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**Electric Bicycle Demo Program “EZ Bike Project” Gets Underway**

*Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) launches new program for local residents and commuters to try out various models of electric bikes for free as a measure to reduce traffic and air pollution in Santa Barbara County.*

Santa Barbara, Calif. – EZ Bike Project, a new electric bicycle (e-bike) demo program operated by SBCAG Traffic Solutions division, gets underway offering a wide range of free e-bike demos of various models including cargo bikes, cruisers, city bikes, and folding bikes to local residents and commuters as a measure to reduce traffic and air pollution in Santa Barbara County. The EZ Bike Project is located at the Bike Spot, a City of Santa Barbara self-serve valet bike parking facility at 1219 Anacapa Street in Downtown Santa Barbara. Those interested to reserve an e-bike must either live or work in Santa Barbara County and can visit [www.EZBike.org](http://www.EZBike.org) to sign-up for a demo. In the coming months, SBCAG plans to offer shorter demo rides on weekdays and during single-day pop-up opportunities countywide.

E-bikes have become more accessible to the average consumer. Most of the leading bike manufacturers offer a few different models making it challenging to compare one model from another when they are only available for purchase online.

Kent Epperson, Director of SBCAG Traffic Solutions explains, “greater competition and economies of scale have brought down the price and increased the accessibility, quality and selection of e-bikes. The EZ Bike Project has a fleet of 10 e-bikes from local and online retailers that range in price from less than \$1,000 to \$3,500. The selection offers participants the opportunity to compare features, pricing, and ride quality between the different demo bikes. Either way, the investment one makes in an e-bike will save money compared to driving a car.”

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While bicycle shops offer e-bike test rides of the models they carry, they are generally limited to a short test ride around the bike shop. The EZ Bike Project offers the opportunity to test riding an e-bike in a variety of conditions and routes over the weekend and at an individual's own pace without the pressure to purchase a bicycle.

There are several benefits associated with e-bikes in transportation for the environment and personal health. Nancy Eckert, SBCAG's EZ Bike Project coordinator, notes that in addition to those benefits how much joy an e-bike can bring to people who have never ridden an e-bike before, "e-bikes are smile factories. I know that when people return the bikes on Monday, they'll come back with fun stories of the magic moments and childlike wonder that they experienced while test riding an e-bike."

E-bikes are recognized as more accessible to those who have physical limitations which might prevent them from riding a standard bike. Kendra Wise, Santa Barbara County supervising environmental health specialist, a recent e-bike convert after participating in a demo stated, "until I test rode an e-bike I had no idea that it was such a game changer. After the demo day I ended up buying an electric bike and use it to commute whenever I can. If a not-so-in-shape mom with a minivan can ride an e-bike, anyone can."

Those interested to reserve an e-bike can visit [www.EZBike.org](http://www.EZBike.org) to sign-up for a demo. Reservation options are available for Thursday to Monday e-bike trials and must be made by 5pm the Wednesday prior to the reservation. There is no charge for the demo, however a returnable credit card damage deposit is required to test ride a e-bike.

The EZ Bike Project is proud to partner with Trek Bicycles, Bicycle Bob's, and Santa Barbara Electric Bikezzz. These sponsors made it possible to offer a wider range of demo options for people to test ride. Courtesy of the EZ Bike sponsors, participants of the EZ Bike Project can receive a discount for an e-bike or bike accessories. Bicycle Bob's is offering a 10% discount (up to \$250) on a Trek e-bike and Santa Barbara Electric Bikezzz is offering a free high security ABUS lock with the purchase of an e-bike.

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Traffic Solutions is a division of the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) and serves as the countywide rideshare organization with a mission to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality by encouraging people to drive less and use sustainable transportation.

**ATTACHMENTS (links provided to download available photos):**

1. [The EZBike Project Logo](#)
2. [Michael Velasquez, Santa Barbara Bici Centro Manager, Santa Barbara Bicycle Coalition \(SBBIKE\)](#)
3. *(Left to Right)* [Chris Sobell consults with Nancy Eckert, SBCAG's EZ Bike Project coordinator in front of the Bike Spot, a bike parking facility supporting the EZ Bike Project at 1219 Anacapa Street in Downtown Santa Barbara.](#)
4. [Tess Stoute, commuter](#)
5. *(Left to Right)* [Nancy, Chris Sobell, Diana Musacchio, Mark Sapp, Tess Stoute, and Michael Velasquez showcasing the variety of electric bicycle models available for reservation.](#)