

# North Moab Recreation Area Transportation Connections

**What is the Transportation Scholars Program?**  
The Public Lands and National Park Foundations' Transportation Scholars programs provide parks and public lands with transportation professionals for six to 12 months who assist in transportation planning and implementation to help parks and public lands reduce traffic, congestion and pollution while improving visitor experiences. These programs are designed to place individuals with substantial knowledge and expertise in transportation planning and related areas. *See footer for a list of sponsors.*

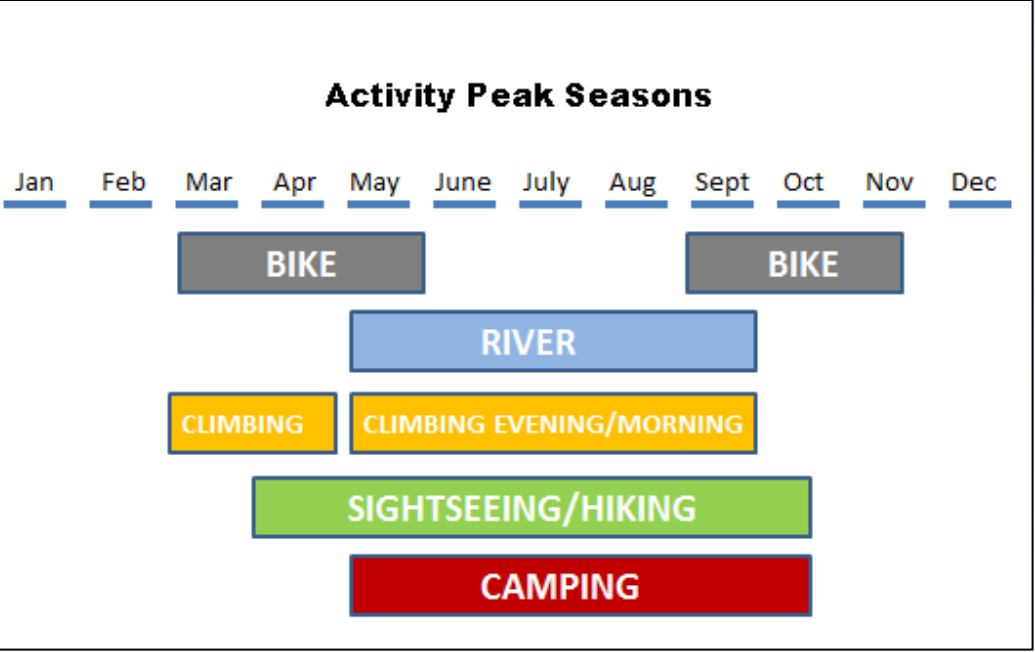
**Introduction**  
In 1999, a coalition of public and private agencies created the North Moab Recreation Area's (NMRA) Alternative Transportation System (ATS) project in response to congestion and safety concerns due to growing visitation. The NMRA ATS aims to reduce the number of motorized trips by enabling and encouraging the use of alternative transportation modes via means that mutually benefit the visitors, the resources, and the local economy. Healthy trails form the pillar of the recreational assets of the area. Many public lands are now (or will be ) accessible via separated pathways. This project has immense potential to be a boom for tourism and change the means of transportation in the area.

**NMRA Vision**  
Build an ATS connecting the City of Moab and the NMRA utilizing privately operated shuttle services and a completely separated non-motorized system to provide a safe, enjoyable walking or biking experience.

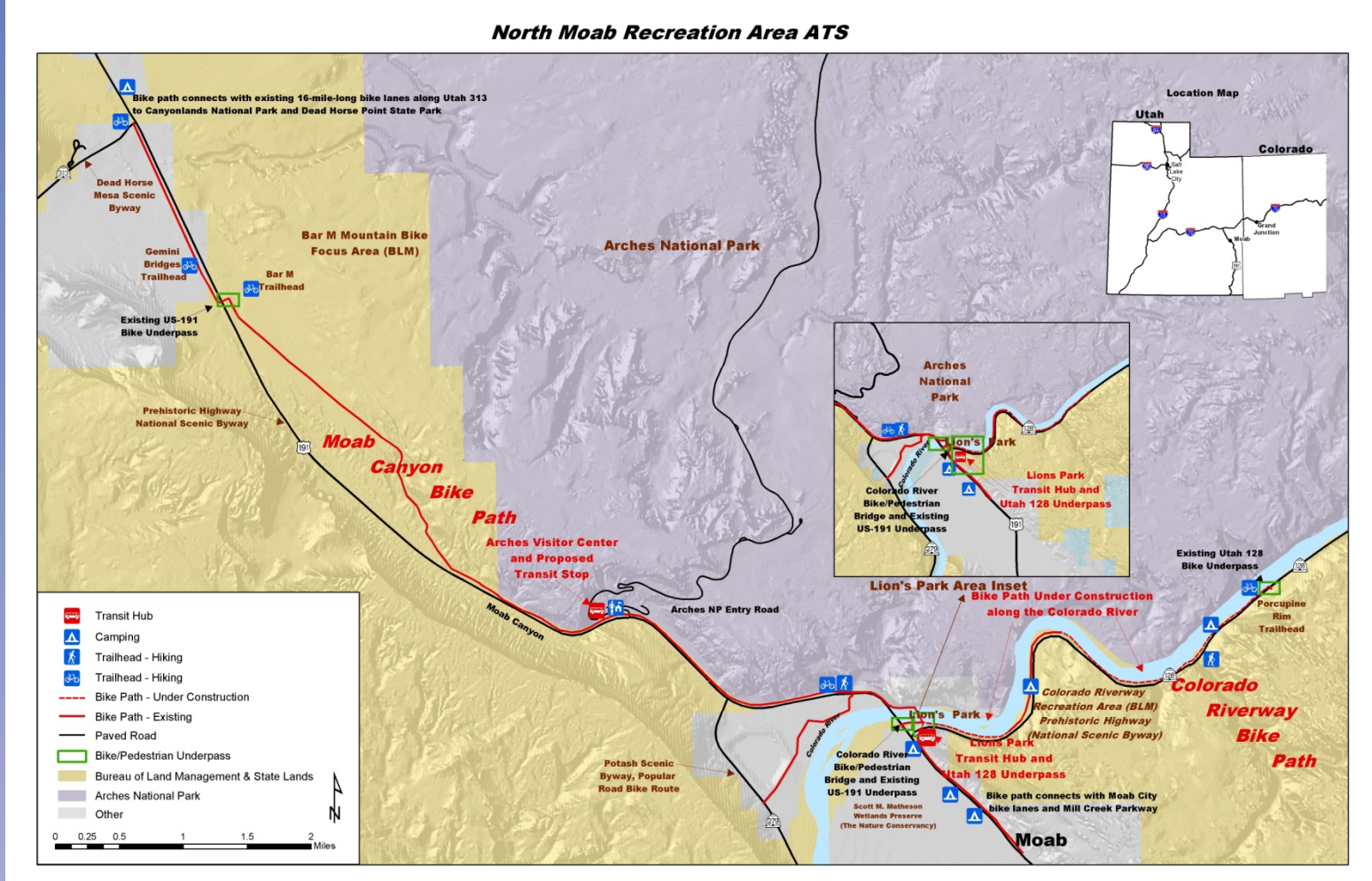
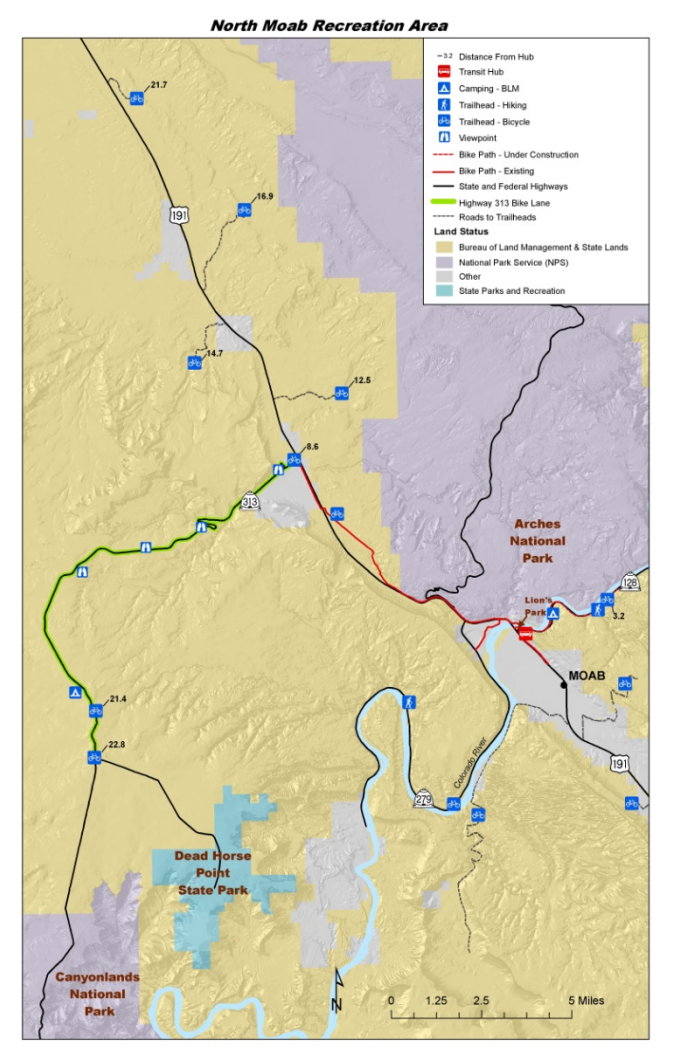
**Transit Hub Vision**  
Private businesses work together to determine appropriate business model to expand their businesses by creating a regular service, while utilizing existing assets.



- Facts and Figures**
- Population: 5,000, largest city in Grand County, Utah
  - Visitation: 2.5 annual visitors, wide variety of recreation pursuits
  - Public Lands: Grand County is 94% public lands, 66% BLM.
  - Economy: Tourism and recreation account for 44% of private employment.
  - Intermodal Transportation: Lacking, therefore most visitors arrive by private vehicle.
    - Airport Service : Moab, UT (18 miles), Grand Junction, CO (100 miles), Salt Lake City, UT 235 miles
    - Bus Service: Green River, UT 40 miles
    - Public Mobility: 4 Rental Car Companies, 3 Taxi Service Companies, 9 Shuttle Companies, 6 Bicycle Rental Companies, 100+ permitted guides.



National Visitor Use Monitoring Survey 2006	
1,494,000	Visits to BLM land
18.30%	Main Activity - Hiking
13.50%	Main Activity - Bicycling
10.40%	Main Activity - Driving for pleasure
2.40	person/vehicle
3.50	average length of stay in the area



**Transit Hub Construction November 2012 thru June 2013**

“There will be 43 parking spaces for people to park their car and get on their bike. There will be a 200-foot loading and unloading area for shuttle vehicles and tour operators. There will be restrooms. And, there will be a 60-foot-long pedestrian and bike underpass connecting the transit hub to the Lion’s Park.”- *Moab Sun Times* July 2011

**Scholar Project Goals**  
*Identify means to:*

1. Encourage new users to ATS in NMRA.
2. Utilize transit hub as part of the ATS.
3. Reduce reliance on the private automobile .
4. Increase business opportunities.
5. Integrate ATS with the Arches National Park pilot shuttle.

- Funding and Partners**
- The North Moab Recreation Transportation System will be a \$20 million project once complete.
  - Most of it was paid by federal grants.
  - Some of it was incorporated into the Utah Department of Transportation plan for US 191 upgrades.
  - Some of it came as a match from Grand County and the City of Moab for grants received.
  - The Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program contributed nearly \$9.2 million.
  - Moab Trail Alliance played a vital role in coordinating this effort and community asset.

**Sommer Roefaro**  
**Public Lands Transportation Scholar**  
**Moab Bureau of Land Management**

- Evaluation of Existing Conditions**
- Field observations.
  - Outreached to businesses and locals to evaluate qualitative needs.
  - Researched shuttle and transit services, business models and contracts.
  - Acted as a visitor, asked deliberate questions at hotels, businesses and Moab information system specific to ATS.
  - Planned recreation trips using online resources, trails and bicycle facilities.
  - Analyzed existing data to quantify needs.

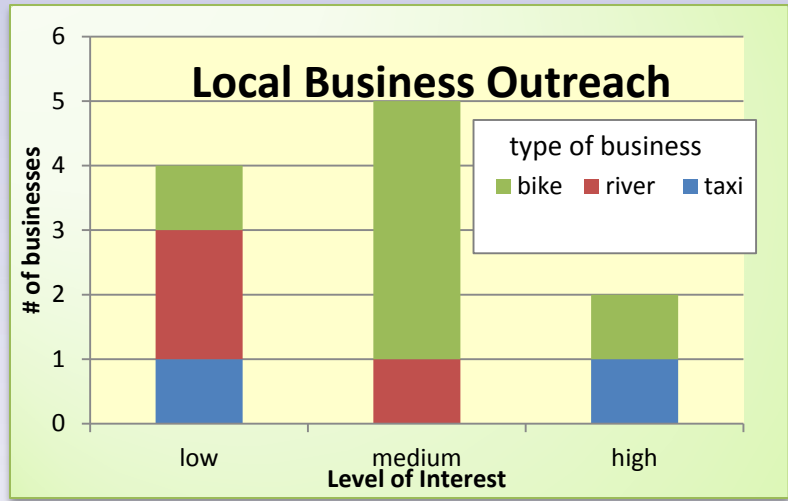
- Summary of Findings**  
*US 191 within City limits*
- Approximately 80% private vehicles.
  - Much of Moab's lodging is within a ½ mile radius of the Moab Information Center, 728 units.
  - Most transportation issues exist such as safety, vehicle delay, noise and high percentage of commercial trucks within City limits.

- Bicyclist Needs**
- Observed many vehicles are without bicycles and/or racks for carrying bicycles.
  - Bike shops carry mostly high end bikes that are rented at a daily rate, ranging from \$45-60 per day.
  - There are limited comfort/hybrid bikes available for rent.
  - Mountain bikers seeking “adventure” have their needs met by shuttle providers and bike shops.

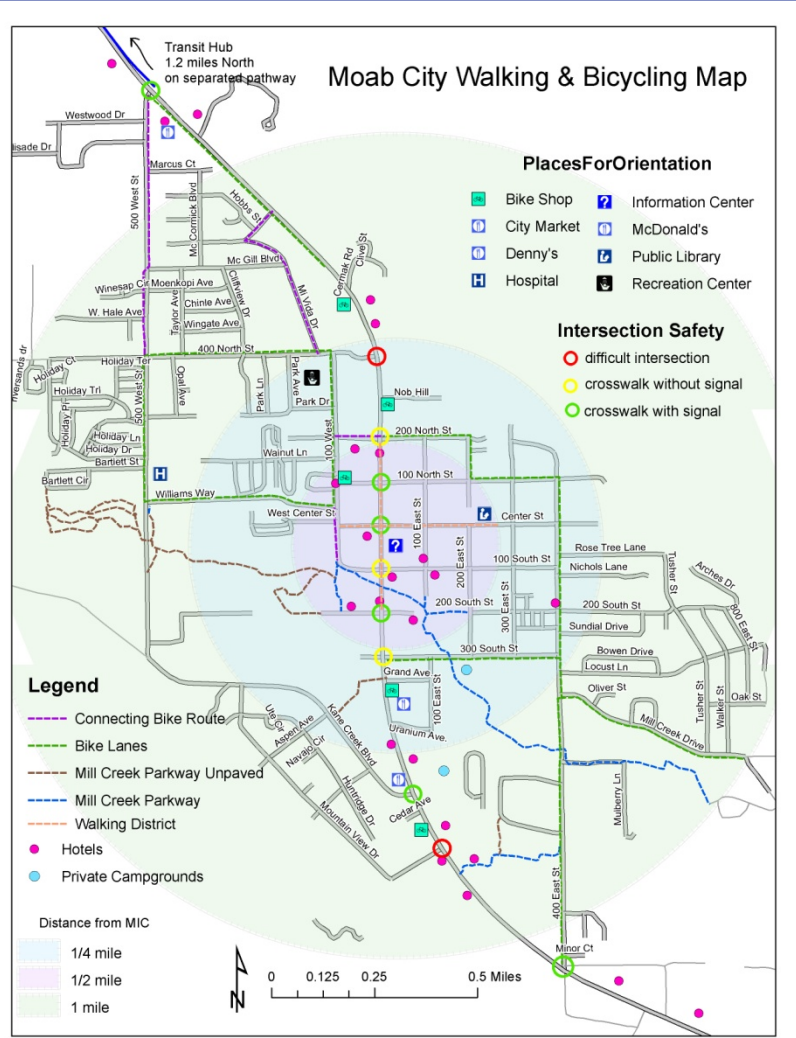
- Information Needs**
- Pathway information (maps, itinerary suggestions) available for planning purposes does not exist.
  - The pathways and City greenway are not well understood by front line staff.
  - The travel council website had 300,000 visitors in 2012, but the website has very little content promoting alternative modes and the paved paths.

- Local Business's Level of Interest Qualitative Score**
- Low: does not see a business case at this time..
  - Medium: would like to stay informed, open to ideas.
  - High: understands benefit to the business, would like to be involved .

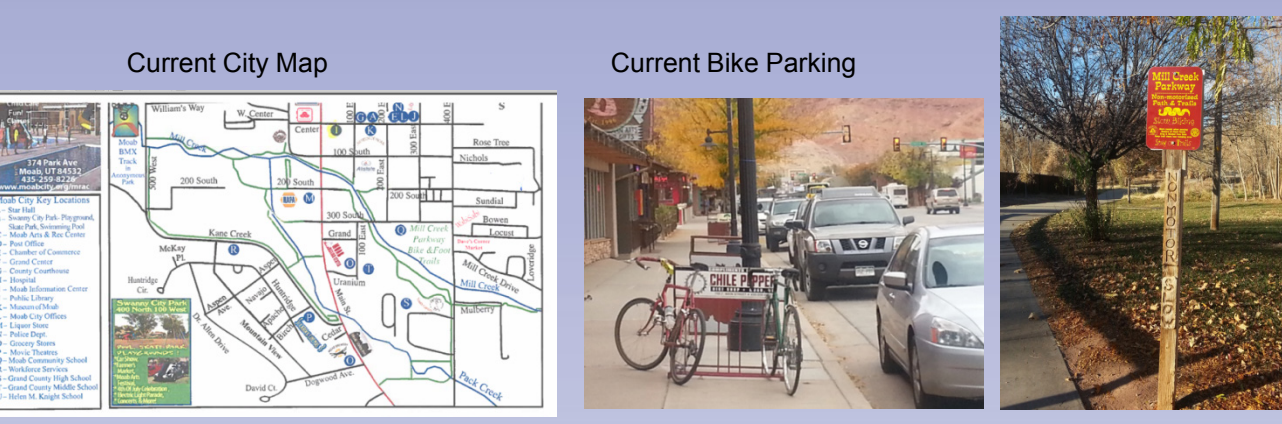
- Bike Shuttle Operations**
- Marketing is word of mouth, and repeat users.
  - Symbiotic relationship with bike shops.
  - Same costs and departure times for trailheads.
  - Barter during the off season to try and meet minimum ridership.
  - Friendly competition .
  - Regular departure times during peak season.
  - Essentially is an on-demand regular service.
  - **Concerns:** Taking business from bike shops, risk without subsidies
  - **Opportunity:** ½ day afternoon service for shorter activities, time of year dependent.
  - **Unknowns:** bottom line, true level of interest, best scenarios given operation cost and logistics.



**Recommendations**  
*Promote and Encourage ATS for short utilitarian and recreation trips (addresses goals 1 & 3)*  
Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Maps are an effective tool to encourage more people to walk and bike. The map below was developed by the Transportation Scholar and well received by the City of Moab. The map's purpose is to orient visitors new to the area and illustrate connectivity of on street bicycle facilities, primary walking areas and multi-use paths. The City also is in favor of implementing other bicycle promoting strategies as next steps.



- Next Steps**
- Identify appropriate wayfinding signage and placement
    - City greenway, Mill Creek Parkway.
    - City streets to compliment Bicycle Map.
  - Develop a uniform signage system for greenway entry points.
  - Further develop a map utilizing back side for NMRA connectivity.
  - Identify areas that would benefit from bike parking corral.
  - Apply for Bicycle Friendly Community designation through The American League of Bicyclist.



**Create a service targeting casual recreationists and families seeking a scenic alternative to hiking or private automobile (addresses goals 2 & 4)**

- Visitor Planning Component**
- Bike rental terms and cost.
  - Bicycle fleet (Hybrid).
  - Schedule of shuttle service.
  - Reservation system.
  - Quality/descriptive maps with itineraries.
  - Cost Information.

- Local Business and Agency Partner Component**
- Special use permit for the transit hub.
    - Transit Hub as single location for new service.
    - Private for profit operator.
  - Request for proposals with minimum level of service defined.
  - Allow businesses to propose business model/partnerships.
  - Work with County to develop policy and authorization terms.
  - Revenue source for the County to maintain the ATS infrastructure.

- Project Challenges**
- Transit Hub and river pathway in the construction stage.
  - No established group dedicated to holistically making a connected system to function as envisioned.
  - Lack of funding or subsidies to start a transit system with an unknown demand.
  - Arches N.P. shuttle unknown.

