

# BICYCLE-FRIENDLY BUSINESS DISTRICTS



Photo: Allan Crawford

There is a strong connection between biking local and shopping local. That's why many merchants incentivize residents to bike to their districts to shop and dine. Bikes are also often the easiest way for merchants to run errands, make deliveries, and get around without the hassle and cost of parking.

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

A BFBD is where merchants actively encourage people to bike to area shops and restaurants – and where merchants and employees ride, too. BFBDs integrate bikes into a district's operations, events and promotions.

## Bicycling can bring business districts:

- More customers
- Increased sales
- Reduced parking congestion and costs
- Free and convenient customer parking
- Reduced car traffic
- Increased public safety
- Improved community health
- Increased employee productivity
- Bicycle tourists and commuters
- Positive media attention

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## Program Success

The City of Long Beach, Calif., hired Green Octopus Consulting to create the nation's first BFBD program in 2011-12. Following its success, we were hired to create a program for San Diego's 18 business districts and kick-start other BFBD efforts across the U.S. and Canada. The City of Copenhagen has studied our work.

## Services

We are hired to speak at conferences and to a variety of business and civic groups, lead workshops, and create BFBD implementation plans. Please visit [www.greenoctopus.net](http://www.greenoctopus.net) for more information, a short video and press coverage.



Green Octopus Consulting President April Economides has a niche in making the business case for bicycling as an everyday mode of transport. She has worked with several Business Improvement Districts and Chambers of Commerce and advises districts on a

variety of green business, transport and placemaking initiatives. She holds an MBA in Sustainable Management and lives car-free in Southern California.



# BICYCLE-FRIENDLY BUSINESS DISTRICTS

The City of Palm Springs' Sustainability and Parks & Recreation Commissions are interested in knowing your thoughts on bicycles, and how they might be incorporated into a positive bike/shop/dine strategy for downtown/uptown.

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### **Stakeholder Engagement**

- Educate them about program and the business case for bicycling
- Learn about their district and their thoughts on bicycles
- Figure out who to engage in the district

### **Palm Springs Bicycle-Friendly Business District Worksheet List –**

1. Safer bike routes and lanes into and throughout the district / Wayfinding signage
2. More Bike Racks: downtown, uptown, city wide
3. Downtown Bike Corrals for easy lockup
4. Bike Parking Ordinance for new developments
5. Bureau of Tourism target biking vacations / hotel bikes
6. Citywide bike share 'pilot program' (targeted at tourists)

### **Discussion points:**

- Bicycle Friendly Business Districts drive more business to merchants (not loose it)
- Saturday Discounts for Bicyclists to get the merchants more traffic
- Bike Local Rides – start and end at different businesses
- Bike local / shop local / dine local
- Bike racks / bike corrals – show the need for them (village fest, weekends)



## Bicycle-Friendly Business District Ideas

### Event Enhancements

- ☐ Free Bike Tune-Ups
- ☐ Bike Valets
- ☐ Bike Portraits
- ☐ Bike/Helmet/Light Giveaways/Raffles
- ☐ Bike Vendors/Merchandise at Events
- ☐ Kids Activities

### Community Rides

- ☐ Bike Local Rides: Start and end in your business district(s) at a different café/restaurant/ shop each month. Possibly ask business to offer discount/gift with purchase. Name Ideas: "Rediscover Your Bike Ride," "Winter Shopping Ride," "Bike Local, Shop Local," "Support Our Local Businesses Ride"
- ☐ Local Leader Rides: Organize a ride with the mayor, a councilperson, or another elected official. Bike Month (May) is a good time to do this; get press out for media attention.
- ☐ Parent and Kid Rides ("Kidical Mass," "Bike Trains")
- ☐ Women-Specific Rides
- ☐ Theme Tours (Architecture, Public Art, Parks)
- ☐ Earth Day Green Tours

### Other Bike-Specific Events (emphasize bicycling as transportation)

- ☐ Plan many special activities from this list and beyond for: Bike Month (May); Bike to Work Week (In 2013, it's May 13-17); and Bike to Work Day (In 2013, it's May 17)
- ☐ Seasonal Sales (family bikes in Sept., lights in Dec.)
- ☐ Food Tasting Bike Tours
- ☐ Date Nights with discounted dinner and a show
- ☐ Commuter stops on bike lanes with free coffee
- ☐ Bike-In Movies

### Bikes

- ☐ Merchant Bikes (and cargo bikes) – individual or shared
- ☐ Corporate/City/University bike share
- ☐ Citywide bike share

### Incentive Programs

- ☐ Discounts for Bicyclists
- ☐ Bike-Friendly Business Recognition
- ☐ Commute-to-Work Program
- ☐ Community fund (Ex: "For every beer you buy, we'll put \$1 into our bike parking fund.")

### Bike-To-Work Encouragement

- ☐ Encourage bike commuters to invite co-workers to ride with them to work and serve as a resource for bike-related questions
- ☐ Hold bike-to-lunch or happy hours once a week
- ☐ Offer free breakfast to everyone who bikes to work during Bike To Work Week
- ☐ Ask employers to buy some bikes from a local shop for employees to share for errands/lunch

### Bike Tourism

- ☐ Promote bicycling and bike amenities on your Convention & Visitor's Bureau website
- ☐ Hotel bikes (free for guests)

- ☐ Bike rental business
- ☐ Bike tour business
- ☐ Offer a repair stand, combination u-locks, air pump, and tire levers for free use and patch kits for sale (at hotels, visitor center, bike shops)
- ☐ Promote 1-2 night trips and attractions

#### **Community Outreach**

- ☐ Business-to-Business – Introduce yourself, tell them why you support bike infrastructure and programs, and offer yourself as a resource.
- ☐ Reach out to PTAs, churches, and other hubs that can spread the bike local message, organize rides, and advertise your events

#### **Bicycle Education & Safety**

- ☐ Urban Riding 101 Safety Training
- ☐ Repair Trainings (Ex: “How to fix a flat”). Bike shop could offer for free.
- ☐ Monthly Weatherization workshops in winter to show newer bicyclists what to wear/use and to remove hesitancy about winter riding. (Hold at REI and offer discount?)
- ☐ Women-Specific Trainings
- ☐ Parent-Specific Trainings. “Want to bike more with your children but unsure about what type of bike to buy? Come learn about the variety of child attachments, cargo bikes, trailers, and more... Receive a 15% discount on your purchase.”

#### **Marketing**

- ☐ City/District Bike Map: online, print
- ☐ Bike app
- ☐ Message: Bike Local
- ☐ Logo
- ☐ BID Websites – Bike-specific page, ‘How to Get Here’ page
- ☐ E-Blasts
- ☐ Social Media
- ☐ Flyers & Posters
- ☐ Bike Tags (tiny paper flyers tied to bike handle - “thank you for biking,” advertise upcoming event or website)
- ☐ Short Videos
- ☐ T-Shirts
- ☐ Street pole Banners
- ☐ Newspaper Ads
- ☐ Media Outreach

#### **Economic Development**

- ☐ Attract/create bike-related businesses and ventures you’d like to come to/start
- ☐ Bike parking ordinance for new developments

#### **‘Light’ Infrastructure**

- ☐ Bike Racks
- ☐ Bike Corrals
- ☐ ‘Walk Your Bike’ Sidewalk Stencils
- ☐ Kiosk Repair Stand (with air, etc.)
- ☐ Vending Machine (patch kit, tire levers, etc.)
- ☐ Murals and other Public Art

#### **Infrastructure**

- ☐ Safe lanes into and throughout your district
- ☐ Wayfinding signage with routes and distance to district; signage on lanes throughout district