



For Immediate Release

CSPDC Contact: Bonnie S. Riedesel, (540) 885-5174, bonnie@cspdc.org
Elizabeth McCarty, (540) 885-5174, elizabeth@cspdc.org

“Bicycling in the Central Shenandoah Valley” Economic Impact Analysis Results Announced

Total economic impact of \$13.6 million that supported 184 jobs was reported for 2015.

STAUNTON (August 29, 2016) — A “Bicycling in the Central Shenandoah Valley” Economic Impact Analysis (EIA) was conducted by the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) in conjunction with regional partners from Shenandoah County Tourism, Bryce Resort, Greater Augusta Regional Tourism, Harrisonburg Tourism, Rockingham County, Lexington & the Rockbridge Area Tourism, Massanutten Resort, and the Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition. The study looked at the current direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts of cycling within the region’s four counties and five cities, and estimated the impact of bicycle tourism on the local retail, lodging, and restaurant businesses.

In addition to spending patterns, the study was intended to provide a profile of bicyclists visiting the region as well as a profile of residents that bicycle for recreation and/or commuting. The profiles and responses from both types of bicyclists, tourist and resident, were used to identify approaches to better promote the region’s bicycling events, routes, and activities to tourists and to improve the riding experience for all bicyclists in the Central Shenandoah Valley.

A survey aimed at both visitor and resident bicyclists was used to collect study data with over 1,500 people responding. Survey results indicate that of the visitors, most were advanced/serious riders. The most popular months for visits were September, October and May, and over half of survey-takers participated in a bike event while in the area. Residents that took the survey were primarily intermediate/recreational road biking enthusiasts. When asked about improvements to bicycle facilities, their top choices were wide paved shoulders, designated bike lanes, and multi-use paths.

Brenda Black, Director of Harrisonburg Tourism and Visitor Services commented about the importance of bicycling to the region: “The results of this study show just how much bicycle tourism already contributes to the local economy, and provide valuable information for evaluating and exploring new ways to showcase our bicycle-friendly amenities to a larger audience and grow this sector into the future.”

Here are a few additional highlights of the study:

Visitors bicycling in the study area have the following characteristics:

- Most visiting bicyclists were middle-aged. Approximately 57 percent were 41-60 years old.
- Most visiting cyclists considered themselves serious riders (63%). This is reflected in their longer rides. For 36 percent of visitors, their average bike ride was 50+ miles.
- Most visitors, 71 percent, stayed overnight in the area. Visitors stayed an average of 2.44 nights. The most popular accommodations were hotel/motel and campgrounds.

Residents bicycling in the study area have the following characteristics:

- The number of resident cyclists in the 5-year age groups between the ages of 31 and 60 was fairly evenly distributed. The age group with the highest percentage of riders was the 36-40 year-olds.
- Most local cyclists considered themselves intermediate/recreational riders (60%). Seven percent characterized themselves as beginner/novice riders.
- The average local cyclist spent \$937 on bicycles or related equipment in 2015.

The bicycle tourism industry in the Central Shenandoah Valley had a total economic impact of \$13.6 million and supported 184 jobs in 2015.

- Visitor spending had a direct economic impact of approximately \$8.6 million that supported 144 jobs.
- Adding direct, indirect, and induced impact, the total economic impact of bicycle tourism in the study area is estimated at \$13.6 million that supported 184 jobs.
- The top sectors impacted by bicycle tourism are restaurants, hotels, motels, and retail establishments.

The entire report can be viewed on the [CSPDC website](#). Contact Elizabeth McCarty for more information (540) 885-5174, elizabeth@cspdc.org.

###