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<https://www.bizjournals.com/sanfrancisco/news/2022/10/28/cbd-bid-sf.html>

# What are community benefit districts? And just how much trash and needles do they pick up?

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In honor of our first List of Bay Area community benefit districts — scroll down to for the List — we put together a primer on these hardworking orgs making their neighborhoods a better place.

First and foremost...

## What is a CBD?

Community benefit districts, also frequently known as business improvement districts, or BIDs, are public-private partnerships between a city and its communities. The districts are formed when local business/property owners vote to create them, often after identifying a need for quality-of-life improvement services beyond what is offered by the city.



ALEX BARREIRA

The city's biggest community benefit district is the Union Square Alliance, which covers the city's main shopping district.

## **How are CBDs formed?**

The process for creating a CBD can vary by jurisdiction, but in the U.S. there are typically three steps (simplified for brevity):

Local business and property owners provide their local government with a signed petition to create the CBD.

The local government surveys the eligible businesses and properties in the proposed area to determine if a majority are in favor of creating the CBD.

If a weighted majority — either by square feet and/or street frontage — vote in favor, the local government will approve the CBD and carry out the necessary legislative process for its establishment. Even property owners that don't vote for the creation must participate.

## **How are CBDs funded?**

CBDs are funded primarily through special assessment fees that businesses/properties within the district's defined boundaries have agreed to pay. The fees are then used to fund various improvement projects that typically include garbage collecting, graffiti removal, street cleaning, and other maintenance services.

In California, there are three primary types of CBDs: property-based, which assess properties; business-based, which assess businesses; and tourism-based, which assess hospitality and tourism.

In 2015 San Francisco gained its first "Green Benefit District (GBD)" with the creation of the Dogpatch & Northwest Potrero Hill Green Benefit District, which is the first CBD to channel its funding into parks and greening public realms in a residential neighborhood as opposed to a commercial district. The GBD is funded through property owner assessments.

## **Who governs the CBD?**

CBDs are self-governed by a volunteer board typically comprised of business and property owners and managed by a paid executive director.

## **Where are CBDs and BIDs today**

Currently, CBDs and BIDs exist in nearly all 50 states, totaling over 1,000 countrywide. Most major U.S. cities have multiple — New York City alone has 76 active CBDs, the most of any city in the states.

## **What are the San Francisco CBDs/BIDs**

As of 2022, there are 18 districts in San Francisco, serving anywhere between seven and 107 blocks and up to 4,900 parcels. The area in blue in the map below show where the organizations are.

## **When were San Francisco's CBDs founded?**

### **1999**

Union Square Alliance

### **2005**

Castro CBD

Fisherman's Wharf CBD

Noe Valley Association

Tenderloin CBD

### **2006**

Mid Market CBD

### **2008**

San Francisco TID

Yerba Buena CBD

### **2011**

Civic Center CBD

### **2010**

Ocean Avenue CBD

## **2013**

Moscone Expansion District

## **2015**

Dogpatch & Northwest Potrero Hill GBD

The East Cut CBD

Lower Polk CBD

## **2017**

Japantown CBD

## **2018**

Discover Polk CBD

## **2020**

Downtown SF Partnership

SOMA West CBD

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## **CBDs By the Numbers**

Here's a snapshot at some of the impact made by CBDs in the city.

### **Pounds of trash collected**

Yerba Buena CBD: 471,250

Union Square BID: 385,850

East Cut CBD: 145,460

Castro CBD: 91,435

Downtown SF CBD: 74,635

### **Number of graffiti/stickers removed**

Union Square BID: 22,709

Mid Market CBD: 11,605

Castro CBD: 10,224

Downtown SF CBD: 6,837

Yerba Buena CBD: 5,389

## **Number of needles removed**

Castro CBD: 4,652

East Cut CBD: 1,101

Downtown SF CBD: 747

Japantown: 213

Discover Polk: 144

## **Number of requests for service**

Union Square CBD: 5,972

East Cut CBD: 730

Downtown SF CBD: 875

Yerba Buena CBD: 2,052

Japantown CBD: 293

## **Number of blocks cleaned**

Fisherman's Wharf: 16,132

Union Square: 3,086

Castro: 742

Discover Polk: 497

Downtown SF: 348

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