

CYCLING UP

BY HARRISON MILLER

Cycling is a rapidly growing hobby that is creating big economic waves in North Carolina. Its popularity is reflected by the annual Cycle North Carolina Mountains to Coast Ride, a fall event that is so popular that participation was capped this year at 1,100 cyclists. Millions of bikers trek the state's 2,072 miles of bike trails across 263 park systems and greenways, including a lot of out-of-state visitors.

Nationally, cyclists spent \$83 billion on "trip-related" sales in 2017, up from \$71 billion spent in 2012, and generated \$97 billion in retail spending, according to a 2017 study by the Outdoor Industry Association, a trade group for the outdoor recreation industry. Those same benefits are reflected in North Carolina.



Western N.C. economic impact

252,000 biking visitors per year

Average daily spending **\$189.66** per person

Supports **1,702** jobs

Generates **\$15.3 million** in tax revenue & **\$43.3 million** in income

Economic impact of shared-use paths in North Carolina

A recent study by N.C. State's Institute for Transportation Research and Education and Alta Planning + Design found:

a **\$26.7 million** investment constructing the four greenways

resulted in

- \$48.7 million** in business revenue from greenway construction,
- \$19.4 million** in annual sales revenue at local businesses across greenways, and
- \$25.7 million** in annual health savings due to more physical activity, less pollution and congestion, and fewer traffic injuries from use of greenways.

Every **\$1** spent on trail construction generated **\$1.72** annually in local business revenue, sales tax, and health- and transportation-related benefits.

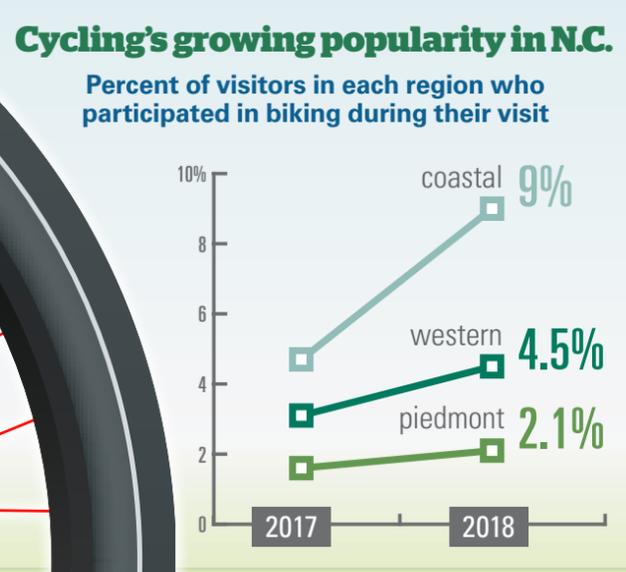
Coastal biking economic impact

An N.C. Department of Transportation study examining cycling in the Outer Banks found:

a **\$6.7 million** investment in bike infrastructure construction

resulted in

- \$60 million** in annual economic impact, nine times the initial one-time investment.
- 1,400 jobs** were created/supported annually from biking activity and
- 680,000 visitors** bike annually, 17% of the area's tourists.



sources: VisitNC, SingleTracks, Macon County News, N.C. Department of Transportation, North Carolina State University's Institute for Transportation Research and Education, Alta Planning + Design