



**El Cajon Boulevard Business Improvement Association
Annual Budget Narrative
FY 2023-2024**

The El Cajon Boulevard Business Improvement Association is an association of local businesses committed to improving the physical and economic conditions along the El Cajon Boulevard corridor and its surrounding neighborhoods in Mid-City San Diego. This year we were excited to open a new incarnation of the Fair@44 serving seniors, Partnering with other nonprofits serving the Mid-City, creating opportunity for entrepreneurs who are women, from our BIPOC, refugee and Immigrant communities. This work fulfills our goals and mission statement and we are honored to address Inclusivity, Diversity and Equity.

Personnel/Staffing

Personnel and Operating expenses support the functioning of the Association which manages The Business Improvement District These include:

- Staff salary/wage, benefits, payroll taxes and insurance (health and workers compensation)
- Coordinate, notify and lead monthly board and Committee meetings noticed and held in accordance with the Brown Act:
 - Monthly Board of Directors meeting (third Thursday of the month)
 - Monthly Executive Officers meeting (first Wednesday of the month)
 - Design/ECBBIA Parking (second Wednesday of the month)
 - Promotions (third Monday of the month)
 - Economic Development (Third Wednesday of the month)
 - Financial/Budget/Policy Adhoc (as needed)
 - Mid-City Community Parking District (fourth Wednesday of the month)
- Hub meetings have bound businesses with neighboring business. HUBS have rekindled friendships and reciprocity for businesses along the Boulevard. Where there is an active business group and neighbor participation to address issues, define challenges and take advantage of opportunities. Hubs are West End, 30ECB, East End, College gateway, Little Saigon Cultural District. The Central Corridor is slow to emerge as the efforts we have made in the neighborhood and with business owners haven't been supported.
- The Blvd. 2020 plan lays out the **10** year vision for the BID based on 7 principles that direct our growth.

- The Blvd. 20/20 now in it's **4th year**, is a living document that meets the change and growth as it happens. We constantly engage community through partners such as Housing You Matters, ULI, and the City Heights CDC as well as our local community groups. The recovery has reshaped our 10 year plan to address the change in business, the growth in home-based and the need for small spaces.
- Staff members coordinate and nurture relationships with Neighborhood Planning Groups, Non-profits, trade groups, stakeholders, and city and county representatives and elected leaders in developing ideas, and plans that make El Cajon Boulevard better, safer, more successful.
- Staff coordination of special events such as The Holiday Market, San Diego Fashion Week, BLVD Mardi Gras Crawl, Fiesta De Almas, Fair Market, BLVD Stroll, Parking Day, Take Back the Alley and Vision Zero through partnerships with business members and community groups throughout the year to host events within the business district.
- Staff coordinates business mixers at various locations throughout the district.
- Staff prepares monthly e-newsletters and annual reports that are sent to our neighbors business members.
- Hybrid meetings must continue to include a very busy business community, neighbors who work but want to be involved and our partners and supporters who are handicapped.
- Expand and maintain the GIS (Geographic Information System) of community assets and development opportunities in the district.
- Manage interns that help develop various promotional projects such as events, business directories, online content and promotional videos. We have partnered continually with the Department of rehabilitation to give teens real world experience and in turn digitalized all of our 28 years of files.

Office/Operational

Our office remains a center where we store our history, come together to plan and implement, educate and inspire and carry out the mission of the association and deliver tech assistance to our members and resources to our community. Currently our office is at the ground floor of a 5 story building that houses start-up in services and manufacturing in loft and office spaces. A hub of business activity. The Boulevard BIA office is at the center of an emerging hub promoted as Central/Corridor. It is situated in between our Normal Heights neighborhood to the north and our Corridor neighborhood of City Heights to the south.

The Boulevard has always endeavored to:

- Maintain office and meeting space - paying monthly rent and utilities.
- Monthly bookkeeping, bill-paying and management of cash flow. This includes monthly reports to the Board of Directors and coordination with accounting and audit consultants.
- Maintaining the appropriate current and competitive insurance policies and keeping required documentation in place.
- Preparation of required reports and monthly reimbursement requests for City of San Diego reimbursements, to include: Office of Small Business – BID Reimbursements, Small Business Enhancement Program reimbursements, and Community Parking District reimbursements.

- Preparation of required reports and reimbursement requests for the following: Community Projects, Programs and Services grants, and County Community Enhancement Grant.
- Preparation of reports on grants from public and private agencies.
- Coordinate and facilitate business training to educate businesses about business programs available from government and private organizations. This includes benefits available from Workforce Partnership, SCORE, The Internal Revenue Service, Accion and other programs as they become available.
- The ECBBIA is managed by an all volunteer Board of Directors. Our Office space provides a place of work from which the management of staff and BIA functions can happen.
- A board member maintains a seat on the board of directors of the BID Alliance.
- The ECBBIA Board of Directors
 - Hire consultants to forward initiatives and mission to create safer streets, business improvement, recruitment and retention of business and technology advances.
 - Work with consultants on transportation, safe streets and capital programs

Communications/Website

Our website has grown to be a repository for BLVD BIA business. Making access to the workings of the business completely transparent to the communities and businesses we serve. Online activities, and our robust social media presence has underscored our office and become a virtual meeting place. This benefits our membership and patrons and helped make us move forward to get as many Blvd. businesses to explore online commerce, communication and their own social media presence. We will work to continue growth in this arena as it opens up our business to increased commerce, online ordering and an expanded customer base.

- The design of our website shows the two functions of The El Cajon Boulevard BIA. 1) the association and the structure and legalities of operating a non-profit 501C3, our history, and focus; and 2) the district which celebrates our businesses, the cultural diversity of our neighborhoods, events, opportunities and resources.
- Maintain the district's website, <http://www.TheBoulevard.org>. Keep the current required posting of organization governance documents. Also includes adding current events, business resources, project updates, historical resources and organization activities, grant and funding opportunities
- Our Website also provides communication options and contacts to support our membership.
- Real estate development and business space leasing resources are highlighted on our website
- The organization also maintains a presence on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Tik Tok and Next Door.
- The BIA distributes a monthly e-newsletter, that is distributed through email and posts on our website

Design and Improvements

- Oversee and/or advises two Mid-City Landscape Maintenance Districts that are within the Boulevard BIAs boundaries. The BIA works with City Parks and Recreation department on maintenance, budget, and enhancement issues.
- We attend North Park Landscape Maintenance District and North Park Planning Group meetings to advocate for projects and services on the El Cajon Boulevard portion of the district.
- Identify locations and facilitate the planting of street trees, lighting, tree benches, wayfinding kiosks and other improvements on El Cajon Boulevard and its side streets.
- El Cajon Boulevard is looking forward to fulfilling the city's Climate Action goals through better transportation options and an increase in greenery and trees.
- Strengthens the District's existing economic base by finding ways to address infrastructure deficiencies and oversee infill development activity and transit issues.
- This year we celebrated 34 years that the ECBBIA has initiated and carried out a Mid-City tradition: The 805 Holiday bridge lighting project, along the 805. In recent years we have coordination with NP mainstreet, Adams Ave BID, CHBIA and shared the expense. Dec. 2022 we celebrated the lighting with Sharon Cooney from MTS, Shane Harris, D9 Councilmember Sean Elo-Rivera, Councilmember Steve Whitburn and Santa. This year we celebrated our City Heights stakeholders. 2024 marks our 35 year anniversary of holiday lighting and we look to make this year extra special.
- Expanded Holiday Bridgelighting to our 15 freeway bridge deck, and celebrated our 3rd year doing that. This year we will coordinate with our Normal Heights planning group to expand service between Normal Heights and University Ave
- Maintain median and other special lighting projects along El Cajon Boulevard.
- Meet with developers to encourage the development of projects in the district.
- This year we started a think tank on Prefab, modular and panel construction that looks like a real possibility to change the building industry and create more dwellings. This group is made up of visionaries, developers, architects and students.
- Moved forward on making permanent our piloted dedicated bus/bike lane in partnership with MTS and the City of San Diego.
- Work closely with ULI, MTS and SANDAG to oversee the development around the Bus Rapid Transit stations throughout our district.
- Implement recommendations from ULI TAP to activate and support transit oriented development around the I-15 bridge deck,
- Helped to create a art project reflecting our diverse MidCity communities for the I-15 Bridge deck
- Coordinate economic development tours in partnership with ULI and produce property profiles and other materials to bring investment into the district.
- Plan and implement incubation strategies to activate hubs within the district and attract future development such as a Tech Library at Fair@44

- Work to increase mobility options in the district. This includes traffic calming, pedestrian mobility and bicycle infrastructure, including but not limited to parklets, enhanced crossings and bicycle facilities.
- Work with government agencies to direct infrastructure funding into the district.
- Administer the street banner district along El Cajon Boulevard, including maintaining the infrastructure and the replacement of banners. There are currently 150 banners in the program. This includes coordination with other organizations that have contracted for the use of banner poles in the district.
- Attend meetings to advocate for infrastructure improvements and redevelopment projects along El Cajon Boulevard. We are currently part of the TEAH task force and contribute regularly.
- Our organization is focused on gaining resources to implement projects outlined in a City-funded sidewalk replacement study.
- Through the Public Right of Way Enhancement (PROW) program, the El Cajon Boulevard exercises the ability to grant permits to allow sidewalk seating and other amenities for member businesses.
- Continue to look for ways to improve the face of storefronts through the City of San Diego's Storefront Improvement Program, volunteer opportunities, artistic endeavors and innovative retail initiatives.
- Expand the district's address signage program to make storefront addresses more visible with the utilization of a unified theme.
- Hire artists to paint and maintain art on walls and street furnishings that promote El Cajon Boulevard, our hub areas and City Designated Districts and Landmarks.
- We believe in the utilization and activation of vacant lots, underutilized space and vacant storefronts with art and events that showcase the different communities that make up the Blvd.

Business Promotion and Development

The Boulevard BID runs roughly 4.5 miles through the Mid-City and is flavored by the 6 Neighborhoods it passes through. University Heights, North Park, Normal Heights, City Heights, Kensington and Talmadge. With 6 Lanes for Multi-modal transportation, Transit Oriented Development is realized by new and innovative developers that realize the benefit of two Rapid MTS bus lines and having Hillcrest on the West End and College on the East. Recovery is noticeable in the amount of development on the BLVD and our home based business community speaks to a new kind of economy that we are looking to meet with more resources and opportunities 2023 provided us an opportunity to deliver more assistance to our members and neighbors. Home-based businesses are growing and now make up ¼ of our membership. New initiatives, capital resources, event and promotional opportunities and community engagement are ways we intend to ramp up efforts in driving business to The Boulevard.

- Oversee funding from the County Community Enhancement grant to implement Boulevard promotional activities, public art and food distribution
- Promote local businesses through the use of written spotlights, and become familiar with each business, one by one, to develop new friends and partners and document the history, diversity and evolution of the business district.

- Produce a monthly e-newsletter to highlight restaurant spotlights, events, business resources, arts initiative and other positive news that relates to El Cajon Boulevard.
- Continue to develop a strong presence on the El Cajon Boulevard Facebook page and Instagram.
- In partnership with the local non-profit organizations, the El Cajon Boulevard BIA received funding through LISC to establish and promote ethnic and geographic business clusters, and support City Heights business owners through a pandemic and achieve greater economic growth.
- Administer the Access to Capital Program sponsored by LISC, Civic Community Partners, that provides for small business owners to open, expand, implement business improvement and expansion, and encourage relocation to El Cajon Boulevard. Through this program we have been able to create and maintain a survey directory.
- Design and print the Boulevard Guide, which is a map highlighting a small sample of the unique businesses that can only be found on the Boulevard.
- Work in partnership with Circulate community partners and other community based organizations on the Vision Zero initiative.
- Work in partnership with the LSF, and the Little Saigon cultural designation group through our Little Saigon Committee to implement projects that focus on the district's continued evolution as a notable cultural district. Continue our reach out to area business owners and residents to gauge what they want to see and to address their concerns of safety, cultural sustainability and increased growth and revenue.
- Work towards state designation of the Little Saigon Cultural District through monthly meetings and community backed projects
- Work with local schools and local volunteers to develop and implement placemaking projects.
- Promote holiday shopping through national Shop Local Saturday and a holiday shopping guide, a business promotion called Stroll the BLVD. that encourages customers to walk 6 blocks north and south with 30th being the center. We utilize our activated lots and sidewalks to host entrepreneurs, makers and bakers for the Holiday season.
- Develop partnerships that assist in activating our lots including Fair@44, POPUP15 and the Blvd Court with the distribution of essential goods and develop opportunity to incubate business start-ups and activity
- Host an Annual Meeting each January to showcase the work of the El Cajon Boulevard BIA, and award business owners and BIA partners for their contribution.

Special Events

The lay-out of the El Cajon Boulevard Business Improvement District makes events that happen once a year and close down streets very difficult. MTS bus service and residents reliance on the Blvd. as a transportation corridor make closures more of an inconvenience,. There is however the opportunity to host smaller events on our activated lots or on low trafficked streets allows us to fortify the brand of our particular hubs and develop neighborhood identity. These events attract new residents, developers, and entrepreneurs. Weekly, monthly and holiday events have become the regular on The Coolevard and have garnered us press opportunities to get our messages of TOD, Safe Streets, and Multicultural Communities out into the buzz of San Diego.

- Work continues in partnership with the Little Saigon Committee to highlight the Vietnamese business cluster along El Cajon Boulevard through the activation of Saigon Nights, and celebration of outdoor, street food culture
- The bulk of our work is now centered with a group really dedicated and motivated to do the work that needs to get done to make Little Saigon better, safer, prettier and better lit. This is the Little Saigon Working group made up of Viet Vote, Business members, civic groups, community organizers, Lisc and ourselves
- Work with business owners within our business hubs to host signature events including Mardi Gras, the Stroll the Blvd and Saigon Nights.
- Our partnership with the IRC has grown and our commitment to serving our immigrant and refugee communities benefit from our interaction. We look forward to creating more opportunity to our African residents as well as our BIPOC entrepreneurs.
- Support of the Beer Fest, Vegan market, and cultural events put on by partner groups and non profits.
- Support individual businesses and business clusters in one-off events that encourage the neighboring community and San Diego at large to sample unique endeavors on The Boulevard.
- Host food trucks at the Blvd Court to support business recruitment, activation and safe outdoor seating
- Manage the Fair at 44 lot that encourages Community and City Heights entrepreneurship, educational opportunities and the distribution of essential goods in response to current pandemic
- Manage the POPUP15 lot for community activation, bicycle education and involvement on the I-15 bridgedeck and for the utilization of city heights residents and local non-profits.
- Host Town Halls to capture community input around infill development, safety and mobility throughout the district. Promote development site and business attraction opportunities through networking and publicity strategies.
- Close coordination with the Copley-Price YMCA to ensure that where our mission statements align we best serve our surrounding communities and neighborhoods.

A New Era of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

San Diego and The Boulevard are leading the way for all of our residents through efforts of diversity, inclusion, and equity. The Blvd. BIA's board and staff is diverse and encourages individualism, culturalism, and opportunity for all.

For a long time our board and membership has been the most socially and culturally diverse in the region. Last year we codified that and set a new standard for our future directors, staff and contractors to uphold. 2022 gives us opportunity and reason to look for ways to create more and level the playing field that will help grow all segments of our Business District and its neighboring communities.

We're proud of what we've done:

- Re-commit to transparency through our compliance with the Form 700

- Provide a signed acknowledgement of Anti-Harassment policy and practice yearly.
- We have updated our Employee and Board of Directors handbooks, removing all gender restrictive language and references and adding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion language as well as our Anti Harassment policy.
- We amended our By-laws to make them gender neutral and reaffirm our commitment to equity.
- Board members and staff attended two trainings that better equipt The El Cajon Boulevard BIA to identify opportunity to include and prop up all members, staff and directors. The training reinforced our strong commitment to serving all and spreading the infectious culture of YES.
- Our commitment to Diversity and Equity was on full display this year for San Diego Design week. Our Designers came from all parts of Africa, The Middle east and Central America including Mexico and the models were all Trans and non binary. That is how the world comes together on The Coolevard in The Mid-City