

CASE STUDY

HUNTINGTON BEACH TICKET DIVERSION PROGRAM

Project Summary

Huntington Beach's Ticket Diversion program is an option for bicyclists and pedestrians who have received a traffic violation to take a safety class in lieu of paying a hefty fine. Traffic law offenders are typically penalized with a fine up to \$254 in Huntington Beach. Through the ticket diversion program, individuals pay a \$50 fee to attend a traffic laws and safety class in lieu of going to court and facing the fine.

The two-hour class is offered once a month and covers pedestrian, bike, electric bike, skateboard and other active modes laws and safety. Those who choose not to attend the class are offered another opportunity to do so in court. The approach effectively encourages active transportation and safety in a unique way:

- Fines can discourage active transportation for young people and lower income individuals who are more likely to use active transportation
- This increases the number of people voluntarily participating in education programs. Education on traffic and safety laws help to decrease violations and collisions in the future

- It encourages traffic law enforcement and discourages violations. Before the program, enforcement of bike and pedestrian violations occurred less frequently due to the severe penalty. Ticket diversion offers a fair enforcement option, which led to more violators receiving citations and subsequently a decrease in violations

Fewer violations result in fewer collisions. In addition, bicyclists and pedestrians save up to \$200 when choosing the traffic school option.

Planning and Implementation

The Ticket Diversion Program was launched in 2011, and relaunched in 2016. Huntington Beach's original program started in 1972 as the Juvenile Bike Class. For many years this model was only applied to minors who received bike and pedestrian violations. In 2011, the city attempted to expand the program to include adults, but after the first year it was determined that the program was in violation with the state vehicle code and was discontinued.

Local bicycle advocates gathered evidence, including expert opinions from members of the police

department who had been involved in the program, and supported a change to the state legislation. [Assembly Bill 902 \(Bloom, 2015\)](http://bit.ly/2ap5jbk) (<http://bit.ly/2ap5jbk>) sponsored by California Bicycle Coalition repealed the barriers to the implementation of ticket diversion programs, effective January 2016. The opportunity to start a program like this in other cities is relatively new but has proven to be an effective way to encourage active transportation and safety.



A ticket diversion program can encourage enforcement of traffic laws by providing the option for a more lenient, constructive citation.
(Source: sellin.com)

Interested in starting a Ticket Diversion Program? Here are the key features of Huntington Beach's program:

- Replaces a traffic violation ticket with a \$50 class fee. Tickets for red light violations can be as high as \$495
- Police and court participation are key to the success of the program. The Police Department issues the citations, which must meet standards for a citation to be submitted to court if the violation recipient does not attend the class. The court refers the recipient to the program in-lieu of the full fine
- Funding is required for staffing, administering citations, and developing class materials and presentations
- The presentation includes videos, local and state laws
- Classes are held in city Council Chambers at no cost to the Police Department
- Staffing for the class includes one person for check-in and fee collection, and two officers to teach the class. The youth diversion class has only one officer teaching the class

- The youth class runs for 1.5 hours and the adult class for 2 hours. For staffing purposes, 4 hours is allowed for the adult class and 3 hours for the youth class
- The \$50 fee from the adult participants and \$15 from youth offsets the cost of the class. Additionally, anyone who would like to attend the class and has not received a traffic citation is welcomed to attend free of charge



Huntington Beach's beachfront path encourages the use of active modes.
(Source: squarespace.com)

WHY IT WORKED

ENFORCEMENT AND EDUCATION

Huntington Beach's Ticket Diversion Program offers a win-win for law enforcement through reduced citation fines when traffic law violators attend a class on traffic safety for active modes. Collisions involving pedestrians and bicyclists decreased by combining enforcement with education through a reduced fine incentive.

QUICK FACTS

What: Law enforcement program

Geography: Huntington Beach, CA

Goal: Bicycle and pedestrian education to reduce the number of collisions that come from law violations.

Leaders: Huntington Beach Police Department