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In the Fall of 1990 my wife and I sat in Terry Sullivan's office. Terry was the CEO of the Colorado Springs Visitor's and Convention Bureau and we were looking for support for our planned 1991 road bicycle stage race.

Terry showed us a draft of the 1991 Bureau's mock-up of the cover for their Tourism Guide. The photo was of a mountain bike rider on a Colorado Springs area trail with our mountains in the background. The idea was clear; to sell to nonresidents the outdoor benefits of the Pikes Peak Region as well as hotel rooms.

That cover was rejected, Terry said. The problem was that Colorado Springs really didn't have the infrastructure to support cycling in the area as a destination. Terry was correct and these problems still holds true today, twenty-two years later.

With a number of other Colorado cities like Durango, Winter Park, Salida, and Fruita all seriously supporting their communities as a destination for cycling, we need to get our wheels turning forward.

The Colorado Springs Gazette regularly covers the Sand Creek Sports mountain bike races with front page Sports coverage and often a main front page photo as well. They've published an article titled, "Is Colorado Springs the Next Mountain Biking Mecca?" in their November 10, 2011 OutThere section. Even the Colorado Springs Business Journal used a mountain bike race photo on the cover of their July 29-August 4, 2011 print issue in an article about "Small sporting events struggle for sponsorships."

We've got the parks with trails and great roads to ride on. As of December 14<sup>th</sup> Pikes Peak Highway has opened up for cyclists. We have a city supported network of commuter trails, the World Class 7-11 Velodrome, several great cycling events and races, several World and National class race organizers, International Race Commissaires, as well as some of the finest cycling clubs anywhere. Colorado Springs has hosted two World Cycling Championships, several International mountain bike races and many National and State Championships.

An "inventory" of all things cycling in the Pikes Peak Region with an economic impact study needs to be done in order for us to move forward.

The State of Colorado did a Statewide "Economic Impact of Bicycling in Colorado" study back in 1998. Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association (MBTA) in British Columbia has excellent information on this topic. Their goal was to,"...have BC recognized for its world class sustainable trails and abundant mountain bike experiences that are supported by enthusiastic communities and resort operators offering high quality services."

The economic impact portion of the MBTA study focused on rider origin studies, event studies, bike shop surveys, and resident and non-resident spending. Part of their conclusion stated, "In total, the Sea to Sky trails are estimated to have brought nearly \$10.3 million in non-resident spending to the host communities over the study period, resulting in \$9.3 million of new economic activity throughout the province, supporting 194 jobs and just over \$6.3 million in wages and salaries." That's serious money.

The good news is that the Colorado Springs Trails and Open Space Coalition is following the lead of cities like Boulder and Fort Collins and pursuing a cycling economic impact study for Colorado Springs.

With a grant from SRAM, Executive Director, Susan Davies is in the early stages of looking for additional funding sources to begin work on this much needed study. It will be a far reaching study to include cycling related events as well as trails and cycling jobs in the Pikes Peak Region.

When completed, we'll have an idea of what local cycling economics already brings to the community. From the final data, a case can be made to City and Regional authorities that cycling tourism works. They need to get behind the cycling opportunities, including events in our city. With coordination and some good marketing from our Colorado Springs Visitor's and Convention Bureau, another "inventory" item can be added to bring people to the Springs.

Maybe we'll get that photo of a cyclist on the cover of the Colorado Springs Visitor's Bureau's Visitor's Guide after all.