

# SAN DIEGO BIKE-FRIENDLY BUSINESS DISTRICT GUIDEBOOK



Prepared for the San Diego County Bicycle Coalition &  
the San Diego Business Improvement District Council  
by Green Octopus Consulting

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# What is a Bike-Friendly Business District (BFBD)?

A Bike-Friendly Business District (BFBD) is where a community comes together around bicycles to bike to area shops and restaurants – and where merchants and employees ride, too. BFBDs integrate bicycling into a business district's operations, events, and promotions.

## What are the Benefits of a BFBD?

### Increased Visitors and Sales:

- **Bicyclists have more disposable income:** The typical cost for a commuter to own and operate a bicycle in the U.S. is less than \$300/year compared to the average of \$8,000 for a car. People who live 'car light' save money, too. (Source: "The Economic Effects of Traffic Calming on Urban Small Businesses," 2003.)
- **Local Effect:** Bicycling introduces us to shops and eateries near our homes and workplaces. There is a strong bike local/shop local connection – bicyclists tend to shop more often and closer to home. There is an untapped opportunity for local businesses to capitalize on this, as 40% of U.S. trips are less than 2 miles – an easy bicycling distance for most people, yet 68% are driven, 26% are walked, and only 2% are biked. (Source: "National Household Travel Survey," 2010.)
- **Visibility:** Bicyclists are more likely than drivers to notice businesses they pass because they are moving slower and are more closely connected to the street. "Having just 100 people go by your shop on a bike or by foot is significantly better than 1,000 speeding by in their cars." –Matt Berman, owner of Bolt Barbers, Los Angeles.
- **Attraction of Bike Tourists and Commuters:** Bike tourists and commuters tend to spend more money in local business districts than car tourists and commuters. Using the bicycle as a mode of transport for vacations is on the rise, both for weekend getaways and multi-state road trips, and it's lucrative to cater to.

**Reduced Parking Congestion and Costs:** Incentivizing customers to bike instead of drive opens up parking and minimizes the need to build more. This is good for taxpayers, as car parking is considerably more expensive to build and maintain than bike parking.

**Free and Convenient Parking:** Bike parking (racks, corrals, and valets) is free for customers, business owners, and employees and conveniently located in front of businesses.

**Improved Community Health and Safety:** Fewer cars in a business district means cleaner air and fewer car-related accidents and deaths. Bicycling is also essential in addressing our nation's obesity and diabetes epidemics and other health ailments by encouraging an active lifestyle.

**Business Recruitment Tool:** After Long Beach installed new bike lanes and programming, 18 bike-related businesses opened/relocated to the city. Facebook, Apple and other corporations recently opened offices in Austin, Texas, because of the active lifestyle it promotes. Cities are wise to try and attract active living professionals just like the creative class.

**Increased Worker Productivity:** Bicycling improves health and increases joy – and happy, healthy workers are good for business. In the U.K., bicyclists take 1.3 fewer sick days per year, saving around \$200m through reduced absenteeism – a projected savings of \$3.2bn over the next 10 years. In the U.S., happy workers correlate to raising sales by 37%, productivity by 31%, and task accuracy by 19%.

**Positive Media Attention:** Bike events and promotions bring positive publicity, especially when targeted to families and children.

**Non-Partisan & All-American:** Bicycling is something that appeals to a wide variety of people, of diverse ages, races, genders, and political backgrounds. It's all-American and old-fashioned. It's as conservative as it is radical, since it's efficient and individualistic. It's refreshing to have something so "main street" on our main streets.

# BFBD Program Checklist

## Event Enhancements

- Free Bike Repairs
- Bike Valets
- Bike Portraits
- Bike Raffles
- Bike Merchandise
- Kids Activities

## Bike-Specific Events

- National Bike Month & Bike to Work Day
- Urban Riding 101 Safety Training
- Bike Repair Training

## Community Rides

## District Bike Maps

## Incentive Programs

- Discounts for Bicyclists
- Bike-Friendly Business Recognition
- Commute-To-Work Program

## Merchant Bikes

## 'Light' Infrastructure

- Bike Racks and Corrals
- 'Walk Your Bike' Sidewalk Stencils & Postcards
- Public Art/DIY Art Installations
- Other Potential Requests for City

## Marketing

- Logo
- Program Website
- BID Websites
- E-Blasts
- Social Media
- Flyers & Posters
- Short Videos
- T-Shirts
- Street Pole Banners
- Newspaper Ads
- Media Outreach
- Encouraging Helmets

# BFBD Program Details

## Event Enhancements

Build bike components into existing events to avoid the workload of creating entirely new events. Partner with bike businesses and non-profits whenever possible. Co-promote your efforts for maximum exposure and success.

### Free Bike Tune-Ups

**What:** Provide free, basic 15-minute tune-ups to the public – preferably monthly or quarterly. Hold inside a district bike shop or outside during district events.

**Why:**

- ✓ Removes a key barrier to getting people on bikes: tuning up their bikes so they're rideable. A common obstacle of people not riding their bike is that it's gathering dust in their garage/has a flat/has another minor maintenance problem, and they haven't made the time or can't afford to get it fixed.
- ✓ Attracts people into district.
- ✓ Allows BID to develop relationship with nearby bike shop.
- ✓ Those held inside bike shops often translate into new and repeat customers, as the customer realizes s/he needs to buy a helmet, lock or other accessory or get more detailed work done.
- ✓ Those held at outdoor festivals add activity and vibrancy to the event.



**How:** Develop a relationship with your nearest bike shop and talk with them about offering this service (for free) during one of your monthly/regular events for three hours. In return, give them great publicity. No bike shop? Hire a bike shop/kitchen to set up a booth at outdoor events.

**Metrics:** Track the number of clinics you hold, the number of bikes fixed at each clinic, and the diversity of customers. Take photos for publicity and documentation. Gather customer testimonials. As customers get their bike fixed, ask them what they think about the offering.

**Tips:** Partner with bike shops to do these for free since they receive publicity, new customers, and sales. Consider partnering with this [San Diego mobile bike repair service](#). (Other examples of mobile bike repair are in [Boise](#) and [Chicago](#).)

## Bike Valets

- What:** Rock star parking at the entrance to your events. Just like car valet, bike valet offers the most convenient and secure bike parking at an event and gives riders a claim ticket for later retrieval. The SDCBC has hosted many bike valets at local events. It would be a great addition to farmer's markets and all BID sponsored festivals.
- Why:** Bicyclists, just like drivers, like to park as close as possible to their destination and know their bike is safe. Bike valets offer safe, manned parking at the entrance to an event or store. They make bicyclists feel welcome, signal the event will be bike-friendly, and attract bicyclists. It's also a friendly suggestion for drivers to try bicycling instead.
- How:** Add bike valet equipment to your BID Council event equipment order and contact the SDCBC for valet supervisors. Hire volunteers to help.
- Metrics:** Record the number of valets you offer, the number of bikes parked at each one, and take photos of your highly populated ones.
- Tip:** Build your own racks to save money (and signs and tickets), making the valets even more affordable and easy.

## Bike Portraits

- What:** Offer free portraits of San Diego residents and their bikes – individuals, couples, friends, a person with their pet, you name it. Teenagers with BMX bikes, cyclists in spandex, bike commuters in suits. People of all ages, races, genders, and backgrounds.
- Why:** It's a fun, community-bonding art project that will build enthusiasm about bicycling and San Diego. It documents the diversity of people who ride in the city (race, age, bike type, etc.). It's also a great photo opportunity for elected officials and community leaders.
- How:** Recruit a local photographer who is passionate about bicycling. Give the project a name (perhaps "Who Bikes SD" or "I Bike SD"). Set up at festivals and events in all of the BIDs and publicize it to a diversity of riders so that a diversity participates. Display the photos at a central space. In Long Beach, Photographer Shereef Moustafa emailed everyone his or her photo for free and had everyone sign a simple waiver. (Here's a non-bike example from San Francisco: <http://www.irionphotography.com/>.)
- Metrics:** The photos! A picture's worth a thousand words. If your resulting photos don't accurately reflect the diversity of your city, adjust your outreach.



## Bike Raffles

- What:** Raffle off a donated bike and other items, like a kid's bike, helmets, u-locks, lights, panniers, and other bike accessories geared toward everyday bicyclists and shoppers.
- Why:** Encourages people to talk about bicycling, gives a potential customer a way to get to your district, educates potential customers what bike-related items are for sale in your district, builds loyalty and appreciation for your district, and publicizes the shops that donated the items.
- How:** Find a local bike shop and other sponsors.
- Metrics:** Collect emails to sign up for your BID's e-newsletter.

## Bike Merchandise

- What:** At your events, recruit booth vendors who sell bike gear, accessories, attire, and artistic pieces like bike-themed jewelry, t-shirts, picture frames, and so on.
- Ask district shops to sell these items as part of their regular merchandise.
- Hold seasonal sales (Sept: parent-child tandems; Dec: lights; April: helmets) and include education (childhood obesity and diabetes, illegality of night riding without lights, statistics of bike injuries with and without helmets, etc.)
- Why:** Outfits people in their local district so they don't shop online or at a mall, increases business sales, helps make bicycling 'hip' for those yet unconvinced, and legitimizes a district's bike-friendliness.
- How:** Try to sell as much locally made items as possible. Don't be afraid to think big: there's a company in San Clemente that sells cargo bikes.
- Metrics:** Advertise the goods and take photos of happy customers with their new purchases.



## Kids Activities

- What:** Incorporate children’s bike activities – bike rodeos, ‘Kidical Mass’ rides, bike face painting, temporary bike tattoos, bike decorating from salvaged materials, and bike art activities – into your events.
- Why:** Encourages families to shop and dine in your district and attend your events – and via bike. Families are a key market for all districts since they spend in multiples, they’re networked to schools, churches, and other groups, and their presence indicates an area is safe.
- How:** The SDCBC can assist you in providing a free bike rodeo – a mini-street where kids can ride bikes and learn traffic rules. Ask a local museum to provide an art table. Where you can’t partner with other organizations, hire vendors. For the activities you pay for, advertise them as free for those who bike there.
- Metrics:** Track the number of participants for each activity, and most important, take photos!



## Bike-Specific Events

There are several bike events that already happen in San Diego and many other new ones that can be created. These three, below, stand out:

### National Bike Month & Bike to Work Day

- What:** This nationwide event takes place in May. In 2012, San Diego's successful Bike to Work Day program saw 85 drink and snack pit stops and 10,000 riders.
- Why:** Capitalize on this; draw them into your cafés, restaurants, bars, and shops.
- How:** Hold event enhancements (like free bike repair) and heavily promote your various bike discounts and offerings.
- Metrics:** Collect data, photos and testimonials.

### Urban Riding 101 Safety Training

- What:** Teach community members bike safety and then demonstrate on a group ride.
- Why:** Some people don't feel safe or informed enough to ride. Providing a safe learning environment will increase the number of bicyclists in your district.
- How:** Hire the SDCBC, which has League Certified Instructor (LCI) trainers and a curriculum. A nominal fee may be required. BIDs secure location. Open to everyone in community. Charge small fee (\$20?) but offer full scholarship for anyone who can't afford it. Keep it under two hours.
- Metrics:** Take photos. Track the number of attendees, their age, and before-and-after feedback. Collect written and verbal testimonials – for example, "I used to be afraid to ride because I hadn't ridden in years and didn't know the rules of the road. Thanks to this class, I now feel confident and ride all the time."

### Repair Training

- What:** Teach community members basic bike maintenance, like fixing flat tires.
- Why:** Builds confidence in riding. When people know how to fix a flat, for example, they're less concerned about becoming stranded far from home.
- How:** Hire a local bike mechanic skilled at teaching basic bike maintenance to beginners. Charge a small fee to cover the cost of trainer and supplies.
- Metrics:** Collect data, photos and testimonials.
- Tip:** Hold some women-only trainings and others geared toward teenagers.

# Community Rides

- What:** Recruit local bike groups to lead rides to dine/shop in your district and to district events. Organize safe, slow, informal rides. Saturday morning family rides work well, and weekday evening rides are great for 'Taco Tuesday' type of events.
- Why:** Provides a safe, fun, group atmosphere to encourage people to get out on bikes. Helps non-frequent riders become comfortable riding within your district. Provides seasoned riders with a social event. Brings new customers into your businesses and to your events.
- How:** Reach out to local bike clubs and ride groups, including the SDCBC, [San Diego Wheelmen](#), and the [San Diego Urban Bike and Social Club](#).
- Metrics:** Record number of rides, number of participants, their diversity (age, etc.), and take photos.
- Tips:** Attracting folks who aren't avid bicyclists to community rides in cooler months is tough. Some people are easily deterred by chilly weather or light rain. Host "Bundle Up Rides" and "Rain Rides" to help change people's perceptions and habits, and offer them something in return, like a free beer or hot cocoa.

Get a celebrity to lead the ride. When Long Beach landed the rock group Dengue Fever to lead a ride in Cambodia Town and have lunch with fans, it doubled as a media event and garnered the band, district, and bicycling great publicity. [Here's](#) a video from the event.



## District Bike Maps

- What:** Provide an electronic 'how to get here' district bike map on your website as a PDF download. Include suggested routes to and within your district, multi-modal connections (such as bus, trolley, and rail), and also any bike shops, discount program participants, bike corrals, and other bike-friendly amenities.
- Why:** Encourages people to bike to your district by making the journey easier. Good marketing tool to publicize your district and bike-related businesses.
- How:** Encourage district businesses to post the map on their websites and to expand their "Parking" or "How to Get Here" pages to include bicycling. Post on Facebook and Twitter. Print and distribute at events and district bike shops.
- Tip:** Nice map layout example here: <http://ridesouthla.com/watts-ride-map>. SANDAG produces a countywide map.

## Incentive Programs

### Discounts for Bicyclists

- What:** Have local businesses offer discounts for bicyclists. Each business determines its own discount (ex: 15% off) or promotion (ex: free appetizer with entrée). You might consider a 'Saturdays only' option for businesses who can't afford to offer the discount daily but still want to try and attract families, shoppers, and others who tend to bicycle more on weekends.
- Why:** To attract nearby residents, cycling clubs, and tourists, and to convert existing drivers to bicyclists. That family of four that's taking their SUV to the mall every Saturday? Attract them to shop and dine local instead.
- How:** Business participants receive a window decal and are promoted on the program web page, social media, media publicity, e-blasts, and organized rides – like those ending at a different lunch spot each week. Businesses should promote via their website, e-blasts, and social media regularly. To reach customers effectively, provide a Google map with participants, a phone app, and monthly e-blasts profiling a business and patron of the month. Suggested messaging theme: "Use this program to discover your city."
- Metrics:** Track the number of business participants and try to determine the number of users per month and associated sales. You can gauge this loosely through business surveys or formally through a programmed key on business registers – or asking businesses to record it manually on a clipboard behind the register.
- Tip:** Business participants should promote the program regularly. Those that don't will see few results.

## Bike-Friendly Business Recognition

- What:** Recognize and promote businesses that encourage employees and customers to bike.
- Why:** Brings positive media attention to the city; attracts bike tourists to the city; and attracts bicyclists to the businesses.
- How:** Encourage businesses to apply for the [League of American Bicyclists' program](#). The SDCBC will also recognize BFBs at its annual Joyride event in December.

## Commute-to-Work Program

- What:** Educate employers on the benefit of encouraging their employees to commute to work via bike and how to start a program.
- Why:** Gets more people on bikes and more businesses designated as Bike-Friendly Businesses.
- How:** Hold workshops for in each district about how to commute by bike. [Transport for London](#) is a great example of a city making a big and effective push for bike commuting.

Companies, universities, government agencies, and other employers are increasingly partially reimbursing employees to bike to work. SANDAG has a program called the [Bike to Work Corporate Challenge](#) and MIT has the [Bicycle Commuter Benefit Program](#).



# Merchant Bikes

**What:** Purchase bikes, cargo bikes, and accessories – such as baskets, trailers, locks, lights and helmets – for merchants and BID leaders to use and share. Brand them with the district’s logo.

**Why:** Bikes are often a more convenient mode of transport for business owners and BID leaders to conduct business. They are also an eye-catching marketing tool, healthy for the rider and district, decrease traffic and parking issues, and an important part of an emergency toolkit. (Bike sales soared immediately following the Japanese tsunami.)

Merchants and business leaders find bikes useful for many things, such as:

- ✓ Errands to the bank, post office, grocery store, art supply store, etc.
- ✓ Restaurant take-out deliveries
- ✓ To pick up lunch across the district
- ✓ Attend meetings, meet a colleague, meet friends
- ✓ Deliver flyers/posters/information to member businesses
- ✓ BIDs can quickly zip over to a business to check out an issue
- ✓ Flaunting in parades

Investing in a **cargo bike** may make sense for some districts. It can be used for:

- ✓ Large-item deliveries
- ✓ Groceries delivery service
- ✓ Errands with large/a lot of cargo (like a big post office run)
- ✓ BID graffiti removal and other maintenance
- ✓ Flaunting in parades

**How:** Purchase a basket, lock, lights and helmet for each bike.

Insurance is available and needed to protect BIDs, BID Council and businesses. Bikestation can provide this. Contact: Cyndi Kaneyuki (562) 733-0106; [CKaneyuki@bikestation.com](mailto:CKaneyuki@bikestation.com). Or contact your insurance provider.

Each bike can be adopted by a business that takes it in at night and locks it up to a bike rack during the day. Business owners and employees on the block can check it out through an easy and informal system.



**Tips:**

Start with a few commuter bikes to test out, experimenting with baskets or saddlebags to see what's most useful. Then determine if a trailer or cargo bike is needed so that nothing is purchased that won't be regularly used.

Brand the bikes with the BID's logo, not a corporate/business sponsor. This keeps the district (and community) spirit and marketing message.

Hold an Urban Riding 101 Safety Training in every district when these bikes are purchased to help employers and employees feel comfortable on two wheels.

# 'Light' Infrastructure

## Bike Racks and Corrals

**What:** Provide more bike parking in every San Diego business district and publicize the ease of using a bike with simple message like this one: "Don't worry about finding parking – ride your bike to our beautiful district."

Encourage the City to offer a free bike rack or corral to any business that requests one, with liability resting with the city, not the business.

**Why:** Bike racks are how bicyclists park in order to patronize a business.

Sales go up in districts that install bike racks. In Fort Worth, Texas, restaurant sales went up 200% after bike racks and lanes were installed.

Bike racks help deter bike theft, as some people who have no place to lock their bike leave it unlocked and experience theft.

Corrals are important where significant bike parking is needed and bikes are cluttering the sidewalks. Corrals replace one parallel parking space with parking for 8–14 bikes.

**How:** Work with the BID Council and SDCBC to identify the needs and locations for your community. In turn, they will request the racks and corrals from City of San Diego Bike Coordinator Tom Landre.

**Tip:** Choose rack and corral designs that clearly look like bike racks. Some people mistake artful bike racks for public art and don't understand they're for bike parking. Most bicyclists prefer oval-shaped racks.





## 'Walk Your Bike' Sidewalk Stencils & Postcards

- What:** Painted or chalked sidewalk stencils that read 'Walk Your Bike' and show a stick figure walking its bike. Educational postcards distributed at businesses.
- Why:** To reduce bike-pedestrian accidents and educate bicyclists that riding on the sidewalk is dangerous for pedestrians.
- How:** Design a stencil using other examples, choose your color paint/chalk, and lay the stencils down a few feet from each curb and also mid-block. Work with your local graphics firm to produce the postcard template from the BID Council.
- Tip:** Make each district's stencil color the same as its district brand color.



## Public Art/DIY Art Installations

There are many examples of artfully incorporating bicycling into a district's public art efforts. Here are three examples:



## Additional Components

The SDCBC is working on these additional components to create a bike-friendly City. For information on how to get involved in advocacy, please contact the SDCBC: **New bike lane** suggestions; **Bike share** program for residents, tourists and hotel guests; **Wayfinding signage** indicating bike routes and distances; **Required or encouraged bike parking** for new developments and renovations

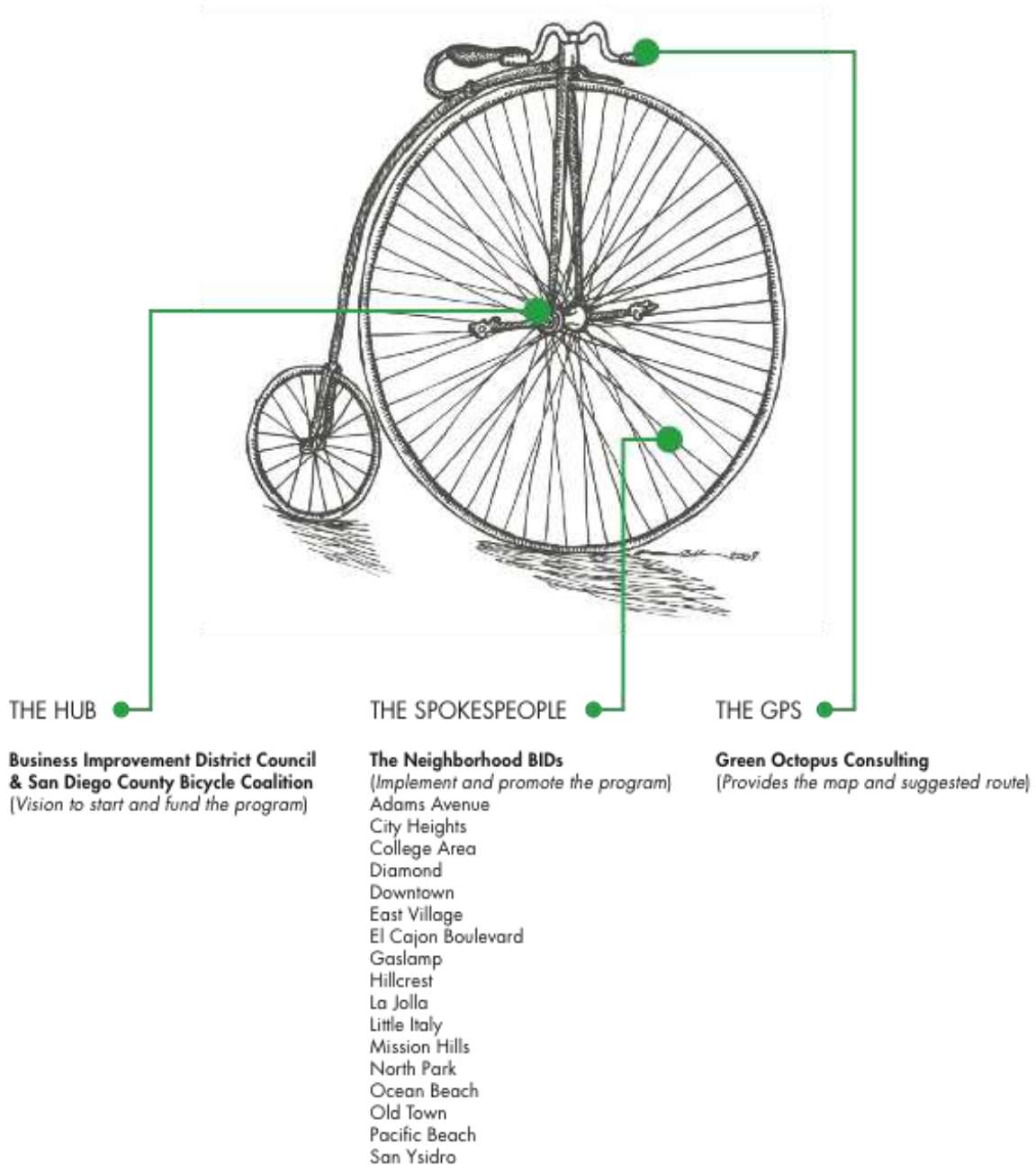
# Marketing

Every district should incorporate bicycling into its regular promotions.

- Logo:** The BFBD logo will be used on all program-wide promotions. The district-specific logos are for use by each district's marketing materials.
- BID Websites:** Each district is encouraged to add its bike logo to their home page and create a bike page on its website with photos, a district bike map, businesses that offer discounts for bicyclists, information on upcoming bike events.
- Program Page:** The SD BFBD program will use <http://bidcouncil.org/programs/bike-friendly-business-districts/> for BFBD program-wide promotions. It will link to all BID bike friendly business district pages.
- E-Blasts:** Each district is encouraged to add its bike logo on their regular e-blasts and include announcements of new businesses offering discounts for bicyclists and information on upcoming bike events, linking to the website's bike page.
- Social Media:** Each district is encouraged to regularly promote its bike efforts on their Facebook and Twitter.
- Flyers & Posters:** Hiring an intern to distribute flyers (or postcards) door-to-door within a one-mile radius of your district is an excellent way to reach your core audience who might miss your other marketing efforts.
- Short Videos:** Hire local a videographer to create short videos about biking in your community. Here are three examples: [The Path Less Pedaled](#); [Long Beach's BFBD program video](#); and SANDAG's "[San Diego is Pedal Powered](#)."
- T-Shirts:** The SDCBC will create t-shirts with the program logo.
- Banners:** Each district is encouraged to create street pole banners with its bike logo.
- Newspaper Ads:** Each district is encouraged to use the BFBD theme to enhance newspaper ads and other media.



# Who Does What



# Contact Information

## THE HUB:

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