



# BLVD 2020









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## Introduction

Blvd 2020 is a vision for smart living and working on El Cajon Boulevard (The Boulevard), leading as a model transit-oriented and climate action community. The El Cajon Boulevard Business Improvement Association (ECBBIA) is an association of 1,000 local businesses committed to improving the physical and economic conditions along The Boulevard and its surrounding neighborhoods in Mid-City San Diego.

At the center of many dense urban neighborhoods, The Boulevard is a centrally-located commercial corridor with a diverse mix of small businesses. It is adjacent to the great urban neighborhoods of North Park, University Heights, Normal Heights, Kensington, Talmadge, and City Heights. Twenty percent of San Diego's population lives within a five mile radius.

Improvements in mobility is at the heart of the Blvd's 2020 plan. They will enhance the pedestrian environment, engage the community in enjoying vibrant business hubs, move them Walong The Boulevard at a more human pace along a multimodal streetscape, including a dedicated transit lane for bus, bike, and other low speed vehicles. An increased number of safe pedestrian crossings will also be added.

With mixed-use development projects rising along El CajonThe Boulevard, desirable transit will enable people to commute from downtown to SDSU and jobs centers to the north, with efficiency, safety, cleanliness and ease of use at upgraded stations throughout the district. Mixed-use development will also ensure The Boulevard continues to evolve as a significant urban center with sustained cultural identities and the capacity to support and attract new investment. Innovative development will have a positive impact on housing supply, business growth and employment opportunities. Efforts focused at our hubs will provide opportunity for recruitment, retention and infill that will attract new businesses to serve our urban residents and surrounding neighborhoods.

With our efforts to improve livability is a need for more public space. As former Highway 80, El Cajon Boulevard has a long history related to car culture. Increased investment in the public environment with amenities, such as more trees, green space, plazas, recreation opportunities, art, history and event spaces will transform the corridor away from a fast-paced roadway into a more livable and human scale environment.

With the expansion of mobility options leading to a less car-dependent, more locally-serving businesses; increased housing density; investments in public space; and an aggressive tree planting campaign will all make The Boulevard a model climate action community.

# The Vision

In January 2019, we laid out BLVD 2020. It establishes the groundwork needed to achieve a safe and prosperous Boulevard. The first element embraces Transit Oriented Development (TOD) by promoting higher density on The Boulevard while preserving the current surrounding neighborhoods. This necessitates investment in transit and pedestrian improvements. Highlights of our achievements in this area include the recently-launched pilot of The Boulevard Busway and bike only lane from Park Blvd. to Fairmount Ave. and our advocacy around pedestrian safety enhancements; including painted crosswalks, tactical transportation features, increased lighting and signaled crossings.

More residents on The Boulevard and an active business environment in the evening supports a prosperous business district that contributes to the vitality and growth of the community. Safety is also assured with more eyes on the street. Mixed-use development projects lead to employment that allows residents to work and do business close to where they live.

Events are key to getting people walking along the busy, once car-dominated, thoroughfare. The Boulevard offers an opportunity of being the connector of multiple thriving neighborhoods. At a minimum we want people to experience local business hubs that are directly connected to their neighborhoods. We are working to integrate open spaces, activated lots, urban plazas, landscaped streetscapes, and placemaking efforts that promote interaction among residents and draw people from other areas to explore The Boulevard.

Our work isn't only about commerce. The Boulevard is rich because of the culturally diverse people and families who arrived with few resources and carried out dreams and aspirations of succeeding here in San Diego. We will see a major advancement in access to jobs and education with the opening of the Price Technology Library, which will offer project-based learning and career development that will bridge connections between students and local businesses.

The Boulevard strives to be the model Climate Action Plan corridor. Underlying these initiatives is an understanding that taking every action within our control to address climate change benefits our neighborhoods and the world as a whole.

The Blvd 2020 Plan builds on decades of work by The El Cajon Boulevard Business Improvement Association, its member businesses, residents and countless community and government partners. The plan will be implemented through our hub strategy and is guided by a set of principles rooting The Boulevard as the spine of the community. It connects the surrounding neighborhoods and provides the capacity for connectivity, density and economic vitality. We envision a community that offers a high quality of life that benefits current and future businesses and residents alike; and is guided by the following ideals:



## The Boulevard of Transit Oriented Development

El Cajon Boulevard embraces and encourages its capacity for density and can be developed in a way that preserves the nearby lower density surrounding neighborhoods. Investments in transit and pedestrian improvements enables a less car-dependent lifestyle.

## The Boulevard of Assured Safety

A safe functioning multi-modal transportation network that offers bus rapid transit, biking, micro-mobility, walking and increasing safety for all. Safety is also assured with more eyes on the street, as more residents inhabit The Boulevard and create an active business environment in the evening.

## The Boulevard of Business and Employment

A prosperous business district that contributes to the vitality and growth of the community with employment that allows residents to work and do business close to where they live, in activated areas of opportunity.

## The Boulevard for Gathering

Transforming business hubs with a series of integrated open spaces, including plazas, activated lots, parks, landscaped, shaded streetscapes, and placemaking efforts that promote interaction among residents and draw people from other areas to activate and explore The Boulevard.

## The Boulevard for Education

Establish partnerships with educational institutions to support project based learning and placemaking practices which enhances the business corridor and bridges connections between students and businesses. As well, in a revived era of craft, cultivate and nurture business members who continue to forge new, informal ways of providing education within their place of business.

## The Boulevard of Cultural Diversity

Community that builds upon, maintains, celebrates and enhances unique identities and cultures of El Cajon Boulevard and the surrounding neighborhoods. Sustains and expands business hubs by showcasing diverse cultures and offering accessible resources for growing business.

## A Boulevard of Innovative Connectivity

Civil interaction, volunteerism, and mobilization maintain activism and interaction with our neighborhoods. Technology, connectivity and wireless options are enabling new kinds of 'virtual' community connections.







## Opportunity

Enhancing and maintaining the physical environment and multimodal safety of El Cajon Boulevard by implementing innovative and cohesive streetscape solutions has been a long time priority of the organization. This is accomplished by addressing infrastructure deficiencies, advocating for increased density, overseeing infill development activity and promoting alternative transportation options.

Ensuring safe and friendly streets, increasing pedestrian activity, promoting economic revitalization and fostering community cooperation through creative collaborations enhances the vitality of our businesses, sustains the health of our residential community life, and promotes a model cohesive neighborhood across our network of active business hubs.

Beginning in the 1980s, with the construction of landscaped center medians and The Boulevard sign, the El Cajon Boulevard Business Improvement Association has been working to bring resources to the district. In partnership with other community nonprofits and government groups, millions of dollars of improvements and maintenance have helped improve and brand The Boulevard. These investments, along with better transportation options and zoning allowing for increased density, has made El Cajon Boulevard a prime area for development.

Recently-completed and projects under construction will add over 1,200 new units of housing to the district.





# Community Support

Todd Gloria, California State Assembly

“The Boulevard is a great place to showcase what we can do together”

Nicole Capretz, Climate Action Campaign

“We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform El Cajon Boulevard into a model Zero-carbon, climate-friendly corridor that we can scale throughout our region and make us climate safe and climate ready.”

Chris Nayve, USD Associate Vice President of Community Engagement

“The Boulevard 20/20 plan is critical to the healthy and transit oriented growth of the community and can lead the way as a model for equity and neighborhood focused growth.”

Andrew Malick, Infill Developer

“El Cajon Boulevard has all the characteristics of a model urban corridor. It has high frequency transit, mixed-use zoning, high density residential development, an eclectic demographic mix, and storied landmark institutions that provide a colorful and proud history.”

Sherry Ryan, Professor and Director, SDSU School of Public Affairs

“El Cajon Boulevard is the ideal setting for Transit Oriented Development. We need to propel this corridor into a world-class example of high density, mixed use, transit focused development where community members can access every necessary opportunity without owning a car.”

Chris Clark, ULI Executive Director

“El Cajon Boulevard is a significant bellwether as San Diego wrestles with its future as a major urban city. Getting this important pedestrian, transit, employment and housing corridor right will establish a new development paradigm for not just our city, but our entire region.”





# Hub Strategy

Recognizing economic vitality, development, traffic and complimenting dynamics within a specific area gave birth to our hub strategy. Along our linear business district, clusters of business activities create a natural marketplace of goods and services that attracts a unique customer base. When nurtured with placemaking, organizing, promotion, events and mobility improvements, these areas blossom into vibrant hubs. A Hub comes into full bloom when housing, cafes, restaurants, retail, services, commercial enterprise and nightlife are all present.

Hubs are grassroots organized and propelled. Business owners meet monthly to share information, concerns and successes. This ground up communication and development helps to inform the ECBBIA day to day occurrences within the four block sections of The Boulevard.

Hub Expansion- Three Year Vision: As each hub continues to flourish with strategic marketing plans, further investment in the public realm, and more residents living on The Boulevard; the result is more customers and urban activity. At the three year mark, we will see additional hubs form east of the I-805 at the SR-15, Fairmount Ave. and 54th St. All the hubs will start to include community stakeholders who will add a patron's

perspective and carry the business community's messages and promotions into their community groups. This alliance builds community power to ensure that the neighborhoods retain their flavor and The Boulevard continues to grow in positive ways.

Hub Expansion- Five Year Vision: Hubs like the West End and 30ECB will blend together to create a fluid stretch of activity. A walkable environment will allow people to travel along The Boulevard in a safe and pleasant way. The Central Gateway hub, just east of the 805, will highlight an affordable and workforce housing focus.

Multimodal transportation makes shopping, dining, living and working in the Mid-City ideal. Along with increased non-motorized options, connectivity between University Ave., Adams Ave. and El Cajon Boulevard will move patrons and visitors, via shuttle, between the three business improvement districts that share 30th St.

10 Year Vision: Vibrant hubs centered around the seven BRT stations will offer an exemplary urban environment for living, working and exploring. Housing developments will help address the city's housing crisis. Increased business activity will create additional and diversified employment opportunities in each of the seven hubs. The Eastern section will be more walkable and attractive with aggressive tree plantings and continued upkeep by The Boulevard's landscape maintenance district.





# Committee Programs & Visions:

## Economic Development Committee 2020 Strategy

### Programs:

The ECBBIA Economic Development Committee seeks to foster greater relationships with public and private entities to create projects that enhance the district and creates an improved environment for residents and businesses through continued advocacy, business development, a recruitment and retention program, and incubation strategies at our hubs.

**Economic Development Tours:** While building a case for El Cajon Boulevard as a great model for conscious housing density and public transportation throughout the San Diego region, this committee seeks to cultivate more opportunities for urban infill along the corridor and supports TOD (Transit Oriented Development). Building on the successes of these activities, the committee's strategy moving forward in the coming years includes more focused developers tours in our hubs where opportunities for TOD lie, as well promoting and educating local residents about small scale infill development on the side streets.

**Activated Lots:** Similar to the role the ECBBIA has played in creating POPUP15, Fair@44 and The BLVD Court; it is important that we support the activation of vacant lots as a strategy for informing and catalyzing development projects that stimulate a greater vision and sense of place, along with creating business incubation opportunities.

**Access to Capital:** As a business association, our strategy around business recruitment and retention is aligned towards expanding and sustaining the overall mix of businesses within each hub. We intend to cultivate the culture of each hub through our Access to Capital program by offering funding support to existing businesses that are seeking to grow, while supporting the launch of new businesses that expand the vibrant nature of each hub. The recruitment strategy exemplifies this by hosting regularly occurring events in each hub which introduce start-up food and retail entrepreneurs to the area.

### Three Year Goals

The Economic Development Committee will continue to cultivate development tours to highlight how catalyst projects continue to define and increase opportunities for living and working along The Boulevard. We will ensure a progression of Fair@44, whether it be within the new tech library footprint or a transition of similar collaborative partners to another space. With mounting success and growth of our temporary activated lots, within three years some will come to completion, while the supporting resources and businesses will evolve and ignite newly-activated lots in other hubs. Through our Recruitment and Retention program, we envision 10 to 15 more businesses members will receive a loan or grant to support the expansion of their business; more businesses will find permanent homes through property ownership; and three to five start-up vendors who participated in activated lots and events will open a business on The Boulevard.

The association will advocate for an update to the Mid-City Communities Plan. Updates to outdated zoning will allow for more density along the corridor and increased public improvements. This will promote new catalyst mixed-use projects that will help define hubs around the 15 freeway and Fairmount Ave. and further ensure the success, permanency and expansion of the Blvd Busway.

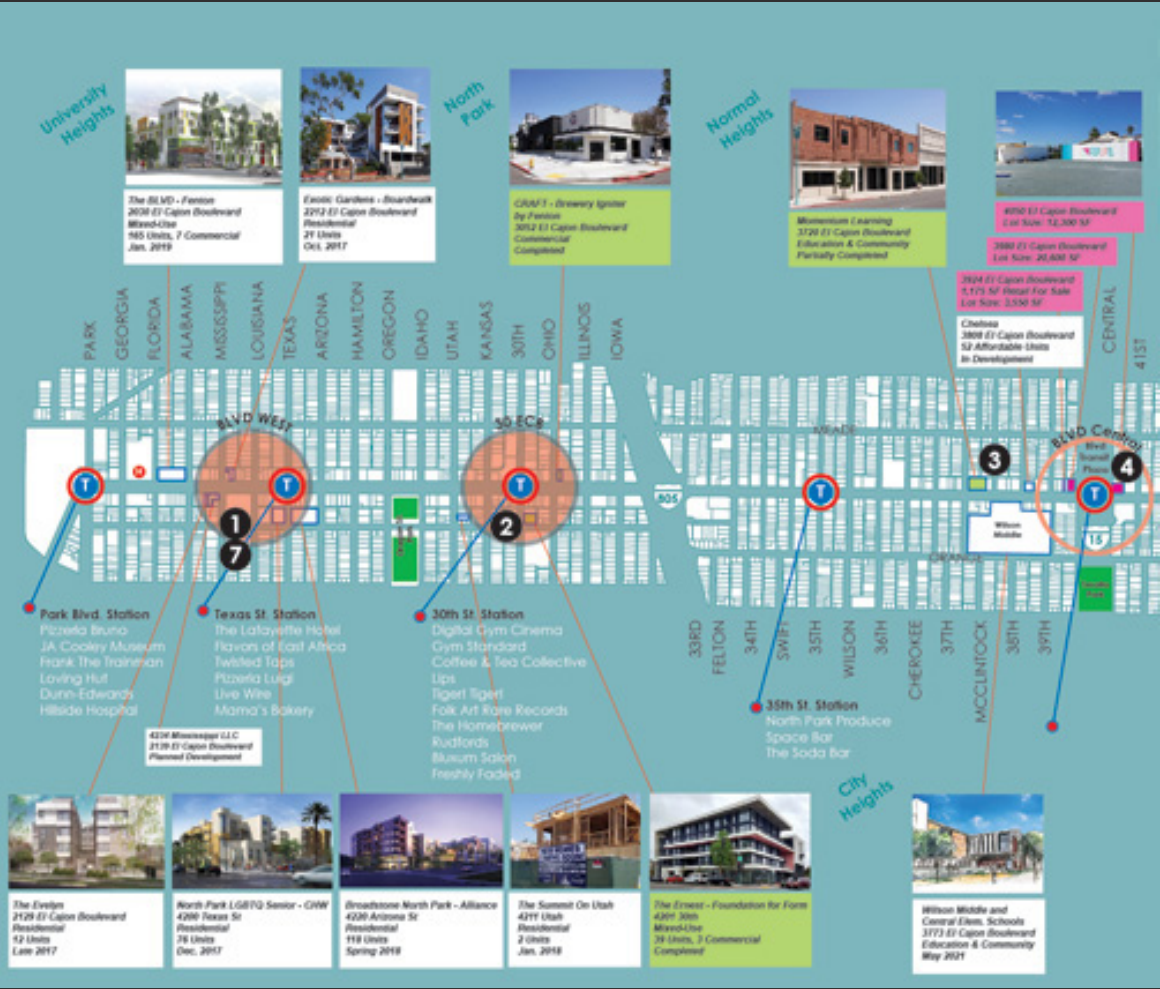
### Five Year Goals

The Economic Development Committee will continue to cultivate dense mixed-use development. Public amenities and gathering spaces offer residents and business patrons an environment where they feel at home. Through the success of activated lots, new mixed-use projects will come online that integrate the culture and activation of gathering spaces and anchor businesses. Expanded park spaces will draw great developments and business hubs will be integrated with public recreation. Through our Recruitment and Retention program, we envision 25 to 30 more businesses members will receive a loan or grant to support the expansion and property ownership, and 5 to 10 start-up vendors will open a business on The Boulevard and expand the culture of each hub.

The Blvd Busway will be fully realized with a permanent dedicated bus and bike lane from Park Blvd to 54th St., with a connection to San Diego State University. Enhanced frequency and increased ridership is supported by increased density.

### 10 Year Goals

The Boulevard will be widely regarded as a leading example of TOD and climate action throughout the region. Each one of the business hubs along the district's four mile stretch will be centered by a bus rapid transit station that incorporates a culturally-distinct mix of businesses, tree-lined walkable hubs, public gathering spaces, educational resources, and a significant number of residents living, working, shopping, dining and commuting throughout The Boulevard. The success of each hub will be transformed block by block through innovative mixed-use projects; small business activity; a host of transportation options; and streetscapes that exemplify safe, activated, vibrant public spaces in and around all seven hubs.





Parking/Design Committee 2020 Strategy

Programs:

**Parking District** - Parking management has been the primary goal of the Mid-City Community Parking District program. This is done by identifying appropriate locations for angled and/or head-in parking conversions and managing time limits and meters. In addition, the district has funded enhanced mobility options, such as bike facilities; pedestrian safety elements; non-vehicular modes of transportation; and placemaking efforts. A wayfinding signage program helps reflect the flavor of the area, tells the history, and directs foot traffic from attractions such as murals, cafe's and entertainment venues. All these efforts lessen the demands on the existing parking supply and promotes better circulation along the corridor.

Along with managing existing supply and demand, it is an initiative of the Boulevard BIA to partner with innovative businesses to help increase parking inventory through valet and the use underutilized lots that also produces revenue for businesses. We are also encouraging developers and businesses to innovate and offer transportation alternatives to meet the need to balance the increased density on our corridor that comes along with our contribution in addressing the regional housing shortage with efforts to preserve surrounding neighborhoods and their need for residential parking supply.

**Design-** Through two Landscape Maintenance Districts (LMDs), El Cajon Boulevard receives services above and beyond what the City normally provides in the areas of street lights, trees, benches, street cleaning, and landscape maintenance. The ECBBIA has planted hundreds of trees along The Boulevard but more are needed. Increasing the amount of canopy trees not only makes the area more walkable, but also sequesters carbon (CO2), reducing the overall concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Consumers also respond positively to business districts that have a healthy urban forest and tend to stay in the area longer.

The association has also installed ornamental acorn lights along The Boulevard and adjacent side streets. This lighting makes our streets safer for all modalities of transportation, but especially for pedestrians. The holidays sing with decorative lighting decor along the landscaped medians and on freeway overpasses during the holidays. This annual commitment started in the 1980's and increased recently with the addition of the I-15 bridge decks.

Transportation

El Cajon Boulevard is currently the second most deadly corridor in the City of San Diego based on pedestrian fatalities. This is due to the high speed of cars, a wide street, and a lack of safe pedestrian crossings. This is why The Boulevard BIA is dedicated to incorporating traffic calming measures to ensure a safe 'Complete Boulevard', where all modes of transportation including bus, bicycle and walking are prioritized alongside car travel.

In 2019, the six lane section of El Cajon Boulevard was reduced to four lanes through a pilot dedicated bus/ bike lane known as the Blvd Busway. Along with reducing travel lanes and enhancing mobility, The Boulevard is seeking to incorporate tactical transit designs as a means of traffic calming and enhanced branding in each of our business hubs. By applying painted artistic bulb-outs and crosswalks and colorful pedestrian infrastructure, traffic calming will be realized and create a well defined sense of place at each hub. Tactical transit is designed to be a quicker, cheaper, lighter strategy for creating multi-modal, safer streetscapes.



Three Year Goals

- Making the Boulevard safer and slower underscores our commitment to a more walkable business district. A decrease in automobile speeds by 10 MPH fortifies our commitment to Vision Zero ideals. We achieve faster and inexpensive change that intuitively slows traffic through tactical transportation implementation, making our pilot Boulevard Busway permanent, and adding more crosswalks within our hubs, making each hub more vibrant, visible, and allows our neighbors north and south to cross from business to business and community to community.
- Branding our current four business hubs with painted artistic crosswalks, murals, benches, lighting and median art installations encourages customers and visitors to feel safe, welcome and interested in exploring. Parklets give our businesses a boost by offering comfortable and protected public places to congregate on the street. Each hub should have a reclaimed piece of roadway for the public to gather. Reclaiming parking for non-vehicular use benefits visitors, residents and makes our streets safer by putting eyes on the street. Loss of parking for parklets should be offset by increasing parking nearby.
- Artistic crosswalks & bulbouts
  - More parking and parking alternatives
  - Area Branding
  - Lighting
  - More Trees
  - Pedestrian Plazas



### Five Year Goals

Seven hubs will have additional safe artistic crosswalks and lighting that makes the street safe and increases business activity. Work with an arts collaborative brings art installations to our Central Gateway that promotes interest in the area as a place to live, work and shop. Building activity in this area is reflected in the art and gives developers a way to spill their developments flavor into our intersections and surrounding pedestrian amenities. With the partnership and vision of the ECBBIA and development partners; greenspace, once void in this area of historical car lots, flourishes and activates the roadway with pedestrian plazas, street cafes, and mini parks. Building entrances, rooftop gardens and living walls will be integrated into the streetscape.

Our Central hub will be noted as a prime location for progressive building design. The I-15 Boulevard Transit Plaza bridge deck, is flanked by developments, and an increase in transportation and pedestrian traffic creates opportunities for more business growth. The completion of the Wilson-Central School and surrounding educational venues brings children, parents, and families to the area making businesses that serve the community valued. Our East end Hub continues to grow with an increased tree canopy. The median at 52nd is landscaped and will provide an opportunity for community identification.

- Lighting
- Increased bicycle facilities
- More public plazas and greenspace
- Permanent Bike/Bus/Scooter lane
- Slower Speeds in Hubs
- Median Improvements
- Pedestrian amenities and plazas
- Greenspace and mini parks
- Public and development art

### 10 Year Goals

The Boulevard 2030 is where San Diegans will choose to live, work and play. The culture of our diverse communities are reflected in art and design. Forward thinking developers share ownership of the intersections where their projects are built. Opportunities for owner-occupied businesses are built into developments. The flavor of our culturally diverse populations are embraced in street amenities and pedestrian plazas. The eastern hub incorporates and uses the ideas and brain power of our student and educators at SDSU and delivers housing and services that makes student life more affordable, culturally diverse, and full.







Mid-City Parks Collaborative 2020 Strategy

The Boulevard includes landscaping and trees within our medians that continue down two thirds of the district. Implemented 25 years ago by the ECBBIA and maintained by the LMDs, the jacarandas now tower and offer a great opportunity for carbon capture. Although many trees have been planted along the sidewalks, they still offer inconsistent shade. In October 2019, the ECBBIA started to discuss greening opportunities that could enhance our rapid busway and promote walkability. The Mid-City Parks Collaborative emerged to not only green area, but to also do next level activation in existing green space. A joint-use agreement between the City's Park and Recreation Department and the school district is being realized at the newly-rebuilt Wilson middle School and includes the mid-block greenway connector between The Boulevard and Orange Ave. The Mid-City parks collaborative looks to activate this greenway with events, such as a farmers/foodie markets, makers/craft fairs, and fitness events. The Mid-City Parks Collaborative looks to continue conversations with developers who are increasingly finding The Boulevard a place to do their next cool project. We believe these projects should benefit Mid-City with dynamic landscaping and vegetation features such as living walls, rooftop garden projects and mini parks.

The Mid-City Parks Collaborative looks to work with and enhance already functioning parks and gathering space in adjoining neighborhoods. These parks have invested and passionate stakeholders who we look to partner with and seek knowledge from about next level activation. Increasing park usage by neighborhood sports teams, fitness instructors, family gatherings, music, movies will drive resident pride and ownership. More use translates into a decrease in squatting, illicit and unsafe activity.

- Grants and Funding
- Climate Action
- Street Side Parks
- Parks partnership

Promotions Committee 2020 Strategy

The Blvd Promotions Committee seeks to promote small business, host themed specific events, initiate more public art and placemaking, highlight cultural diversity, and work in parallel with other committee goals to showcase and communicate positive activity on The Boulevard.

Outreach Materials

Alongside events, the Promotions Committee will continue to produce an annual Blvd Guide to showcase the vibrant mix of business; print banners that welcome patrons to the area; send monthly e-newsletters to highlight our member businesses and keep people informed of ongoing activities; and remain active on social media to communicate a positive voice of The Boulevard.

Hub Events

With increased partnership and interest from member businesses, cultivating a marketing strategy in each business hub has developed as an events strategy. It builds on the success of past hub events and has produced a regular schedule of notable annual and quarterly events that define the activity and culture of each hub.

Placemaking

Placemaking is a 'light, quick, and cheap' strategy for galvanizing the community to enhance public spaces. Projects like Take Back the Alley, The Blvd Market, Fair@44 and POPUP15 have put the ECBBIA on the map as a leader in the field of placemaking. As these projects draw more interest and customers to the district, each hub will continue to expand placemaking efforts by identifying opportune locations in which to create public space for enhanced events and business activity.

3 Year Goals

By remaining on track with the hub strategy around events, branding and placemaking, the Promotions Committee's three year goal is to see that our core hubs include distinct public art and placemaking projects that attract the participation of local partners and anchor businesses. Quarterly events will expand, new markets will launch and additional placemaking projects will take place in each hub.

5 Year Goals

Our three core activated business hubs will expand to five vibrant hubs, to include Fairmount Ave and Blvd East.

10 Year Goals

The completion of seven distinctly branded hubs that are activated with regularly-occurring events, sustained by local partners and anchor businesses. Attractive gathering spaces with enhanced pedestrian activity and a highly-regarded Blvd Mardi Gras Parade will close down The Boulevard from Park Blvd to 805. An annual Dia de Los Muertos Procession that will incorporate the business community that caters to City Heights, Kensington, and Talmadge residents. Culturally intact public spaces, activated lots, and artistic alleys with regularly occurring events and daily food vendors will succeed within each hub and transform the way local residents live, work and play on The Boulevard.