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BIKE LONG BEACH – OVERVIEW RELEASE

Helping Long Beach become a Bike-Friendly City, the **Bike Long Beach** program has quickly become one of the city's most visible campaigns. While it directly benefits residents through the development and construction of roadway projects, dedicated bike lanes and safety programs, **Bike Long Beach** provides indirect benefits to the city's business districts, tourism industry, and core downtown area through infrastructure projects that provide safer transportation corridors and enhance neighborhood livability.

A part of the city's public works department, the **Bike Long Beach** team has been responsible for securing more than \$17 million in grant money for roadway improvements, bike racks and corrals, education campaigns and other bike-specific projects. These programs make walking in Long Beach safer by getting cyclists off sidewalks within shopping districts; make driving in Long Beach safer by enabling better traffic flow in downtown Long Beach and increasing the visibility of shared bike lanes throughout the city; and make cycling in Long Beach safer through "safe routes to school" biking initiatives and making it easier for people to leave their cars at home for neighborhood trips or commuting to work.

"The Bike Long Beach initiative is doing more than enabling safe cycling. We are putting the tools in place for a healthier, more active Long Beach for our generation, our children, and the future," said **CITY OFFICIAL**.

A Sustainable City

The **Bike Long Beach** program was initiated as a citywide initiative to promote healthy living and create a sustainable city, with an overall goal of becoming the Most Bike-Friendly City in America.

As a "beach" city, Long Beach is taking a leadership position in Southern California in promoting a healthy, active lifestyle and encouraging increased use of bicycles (and other alternative modes of transportation). As an urban city, Long Beach understands the importance of a diversified transportation model that seeks to improve and expand greener alternatives.

Earmarked Funds

Bike Long Beach projects are financed through government grants earmarked for these types of civic projects. These monies do not come from the Long Beach general fund.

City staff identified available grant monies and authored numerous grant applications. To date, their efforts have brought more the \$17 million in funds to support **Bike Long Beach** projects. In addition to providing bicycle infrastructure, these projects also modernize and beautify the city.

Urban Planning

Each **Bike Long Beach** initiative has been designed and vetted with input from city traffic engineers, area transit authorities, and engagement with the community.

"The beauty of Long Beach bicycle projects is that they are a result of input and support from residents and businesses," said Sumire Gant, Transportation Programs Officer, City of Long Beach. "We have

worked in conjunction with departments across the city and region in the planning and construction phases. All of the roadway changes have been thoroughly discussed and planned with traffic and transit officials and meet federal transportation and roadway guidelines.”

Additionally, **Bike Long Beach** projects are helping to improve the livability of the downtown area by providing new transportation infrastructure and aesthetics that are attracting new businesses.

“Bicycle infrastructure projects have been proven to revitalize downtown areas, increase store traffic to business districts, and keep spending and tax dollars local,” said Charlie Gandy, Mobility Coordinator, City of Long Beach. “And throughout the city, by reducing the number of automobile trips that are 1 mile or shorter, we are supporting neighborhood businesses by encouraging local shopping.”

Becoming the Most Bike-Friendly City in America

Just two years into the project **Bike Long Beach** project has been successful in increasing bicycle ridership, reducing bicycle traffic on sidewalks in business districts, and, above all, engaging Long Beach leaders and residents.

According to the most recent bicycle counts, ridership in Long Beach is up **N%**. In Belmont Shore, where sidewalk ridership was endangering pedestrians, bicycle ridership is up **N%** but sidewalk ridership has decreased **N%**.

Long Beach Mayor Bob Foster has become an avid cyclist, often reporting on his regular 30-mile rides throughout the city and along the riverbed bike paths. Other city council members have embraced cycling as well, and are helping to pave the way for future **Bike Long Beach** projects in their districts. In total, more than N projects are underway or in the planning stages, and a new Bike Master Plan is being developed during 2011 to provide a roadmap for the future.

And the bicycling world is taking notice: Long Beach has been awarded a Bronze Level status as a “Bicycle Friendly Community” by the League of American Bicyclists, and has been acclaimed one of *Bicycling Magazine’s* Top 50 Bike Friendly Cities.

“We’re just starting on the path to becoming the Most Bike-Friendly City in America,” said Gant. “We will continue to educate school children and the community on road safety issues; identify city streets where we can add bike lanes to encourage safer vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian traffic flow; and create projects that will further enhance neighborhoods and encourage local, Long Beach shopping.”

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