



Joint Regional Planning Partnership / Planners Committee

May 18, 2015

CycleSac Update and Outreach Plan

Issue: What is the status of the new SACOG mobile app for biking and what is the outreach plan?

Recommendation: None; this item is for information and discussion only.

Discussion:

Measuring bicycle and pedestrian activity is an important step towards understanding active transportation as a valid mode choice, identifying trends, and finding ways to improve safety and connectivity for people biking and walking. In 2014, the SACOG Active Transportation Team initiated the Regional Bicycle/Pedestrian Data Collection project. This is a multi-pronged effort to increase information about biking and walking in the region:

- a) customizing an existing open source mobile phone application to crowdsource bike route information for the Sacramento region;
- b) developing a bike/ped counter loan program for local agencies; and
- c) developing evaluation standards for biking and walking projects.

CycleSac Development and Launch

As the first step in the data collection project, SACOG led the customization of a mobile application to inform bicycle facility design and help improve demand forecasting for biking in the Sacramento region. The regional app is based on an open-source app developed by San Francisco County Transportation Authority in 2009 (CycleTracks), that has been updated and re-branded by various agencies across the country, including CycleAtlanta and CyclePhilly. SACOG conducted a poll on the May is Bike Month website to determine the brand name for the Sacramento region's app, and CycleSac was the clear winner.

CycleSac is available for Apple and Android users and is intended for use by anyone who bikes in our region. The app empowers users to give feedback on biking conditions and preferences to transportation planners and engineers. This information will help transportation professionals better understand bicycle travel behavior in the region. It provides a unique set of information for transportation planning that is not available through existing transportation surveys, planning efforts, or fitness-focused mobile apps for recording bike trips. CycleSac includes features to log the trip purpose for each bike trip recorded (e.g. errands, commute, school) in addition to user characteristics (e.g. self-assigned confidence while biking) and demographics (e.g. age range, gender). CycleSac also added a new element of data collection to enable users to record their comfort on the bike trip utilizing a Lichert scale, identifying where people feel comfortable riding bikes and where people do not. The anonymous data is uploaded to SACOG's servers, aggregated, and displayed on an interactive map on the website. The data will be shared with local agency staff for bike trips traveled entirely within their jurisdictional boundaries and bike trips where only part of the trip is traveled in their jurisdiction.

It is important to acknowledge that the selection of CycleSac users is biased due to participation being limited to smartphone users, as well as other factors that impact how likely someone is to record a bike trip using their phone. However, the advantages of this data collection method are significant because of the limited cost, increased rates of sampling for the small population of bicyclists, and the ability to identify personal characteristics, trip purposes, and trip comfort. More information about CycleSac can be found on the mobile app's website, <http://cyclesac.org/>.

CycleSac Outreach Plan

CycleSac has been integrated with the 2015 May is Bike Month campaign. As of May 19, 2015, 450 users had downloaded CycleSac, recording 3,700 trips. SACOG is seeking opportunities to partner with local agencies to inform a broader audience of potential users about CycleSac, and to spread the word about how logging bike rides with CycleSac can provide quantitative information for active transportation analysis, investment, and decision-making.

SACOG has developed an Education & Communications Plan (attachment) to guide continued outreach efforts encouraging the use of CycleSac to gather more information on biking in El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba counties. Additionally, the CycleSac Education & Communications Plan outlines the opportunities for Board members, local agency staff, and advisory groups to provide feedback on CycleSac and to discuss how agencies are using the data collected for local bicycle transportation efforts.

Attachment: CycleSac Education & Communications Plan

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CycleSac – Education & Communications Plan

Working document that will be updated as needed.

May 19, 2015

CycleSac background: SACOG and the region’s local governments have consistently worked to make strategic investments using the best available data and professional judgment. Currently reliable and anecdotal bicycle trip data are sparse, non-existent, and/or do not have consistent methods for collection and reporting. In order to build a regional collection of bicycle trip data and support the smart placement of bicycle infrastructure, SACOG (with grant funding and significant regional input) developed the CycleSac mobile application for Apple and Android systems. The CycleSac app collects detailed data from registered users utilizing Global Positioning System (GPS) technology and allows for users to provide contextual feedback on each trip.

BOARD MEMBER, JURISDICTION STAFF & PUBLIC AGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

- Provide updates on outreach and communications activities to the SACOG Board of Directors Committee meetings.
 - Timing: Ongoing
- Maintain regular communication and opportunity for feedback from the Planners Committee, Regional Planning Partnership, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.
 - Timing: Ongoing, since 2014
- Provide electronic reports to member jurisdiction staff to share usage rates, data reports, and request education and outreach support to residents.
 - Timing: Summer 2015
- Offer presentations to various public agency staff and boards of directors in the region.
 - Timing: Summer 2015, as coordinated by SACOG staff and/or by request from public agency staff and boards

STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH/MASS COMMUNICATIONS

In addition to ongoing communications outlined above, staff will use the methods listed below to inform residents across the region about CycleSac and its purpose.

- Send direct electronic messages to the over 8,000 registrants of May is Bike Month.
 - Timing: May 2015 and ongoing
- Promote CycleSac at May is Bike Month Energizer Stations (in-person, direct outreach).
 - Timing: Beginning April 2015
- Use Social Media for direct messages to stakeholders across the region.
 - Timing: Beginning spring 2015
- Produce a short video that can be shared on social media and SACOG websites to highlight why residents should use CycleSac.
 - Timing: June 2015
- Offer presentations to stakeholders.
 - Timing: as requested

- Conduct Bicycle-oriented business, bicycle and active transportation advocacy group outreach through phone and electronic communications including email and social media.
 - Timing: Summer 2015
- Conduct Media Outreach including media advisories and press releases.
 - Timing: Summer 2015
- Reach out to community newsletters, blogs, and other similar publications outside of traditional media that work with SACOG in its media outreach.
 - Timing: Ongoing

ASSESSMENT

- Staff will measure growth from current user base over six months and compare growth rate of users with outreach and communication efforts to determine which strategies resulted in the greatest number of new users.

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