



The new Bikestation facility is opened Friday by Councilwoman Bonnie Lowenthal, Michael Replogle of Environmental Defense, state Sen. Alan Lowenthal, Councilman Dan Baker and Bikestation founder John Case, from left.

Diandra Jay / Press-Telegram

A shiny new place for bikes

LB: Officials praise role of Bikestation in urban landscape.

By Samantha Gonzaga
Staff writer

LONG BEACH — A state-of-the-art bicycle facility at the Promenade downtown will provide a haven for cyclists and cement a link in Southern California's urban transportation system, said Bikestation organizers.

"This is a major step forward in urban living," said Sen. Alan Lowenthal, D-Long Beach.

Lowenthal was among city and state officials and bicyclists present at the grand opening of the new Bikestation Long Beach facility, the only facility of its kind in Southern California. It has served as a model for four others in Berkeley, San Francisco's Embarcadero, Palo Alto and Seattle, said executive director Andrea White. Additional stations are planned for Pasadena, Santa Barbara and Washington, D.C.



Michael Replogle of Environmental Defense speaks about the benefits of forgoing cars for two-wheeled transportation at the Bikestation grand opening in downtown Long Beach.

Diandra Jay / Press-Telegram

Two 600-square-foot tempered glass pavilions provide free supervised parking for cyclists and public transit riders. A \$96 annual membership allows 24-hour access to lockers and storage. Other amenities include bike repairs, rentals, a snack bar and a specialty shop. Bikestation Long Beach is at 221 E. First St.,

next to the Long Beach Transit Info Center and bus stop.

Also present was Michael Replogle, a transportation expert who has studied the viability of bike-and-ride and public transit in Europe and Asia. His findings have shown that as a "feeder" mode of transportation, bicycles have helped countries like Japan

and the Netherlands maintain high rates of shared trips, as well as compete with automobiles.

Long Beach's new station is emblematic of change, he said.

"We're making it happen despite the political environment and the ebb and flow of gas prices," he said.

Bicyclist Humberto Cortes said he applauds the vision of the Bikestation Long Beach, but also stressed the value of "vehicular cycling" — taking ownership of the road like an automobile driver.

"It's easy to talk about how wonderful something is but it's important to take part in it," said Assemblywoman Betty Karnette, who also called for more bicycle lanes in highly urbanized areas.

Councilman Dan Baker said a Seventh Street project plans to include a bicycle lane that would create a path along the Los Angeles River.

For information about Bikestation Long Beach, call (562) 436-2453 or go to www.bikestation.org/longbeach.