding gender, age and origin.

GENDER	MALE	FEMALE
Paper Survey	72%	28%
Online Survey	76%	24%
Combined Average	*74%*	*26%*



AGE	
Paper Survey	39.5
Online Survey*	47.2
Combined Average	*43.4*

*The online survey asked for the respondent's age at the time they completed their tour on the PCBR.

Although the majority of the cyclists were traveling alone or in small groups of 2-3, there were some large commercial tour groups that increased the average number of cyclists per group. The average group number for the paper survey is 3.19 and the online survey is 5.14.

The youngest survey respondent was age 16 and part of a group tour guided by a commercial tour group. The oldest respondent was 77 years old and noted this was not his first time cycling the PCBR. During our in-person interviews we met a father and his son who were cycling together, couples who were riding a tandem bike, and others who had traveled internationally for the sole purpose of riding the PCBR.

ORIGIN	INTERNATIONAL	NATIONAL (not CA)	CALIFORNIAN
Paper Survey	36%	37%	26%
Online Survey	9%	34%	57%

Of the international visitors, 45% were from Canada and 45% were from Europe (with the highest percentages coming from the UK, Germany and the Netherlands). Another 6% came from Australia and New Zealand. Other countries represented were Bangladesh, China and Barbados.

How the Route is Being Used:

This section examines the data collected regarding distances, direction of travel, popular route plans and where the touring cyclists choose to stay during their trip.

MILES PER DAY	
Paper Survey	55.9
Online Survey	61.0
Average	*58.45*

DIRECTION OF TRAVEL	SOUTHBOUND	NORTHBOUND	LOOP
Paper Survey	283	11	15
Online Survey	215	11	NA

Overall on average, 93% of the riders reported that they are riding the PCBR from north to south. Additionally, about 42% of the respondents from this survey ended their trip on the PCBR somewhere in the San Francisco Bay Area. Some of the riders were going to Mexico on their bikes and two others were headed all the way to the tip of Argentina.

ACCOMMODATIONS	CAMPING	HOTELS	COMBINATION	FRIENDS
Paper Survey	185	32	74	1
Online Survey	108	27	77	2

As mentioned, the accommodations section of the survey had many variables due to the two survey formats. For example, some of the answers were not applicable to our survey (such as commuter respondents) and those answers were not tabulated here.

Of those who responded they were camping during their tour, the majority specifically indicated that they were staying in Hiker/Biker Campgrounds. Hike or bike campsites are offered in many California State Parks and are reserved for people who either walk or cycle into the campsites. Although a fee is still required for these sites, they are usually much lower than for a typical campsite. The sites range from extremely primitive to offering facilities for cyclists such as bike racks, locks, charging stations, hot showers and more.

Hiker/Biker Facilities at Standish Hickey State Recreational Area (Humboldt) and MacKerricher State Park (Mendocino).

There are fourteen campgrounds along the PCBR within District 1 with hiker/biker camping capacity. See the parks listed below from north to south:

- Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park
- Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park
- Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park
- Patrick's Point State Park
- Grizzly Creek Redwoods State Park
- Humboldt Redwoods State Park
- Benbow Lake State Recreation Area
- Richardson Grove State Park
- Standish-Hickey State Recreation Area
- Sinkyone Wilderness State Park
- MacKerricher State Park
- Russian Gulch State Park
- Van Damme State Park
- Manchester State Park

<u>The Difficulties Identified:</u>

This section of the survey was open-ended on both the paper and online formats. The paper survey asked whether or not the rider had encountered any particularly difficult locations or incidents on their trip so far and, if so, to describe. The following is a list of the difficulties the survey respondents identified listed in order of significance of concern:

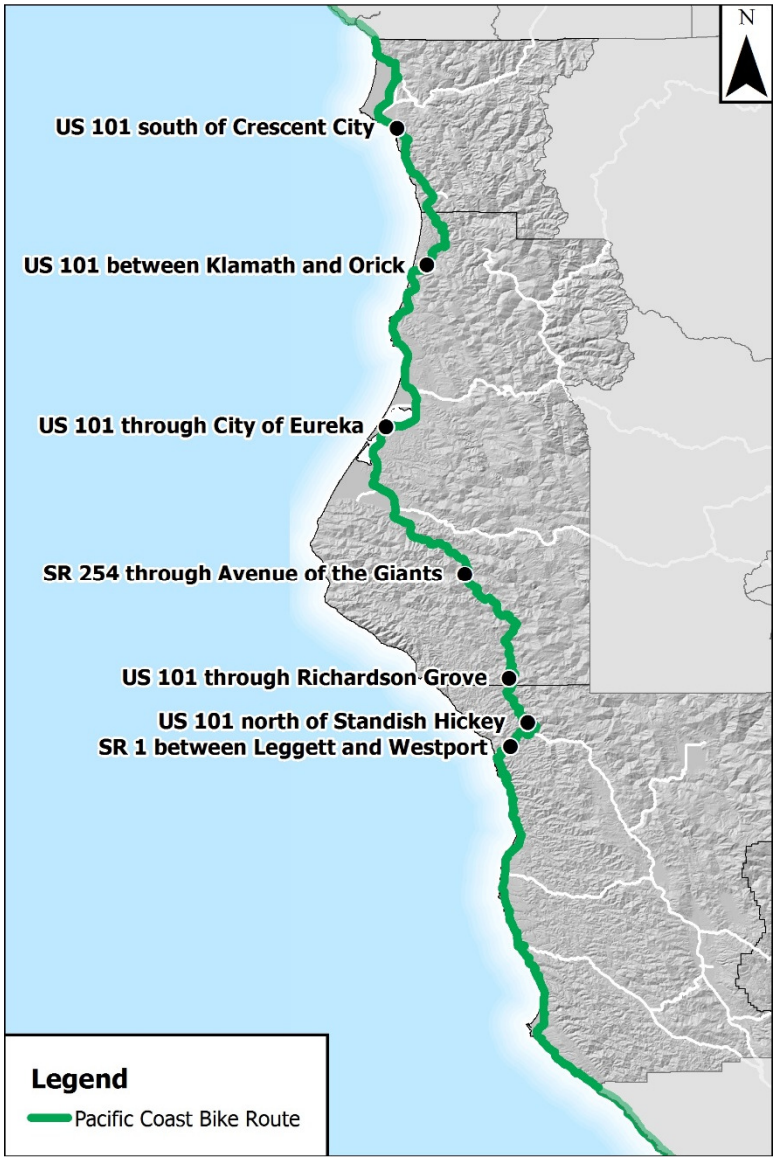
Paper Survey:		
1. Lack of An Adequate Shoulder	(96)	(31%)
2. Nothing to Report (Blank)	(68)	(22%)
3. Large Freight Trucks, Logging Trucks, Recreational Vehicles	(34)	(11%)
4. Hostility from Drivers	(25)	(8%)
5. U.S. 101 south of Crescent City	(23)	(7%)
6. Reported Having No Issues	(22)	(7%)
7. U.S. 101 between Leggett and Junction of SR 1	(21)	(7%)
8. SR 1 Between Leggett and Westport	(17)	(6%)
9. Debris in the Shoulder	(12)	(4%)
10. Lack of Adequate Signage on the Route	(7)	(2%)
11. Theft	(5)	(2%)
Online Survey:		
1. Nothing to Report (Blank)	(91)	(40%)
2. Lack of An Adequate Shoulder	(75)	(33%)
3. Lack of Adequate Signage on the Route	(19)	(8%)
4. Large Freight Trucks, Logging Trucks, Recreational Vehicles	(17)	(8%)
5. U.S. 101 south of Crescent City	(13)	(6%)
6. Hostility from Drivers	(10)	(4%)
7. U.S. 101 between Leggett and Junction of SR 1	(3)	(1%)
8. Debris in the Shoulder	(2)	(1%)
9. Too Much Traffic	(2)	(1%)
10. Reported Having No Issues	(1)	(0.4%)
11. SR 1 Between Leggett and Westport	(0)	(0%)

Note: Some respondents identified multiple difficulties while others did not identify any.

The lack of a shoulder to ride in was the top concern for most survey respondents. The survey identified the following locations in District 1 as being most problematic for the touring cyclists:

- US 101 south of Crescent City
- US 101 north of Standish-Hickey
- State Route 1 between Leggett and Westport
- US 101 through Richardson Grove
- US 101 between Klamath and Orick
- State Route 254 through the Avenue of the Giants
- US 101 through the City of Eureka (Broadway Street, 4th and 5th Streets)

Haul Road, a Mendocino County road that is an alternate route to the SR 1 mainline, was also identified as being problematic for the touring cyclists due to the poor condition of the pavement.



Locations along the PCBR in District 1 percieved as being the most problematic for the touring cyclists who completed the survey.

Large freight trucks, logging trucks and recreational vehicles (RV's) were of concern to the survey respondents because some reported these vehicles were prone to causing 'near misses' and increase

the risk of the cyclists getting run off the roads. The Adventure Cycling Association (ACA) website advises that, “during peak tourist season, there is heavy recreational vehicle traffic along the U.S. Highway 101 and State Highway 1 along the coast, so cyclists must ride cautiously and defensively” (ACA website, 2015).

Narrow shoulders: Richardson Grove on US 101 (Humboldt County), just south of the community of Elk on SR 1 (Mendocino County), along the Avenue of the Giants on SR 254 (Humboldt County)

Similarly, hostile drivers were identified as an issue. Some examples respondents gave included inappropriate overtaking, honking and yelling profanities. Two people even reported having items thrown at them from vehicles. Some cyclists thought the drivers were angry about having to slow down in order to share the road.

Truck in Richardson Grove, Humboldt County

Survey respondents identified the climb south of Crescent City as a difficult location due to the extremely narrow shoulders, aggressive and unfriendly drivers, high volumes of traffic, steep terrain and debris (the pass between Hamilton Road and Wilson Creek on US 101). Two other locations perceived as being difficult are the section of US 101 north of the junction with SR 1 and the inland stretch of SR 1 between the communities of Leggett and Westport. The cyclists’ concerns with these sections of the PCBR were the lack of shoulders, lack of turnouts, potholes, blind corners and hostile drivers. In both cases, sharing the road with the large trucks on these sections of roadway that have very little shoulder was noted as being an issue.

Debris in the shoulder was an issue for some respondents. The highway shoulders along US 101 and SR 1 are swept regularly, sometimes more frequently depending on weather conditions. Still, scheduling adjustments can be made during high tourist season by alerting the Division of Maintenance.

Some respondents felt as if there was a lack of adequate signage along the route. One person said, “Road markings for the Bike Route could be better, they appear kind of randomly”. Another person said, “Some PCBR signs are confusing directions,” while many others just wanted more signs to help encourage them that they are on the correct route.

Signs advocating safety were also popular suggestions, including the “Share the Road” signs, “Give Me 3” signs and RADAR feedback signs in areas with limited sight distance. The survey respondents would also like more directional signage off the route within the local jurisdictions that guide them back to the mainline PCBR.

Various signs found throughout the route including Hiker/Biker, directional, warning, and the paddle delineator signs in Mendocino County.

Although a relatively low number overall, a few respondents noted theft as an issue during their trip. They reported items such as a tent, sleeping bag, bike bag and panniers being stolen. Three out of five of

those respondents reported the theft incidents occurred at the camping facilities of Clam Beach County Park in Humboldt County.

Other difficulties were relayed through the online survey but were not tabulated with the other data due to lack of relevance to this survey. For example, these included complaints of pesky animals, becoming sick while cycling, fatigue, or encountering too many tourists.

The Improvements Most Desired:

This section of the survey was open-ended on both the paper and online formats. The paper survey asked what would help improve the rider experience and to explain. The following are the improvements that are most desired by the survey respondents listed by popularity:

Paper Survey:		
1. Improvements to the Shoulder	(135)	(44%)
2. Improvements to the Signage	(61)	(20%)
3. Improvements to the Facilities Along the Route	(38)	(12%)
4. Removal of Debris in the Shoulder	(27)	(9%)
5. Offer More Alternate Routes Off of the State Highway	(24)	(8%)
6. Offer More Information About the PCBR	(23)	(8%)
7. Develop a Guide Similar to ODOT*	(18)	(6%)
8. Improve Driver Education	(16)	(5%)
9. Offer Better Navigation Technology	(9)	(3%)
Online Survey:		
1. Improvements to the Shoulder	(88)	(39%)
2. Improvements to the Signage	(39)	(17%)
3. Improvements to the Facilities Along the Route	(17)	(8%)
4. Offer More Information About the PCBR	(10)	(4%)
5. Removal of Debris in the Shoulder	(9)	(4%)
6. Offer More Alternate Routes Off of the State Highway	(8)	(4%)
7. Develop a Guide Similar to ODOT*	(4)	(2%)
8. Improve Driver Education	(3)	(1%)
9. Offer Better Navigation Technology	(1)	(0.4%)

Note: Some respondents identified multiple improvements while others did not identify any.
*Oregon Department of Transportation

Improvements to the shoulder was the most popular critique from both survey formats, with a combined 42% of respondents listing this as their top priority. A combined total of 19% requested improvements to the route signage as their second priority they would like to see.

Improvements to the existing facilities is the third most popular suggestion from both survey formats. Facility improvements include everything from access to potable water to more bike shops along the route. The following is a list of some of the more popular suggestions for improving the facilities:

- More Hiker/Biker campgrounds and improvements to the existing Hiker/Biker campgrounds
- Power outlets, charging stations, USB ports and electric hook-ups in the campgrounds

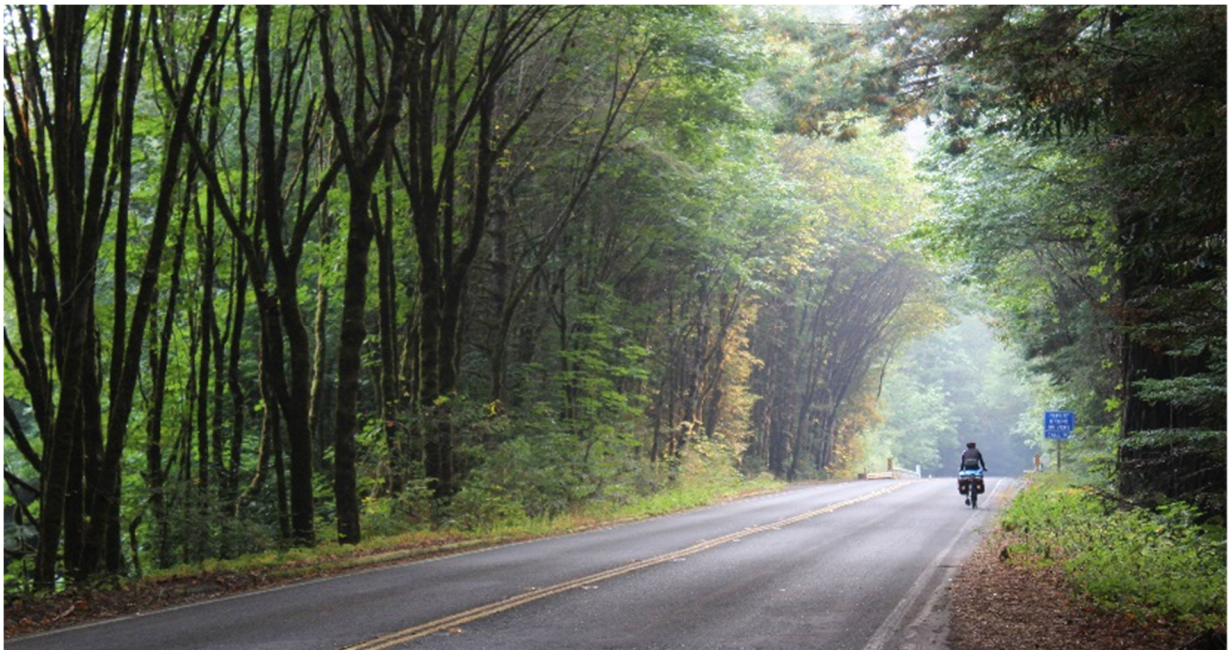
- Access to potable water along the entire route
- Clean restrooms with hot showers in the campgrounds
- Laundry and dishwashing facilities in the campgrounds
- Bike repair stations in the campgrounds with tire pumps, tools, bike racks, lockers

Many survey respondents reported that they prefer to be routed off the main highway when it's a possibility and requested more alternate routes if they are available. In District 1, there are a number of alternate routes to the mainline PCBR. Oftentimes these alternate routes have lower volumes of traffic and can be more scenic.

A California Assembly Concurrent Resolution (No. 32) filed in 1990 resolved that "the Department of Transportation is requested to maintain appropriate signs for the experienced bicyclists who may wish to use the route," referring to the Pacific Coast Bike Route. In addition to signing for the mainline route, it is good practice to ensure alternate routes are clearly marked and to look for additional opportunities to reroute cyclists when an appropriate alternate is available. To do this, Caltrans is committed to working closely with our local partners when the route traverses jurisdictions.

The following are alternate routes in District 1 listed north to south:

- Lake Earl Drive
- Newton B. Drury Parkway
- Patrick's Point Drive
- Hammond Trail, Arcata Bottoms, SR 255
- Waterfront Drive in the City of Eureka
- Hik'shari Trail
- State Route 283 in the City of Rio Dell
- Avenue of the Giants (SR 254)
- State Route 271
- Haul Road



A cyclist riding through the Avenue of the Giants (SR 254) in Humboldt County. Alternate route signage on SR 1 in Mendocino County (above).

Many respondents would like more information about the Pacific Coast Bike Route. The following is a list of some of the most popular suggestions:

- A comprehensive guide with better maps
- A website or app showing the entire route throughout the State of California
- Mileage information to the next resources, clear indications of distances to services
- More information on food and lodging options and bike repair shops
- Topographical/elevation information
- Identification of potential conflict points (narrow shoulders or steep terrain)

Forty percent of those who wanted more information about the route suggested Caltrans look to the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) for tips on the type of information they would like to see in California. The "Oregon Coast Bike Route" guide is published by ODOT and is a folded brochure that is mailed to cyclists for free by request. It contains detailed maps, an index to parks and campsites, traffic data and information about the signage along the route. One survey respondent noted that it is "currently hard to piece together the various district maps" because Caltrans does not provide a comprehensive guide for the PCBR through the State.

The cyclists would also like to see better driver behavior and a greater public awareness that cyclists have the right to be on the state highways. This includes better driver education and enforcement of AB 1371 "Give Me 3", the State Assembly Bill requiring drivers to give bicyclists three feet of clearance when passing.

Last, a small group of respondents requested better navigation technology including an app for the PCBR (although a larger group responded they would use an app if it were available when specifically asked later in the survey, see the "Navigational Tools" section for more information).

Navigational Tools:

We asked where the cyclists are getting their route information for the PCBR and the respondents replied overwhelmingly with two sources: The Adventure Cycling Association (ACA) maps and the "Bicycling the Pacific Coast: A Complete Route Guide, Canada to Mexico" by Vicky Spring and Tom Kirkendall. ACA produces maps for the Pacific Coast Route and they are available for purchase either in sections or for the entire route (Section 3: Crescent City to San Francisco or the entire Map Set from Vancouver, BC to Imperial Beach, CA).

Very few respondents replied that they had gotten route information from Caltrans. In fact, one person said, "I don't recall coming across any information about it on the Caltrans web site, or coming across the District 1 touring guide," which means Caltrans should work on finding ways to make the information more accessible.

During the in-person interviews, it was noted that many cyclists still rely heavily on paper maps due to the ease of having the information right at their handlebars.

That said, 49% of respondents on the paper survey reported they had been using some sort of self-contained program or software to assist with navigation. Although some respondents reported using more than one program, Google was the app most respondents reported using (27% of the paper survey

respondents) and Garmin was the second most popular (12% of the paper respondents). The following is a list of all the navigational resources that were reported being used:

- Google
- Garmin
- Maps.ME
- Strava
- CatEye
- RidewithGPS
- Mapmyride
- Scout
- Paper Maps

When asked if the cyclists would use an app tailored to give navigation and route information for the PCBR, 69% of combined respondents reported they would use an app if it were available. A few others stated they might.

Some respondents were concerned that they wouldn't be able to use an app unless there was capacity to charge their device and/or have access to internet service in rural areas. Others stated they would appreciate being able to use the information while off-line. Cellular service and access to cellular data is not available in many locations along the PCBR and could be an issue for route apps that do not store information for offline navigation or access.

Clearly the PCBR is viewed positively, as 88% of the online survey respondents said they would consider taking another tour on the PCBR in the future. Several people indicated that this was not their first time riding the PCBR and at least one person says they ride the route annually. One survey respondent reported the route as being a "combination of beauty, community and nostalgia" while another person "loved the challenge, the people, the scenery". An avid rider noted the PCBR is "the most scenic route in the U.S."

An electrical charging station and repair stand mount for cyclists in the Hiker/Biker campsite at Standish-Hickey SRA in Mendocino County.

Analysis and Lessons Learned

Analysis of the findings:

Why does this information matter? What will Caltrans do with this information? How can Caltrans take this information and implement some of the suggestions to make improvements to the route?

The information gathered from this survey is helpful for Caltrans to be able to understand the needs of the user, discover ways Caltrans can address those needs, and be able to prioritize future improvements. The information also supports key aspects of the Caltrans Mission, Vision and Goals. Specifically, it supports accomplishing the following goals and strategies:

#	Goal:	Strategic Objective:	Performance Measure:
1	**Safety and Health**	Reduce User Injuries and Fatalities	Reduce the number of injuries and fatalities for bicyclists
		Promote Community Health Through Active Transportation	Increase and improvement in opportunities for safe and accessible active transportation
3	**Sustainability, Livability and Economy**	Improve the Quality of Life by Providing Mobility Choices	Increased percentage of non-auto mode for bicycles; provide increased transportation choices
		Reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions	Reduction in per capita vehicle miles traveled

Improvements to safety and health is a primary goal for Caltrans. The California Department of Transportation Traffic Accident Surveillance and Analysis System (TASAS) covering the period of September 30, 2003 through October 1, 2013 shows there to have been 153 injuries and two fatalities involving a bicyclist on the PCBR in District 1. Nearly 40% of the bicycle-related incidents on the PCBR occurred within a city's limits.

The information also fulfills action items identified in the Complete Streets Implementation Action Plan 2.0 (CSIAP), which is a living document with the intent of monitoring, reporting and overcoming barriers to further integrate complete streets into all Caltrans functions and processes. The CSIAP 2.0 can be found on the Caltrans website at: http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ocp/docs/CSIAP2_rpt.pdf. Specifically, this survey supports accomplishing the following three goals and strategies:

#	Action Item:	Lead Agency:	Action Description:
27	**Pacific Coast Bike Route**	District 1	Develop improvement priorities for the Pacific Coast Bike Route for state highways in District 1.
51	**District 1 Complete Streets Outreach**	District 1	Actions designed to raise awareness of complete streets concepts and to collaborate with partner agencies.

87	**Partnerships and Coordination**	District 1	Develop and maintain coordinating relationships with local agencies and community groups.

Improvements to the highway shoulders was overwhelmingly the first issue identified, and the top improvement the cyclists would advocate for change. This is also one of the more challenging issues for several reasons including the high cost for construction, limited right of way, and challenges with the environmental process and potential impacts. However, Caltrans can and does look for opportunities to make improvements to the shoulders when possible during overlapping transportation projects.

Ten Mile Bridge in Mendocino County with 6' shoulder and separated pedestrian path.

The Ten-Mile Bridge replacement project along the PCBR in Mendocino County is a good example of a project where Caltrans worked with the community and the Coastal Commission to come up with a design that is aesthetically pleasing and included six-foot shoulders and a pedestrian walkway. This bridge is the third replacement project on SR 1 in Mendocino County with dedicated bike improvements, including the Greenwood Bridge and the Noyo River Bridge.

Improving signage for the route was another high priority for the cyclists and is something Caltrans plans to evaluate for enhancements. This includes the possibility of increasing the number of guide signs for the PCBR, increasing the number of warning signs to encourage driver safety, and/or evaluating the location of existing signage and making changes to enhance the performance of the route.

Other suggestions outlined in the survey included maintaining the highway shoulders, establishing alternate routes when they are available, providing more information about the route, developing tools for navigation and encouraging driver education. Each of these are items Caltrans can help with to improve the Pacific Coast Bike Route. See the "Opportunities and Next Steps" section of this document for a list of action items that address these suggestions.

Bicycle warning sign on SR 1 in Mendocino County

Three locations in particular were identified in the survey as being most problematic (U.S. 101 south of Crescent City, US 101 between Leggett and the junction of SR1 and SR 1 between Leggett and Westport). The information gathered in the survey about these locations will provide Caltrans the opportunity to evaluate these locations through the lens of a cyclist.

Caltrans plans to share the survey information with our transportation planning partners, the California State Parks, the California Coastal Commission and law enforcement agencies to help address some of the feedback we received about facilities, signage, potential media outlets, theft and opportunities.

Touring cyclists in Humboldt County (US 101 near King Salmon in Humboldt County, SR 254 on the Avenue of the Giants in Humboldt Co.)

One survey respondent wrote the PCBR "is an incredible resource—with a few minor safety improvements and some more planning it could be improved in the order of many magnitudes!"

<u>Lessons learned:</u>

What would make surveying PCBR cyclists more successful in the future?

- Develop better methodology for instructing the administrators of the paper surveys. For example, include a more comprehensive orientation to those who will be disseminating the survey.
- Include a map of the PCBR in District 1 on the paper survey for a reference.

- Include a mailing address for those who wish to mail in the survey and do not have a QR Code Reader on their electronic device.
- Begin coordination with State Parks as early as possible and work from the highest level of seniority and down.
- Private businesses such as local bike shops were some of our biggest allies for this effort and really supported disseminating the surveys to the cyclists coming to their shops. It is to our advantage to work as closely with these businesses as possible.
- Begin administering the survey earlier in the summer and extend it longer into the fall for 3-4 full months of survey time.
- Since almost two thirds of the paper surveys were returned from Mendocino County, it would be beneficial to find better ways of reaching out to Del Norte and Humboldt Counties to encourage participation.
- The online and paper versions of the survey should match more closely and/or determine if only the information from the cyclists who are currently riding the route is most applicable.
- Many commuters took the survey. Although this information is extremely valuable, it tended to skew the overall information collected (for example: "Where are you staying along your journey?" and "Approximately how many miles per day are you traveling?"). Next time it would be best to distinguish the touring cyclists from the commuters who use the route on a regular basis and place them into separate categories.
- We noticed several respondents filled out one paper survey for two or more people in their group and we would have preferred each person fill out one individual survey. It may help to better clarify that each paper survey is meant for one cyclist.
- Find a way to disperse the online survey to platforms that might better reach an international audience.
- Find a way that we can coordinate with Warm Shower hosts and participants (a worldwide hospitality exchange for touring cyclists). Although we did reach out to Warm Showers, they did not agree to post a link to our survey on their website.
- Additional potential locations to disseminate the survey: Arcata and Eureka Co-Op message boards, all of the campgrounds with hiker/biker facilities in District 1, State Park message boards, Humboldt State University and Center Activities.
- Perhaps expand the survey to include a statewide effort through coordination with Districts 4, 5, 7, 11 and 12 since the PCBR runs through those Districts as well.
- Perhaps expand the survey to include a multi-state effort through coordination with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). This could help strengthen the relationship between the agencies and achieve mutual goals.

Opportunities and Next Steps

Maintenance Requests:

Using the results from this research effort, District 1 Transportation Planning will work with our Maintenance Division to encourage the addition of more regularly-scheduled sweeping of the highway shoulders during the cycling season into their work plan.

District 1 PCBR Signage Plan:

In the coming year, District 1 Transportation Planning will be developing the District 1 Pacific Coast Bike Route Signage Plan. In an effort to address some of the issues identified from this survey, the Signage Plan will include an inventory of all PCBR route signs in District 1, a corresponding map and a proposed signage replacement phasing list.

Establishing Alternate Routes:

District 1 Transportation Planning will continue to look for opportunities to establish alternate routes to the PCBR by working closely with our local partners when the route traverses a city or town. Additionally, we will evaluate the current signage and make sure all alternate routes are adequately signed.

California PCBR Touring Guide and Navigation App:

As a result of the suggestions from this survey, District 1 Transportation Planning will apply for a 2016/17 State Planning and Research (SPR) Part 1 grant to develop a California-wide PCBR Touring Guide and associated navigational app. If funded, it will aim to address several of the issues discovered during this effort.

California Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan:

Caltrans is in the process of developing the first California Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (CSBPP) which will be finalized in February 2017. One of the objectives for this document will be to develop a statewide bike map which will include the PCBR.

Evaluation of Problematic Locations Identified:

Three locations in particular were identified in the survey as being most problematic and deserve a more detailed analysis to evaluate what is occurring at these particular locations. These locations are US 101 south of Crescent City, US 101 north of Standish Hickey, and SR 1 at Leggett Hill between Leggett and Westport.

Asset Management Program in the SHOPP:

The SHOPP is a Caltrans program with the purpose of funding projects on the State Highway System. Part of the Asset Management Program intends for Caltrans to work closely with the local agencies to look for opportunities to incorporate community needs into SHOPP projects.

Two projects on the PCBR were submitted for the 2016 SHOPP and both proposed bike improvements (replacement of Gualala River Bridge and add a six-foot separated multi-use path and bike lanes on SR 1 in Mendocino County and replacement of the Northbound Eureka Slough Bridge with a separated multi-

use path on US 101 in Humboldt County). Caltrans will continue to look for these opportunities in future SHOPP cycles.

Anniversary of the PCBR:

The PCBR turns 40 in 2016 and the District can look for ways to commemorate the route, such as through social media or fliers in our communities.

PCBR Website Development:

District 1 Transportation Planning will improve the content and quality of information about the PCBR on the District's System Planning website. In doing so, we hope to make the information easier to find and use. Additionally, we will look for opportunities to offer invitations to our partner agencies to link to the Caltrans website.

District 1 Bicycle Touring Guide:

In the coming year, the District 1 Bicycle Touring Guide for the California North Coast will be updated to make sure all of the information contained is current and accurate. With the results from this survey, we can incorporate some of the comments bicyclists expressed on the survey into the guide. The guide includes all routes within the District, but will have a designated section for the PCBR.

Media Campaigns for Bicyclists:

We will work with our Public Information Office to discuss opportunities to get the word out to the public about sharing the road and the "Give Me 3" law.

2018 Pacific Coast Bike Route Survey:

District 1 Transportation Planning will administer the PCBR Survey again in the summer of 2018 with the goal of doubling the responses. We will use our lessons learned to alter our approach to ensure we ask the correct questions, disseminate the survey to the appropriate locations and take advantage of technological advances to maximize our return.

Grant Opportunities for the PCBR:

We will continue to look for grant opportunities for funding for the PCBR and work with our local partners to support their seeking funds for improvements.

State DOT Literature Review:

We will research bike programs of other State Departments of Transportation in an effort to learn what has worked for them.

Continuous Feedback:

Despite the survey having closed, Caltrans still welcomes feedback on the Pacific Coast Bike Route and other bicycle-related issues in District 1. Contact information can be found at the beginning of this document.

Pacific Coast Bike Route Survey

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is seeking information about the Pacific Coast Bike Route (PCBR) in northwest California. Therefore, Caltrans is conducting surveys of cyclists who have experience riding the PCBR. You do not need to ride the entire route to participate. These surveys are being conducted using three methods: on site surveys for cyclists, in-person interviews, and an online survey for those who have past experience riding the PCBR.

As you may be aware, improvements to the PCBR can be challenging due to physical and environmental constraints. However, the results from this survey can help Caltrans improve riders' experience through improved infrastructure, improvements in communication and route information. Thank you for taking time to fill out the survey about your experience riding on the PCBR.

Today's Date: _____

Age: _____

Gender: M F

Where do you live?

Where did you start your bike trip? *(City)*

Where will your bike trip end? *(City)*

What are the approximate start/end dates of your cycling trip?

START END

Approximately how many miles per day are you riding?

How many cyclists are in your group? *(including you)*

Where are you staying along your journey?

Where did you get the information about the route you are taking?

Are you using an app or electronic device for navigation?

If so, which one?

Would you use a special PCBR app to help provide you with route information?

YES NO

Are you familiar with the "Pacific Coast Bike Route"?

If you are familiar with the PCBR, does your trip intend to follow that route?

Have you encountered any particularly difficult locations or incidents on your trip so far? If so, where? Please describe:

Continue on back

What would help improve your experience? Please describe:

Continue on back

SCAN CODE to take survey online

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PCBRSurveyD01

For more information about this effort, please contact **Lisa Hockaday** at **(707) 441-2059**.

Pacific Coast Bike Route Survey

Your Feedback is Important!

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is seeking information about the Pacific Coast Bike Route (PCBR) in northwest California. Therefore, Caltrans is conducting surveys of cyclists who have experience riding the PCBR. You can participate whether you rode the entire route or not. These surveys are being conducted using three methods: onsite surveys for cyclists, in-person interviews and this online survey for those who have past experience riding the PCBR.

As you may be aware, improvements to the PCBR can be challenging due to physical and environmental constraints. However, the results from this survey can help Caltrans improve riders' experience through improved infrastructure, improvements in communication and route information. Thank you for taking time to fill out the survey about your experience riding on the PCBR.

Only take this online survey if you have previously ridden on the PCBR, and please only fill out the survey one time. Thank you once again for your response!

1. Today's date:

	MM	DD	YYYY
Please give the date you are taking this survey:	/	/	

2. What was your age at the time you completed your tour on the Pacific Coast Bike Route (PCBR)?

3. What is your gender?

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female

4. Where do you live?

Country

State/Province

City

5. Are you familiar with the PCBR?

- Yes
- No

6. Did your cycling trip follow the PCBR?

- Yes
- No

7. Where did the cycling portion of your trip begin?

Country

State/Province

City

8. Where did your cycling trip end?

Country

State/Province

City

9. How many cyclists were in your group (including you)?

10. What were the start and end dates for your trip?

	MM	DD	YYYY
Begin Date	/	/	
End Date	/	/	

11. About how many miles per day did you travel on your bike during your trip?

12. Where did you stay during your trip?

Other (please specify)

13. Where did you get the information about the route you took?

- [ ] Caltrans Website
- [ ] District 1 Bicycle Touring Guide (printed copy)
- [ ] Commercial Tour Group (Please specify which one in "Other" below)
- [ ] Cycling Advocacy Group (Please specify which one in "Other" below)
- [ ] Electronic Media (Please specify which ones in "Other" below).

Other

14. If you make this trip again, would you use a special PCBR app on your phone to provide you with route information?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

15. Did you have any issues that you encountered along your route?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

If yes, could you describe the location of the issue (especially road, proximity to city or landmark) and what the problem was?

16. What would help improve your experience? Please describe:

17. Would you consider taking another tour on the PCBR in the future?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Why or why not?

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DISTRICT 1, P. O. BOX 3700
EUREKA, CA 95502-3700
PHONE (707) 441-4540
FAX (707) 441-5869
TTY 711

Serious drought.
Help Save Water!

November 3, 2015

Caltrans Headquarters
Smart Mobility
Office of Sustainable Community Planning

Pacific Coast Bike Route
2015 Survey Findings

To Whom It May Concern,

The 2015 Pacific Coast Bike Route (PCBR) Survey, administered by the Caltrans District 1 Office of Transportation Planning, closed on September 30, 2015. We would like to thank you for your help disseminating the survey to the touring cyclists coming through our area. The goal of the survey was to collect basic information about touring cyclists riding on the PCBR.

The survey had two components: An online version and a paper version. The audience between the two formats varied considerably and therefore, the information outlined in this letter focuses on the information in the paper surveys collected in the field.

The following is a brief summary of the survey methodology and information that was collected:

- The survey duration was from mid-July through September 30, 2015
- The paper surveys were distributed to 21 locations throughout Del Norte, Humboldt and Mendocino Counties. Twelve of those locations were private businesses, nine of those locations were public agencies.
- With help from our partner agencies, the online surveys were distributed through social media and shared on public agency and organization websites.
- Caltrans staff conducted over twenty extensive, in-person interviews with touring cyclists in the field.
- The total number of online surveys collected: 226
- The total number of paper surveys collected: 309
- The respondents reported riding an average of 60 of miles per day and 95% of those cyclists rode the route from north to south.
- The following is a breakdown of where the cyclists are coming from: 36% International; 37% National outside of California, 26% Californian
- The majority (60%) of respondents chose camping as their sole accommodations, particularly hiker/biker camp sites. Another 23% responded that they shared accommodations between camping and hotel/motel.
- 72% of the respondents were previously familiar with the PCBR (paper respondents only).
- 88% of the respondents would consider taking another tour on the PCBR in the future (online respondents only).

We expect the collected information will help Caltrans and our partners in the following ways:

- Identify future needs, opportunities and establish prioritization for making improvements to the PCBR
- Assist in securing grant funds for potential projects of improvements to the PCBR
- Improve working relationships between Caltrans and our partner agencies
- Increase communication opportunities between Caltrans and touring cyclists in our region
- Continue our support for bicycling and complete streets

A report will be finalized early 2016 and will be available on the Caltrans District 1 website: http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist1/. The report will elaborate on the survey findings, trends and next steps discussed in this letter. We hope the information will also be valuable to you and your organization.

Thank you for your help in making the Pacific Coast Bike Route 2015 survey a success. If you have questions regarding the information outlined in this letter or would like to know more about the survey effort, please contact me at (707) 441-4540 or tatiana.ahlstrand@dot.ca.gov.

If you have questions about bicycle and pedestrian support in our region or would like copies of the District 1 Bicycle Touring Guide, please contact the District 1 Bicycle Coordinator, Lisa Hockaday at (707) 441-2059 or lisa.hockaday@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Tatiana Ahlstrand
Associate Transportation Planner
District 1 Office of Transportation Planning