

Long Beach Business Journal

December 19, 2017-January 15, 2018

Long Beach's Newsmagazine

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FOCUS ON DOWNTOWN LONG BEACH



A night-time photograph of the Rainbow Bridge in Long Beach, California. The bridge features a large, illuminated archway with a colorful, rainbow-like light display. The archway is supported by a network of cables and is surrounded by a dense array of small, colorful lights. The bridge is set against a dark sky, and the city lights of Long Beach are visible in the background.

Wow...




The Iconic Rainbow Bridge

“A dazzling architectural masterpiece that provides a contemporary retreat under its illuminated canopy”

Michelle Ocampo, CMP | Conference Planner, IEEE Computer Society

City Lights. Ocean Views. The latest buzz in Long Beach is the new public art walkway – **Rainbow Bridge**, an iconic design enhancing your city stroll with an easy, breezy walk to everything Downtown.

“The Rainbow Bridge greatly improved our ability to connect our conference goers between the convention center and the hotels in downtown Long Beach,” raves Stacey Gordon, PIHRA Programs Manager. With cool visual surroundings for selfies and reflection as well as a place to gather for networking and connecting with our community — adding to our highly walkable downtown of award-winning restaurants, metropolitan hotels, electrifying nightspots, and fun-filled entertainment. Convention planners love it. A new landmark transforms our skyline, stimulating the senses and our economy.

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Photograph by the Business Journal's Brandon Richardson

Mayor Robert Garcia: Downtown Evolution Is Accelerating

As a homeowner in Downtown Long Beach for more than a decade, I have never been more excited about the progress we are seeing in our neighborhood. Downtown is well on its way to becoming one of the most thriving and walkable places to live, work and play in America. Smart development, increasing economic activity and transportation improvements are transforming our downtown into one of the most desirable neighborhoods in the region.

More than \$3 billion of private investment is bringing new homes and business opportunities for local residents and business owners. There are currently five cranes in the downtown's skyline, seven if you also count the two working on the new bridge in the Port of Long Beach. But this is only a start; more are on their way in 2018 as the pace of development continues to accelerate. Our new Civic Center project is leading the way – two new towers that will be our new City Hall and Port Headquarters will top out soon and the outline of the new Main Library is visible as steel and wooden beams are already in place. All three buildings are on schedule to be completed and occupied in 2019.

The three new residential projects adjacent to the Civic Center are also moving forward at a brisk pace – the first should be completed next year. There are over a dozen projects under construction with more to break ground next year. I set a goal of creating at least 4,000 new residential units in the Downtown when I took office and the projects under development today are putting us on track to meet this goal and to bring new opportunities and amenities to our residential market. We need more residents living, shopping and spending money downtown to support our local economy and ensure downtown's continued success. We are committed to building a housing market that supports everyone, including our seniors and working families. I am proud that more than 600 units of affordable housing are in progress nearby.

Retail development also continues to improve. Pine Avenue is emerging as a culinary destination as several new eateries joined the Pie Bar last year. Romeo Chocolates, Plant Junkie, Crepe Crafters and Pumped Nutrition each bring something unique to the street and join the long-time anchor institutions like the Kress Market, Hamburger Mary's, the Omelet Inn and Made by Millworks, making Pine Ave a key retail and food destination. These new options, when added to those found in the East Village and the renovated Pike on South Pine, create a downtown that has something to satisfy the needs of every resident and visitor alike.

Key office buildings are also being renovated to strengthen commercial options downtown. Renovations were completed at the Hubb – at the corner of Pine and Broadway – and significant renovations are underway at the World Trade Center and Catalina Landing properties. These changes are attracting new companies like recent arrival WeWork and convincing others to increase their investment in our city. Zwift, one of the top funded tech startups in the region, is growing rapidly and is looking to expand its presence here because they believe in our community and where it is going. Other spaces will join the Retail Design Collaborative and Studio One Eleven in 2018 to increase the options for state of the art new creative office space in downtown.

Downtown transportation options continue to improve. Earlier this year, I was elected to serve on the Metro Board and made improving ridability and safety on the Blue Line a top priority. One of the first motions I supported allowed Long Beach Police to patrol the Blue Line in Long Beach. I also fought for additional security services at downtown stations to increase fare enforcement. More than a billion dollars are being invested to replace Blue Line trains, synchronize traffic signals to reduce travel times and make other improvements. Long Beach is still the only city in Southern California to be in the Top-10 nationally for walkability and bikeability. Downtown was the highest scoring neighborhood in both rankings. Our Bike Share program continues to expand and has more than 20,000 users. Finally, Measure A will make significant investments in infrastructure, including street improvements, lighting and additional bike lanes to improve traffic flow and make life easier for pedestrians.

None of this would have been possible without the great community partners we have. I want to thank the Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau for helping us have our best year ever in tourism and the Downtown Long Beach Alliance for the outstanding work they do to clean and program our downtown. They are indispensable partners. Finally, thanks again to the Long Beach Business Journal for their long-standing support of our downtown and the opportunity to share my thoughts with you.



Photograph by the Business Journal's Brandon Richardson

Welcome To Downtown

By **KRAIG KOJIAN**, President & CEO
Downtown Long Beach Alliance

By **RYAN ALTOON**, Board Chair
Downtown Long Beach Alliance

Downtown Long Beach continues on its progressive trajectory to take itself to the next level, yet still holding onto its unique and fun personality that makes our 1.38 Un-Square Miles a destination for business and residents to call home and for visitors to enjoy.

In alignment with this continued growth and open doors of opportunity, the Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) understands and embraces the need to preserve what makes Downtown special. The businesses, residents, property owners and visitors are all integral in creating the eclectic character of DTLB that we know and love.

This past year, 174 new businesses made the decision to call Downtown home, and the business environment remains healthy and evolving. Additionally, 31 mixed-use residential projects, planned or under construction, are in development. Pedestrian traffic numbers are strong with over 1.6 million people tracked in Q3 of 2017 alone. While foot traffic serves as one great indicator of potential economic benefit for our local businesses, the

DLBA strives to implement programs and activate public space to build the appeal of a downtown destination.

At the heart of DLBA is a community-driven, non-profit organization staffed with a dedicated team determined to grow and evolve to suit the needs of DTLB. The Downtown community and DLBA continue to face challenges that push us forward to keep serving and exploring for actionable solutions. As a full-service place management and leadership organization, the DLBA is well-positioned to focus on a variety of core functions including but not limited to advocacy, marketing and special events; business recruitment, retention and job creation; activating the public realm to emphasizing cleanliness and safety that ensures a quality of life for thousands.

Building and fostering a great Downtown is a community effort, and we applaud all our stakeholders and collaborative partners who appreciate the importance of working together and strive to create this one-of-a-kind, thriving Downtown.

Table Of Contents

3

■ Mayor Robert Garcia: Downtown Revolution Is Accelerating

4

■ Welcome To Downtown By Downtown Long Beach Alliance

6-7

■ Perspectives On Downtown Long Beach . . .
John Di Carlo, Windes
Steve Goodling, Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau
Kenneth McDonald, Long Beach Transit
Mario Cordero, Port of Long Beach
Carolyn Caldwell, Dignity Health-St. Mary Medical Center
Henry Walker, Farmers & Merchants Bank

8-10

■ Map And Listing Of Downtown Residential/Mixed-Use Projects
■ New Civic Center Taking Shape

12

■ Data, Education And Assistance
Are Key When Locating A Business Downtown
■ More Assistance Resources Than Ever For Long Beach Entrepreneurs
■ DLBA Program Helps Local
Woman Entrepreneur Launch New Venture
■ Diversity, Community Support And
Tourism Are Drawing Businesses To Downtown

20

■ Array Of Industry Sectors Thrive In Downtown
■ Upgrades To Long Beach Transit Systems
Aim To Improve Rider Experience
■ Downtown Creative Sector Fosters Local Talent

28-29

■ The People And Projects Creating A Fun And Connected Downtown

30

■ A Diverse And Vibrant Downtown Attracts Different Demographics

32

■ Downtown Long Beach Serves Up Local Crafts And Delicacies

34

■ Community Members Pitch In To Create
A Hub Of Culture And Connectedness

36-37

■ Options Galore For Shopping And Dining In Downtown Long Beach

38-40

■ No Shortage Of Arts And Entertainment In Downtown Long Beach
■ Annual Events Spotlight Downtown Long Beach

42

■ The Scene Is Noticing Long Beach's Embrace Of Music

44-45

■ Viewfinder Winners Of Inaugural Downtown Long Beach Alliance
and Arts Council For Long Beach Photography Contest
■ Thank You Advertisers

46-47

■ Small Business Showcase: Garnica Interiors; DG Boxing;
ReCircle Home; Buono's Authentic Pizzeria; Kress Market;
Bark! Bark! Daycare & Grooming; La Traviata Bar And Lounge

*Downtown is growing.
You can be too.*



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Perspectives On Downtown Long Beach



By **John Di Carlo**
Managing Partner
Windes

Windes employees have been watching Downtown Long Beach grow since we opened our doors in 1926. New construction, most notably the new Civic Center Plaza, is a significant addition to the continuing revitalization of downtown. The vast array of significant construction projects of commercial, residential, and mixed-use properties add to the vibrancy of the area and make downtown Long Beach an attractive and magnetic workplace for our employees, both current and future.

A great city is distinguished by its live performance and arts scene, and Long Beach, by that definition, is a great city with its multitude of festivals and cultural events. The Aquarium of the Pacific, the annual Long Beach Grand Prix, and the hundreds of events held at the convention center and Rainbow Harbor each year bring tourists and locals here to contribute to the economy and vitality of our city.

Proposed renovations to the Queen Mary complex, including the summer home of the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra, are promising improvements that will add to the vibrancy of downtown from across the bay and throughout the region.

Our office is centrally located in downtown (Ocean Blvd. and Pine Ave.), which offers a great working environment for our employees. We have a big-city experience with a small-city feel and the vista is stunning, especially the sunsets during winter. The boom in downtown housing allows our workforce to consider the opportunity to live and work in close proximity. A variety of high-end restaurants and casual eateries make downtown an excellent place for business lunches and after-hours gatherings for families and singles alike.

We are proud of our 91-year residency in downtown Long Beach as we continue to experience, and be a part of, its growth and development.



By **Steve Goodling**
President & CEO
Long Beach Convention
& Visitors Bureau

There are so many positive forces at work in Downtown Long Beach that are helping to push it to a new level. With new residential units opening in the next 24 months, there will be even more people living in and enjoying the downtown. Residents are walking their dogs, meeting friends, and dining in our restaurants alongside visitors and convention attendees, thus creating an eclectic and dynamic environment. We can expect that trend to continue to grow next year and beyond.

In addition to more residents downtown, the \$60 million investment in repositioning the Convention Center creates an energized urban vibe that appeals to convention and conference attendees. Clients are responding positively to the new “networking” environment that has been created inside the convention center, as well as its new turnkey special events venues. Furthermore, new local businesses have been discovered through social media and enlisted to provide their products at many of the conventions this year. We see this trend continuing as more of our clients make personal connections with our community, finding locally owned and operated businesses to support their conventions.

Upcoming renovations in downtown hotels, and the addition of several new hotels including a new boutique hotel, are creating excitement within the meetings industry. Several planners have asked for increased hotel inventory and have been thrilled to learn of these new developments.

Overall, the synergy between visitors, conventioners, and residents continues to grow stronger as they all visit local businesses in downtown and the adjoining areas of Long Beach. A vibrant urban core, coupled with a convention center that is designed to facilitate and enhance networking, are amongst the key points that planners are seeking for tomorrow’s conferences.



By **Kenneth McDonald**
President & CEO
Long Beach Transit

The cityscape of Long Beach is undergoing a once-in-a-century transformation that envisions livable neighborhoods, creative workspaces and vibrant entertainment centers.

Long Beach Transit (LBT) visualizes this transformation occurring where residents use clean efficient and frequent public transportation. With hundreds of residential units either approved or in the planning stages, and a downtown annex for CSULB in the works, thousands of new residents will be putting down roots where asphalt parking lots and old commercial structures used to take up space.

Many people already reject the convention that defines freedom as car ownership. The new urbanites embrace freedom as the absence of a car and see car ownership as an unnecessary expense.

Reimagining a new downtown lifestyle is easier to do if a whisper quiet, zero-emissions LBT battery-electric bus can be accessed with a block or two of your starting locations and ending destinations.

LBT continues to be an engine that propels a higher quality of life for residents and visitors of Long Beach. With low and zero emission clean air vehicles, LBT is focused on being a good corporate citizen by reducing its carbon footprint.

LBT’s mission is “dedicated to connecting communities and moving people...making everyday life better.” Working together with our downtown partners and the communities we serve, our transit system has become a model and leader that drives better economic and community opportunities.



Business Journal photograph by Evan Patrick Kelly, December 6, 2017



By **Mario Cordero**
Executive Director
Port Of Long Beach

Looking at the bustling construction site for the new Civic Center, with the concrete frames for two buildings already rising several stories into the sky, it's not hard to imagine the completed Harbor Department headquarters, side by side with the new City Hall, open for business.

The Port of Long Beach awaits the day when we have moved into our new home in Downtown Long Beach. That day is coming in 2019, right on schedule, and our move will fulfill a commitment by the Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners.

In early 2014, the Harbor Department pulled up stakes from the venerable antique-yellow building on Harbor Plaza in the Port, and opened our Interim Administrative Offices building within view of our friends at Long Beach Airport.

When we relocated, the Port continued to thrive. We guided our developments, engaged with the community, and worked to serve our customers. Port industry-related conventions, conferences and other events continued to stream to the Long Beach Convention Center, helping to bring business to Downtown hotels and restaurants. We still had many personnel stationed in or near the Port.

Although we are well-equipped to oversee the Port from a few miles away, we are looking forward to moving Downtown.

And why not? As the nerve center of a vibrant, dynamic city, Downtown Long Beach is an ideal place for our organization. We will be close to the Harbor, close to the Downtown business community, and close to our partners in City Hall. We will have an excellent view of the new span that is replacing the Gerald Desmond Bridge.

The future of Downtown Long Beach is also the future of the Port.



By **Carolyn Caldwell**
President & CEO
Dignity Health –
St. Mary Medical Center

Downtown Long Beach is thriving with new partners facilitating various redevelopment projects, not just in the areas of residential and commercial business, but also in necessary housing for veterans and the homeless population. Just as the City of Long Beach and Mayor Robert Garcia have pledged the importance of assisting those in our community whom are poor and disenfranchised, so is the mission of Dignity Health. St. Mary has been serving the health care needs of the homeless for many years and looks forward to increasing its specialized services through a partnership with Mental Health America (MHA) Los Angeles, which will identify the most vulnerable emergency department (ED) patients and provide them with comprehensive case management services and housing resources.

You can't visit Downtown Long Beach without recognizing the prominence of the Port of Long Beach and acknowledging their contributions to aid in the needs of our community. The Port has been a long-time supporter in combating the health needs of Downtown residents as it relates to respiratory and cardiopulmonary disease. Thanks to the Port, St. Mary Medical Center has just launched the Respiratory Rescue Program, a three-year, multidisciplinary approach to help reduce the risks associated with asthma, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and Congestive Heart Failure, all conditions common among older adults.

Dignity Health – St. Mary Medical Center has been a vital resource for Downtown Long Beach and the surrounding area for 95 years and will continue to do so well into the future with greater community engagement, physician alignment, and excellent care for all. As a faithful believer that strong partnerships make for a stronger community, I am proud of the great relationships built over time, the support of the City of Long Beach, and the fact that Downtown Long Beach thrives in its diversity.



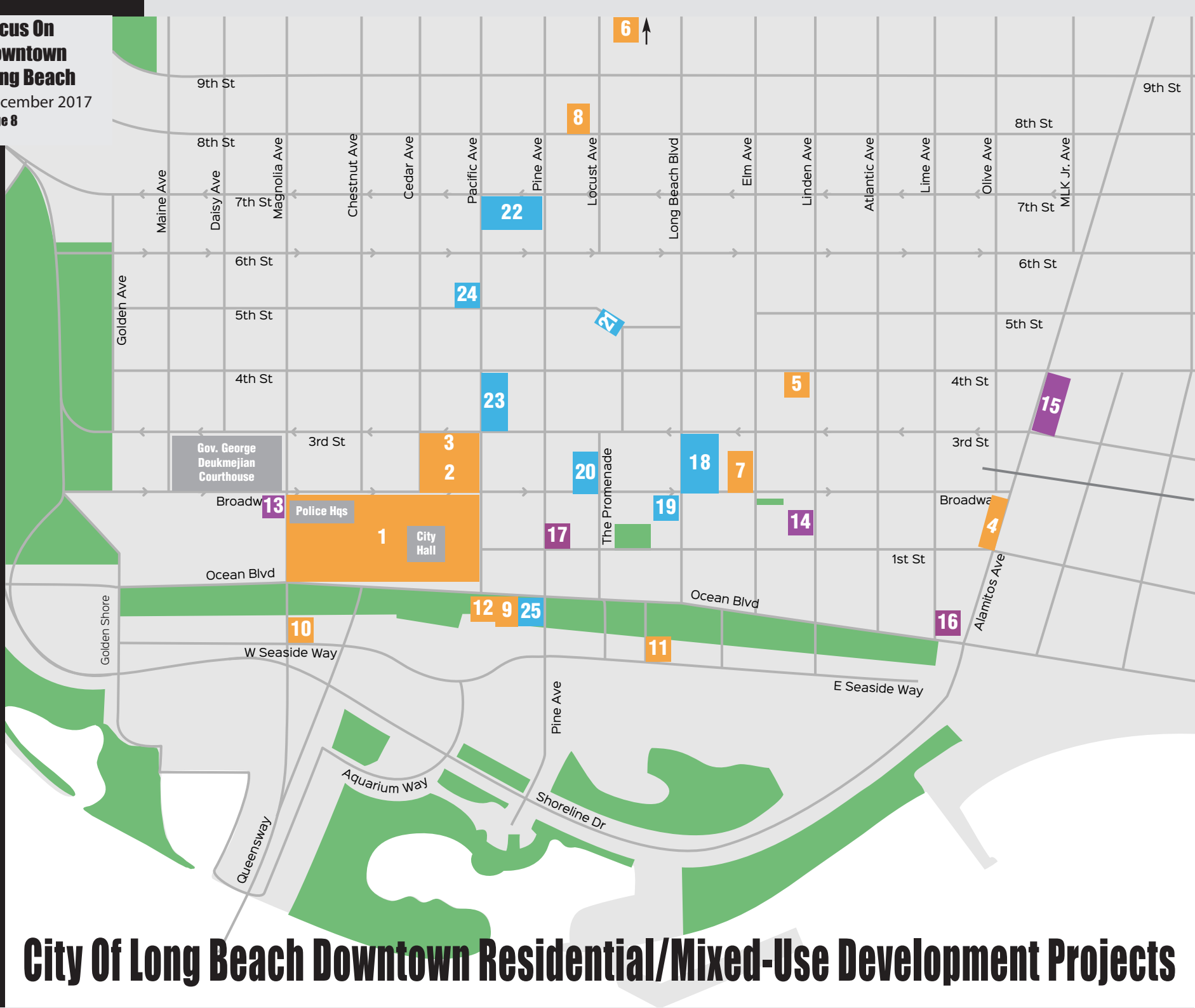
By **Henry Walker**
President
Farmers & Merchants Bank

Downtown is finally reaching a tipping point of firmly moving in the right direction. And the reason for that is that we have a housing boom going on in California. The downtown areas are interesting to singles and couples, so there is a strong interest of living in an urban environment.

We have hit a critical mass point in the downtown area, so that the businesses can now look at surviving on a local economic base. That is critical. And that local economic base isn't tied to the ports, the Navy, or retirement – it's tied to higher paying jobs.

As the city fathers look at the downtown areas, I think it's critical that we get in the right density of housing. Probably one of my disappointments is that I see some lower density housing projects going in what really should be high density [areas]. We need taller buildings downtown – 20 to 30 stories of good housing. And then we truly end up with a local business [environment] and a walking community, which is exciting to see. We have some of that going in, but I also hear that there are some that are fighting that, which is disappointing. Getting the right economic base own here to live is really important.

I think it's going to turn into a very good working and living environment down here. And I think we are going to continue to see old housing stock be retired and new housing stock put in its place. So I am bullish on downtown. It's probably the best I have seen it in the 30 years I have been down here. And that's a comment that I have also heard from many of my constituents who have also worked downtown for over 30 years.



City Of Long Beach Downtown Residential/Mixed-Use Development Projects

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

- 1 Long Beach Civic Center:** 411-415 W. Ocean Blvd.
Re-envisioned Civic Center project to include a new 11-story, 254,000-square-foot City Hall; an 11-story, 237,000-square-foot Port Building; a 92,500-square-foot Main Library; and a 73,000-square-foot Civic Plaza with subterranean parking structure; and a renewed Lincoln Park.
a. Developer: PECP
b. Building height: 11-story City Hall, 11-story Port Building
c. Start/Completion: 2016 / 2019
- 2 AMLI Park Broadway:** 245 W. Broadway
a. Developer: AMLI Residential
b. Building height: Seven-stories
c. Units: 222
d. Commercial space (sq. ft): 6,007 square-feet
e. Parking: 320
f. Amenities: Amenity-rich building featuring the pool and pool deck areas, a podium-level clubhouse, and ground floor fitness center and multi-purpose room areas.
g. Start/Completion: 2016 / TBA
- 3 The Pacific:** 230 W. Third St.
a. Developer: SARES REGIS Group (SRG)
b. Building height: Seven-stories
c. Units: 163
d. Commercial space (sq. ft): N/A
e. Parking: 244
f. Amenities: Roof top deck and club-room with a kitchen, fitness center, outdoor kitchen, community living rooms and bike workshop and storage room (Ground floor bike kitchen with 50 bicycle storage spots).
g. Start/Completion: June 1, 2017 / Summer 2019

- 4 The Alamos:** 101 Alamos Ave.
a. Developer: SARES REGIS Group (SRG)
b. Building height: Seven-stories
c. Units: 136 condominium units
d. Commercial space (sq. ft): 2,560 square feet
e. Parking: 174
f. Amenities: Fitness Center, roof top deck and club-room, bike kitchen and storage room
g. Start/Completion: May 2017 / TBA
- 5 The Linden:** 434 E. 4th St.
a. Developer: SARES REGIS Group (SRG)
b. Building height: Six-stories
c. Units: 49 apartments
d. Commercial space (sq. ft): 2,550 square feet
e. Parking: 82
f. Amenities: Fitness center, outdoor kitchen and multiple outdoor community spaces, and ground floor bicycle kitchen.
g. Start/Completion: June 2017 / Early 2019
- 6 The Beacon:** 1201-1235 Long Beach Blvd.
a. Developer: Century Housing
b. Building height: Beacon Place seven-stories, Beacon Pointe five-stories
c. Units: 160
d. Commercial space (sq. ft): 6,184 square feet
e. Parking: 200 car, 72 bicycle stalls
f. Amenities: The two buildings will be connected at their third levels by a 23,735-square-foot courtyard. Within the courtyard area will stand a 1,311-square-foot community room. Other residential amenities include a 1,100-square-foot library, two media rooms (one per building), supportive services space, a 1,400-square-foot fitness center, and large building lobby areas.
g. Start/Completion: 2017 / 2019

- 7 Huxton:** 227 Elm Ave.
a. Developer: City Ventures
b. Building height: Three-stories
c. Units: 40 townhomes
d. Commercial space (sq. ft): N/A
e. Parking: 40 one-car garages, 10 guest parking spaces
f. Amenities: Solar powered, all-electric townhomes. A community room building, outdoor courtyards, and an integrated pedestrian paseo that will activate the streetscape and promote connectivity in the Downtown. On-site bike storage and a bike repair room for residents.
g. Start/Completion: May 2017 / Summer 2018
- 8 117 East 8th Building:** 117 E. 8th St.
a. Developer: Global Premier Regency Palms LLC
b. Building height: Eight-stories
c. Units: 105
d. Commercial space (sq. ft): 872 square feet
e. Parking: 46
f. Amenities: Two levels of medical offices, and kitchen, living room and dining room on each floor
g. Start/Completion: 2016 / TBA
- 9 Oceanaire:** 150 W. Ocean Blvd.
a. Developer: Lennar Multifamily Communities
b. Building height: Seven-stories
c. Units: 216 apartments
d. Commercial space (sq. ft): 1500 square feet
e. Parking: 406
f. Amenities: Additional project components include improvement of the Victory Park stretch along Ocean Blvd., and the development of a new City park at the Seaside Way grade.
g. Start/Completion: December 2016 / 2018



10 Serenade Modern Flats: 442 W. Ocean Blvd.

- a. Developer: Ensemble Real Estate
- b. Building height: Four-Stories
- c. Units: 94
- d. Commercial space (sq. ft): N/A
- e. Parking: 152
- f. Amenities: 1,633-square-foot rooftop deck with outdoor kitchen, fitness center, new plaza-level pedestrian paseo and dog park
- g. Start/Completion: 2017 / 2019

11 Sonata Modern Flats: 207 Seaside Way

- a. Developer: Ensemble Real Estate
- b. Building height: Five-Stories
- c. Units: 113
- d. Commercial space (sq. ft): 2,000 square feet
- e. Parking: 176
- f. Amenities: Amenities including a media room, a 3,309-square-foot roof deck, a 2,058-square-foot landscaped area and a 3,000-square-foot club/exercise room
- g. Start/Completion: 2017 / 2019

12 Ocean View Tower: 200 W. Ocean Blvd.

- a. Developer: MEIAO Investment
- b. Building height: 12-stories
- c. Units: 94
- d. Commercial space (sq. ft): 4,597
- e. Parking: 129
- f. Amenities: On the first level, a fire pit, pool, and barbeque lounge area would be located adjacent to a new 915-square-foot gym and 750-square-foot community room.
- g. Start/Completion: 2017 / TBA

APPROVED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

13 Magnolia and Broadway: 500 W. Broadway

- a. Developer: Ensemble Real Estate
- b. Building height: Seven-stories
- c. Units: 142 apartments
- d. Commercial space (sq. ft): 4,110 square feet
- e. Parking: 191, 21 EV stalls, 94 bicycle
- f. Amenities: ground floor retail/restaurant space, ground floor bike kitchen
- g. Start/Completion: TBA

14 Residences at Linden: 135 Linden Ave.

- a. Developer: Residences at Linden LLC
- b. Building height: Seven-stories
- c. Units: 82 units, 20 bike stalls
- d. Commercial space (sq. ft): 4,091 square feet
- e. Parking: 135
- f. Amenities: 2nd floor courtyard, an enclosed terrace on the 5th floor, and an outdoor roof terrace on the 6th floor, totaling 4,668 square feet. Additional recreational space is included with a 549-square-foot gym on the second floor and a 1,244-square-foot club room on the 6th floor.
- g. Start/Completion: TBA

15 Residential Project: 320 Alamitos Ave.

- a. Developer: Urbana Development LLC
- b. Building height: Seven-stories
- c. Units: 105 stalls
- d. Commercial space (sq. ft): N/A
- e. Parking: 105
- f. Amenities: A 4,081 square foot rooftop deck, which contains multiple deck areas featuring landscaping and hard-scape amenities, including lounge-type tables and seating, as well as a 793-square-foot community room.
- g. Start/Completion: TBA

16 Shoreline Gateway East Tower: 777 E. Ocean Blvd.

- a. Developer: Anderson Pacific LLC
- b. Building height: 35-stories
- c. Units: 315
- d. Commercial space (sq. ft): 6,700
- e. Parking: 458
- f. Amenities: A 4,081 square foot rooftop deck, which contains multiple deck areas featuring landscaping and hard-scape amenities, including lounge-type tables and seating, as well as a 793-square-foot community room.
- g. Start/Completion: 2018 / 2019

17 110 Pine Ave Building: 110 N. Pine Ave

- a. Developer: Pacific Investment I & M LLC
- b. Building height: 13-stories
- c. Units: 118 condominium units
- d. Commercial space (sq. ft): Existing uses to remain.
- e. Parking: N/A
- f. Amenities: Reconstruction of the roof to accommodate a community patio for residents and fitness room.
- g. Start/Completion: TBA

Pending Development Projects

18 “Broadway Block”: 200-250 Long Beach Blvd

- a. Developer: Ratokovich Preoperties
- b. Building height: 21-story tower, a 7-story mid-rise
- c. Units: 392
- d. Commercial space (sq. ft): 32,807 square feet
- e. Parking: 582, 104 bicycle
- f. Amenities: Proposed partnership with California State University, Long Beach for programming of commercial/public spaces, and a housing component.
 - 1,311 square feet of ArtExchange space
 - 3,873 square feet of flex space
 - 6,012 square feet of loft space
 - 5,773 square feet of creative office space
 - 3,200 square feet of university space
 - Art gallery on top of housing space for the university’s arts faculty and students.
- g. Start/Completion: TBA

19 Mixed-Use Project: 125 Long Beach Blvd.

- a. Developer: Raintree- Evergreen LLC
- b. Building height: Seven-stories
- c. Units: 208
- d. Commercial space (sq. ft): 7,000 square feet
- e. Parking: 304, 62 bicycle

- f. Amenities: Proposed bicycle kitchen, fitness center, courtyard clubhouse, and an amenity space on the building’s ground floor Long Beach Boulevard frontage. A 1,250-square-foot rooftop lounge on the seventh floor is also proposed.
- g. Start/Completion: TBA

20 Mixed-Use Project: Broadway & Promenade
127-135 E. Broadway

- a. Developer: Raintree- Evergreen LLC
- b. Building height: Eight-stories
- c. Units: 172 studios, one-bedrooms, and two bedrooms
- d. Commercial space (sq. ft): 10,000 square feet
- e. Parking: 266
- f. Amenities: Plans call for an array of on-site amenities including a fitness room, bike kitchen, roof decks, a swimming pool and a club room.
- g. Start/Completion: TBA

21 Residences at City Place: 495 The Promenade North

- a. Developer: Long Beach Center, LLC.
- b. Building height: Four-stories
- c. Units: 20
- d. Commercial space (sq. ft): 5,200
- e. Parking: TBA
- f. Amenities: TBA
- g. Start/Completion: TBA

22 Residential Project: 635 Pine Ave./636 Pacific Ave.

- a. Developer: Holland Partner Group
- b. Building height: Two eight-story buildings
- c. Units: 270
- d. Commercial space (sq. ft): 1,406 square feet
- e. Parking: 345 stalls, 40 bicycle stalls
- f. Amenities: Pine Avenue building features active ground floor uses (one retail space, one main resident lobby, and one amenity room); Pacific Avenue building features a main resident lobby and ground floor residential uses along its two street frontages (Pacific Avenue and W. 7th Street).
- g. Start/Completion: TBA

23 Third and Pacific: 131 W. 3rd St. – 3rd St. and Pacific Ave.

- a. Developer: Ensemble Properties
- b. Building height: Two buildings, 21-story high rise, and a 7-story building.
- c. Units: 370
- d. Commercial space (sq. ft): 19,782
- e. Parking: 483
- f. Amenities: 5,841 square-feet of club rooms, fitness, and amenity areas.
- g. Start/Completion: TBA

24 Residential Project: 507 N. Pacific

- a. Developer: Anastasi Development Company
- b. Building height: Seven-stories
- c. Units: 158 condominiums, one-and two-bedroom units
- d. Commercial space (sq. ft): 9,400
- e. Parking: 210
- f. Amenities: Two proposed recreation decks and rooftop deck
- g. Start/Completion: TBA

25 Ocean Center Building: 110 W. Ocean Blvd.

- a. Developer: Firth Howard
- b. Building height: 14-stories
- c. Units: 74
- d. Commercial space (sq. ft): 11,696
- e. Parking: 83
- f. Amenities: Common open space on three of the building’s existing deck areas. On the seventh floor, a fire pit and barbeque lounge area would be located adjacent to a new 1,147-square-foot amenity room.
- g. Start/Completion: TBA





- 1 The Pacific
- 2 AMLI Park Broadway
- 3 Long Beach Main Library
- 4 Oceanaire
- 5 Ocean View Tower
- 6 Serenade Modern Flats
- 7 Port Of Long Beach Head-quarters
- 8 Long Beach City Hall



New Civic Center Taking Shape Downtown

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**
SENIOR WRITER

Of the 25 major developments underway or planned in Downtown Long Beach, none is as large or as expensive as the Long Beach Civic Center project by the City of Long Beach and their partners, Plenary-Edgemoor Civic Partners (PECP).

The \$520 million public-private partnership project consists of twin 11-story buildings serving as the city’s new city hall and port administration building, as well as a new council chambers wing, library and Lincoln Park. Once these elements are completed, PECP will develop a mixed-use project that could include residential units, retail and office space, and a hotel on the site of the current city hall building.

“I anticipate they will finish pouring the 11th floors some time toward the end of January,” Long Beach Public Works Director Craig Beck said. “Then the curtain wall system will start to be installed. I’m guessing in the May or June time frame we’ll see the buildings with the skins on.”

According to Beck, the two towers are scheduled to be completed by June 2019. He explained that the buildings will have more of a modern office lay-

out that is open with plenty of natural light and amenities to help employees do their jobs more efficiently and comfortably. The most notable design feature inside the city hall building is the likely decrease in personal space to allow for the inclusion of more meeting space, which Beck said is hard to come by in the current building.

With more collaborative space, Beck explained that additional technologies will be utilized such as Microsoft Surface laptops in conference rooms to maximize and ease the use of digital presentations and other content. Aside from meeting space, Beck said the new building will have formal break rooms for employees on every floor, which the current building lacks.

“There will be a new data center constructed in the new city hall, new fiber lines that will ensure that our network is secure and can accommodate the growing amount of data that is being exchanged,” Beck said. “And a digital imaging system is going in, basically converting from the paper-driven business processes that we have today in the city to a more digitally driven business process.”

The new 92,500-square-foot main library is on the same schedule as the city hall and port buildings – contracted to be completed by June 2019. The steel framing of the structure is complete and Beck expects construction crews to begin placing wood beams in early January. The energy efficient designs include increased access to library materials, individual study and tutoring rooms, a dedicated children’s space and additional services for disabled residents. The library will overlook the revitalized Lincoln Park directly to the south.

As for the mid-block development by PECP, Beck said no plans have been finalized, as construction cannot begin until 2020 at the earliest. After the completion of the new city hall in June 2019, PECP could then go through the lengthy process of demolishing the current building. Beck said final plans for the likely residential, commercial and hotel space depend on the markets in those areas at the time.

Once the entire project is completed, Beck explained it will be very open, creating a more walkable and accessible civic center. In addition to open space within the project, Chestnut Place and Cedar Avenue will run through the development connecting the now-divided streets.

“The civic plaza is going to be a fantastic space that flows through and around the project. The current civic plaza is kind of disjointed space. It is hard to figure out how to access it, where the common zones are,” Beck said. “This new one is going to be much more intuitive. I think the civic plaza is going to be a very special place.”

For more information on the Long Beach Civic Center development project, visit www.pecplongbeach.com. ■

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Austin Carr

Patrick Michel

Patrick Michel

Linda Treffry

Linda Treffry

Mario Bradley

Mario Bradley

Shannon Sahlstrom

Shannon Sahlstrom

Stefanie Fredella

Stefanie Fredella

Jonnie Weber

Jonnie Weber

Camille Williams

Camille Williams

Gloria Jaramillo

Gloria Jaramillo

Isabelle Barcnas

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Monica Monserrat

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Photo by J. Christopher Launi Photography

Data, Education And Assistance Are Key When Locating A Business Downtown

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**
SENIOR WRITER

Choosing a location to open, relocate or expand a business is an important decision with many potential pitfalls and challenges. It can be a daunting task for a budding entrepreneur who is unfamiliar with the ins and outs of Downtown Long Beach. However, free or low-cost resources are available to assist potential small business owners.

Before viewing properties and talking leases, John Keisler, director of the Long Beach Economic Development Department, advises entrepreneurs to browse the ‘Launch’ tab at bizport.longbeach.gov.

“They can zero in on the downtown and the type of property they are looking for, and this will provide them not only with all of the available sites that are lists on the MLS but they can then also click on the building and do ring studies of consumer, demographic and all kinds of economic analysis,” Keisler said. “It’s really an awesome tool if you want to poke around.”

One thing to consider that often gets overlooked, according to Keisler, is the impacts of future development. He explained that, with the amount of new construction underway and planned downtown, realities, such as a loss of surface parking, could have a negative impact on some

ing with the community is key. He explained that downtown residents love supporting small businesses and, once they are hooked, they become advocates for a business and actually drum up more business. However, to build the initial clientele, Carrillo said soft opening and ribbon-cutting events work well, as does e-commerce and a solid online marketing presence, through social media and other tools.

As for choosing a physical location in the downtown area, Carrillo said it is really up to the prospective business owner to do their due diligence when looking at properties. Part of this process should be consulting with an architect and general contractor to determine build-out costs and whether or not they fall within budget. This also includes understanding if the type of business can legally operate at the locations of interest.

“As a business owner, I think having an understanding of the Downtown Plan is good. Just knowing what the approved use is within a neighborhood, that’s a question I get asked quite a bit,” Carrillo said. “Outside of a general retail or restaurant, if there is a very specific use, it’s always best to double-check with the city if that use is approved.”

Noel Aguirre and Sean Lieppman, senior associates at Lee & Associates Commercial Real Estate Services, agree, and said not verifying permitted use is one of the major pitfalls they have experienced with entrepreneurs. Lieppman pointed out that it is a simple mistake to avoid by making a phone call to the city’s development services department.

A second major pitfall is underestimating startup cost and buildout time, according to Aguirre and Lieppman. Without appropriate input and estimates from architects and general contractors, the project budget can get derailed by the first curveball, ultimately costing the owner more money.

“Construction timing is a big one because, when we are negotiating leases, we are trying to bring in a realistic time frame. If we’re working with a bar or restaurant operator, they might think they can complete the construction process in four or five months but realistically it might take six to eight months.”

In order to be successful downtown, Lieppman said it’s important to understand the changing dynamics and demographics of the area. He noted that, to some people, current data might not paint a completely enticing picture, but that current stats don’t reflect new developments set to come online in the coming years.

“With downtown in general, for the past couple of years, the transformation, whether it’s in concepts of restaurants or retail or services, it’s very dynamic now,” Aguirre said. “For a while the reputation of Downtown Long Beach was not the best in the public. But talking to companies now that want to move to Downtown Long Beach, they come down here and do tours and they see the DNA has changed and they want to be a part of it. It’s been great seeing that.”

Becky Blair, president of Coldwell Banker Commercial BLAIR WESTMAC, said first and foremost anyone seeking space downtown should seek out a broker to lead them through any challenges, which is typically free for the tenant. She explained that, while a property owner negotiates a lease in their best interest, a broker would work toward the best interest of the small business owner.

According to Blair, priorities have changed for those seeking office space in Downtown Long Beach. She said business owners are being driven by a younger workforce, which equates to personal space being replaced with modern terraces, open lounge areas, coffee bars and smart technology. She explained some building owners now offer added services, such as dry cleaning, bike racks and gyms, which a broker would be able to inform entrepreneurs of.

Brokers who are familiar with Downtown Long Beach already have base knowledge regarding current prices per square foot and funds available for tenant improvement, Blair said. These and a number of other factors are important when working out the details of a lease. However, entrepreneurs most likely do not have this information.

Blair noted that there are certain factors to consider when looking for office space in a downtown, urban environment, such as surrounding amenities for employees. One challenge in dense areas is employee parking.

“Parking may be a challenge – it’s a challenge for all urban cities,” Blair said. “But at the same time we’re working with excellent developers to really be able to build more market rate housing so the working class will be able to have affordable places to live where they can actually walk. I don’t see a downside right now. I see more opportunity than I have ever seen in this downtown area.” ■



Adam Carrillo, economic development manager at the Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA), said utilizing city and DLBA resources, as well as hiring a broker familiar with Downtown Long Beach, are the best tips he can give to young entrepreneurs looking to locate a business in the area. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)

types of business. However, he noted residential developments could have positive impacts due to an increase of foot traffic.

For more direct assistance, Keisler recommends prospective business owners reach out to Adam Carrillo, economic development manager at the Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA). He said Carrillo has intimate knowledge of the group’s membership and vacant space in the downtown area and can offer entrepreneurs a wealth of information and resources.

“Really educate yourself with data,” Carrillo said. “That’s really one of the biggest reasons why we launched our Entrepreneur and Business Education series: we wanted to provide education that worked well with existing and potential business owners in the downtown, especially small business owners.”

Carrillo looks toward the successes of business that have utilized the DLBA’s education and data, such as Romeo Chocolates, The Pie Bar and 6th & Detroit, as models of ideal startup processes. He explained that, when entrepreneurs engage in discussions with the DLBA, the organization can walk them through all the steps required to open their business.

For many retail, restaurants and service businesses, Carrillo said connect-

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Long Beach Water

More Assistance Resources Than Ever For Long Beach Entrepreneurs

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**
SENIOR WRITER

When it comes to business assistance, the City of Long Beach is working with several partners to create innovative solutions, some of which are the first of their kind, according to John Keisler, director of Long Beach Economic Development Department. One such solution arose from the city’s partnership with Start It Up for the development of a business assistance phone application, which was launched on December 4.



The City of Long Beach is launching several new business assistance resources beginning in early 2018, according to John Keisler, director of the Economic Development Department. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)

Sheneui Weber, chief operating officer for Long Beach City College’s (LBCC) College Advancement and Economic Development, stands in front of the Small Business Development Center at 309 Pine Ave. Earlier this month, the Long Beach City Council approved a lease agreement between the city, LBCC and co-working space operator BlankSpaces to transform the building into the Shaun Lumachi Center For Innovation and Entrepreneurship. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)



“This is a cutting-edge thing that the city is doing for entrepreneurs that actually has never been done,” Keisler said. “As you start answering questions about yourself and your business idea, the algorithms in the chatbot [an artificial conversational entity] connect you with a mentor who is similar to you or has the skill set that can address your needs.”

Start It Up’s proposal came to the city through the Citymart open procurement process after the city decided to seek ways to assist businesses in beating the national average survival rate for small businesses and startups. To do this, the city wants to educate budding entrepreneurs before they make any significant investment, sign any leases, apply for licenses or lose any money.

With connections at Stanford and Tufts universities, Start It Up was already seeking a trial city for its program to assess entrepreneurs’ startup businesses strengths and weaknesses to better prepare them for the startup process. This assessment informs entrepreneurs of resources such as mentors and classes, to help them be successful in the long term.

The three-month pilot program begins in 2018 with the first cohort of entrepreneurs being small business owners who are members of the Uptown Business Improvement District, coordinated by its manager, Tasha Hunter. According to Keisler, one of the more unusual aspects of the new program is the fact that a city department invested money up front in order to develop this business tool alongside Start It Up. The economic development department and the Innovation Fund invested \$25,000 combined into the project.

“It’s the government as an investor. It’s the government trying to stimulate the creation of new technology and new businesses,” Keisler said. “The whole point of it is to provide an innovative and efficient way to assess the readiness of entrepreneurs and connect them to online mentors all over the world so they can be successful. This will be a really cool learning experience for us. This will be a national story once we go through this piloting and go from beta to next generation application.”

January will also see the launch of the city’s new micro-lending program through the international nonprofit Kiva, which is based in San Francisco. Keisler explained that the city’s current small business lending program is not a one-size-fits-all system, with a minimum loan of \$25,000 and some credit requirements. He said some entrepreneurs have bad credit or no credit at all, or they simply do not need that much money.

Through Kiva, everyday residents can loan as little as \$25 to small businesses of their choice as part of a crowd-funded loan program. Since 2005, Kiva has crowdfunded over \$1 billion in loans for 2.7 million borrowers in 82 countries. According the company’s website, 100% of money lent goes to fund the no-interest, no-fee loans, which have nearly a 97% repayment rate.

“The woman I am lending to in San Jose is trying to buy her first large sewing machine. So she only needs a couple thousand dollars to get her business started,” Keisler said. “I lent her \$25 that will get repaid over 18 months. I got my first \$1.40 per month repayment last month. You actually become an investor in local small business. To us that’s the spirit of Long Beach and that’s really exciting.”

On December 5, the Long Beach City Council voted to approve a 10-year lease agreement between Long Beach City College (LBCC), the city and co-working space design and operating firm BlankSpaces at 309 Pine Ave. The space is currently utilized by LBCC for workshops and one-on-one business advising as part of its Small Business Development Center (SBDC). In January, the building will be renovated and transformed into a business incubator and accelerator hub called the Shaun Lumachi Center For Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Keisler said.

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CITY OF LONG BEACH

BID OPPORTUNITIES

TITLE	BID NUMBER	DATE
Comm. Rehab Program Anaheim St & Cherry Ave	ITB DV18-040	12/20/2017
Houghton Park Community Center	R-7113	12/21/2017
Pharmacy Benefits Manager	RFP LW18-050	12/21/2017
Radiologist Services	RFP HR18-045	12/21/2017
Design-Build Svcs for Phase II Terminal Area Impro.	RFP AP18-033	12/22/2017
Baggage Handling System Maintenance	RFP AP18-035	01/03/2018
Request for Quotes for LBWD Promotional Items		01/03/2018
Inspection of Sewer Lateral Pipelines on Customer Premises	ITB GO18-051	01/04/2018
Develop & Implement Traffic Calming Measures for Traffic Exiting the I-710 into Long Beach	R-7053/R-7056	01/10/2018
Citywide Printed Envelopes	ITB LB18-031	01/10/2018
Qualification and Selection of Peer Reviewers	RFQ DV17-112	Continuous

Some of the listed projects have scheduled mandatory pre-bid meetings which may have already occurred due to publication lead times

Bidder Registration

To receive notifications of bid opportunities, register with the City of Long Beach at www.longbeach.gov/finance/business-info/purchasing-division/purchasing-division/. Additional details on upcoming bids and how to register can be found on the website.

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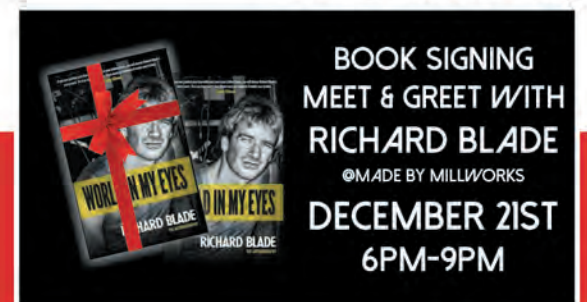


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(Continued From Page 14)

The revamped facility will house SBDC, LBCC’s Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program, e-commerce program and international business accelerator program, as well as all government-sponsored entrepreneur support programs. The center will be open seven days a week to allow entrepreneurs better access to programs and tools to help them succeed.

BlankSpaces is designing the project to include open and efficient co-working space featuring hot desks (desks shared by multiple users), private offices and meeting rooms. These spaces will be available to rent at affordable prices for new business owners and students making their first move into the downtown area. The city is paying for the renovation of the city-owned property, and BlankSpaces will pay monthly rent to the city, making it a cost-neutral project.

LBCC’s newest business assistance program, B2B E-commerce for Advanced Manufacturing (BEAM), which will find a home at 309 Pine Ave., was kicked off with a Getting to Global event in October.

“The e-commerce phenomenon . . . is a shift in the market and it will be interesting to see how that develops. But what we see is that it makes a lot of economic sense, because if you think about it, 95% of the market is outside of the United States,” Sheneui Weber, chief operating officer for LBCC’s College Advancement and Economic Development, said. “So there is a lot of opportunity for businesses, especially small businesses, if they learn how to grow their sales via e-commerce.”

To assist new or expanding businesses in growing e-commerce, the BEAM program provides a number of online resources and workshops that focus on marketing and other topics such as logistics fulfillment. Sheneui explained her experience shows that the increase in sales generated by e-commerce often translates to job creation for small businesses.

“In order to attract businesses, you have to have something for them,” Weber said of the 309 Pine Ave. project. “You have to have services, you

have to have a support network and sometimes having a physical location helps tremendously with that.”

Weber explained that LBCC and the SBDC will continue to offering services such as financial, marketing, social media assistance and other resources for small businesses at the renovated downtown location. She said she hopes to continue introducing new innovative services to assist entrepreneurs.

“We have a very big network of business advisors that can help small business owners with any issue they have, any challenges, even if they just need a little advice,” Weber said. “We also have orientation workshops for budding entrepreneurs. We want to make sure they fully understand what they are getting into, how to vet their business idea, make sure this is something they really want to do, and give them a good solid foundation to start off with.” ■

Diversity, Community Support and Tourism Are Drawing Businesses To Downtown

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**
SENIOR WRITER

The reasons startups and other new businesses are attracted to Long Beach vary greatly. The conventional explanations are almost always the same – it’s centrally located between Los Angeles and Orange counties, it has a port complex, it has an airport, it’s just off several freeways. While these are certainly big draws for business, there are other significant benefits of doing business in Long Beach.

“From a macro perspective, Long Beach is grossly underrated. Long Beach seems to welcome people from all walks of life and is home to a diverse group of people that creates a great vibe for the city,” Bob Ruth, president of building management company The Ruth Group, said. “For people who are looking for the outdoor lifestyle, they have all those elements sitting in the downtown core. Now, with new development and the residential coming along, the residential will drive retail, and the retail ultimately [will drive] office.”

Ruth credited Mayor Robert Garcia and other city department heads’ hands-on, progressive leadership as a driving force in fostering a nurturing and prosperous environment for businesses and residents alike.

The Ruth Group manages one building in Downtown Long Beach: Downtown Plaza, at 211 E. Ocean Blvd. Though it has several other tenants, the building is 40% occupied by a full-service marketing agency, Designory. Ruth explained that Designory is a perfect model tenant for Long Beach – diverse, interesting, memorable and looking for “more than just a place to put bodies behind desks.”

Currently, The Ruth Group building has several floors being renovated into creative office space, a move that Ruth said is driven by employees. He explained that people have realized that creative space fosters a collaborative and stimulating environment, which makes employee recruitment and retention easier. He noted the influx of creative space, including the opening of WeWork’s office space downtown, as evidence of this trend.

Lisa Mae Brunson, founder of Wonder Women Tech (WWT), has an office in WeWork’s creative office building at The Hubb, located at 100 W. Broadway. Brunson founded WWT in 2015, which she described as “an ecosystem that highlights, celebrates and educates women and the under-represented across STEM industries and the arts.” The company builds conferences, events and workshops internationally to foster its mission.

“I had our first conference in Los Angeles but I produced it in Long Beach and then we were provided the opportunity to bring the vision to Long Beach and have a home here,” Brunson

(Please Continue To Page 18)



DLBA Program Helps Local Woman Entrepreneur Launch New Venture

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Wedding and special events planner Megan Papageorge, pictured at left, has been given an opportunity to start a new business venture thanks to a \$15,000 grant from the Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA). This year, the alliance launched a new business assistance program, the Woman Owned Business Accelerator, to help downtown women entrepreneurs launch new business concepts in the area.

Papageorge applied to the program and won the total lump sum grant available, which could have been split between as many as three winners. For the past four

years, she has owned and operated Sweet Peach Planning, a solo business she started in her home in the East Village and later moved into Work Evolution Laboratories, a collaborative office space. In her first year, she planned one wedding. This year, she planned 50.

Papageorge compared her experience pitching her new business venture, a subscription service to help individuals plan their own weddings, to pitching on the hit TV show “Shark Tank.” “It was a really good process of taking the idea of something . . . and putting it onto paper and pictures,” Papageorge said. “I think even just that process of applying was helpful.”

Her concept is to create a service in which a box containing wedding planning tips, to-do lists and trinkets would be sent to subscribers each month.

“There are a ton of women out there who would love to hire a wedding planner but can’t afford it,” Papageorge said. It can also be difficult to schedule the 10 to 20 necessary meetings with wedding planners, she noted. The subscription service would be a more affordable and time-saving option, she explained.

“I would love to launch on my birthday, which is July 2,” Papageorge said. “The next six months [will consist of] just getting the product solidified, working on the branding and sort of a buzz around it, and then hopefully launching.” ■



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(Continued From Page 16)

said. “I really love the city. I lived in Los Angeles and happened to visit Long Beach. I loved the vibe of the city. I made a decision to move right there on the spot during my first visit.”

Support from the city and Mayor Garcia in sponsoring her Long Beach conference, as well as community support and involvement, enabled WWT to scale up operations faster than if they had chosen another location to be headquartered. She added that she would not have received similar support from the city government and community in Los Angeles.

With diversity and culture being the cornerstone of her business, Brunson said Long Beach embodies those ideals with a good mix of large and small businesses, creatives and everything in between, mixed to create a “beautiful collage of diversity and art.”

“Just having this vibe where it feels like anyone could create success. Whether you’re a knitter on the corner or you’re a teacher or you’re launching a tech startup, I think you can find a home here in Long Beach,” Brunson said. “That’s really what I love – the sense of community and collaboration and spirit.”

In addition to the support and overall vibe of Downtown Long Beach, Brunson said she loves being able to bike to work and walk to amenities. She also enjoys being able to bring her dog to the office and to surrounding restaurants on her lunch break.

Kangarootime founder and CEO Scott Wayman established his company in the downtown area more than two years ago. Wayman explained that the company works with childcare centers and early education schools to automate their systems for, and streamline communication with, parents and teachers, saving 40 to 60 hours per week in labor for the business and giving parents peace of mind.

Wayman said he has watched the growth of Silicon Beach and the amount of startup activity happening there. He said this region of Southern California gives new businesses access to engineering and other startup talent, with a growing population of young professionals.

“Not having to have the company in the heart of Santa Monica is really nice,” Wayman said. “Being here where it’s more affordable, being here where you are on the ocean and you’re in an urban environment that’s growing and updating and going through a renaissance is really amazing.”

According to Wayman, the Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) has been helpful in connecting him to resources, while Long Beach Economic Development Director John Keisler helped him find business opportunities within the city. Wayman said he thinks the city’s infrastructure and government are leaning in a direction that is positive for startups and their success.

In 2009, Wayman and his wife purchased their first condo in Long Beach’s West Ocean Towers and in 2013 bought another. From his firsthand experience, being able to live near work surrounded by restaurants, entertainment and the beach is a big draw when recruiting talent that may have other employment options.

The Long Beach Creamery has been a staple of the Bixby Knolls area since 2014 and early next year will open its second location at 222 E. Broadway in Downtown Long Beach, across from Congregation Ale House. While her Bixby Knolls location is more of a destination, with people traveling from out of the area for her ice cream, owner Dina Amadril said she chose downtown for her second location to take advantage of the higher volume of foot traffic due to the denser population as well as travelers in town for conventions, events and cruises.

“One of my next goals for the creamery is to start shipping ice cream. So, if people come from Ohio or Idaho or wherever to an event here in Long Beach and they fall in love with the ice cream, then they can get it shipped to them,” Amadril said. “The best way for me to expose them to that is by having a foothold in downtown.”

The downtown’s walkability and bikeability are key to the movement of residents and visitors, and result in the increased foot traffic, according to Amadril. She said plans for a bike lane passing in front of her new location will mean even more bodies passing her ice cream shop.

Hoping for a Valentine’s Day opening for the downtown location, Amadril said she has already begun chatting with surrounding business owners about cross-promotion to garner business for one another. Amadril already has long-standing relationships and collaborations with other businesses, such as The Pie Bar and Romeo Chocolates.

Luis Navarro and Brenda Rivera, owners of Lola’s Mexican Cuisine and The Social List, have partnered with Simon Huxton to open in 2018 Long Beach’s first distillery and restaurant, Portuguese Bend, at the intersection of The Promenade and 3rd Street. Speaking about his two Lola’s locations, one in Bixby Knolls and one on 4th Street, and the Social List, also on 4th Street, Navarro noted that their success is entrenched in the surrounding neighborhoods and local residents.

“In downtown we can create a magnet, a draw, where people from all over, not only Southern California, but conventioners, come and really just create something. I want to be a part of that moving force to create kind of like what San Diego created with the Gaslamp Quarter,” Navarro said. “To really create that downtown feel and that downtown pull where people want to come. That’s our vision and why we are choosing to go to the downtown right now.”

Navarro said DLBA President and CEO Kraig Kojian approached him about opening up a new business concept in downtown. Having already been working on details for the distillery, according to Navarro, the idea was an instant attention grabber, even catching the notice of Mayor Garcia, who told Navarro he hoped the new business would be located in downtown.

With numerous developments and improvements, such as Tony Shooshani’s revitalization of The Streets, formerly City Place, Navarro said downtown is full of potential. Portuguese Bend will be located beside the Retail Design Collaborative and Studio One Eleven offices.

“We’ve been in downtown a lot lately, especially with a lot of our meetings

happening with regards to the distillery, and it’s just different,” Navarro said. “Downtown Long Beach has been asleep; it’s been dormant. But right now I feel that there has been a corner that has been turned with all the businesses that have opened in the last couple years. And with all the approvals of all the residential that is coming in. I feel that, if we build it, they will come.” ■



Lisa Mae Brunson, founder of Wonder Women Tech, said culture and diversity are the cornerstones of her business, which makes Downtown Long Beach the ideal area for company headquarters. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)

Tourism foot traffic was a major draw for partners Luis Navarro (left), Simon Huxton and Brenda Rivera when they decided to locate Long Beach’s first distillery, Portuguese Bend, on the corner of The Promenade and 3rd Street. Opening is scheduled for 2018. (Business Journal photograph)





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Array Of Industry Sectors Thrive In Downtown

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Downtown Long Beach’s location – halfway between Los Angeles and Orange County and adjacent to the largest port complex in the country – is just one of many reasons the area is a hub for a number of industries. International trade, oil and gas production, health

through these ports, which support a variety of other industries in the supply chain, such as trucking, rail, warehousing and freight forwarding. Many companies in these fields call Downtown Long Beach their home.

One in eight jobs in the City of Long Beach is supported by the port. It also supports more than 300,000 jobs across Southern California and more than 1.5 million jobs nationwide, according to the Port of Long Beach (POLB).

The port sits on 3,000 acres of land and spans 4,600 acres of water, with 22 shipping terminals. Its largest operator is Long Beach Container Terminal, a division of Orient Overseas Carrier Line.

2017 has proven to be a year of records for POLB, which set several monthly all-time highs for containers moving through its facilities. For example, the port experienced its busiest-ever July, August, September and October this year.

The port’s two largest capital improvement projects are also major job creators. The Middle Harbor Redevelopment Project, which involves combining two aging terminals into an energy-efficient facility able to handle the world’s largest ships, is responsible for generating about 1,000 construction jobs, according to the port. The Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project, which involves tearing down an old bridge and replacing it with a taller structure, generates about 3,000 construction jobs.

Health Care

Molina Healthcare, a national health plan and care provider, is headquartered in Downtown Long Beach. About 2,600 of the 3,600 Molina employees in Long Beach work downtown, according to a company spokesperson. The firm, which was founded in Long Beach in 1980, opened its headquarters in downtown in 1991.

Molina Healthcare is a major occupant of office space throughout downtown, despite recent changes that have caused the firm to downsize. The company occupies offices in the Press-Telegram and Meeker Baker buildings on Pine Avenue, as well as in its namesake buildings at Molina Center.

Dignity Health St. Mary Medical Center is located on the outskirts of Downtown Long Beach, providing crucial medical services to the area. The hospital operates a 24-hour Level II trauma center and emergency room, and provides cancer, cardiac and vascular, maternity, orthopedics, gastroenterology and laboratory services. The medical center employs 1,480 people.

Other health care companies have operations in the downtown area. U.S. HealthWorks Medical Group operates an occupational health care clinic, with urgent and specialty care, at 100 Oceangate, and Urgent Care Plus operates a clinic at 555 E. Ocean Blvd.

There are also many small businesses in the health care industry in downtown, including optometrists, dentists and more.

Financial Services

Downtown Long Beach is a hub for professional services, particularly those within the financial industry. Several major financial services entities are headquartered in downtown, including Farmers & Merchants Bank, International City Bank, and fiduciary management and investment firm Halbert Hargrove.

Downtown is also home to Wells Fargo’s California Trust Center, accounting firms like Windes (founded downtown in 1926), Rossi LLP, Holthouse Carlin & Van Trigt LLP and other investment and wealth management firms. In 2016, City National Bank debuted a new regional banking center and banking branch at 100 Oceangate.

The oldest financial institution native to downtown is Farmers & Merchants Bank, which was founded there in 1907. In 1920, founder C.J. Walker bought land at 301 Pine Ave., where he constructed F&M’s headquarters. Completed in 1923, the bank still operates there today.



The Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project is one of the Port of Long Beach’s major capital improvement undertakings. At right is the existing bridge. At left, the new bridge’s columns have been built to their full height, making them the tallest structures in Long Beach. The bridge is being built with a higher clearance above the water to allow larger ships into the inner harbor. (Business Journal photograph by Evan Patrick Kelly, December 6, 2017)

The third and final phase of construction of the Middle Harbor Redevelopment Project at the Port of Long Beach, shown here, is slated to begin in February. Pictured in the foreground, landfill has been used to fill in an old slip, which will become part of Long Beach Container Terminal’s wharf, container yard and intermodal yard, according to a port spokesperson. (Photograph provided by the Port of Long Beach)





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This overhead image of one of the THUMS islands along the Long Beach waterfront reveals the oil operations hidden behind a facade meant to look like a resort from the shoreline. There are four such islands in Long Beach waters. (Business Journal photograph by Evan Patrick Kelly, December 6, 2017)

One of Long Beach's largest industries is its hospitality and tourism sector, which is celebrating its best year ever. Pictured at right is the Pine Avenue entrance to the Long Beach Convention Center. Below is Shoreline Village, a Cape Cod-style boardwalk with a collection of restaurants and shops, plus an arcade, all within a short walk of the convention center. (Business Journal photographs)



(Continued From Page 20)

F&M also operates F&M Trust Company – the oldest state-chartered trust company in Californ – at its Pine Avenue headquarters. The company manages in excess of \$2 billion in assets and estates.

Halbert Hargrove was also founded in Downtown Long Beach. “We are a Long Beach firm with roots planted downtown since we opened in 1933,” JC Abusaid, president and COO of the company, said. “We have endured the good times (and some bad) and have benefited from the resurgence. Downtown has evolved over the years and we are happy to be a member of a vibrant community that has grown a ton with great businesses, restaurants and attractions.”



Oil & Gas

The oil and gas industry, too, has a storied history in Long Beach and in the downtown area, which sits on the Wilmington Oil Field. The four THUMS oil islands just off downtown’s shoreline are perhaps the most iconic representation of the oil and gas industry’s history here. The islands, built to look like resorts at sea, hide some of the oil rigs that generate revenue for the city.

California Resources Corporation’s (CRC) southern operations headquarters are located in Downtown Long Beach at 111 W. Ocean Blvd. The firm and its THUMS and Tidelands (state-designated portions of Long Beach along the waterfront, including downtown and the port) affiliates produce oil and natural gas for the city and the state.

According to CRC, oil and gas operations have generated \$4.4 billion for the city and the state in direct revenues since 2003. The firm has 400 employees and another 400 contractors working on the oil islands and within the port.

Robert Dowell, director of Long Beach Gas & Oil, the city’s oil and gas department, said that overall oil production in Long Beach is about 12 million barrels per year, with 90% of that coming from the Tidelands area.

Hospitality & Tourism

Downtown’s hotels, attractions, restaurants and drinking establishments make up one of the largest segments of the local economy, according to a report for the city by Los Angeles-based Beacon Economics.

The Long Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau has declared 2017 the best year ever for Long Beach tourism. About 7.2 million people came to Long Beach for its events and attractions, many of which are in downtown.

The Aquarium of the Pacific, which is undergoing an expansion, had about 1.7 million visitors in 2017, according to President & CEO Jerry Schubel. The facility, located at Rainbow Harbor, is home to more than 11,000 animals native to the Pacific Ocean in more than 50 exhibits. The Aquarium also provides a host of educational programs year-round, such as a lecture series, and cultural events and festivals.

Most of the city’s top-tier hotels are located in Downtown Long Beach. The area is also home to boutique hotels like the historic The Varden Hotel on Pacific Avenue and The Hotel Maya on the waterfront, as well as a Best Western and a variety of motels.

This year, local hotels generated \$26.4 million in transient occupancy (hotel bed) tax – the most ever in the city’s history, according to the Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau. Overnight visitors to the city had an estimated economic impact of \$300 million.

The Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center has undergone a variety of upgrades over the past four years, resulting in a conglomeration of spaces that CVB President & CEO Steve Goodling often refers to as “turn-key.” The venues, like the Pacific Room at the Long Beach Arena, are equipped with theatrical lighting, a full stage crew and contemporary furniture and accent pieces at no extra charge to clients, resulting in major cost savings. Charlie Beirne, general manager of the center, has said that the venues have helped bring in new conventions.

Through November, 297 conventions and meetings were held in Long Beach, generating 238,197 overnight stays in hotels, an increase of 18% from 2016, according to the CVB. More than 507,400 people attended conventions and meetings in Long Beach this year, based on CVB estimates. These events alone generated \$4.9 million in transient occupancy tax revenue. ■

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An overview of the Long Beach Transit Mall on 1st Street shows the Metro Blue Line and Long Beach Transit buses. (Business Journal Photograph)

Upgrades To Long Beach Transit Systems Aim To Improve Rider Experience

■ By **ANNE ARTLEY**
STAFF WRITER

To keep up with new development downtown and community needs, Long Beach Transit and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) are upgrading their systems. According to Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia, who has served on the Metro board for the past year, the Blue Line that serves Long Beach is undergoing a series of improvements. These include replacements of old light rail cars, as well as repairs to the track and electrical system. Garcia said that the biggest change to the Blue Line this year was the switch in security from the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department to

Property owners and managers recognize that young professionals are attracted to creative office space and are addressing their needs through building renovations and attracting firms such as WeWork offices – pictured at The Hubb at 100 W. Broadway. (Photograph courtesy of the Downtown Long Beach Alliance)



the Long Beach Police Department (LBPD) on the Long Beach segment of the rail line, including the city’s eight Metro stations. Metro is funding the patrol system, which has been in operation for about six months.

“The security prior to the new arrangement was, unfortunately, not providing a secure ride for everybody,” Garcia told the Business Journal. “We are lowering the response time by about four or five minutes. The average response time was 14 minutes with the L.A. County Sherriff’s Department. It’s much less now with LBPD.” Garcia reflected on his first year on the Metro board, describing it as “very interesting and successful.” He said that, since he assumed the role, the Blue Line has had more attention than before.

“The improvements are important so people feel like it’s a safe, clean, acceptable experience for everybody,” Garcia remarked. “We want to make sure everybody enjoys their riding experience. We’ve already seen a small uptick of riders in the last few months. That’s a positive development and we hope that continues.” The mayor also mentioned an initiative by Long Beach Transit (LBT) to reroute the bus stops. He said that next year riders can expect a new bus system across the city, which will improve connections and the overall rider experience.

“The goal is to create a better riding experience for people across the county, but especially for trips between Downtown Los Angeles and Downtown Long Beach,” Garcia said. “There could be more trips and less time waiting on the freeway.” LBT is conducting a comprehensive operations analysis.

The research focuses on possible changes in customer travel patterns due to increased residential development downtown. “We want to be able to be front and center with how public transit helps people move effectively around our city,” LBT President and CEO Kenneth McDonald said. LBT has partnered with local groups such as the Downtown Long Beach Alliance and the Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce to gather feedback. The study has been going on for about 10 months. “The last time we did a survey was 10 or 12 years ago,” McDonald said. “We don’t do them very regularly. These are things you look at after seven to 10 years, when there’s more construction and people moving around downtown. We want to make sure we’re providing transit systems where our customers need them, after gauging economic development in the city.” LBT is also expanding its environmental initiatives. It is installing a wireless battery charger in front of the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center for its 10 zero-emission, battery-electric buses. This project is slated for completion in March, with a goal to finish construction by the Toyota Grand Prix in April. ■

Downtown Creative Sector Fosters Local Talent

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Downtown Long Beach is home to a variety of creative sector firms: ad agencies, branding specialists, graphic designers, web design shops and companies that are combinations of all of the above. The creative firms of downtown range from one-person start-ups set up in WeWork, a subscription-based collection of offices, to major agencies like advertising firm interTrend, which occupies an entire building on Broadway. Many of these firms are growing, and their executives choose to remain in Downtown Long Beach both because they see opportunities within the area and because they feel it is an “up and coming” place to be. Each com-



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Jeff Hickman (far left) started Rocket Farm as a freelance venture in 2010 when he tired of the creative restrictions of working for large agencies. His growing firm has given young creatives the opportunity to stay and launch their careers in Long Beach. Pictured with Hickman at Rocket Farm's temporary location in WeWork, from left, are: Lindsay Mysior, project manager; Jordan Fujimori, marketing manager; Andrew Hakim, digital content manager; and Dooley the dog. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Samantha Mehlinger).

(Continued From Page 24)

pany interviewed by the Business Journal has ties to the local community, and have provided talent graduating from California State University, Long Beach and local schools with the opportunity to remain in Long Beach rather than having to move to Los Angeles for work.

Jeff Hickman founded Rocket Farm in 2010 after deciding to strike out on his own. "I came from very corporate [environments] where it's like, you have a job title and that's what you do. And that drove me nuts, because you have no creative collaboration on anything," he said.

Rocket Farm now has four employees and an office in Downtown Long Beach within the Farmers & Merchants Bank office building, although the team is currently taking up residence in WeWork while their permanent office is being refurbished. The company provides video production, graphic design, website development, social media management, brand development and other creative services. "I said yes to everything and then figured out how to build the team," Hickman said of the company's growth.

The firm has provided some young local talent the opportunity to stay in Long Beach. "I came here for school 10 years ago to study film, and I thought, 'All right, I will enjoy the city for as long as I can and then move to

L.A. and find a job in production there, because that's just how it is," Andrew Hakim, digital content manager for Rocket Farm, said. "Then I was lucky enough to meet Jeff and continue working here. And that makes me feel fortunate, to be able to stay in the city that I love so much and kind of watch it grow and acquire more clients here."

Lindsay Mysior, Rocket Farm's project manager, made a similar assumption upon graduating. "I guess my fear of graduating was going up to L.A. and being part of this big corporate company where I felt like I didn't matter as much, at least starting out. I have never felt like that here," she reflected. "There is a lot of opportunity for growth when you work so closely together."

Jordan Fujimori, digital marketing manager for Rocket Farm, was born and raised in Long Beach. "For me, it's cool to just see what downtown has become, because growing up this was not a place that I would come," she said. "It's just kind of cool to see what it has developed into."

After serving in marketing positions for a couple of large firms, including RE/MAX, CSULB alum Sal Flores-Trimble

decided to start his own company. "I started on my own, pretty much in a living room. And then, you know, it grew from there," he said. Flores-Trimble formed Kahlo Creative eight years ago. He grew the creative firm – which provides website design, branding and logo design, search engine optimization, social media management and other services – from a one-man operation to a company with five employees. Two years ago, the company moved into offices in the Farmers & Merchants Bank building in downtown.

"Downtown is up and coming. And it's wonderful. There is a lot of stuff going on, and that's why we chose downtown," Flores-Trimble said. Kahlo Creative's clients include some downtown-area businesses, including The Pie Bar, Romeo Chocolates and Groundwork Fitness.

The company also recently started an online publication called Long Beach Home + Living, which has afforded an opportunity to get more involved in the community, according to Flores-Trimble. The publication recently held an awards event called "Best of Long Beach," which highlighted local businesses, he noted.

Roberto Martinez founded Braven – a creative firm providing strategy and customer research, search engine optimization, web design and development and more – last year. He had been working for a firm in Downtown Los Angeles, and decided to start his own venture in his hometown of Long Beach.

"I am very passionate about the city," Martinez said. "So, instead of launching my company in West L.A. or Downtown L.A., I decided to move to Downtown Long Beach and really invest into my city. I made that decision fairly early. I wanted it to really be about the fabric of Long Beach and invest into it and drive economic impact into the city." Martinez has 10 employees and is planning to secure more capital to expand further," he noted.

The creative sector in downtown is growing, according to Martinez. "There is a lot of talent in Long Beach," he said, adding that the addition of WeWork's offices to downtown have attracted some start-up creative firms to the area. ■

California State University, Long Beach alum Sal Flores-Trimble started his own creative agency, Kahlo Creative, in his living room eight years ago. He and his five-person team now occupy an office at the Farmers & Merchants Bank building in Downtown Long Beach. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Brandon Richardson)



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The People And Projects Creating A Fun And Connected Downtown

■ By **SEAN WARNER**
PLACEMAKING MANAGER
DOWNTOWN LONG BEACH ALLIANCE

Placemaking is an approach to transforming public space that engages the community in making changes that promote the health, happiness, and well being of a city. The Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) believes certain placemaking projects also drive the economic growth and prosperity of DTLB. Over the past several years we have led efforts to create pop-up public spaces, crosswalk art, and a new pedestrian wayfinding program. We also support community led public space activation projects through sponsorships and our Placemaking Grant Program. In DTLB, we are lucky to have engaged residents and business owners that dedicate their time and energy to make a positive impact. So this year DLBA would like to share the insights of the DTLB stakeholders who are helping to change the face of Downtown through placemaking.

Katie Rispoli Keaotamai, executive director of We Are The Next, introduced Step Back viewing devices to DTLB in 2017. The devices, which were partially funded by a DLBA Placemaking Grant, are outfitted with a historic image taken from the exact location where they are installed to help tell the story of Downtown's evolution. Step Back viewing devices can be found at the Deukmejian Courthouse, The Promenade and Broadway, and in the East Village at Atlantic Avenue and 1st Street.

Shelby Batalla, owner of Renew Garden Care, and Helen Cheuk, senior designer at Studio One Eleven, developed Urban Furniture. The six custom-made art installations were partially funded by a DLBA Placemaking Grant and function as seating, public art and wayfinding. Urban Furniture will debut in early 2018 on Pine Avenue between Shoreline Drive and Ocean Boulevard.

Julia Y. Huang, CEO of Intertrend Communications, was the force that brought the international outdoor mural festival Pow! Wow! to Long Beach in 2015. Pow! Wow! Long Beach, of which DLBA is a sponsor, completed its third edition this past July.

Daphne Draayer, resident of the East Village Arts District, was the idea creator behind the East Village Outdoor Mural Gallery project. Partially funded by a DLBA Placemaking Grant, the project introduced 15 new murals to alleys in the East Village Arts District in 2016 and 2017.

Debra Kahookele, Kristen Dunn, Joen Garnica and Lisa Callamaro of the Promenade Area Residents Association spearheaded the effort to build a children's playground at Promenade Square Park. The playground was partially funded by a DLBA Placemaking Grant, and since its opening a year ago has been a popular place for Downtown families to gather and socialize.

What motivated you to get involved in the community?

Huang: Our relationship with the city, in particular Downtown Long Beach, changed immediately after our firm relocated from a high-rise to the building we now lovingly call Psychic Temple on Broadway. What we considered just a "nice view" before is now an extension of where we live and work. More importantly, "people on the street" now became "neighbors." It's hard not to get involved with the community when this kind of transformation happens.

Draayer: We could always use more art, and we need to brighten up our alleys. I love the city, and I love the feeling of having a positive impact on my surroundings.

Callamaro: Downtown is like a small town in a larger city, and I was inspired by my friends who have been involved for years and have made a difference.

Garnica: When I moved to DTLB 15 years ago, there was not much downtown in terms of residents. When the Promenade buildings came along, it was exciting to have and meet new neighbors, many like-minded neighbors that wanted to see downtown thrive all while having fun. I didn't miss an opportunity to join them in making a better downtown.

What are the benefits of improved public spaces?

Keaotamai: Welcoming and interactive public spaces offer opportunities for enjoyment, and encourage visitors and residents to feel a connection with the places they spend their time in our city. Today I think our biggest challenge is ensuring that the improvements we make in public spaces meet the needs of all residents, and that they are inviting to people of all backgrounds.

Batalla: Our installation aims to guide pedestrians toward places of interest and activate the streetscape. The custom furniture pieces and wayfinding signage we designed are inspired by iconic Long Beach destinations like the Queen Mary, Pine Avenue, and the Shoreline Village Lighthouse. These connections strengthen pedestrian networks and encourage urban exploration.

Draayer: When we make each street safe and unique, it draws new life into the city.

Kahookele: Activating and improving public spaces helps bring the neighborhood together and keeps our community safe.

Garnica: Public spaces are gathering places for neighbors, and folks who work and play in the downtown. A community that knows each other is a better and safer community.

What benefits did your project bring to DTLB?

Keaotamai: The Step Back project was designed to help residents, workers and visitors in downtown reflect upon the way our cities change over time. The viewers are an experience – they don't imply that change is positive or negative.



The Loop at Pine Avenue and Ocean Boulevard. (DLBA photograph)



Step Back project.
(DLBA photograph)

Instead, they highlight the fact that change happens. My hope is that users will walk away a bit more aware of the evolution constantly happening around them, and will grow to be more appreciative of the experiences they have in our public spaces.

Batalla: We hope that the wayfinding component of our project will lead people to explore the many unique destinations around the city and support local retailers.

Huang: I'd like to think Pow! Wow! Long Beach changed the perception people had of public art in the city. I'd also like to believe the one-week-plus event opened up Long Beach, and of course DTLB, to people around the world.

Draayer: Downtown Long Beach inspired me to jump in and be a part of the community. The murals we added to the alleys help make everyone feel a part of their community. It feels connected and made for us all.

Kahookele: The Promenade Square Park Playground brought the family community together and created an incentive for them to stay in downtown with their kids.

Dunn: As a mother of a now five-year-old, I am happy to have a place for my child and her friends to play. Prior to the playground being built, we had to jump in the car to get to a playground as did other Promenade families so we didn't socialize as much then. Now we can just walk out the door and run into friends and parents gathering in our own neighborhood.

Callamaro: The playground put a spotlight on something we knew about our community already: there are families here – some that live here, some that work here, some that visit here. These people feel like they are welcomed, and that it's not just a place to eat, drink and dance. It's a place for people to live.

Garnica: It's activated a park that didn't see much daily activity prior to its completion. The playground is a new public space where people gather and build community. We now host movie nights at Promenade Square Park.



Promenade Square Park Playground.. (DLBA photograph)

Did your completed project alter your perception of public spaces?

Keotamai: The curiosity of people in our public spaces impresses me, and after doing this project I recognize what an asset that curiosity is. More projects like Step Back, and other placemaking projects, need to happen to capitalize upon it and encourage pedestrians in our cities to not only witness, but interact with or even improve upon, our built environment.

Batalla: Our goal was to activate Pine Avenue from Shoreline Village into the downtown area. Interestingly enough, we were not the only ones trying to establish this connection. The opening of The Loop on the corner of Pine + Ocean only strengthened our concept and was very exciting for us. This project expanded our understanding of public space and introduced us to the many people who bring these special places to life.

Huang: I found myself paying more attention to our surroundings. In particular, I have been obsessed with thinking about how we can improve public spaces that seem to be ignored and abused, like back alleys and parking lots.

Callamaro: It was fascinating how quickly and immediately the playground was used and embraced. It seemed like it had been there forever.

Dunn: I often see public spaces created and not used in the way that they were intended to be used. The playground is an example of a successful activation of an underutilized public space. Its success has by far surpassed my expectations.

Garnica: It is a great source of pride and joy to know the four of us came together with a vision for our neighborhood, and saw it through to successful completion and activation. It wasn't easy, but it was well worth it.

How would you recommend someone become engaged in making their community a better place?

Keotamai: In my experience, if you're fueled enough by the consequences of your inaction, it's easy to find the motivation to take action.

Batalla: There are so many opportunities to get involved. Find organizations you believe in and reach out to them. This project would not be possible without the support from the local Long Beach organizations that worked with us.

Huang: Making a contribution to improve our community is not hard work. To simply begin caring is a good start.

Draayer: If you don't have the experience, don't let it hold you back. Never be afraid to ask for help. The city needs us all to participate in order for the public spaces to accurately reflect its residents.

Callamaro: Volunteer to be on a committee or show up at the meetings to learn and contribute thoughts, ideas, muscle, and hours.

Dunn: I think many people hold back from getting involved because they feel that they can't make a difference in a city of this size. This is far from being true, and I would encourage everyone to get involved by starting at the neighborhood level.

Garnica: Long Beach is a wonderful big city with a small town-welcoming feel. It is fairly easy to find a welcoming neighborhood association or community group where you can get involved. You make a difference.

(Sean Warner is the placemaking manager for the Downtown Long Beach Alliance. The DLBA works with the community to improve DTLB's public realm. If you have an idea or would like to get involved, you can contact Sean at seanw@dlba.org.) ■



A Diverse And Vibrant Downtown Attracts Different Demographics

■ By **ANNE ARTLEY**
STAFF WRITER

Today's Downtown Long Beach is "not your mom and dad's downtown," said Broc Coward, the chief operating officer of the Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA).

"I think when folks come down here, they're happily surprised by a change in the mood and the character of downtown," he said. "They get to see all the building that has taken place over the last 10 years. But I think also, down at the street level, there's a feeling of safety and involvement."

Coward attributed some of this progress to the DLBA's Clean and Safe

Another DLBA initiative that helps promote both safety and the character of Downtown Long Beach is the creative crosswalks, Coward pointed out. The organization funded the painting of five crosswalks on Pine Avenue between 1st and 7th streets that are designed to reflect both the history of Long Beach and the aquatic life found off its shoreline. Each is designed so that viewers see one image when crossing one way, and another when crossing the opposite way. For example, drawings of ships are juxtaposed with pacific rock crabs between Broadway and 3rd Street.

"When you see someone crossing the street, you can see their head tilting and then the 'aha!' moment when they get it. It's pretty cool," Coward said.

Sean Warner, the DLBA's placemaking manager, described another project that integrates downtown visitors with their surroundings. "Step Back" is an installation of viewfinders on three street crossings with a historic image from the same location. The project was implemented with a \$10,000 community grant from the DLBA to We Are The Next, a nonprofit that specializes in civic engagement.

Warner said the alliance has also partnered with the city to develop a comprehensive wayfinding program that provides signs and maps to help pedestrians better navigate the downtown area.

"The goal is to put signs throughout downtown so people can walk rather than taking Lyft or Uber," Warner said. "People think they can just take out their cell phone and look up their destination, but a lot of times I see people just holding their cell phones and looking around."

In 2016, Warner said the DLBA worked to transform a lot at Pine Avenue and Ocean Boulevard into a public space called The Loop. This space features free live local music on Friday afternoons. According to Warner, the DLBA is looking into upgrading The Loop next year.

Warner himself has been a downtown resident for more than 10 years. He said it was the "diversity" that attracted him to the neighborhood.

"I think it's a big draw," he said. "It's also an urban area with urban amenities. You can walk to the grocery store, restaurants and bars. It's got great transit and bike facilities with the recently introduced bike share program. We've got the Metro Blue Line, so you can get to Downtown L.A. within an hour. You can get to Alamitos Beach in a short walk to take a run. For me, it checked off all the boxes."

And according to real estate brokers, the area is also 'checking off the boxes' for two main demographics: young professionals in their 20s and 30s, and empty-nesters in their 50s and 60s. Stepp Commercial Multi-Family Investments President Robert Stepp said he noticed a "new wave" of young professionals coming to the area about three years ago.

"Five or 10 years ago, it wasn't even safe to live here," he said. "Now there's better retail, restaurants and more things to do."

Mike Dunfee, owner of the Mike Dunfee Group, a property management company, said the same amenities attract the empty-nesters.

"They like the idea that they can buy a nice condo, walk to the bar to get some drinks, get on their bikes and ride on the bike path," he said. "They can also lock the door and travel for a month and everything will be fine." Dunfee remarked that he found many in this demographic are moving from Rancho Palos Verdes and are looking to downsize.

Stepp estimated that about 30 development projects are currently underway in downtown, which add value to the area.

"There's a lot of institutional money coming into the market that we haven't seen in the past," he said. "It's building new product, which all has parking underneath it. [These developments] are helping to bring a higher-end demographic to the area, which has more income to spend on restaurants, retail and entertainment."

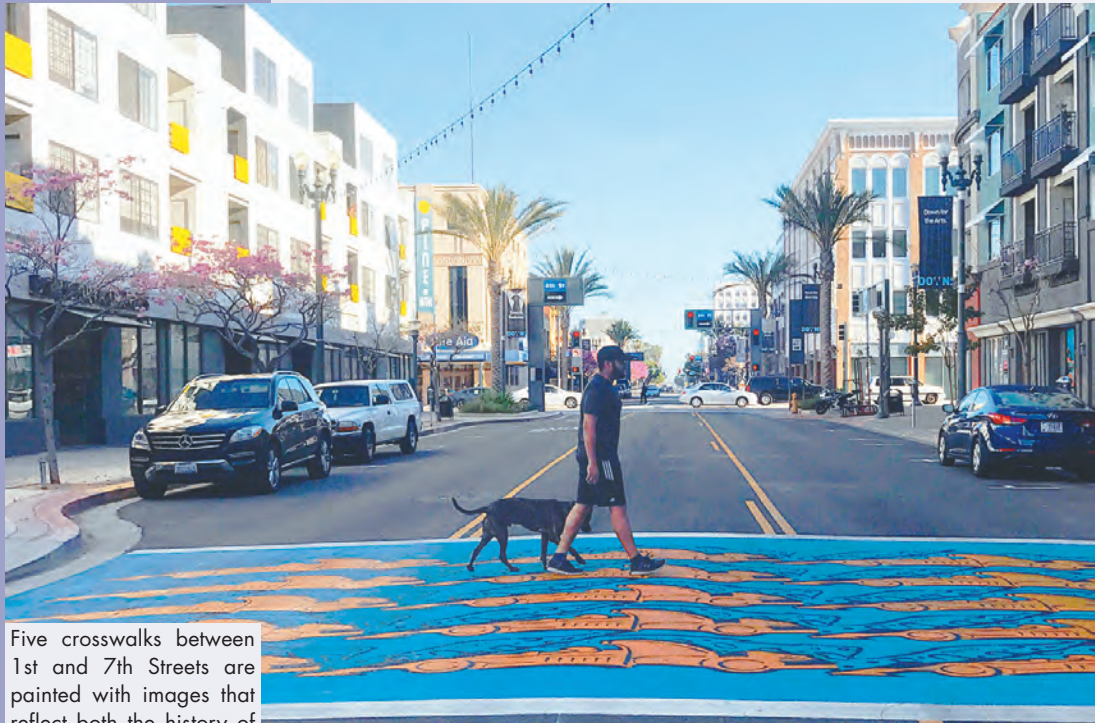
President of the Downtown Residential Council (DRC) Bob Kelton estimated that about 220 restaurants are located within a couple of miles of where he lives downtown, which is one of the factors that drew him to the area.

"We can easily walk out and get a variety of different cuisines," he said, describing the convenience as "fabulous."

The DRC has planted more trees in the area and is holding four informational forums next year. The first one is on public safety and another is about parking.

As for additional amenities, both Dunfee and Coward said they would like to see more areas built for families, such as nearby parks, as some of the young professional crowd are starting to have kids. Whereas in the past they would migrate to another area, Dunfee and Coward said they have noticed more of them are sticking around Downtown Long Beach.

"It used to be that, if you had kids, you were 'voted off the island,'" Dunfee said. "Now people are starting not to want to leave." ■



Five crosswalks between 1st and 7th Streets are painted with images that reflect both the history of Long Beach and the aquatic life found off its shoreline. Each is designed so that viewers see one image when crossing one way, and another when crossing the opposite way. (DLBA photograph)

Teams, which aim to improve the area's physical appearance as well as the overall downtown experience. The safe team patrols the neighborhood and provides directions and recommendations to visitors. It also partners with the police department and can respond to minor issues, Coward said.

"The folks who last came down here about 15 or 20 years ago remember a town that was transitioning from being a Navy town and did not have a very active restaurant or retail component," Coward said. "We've transitioned to having more of a diverse downtown with different kinds of businesses."

Coward said he would like to increase awareness of some of the services the safe team provides. For example, they are available to escort visitors back to hotels from restaurants and bars within the downtown area. They also provide roadside assistance in case of a dead car battery or flat tire.

The Current is a luxury high-rise apartment building located at 707 E. Ocean Blvd. A second luxury apartment building is slated to begin construction next to The Current next year. (DLBA photograph)



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Downtown Long Beach Serves Up Local Crafts And Delicacies

■ By **ANNE ARTLEY**
STAFF WRITER

Laurie Gray, the owner of The Pie Bar on North Pine Avenue in Downtown Long Beach, left the corporate world after 30 years to rescue the “lost art” of pie making.

“Lots of people don’t have the time or skills to make fresh, handmade pie,” she said. “I wanted to make sure pie didn’t die.”

Gray is one of many local artisans who have set up shop in Downtown Long Beach. After selling her pies from home for about a year, she moved into MADE by Millworks, a consignment shop located downtown. Five food vendors who started out at MADE now have their own shops, three of which are downtown. These merchants, which include Romeo Chocolates and Saints and Sinners Bakeshop, are part of what is known as “Decadent Row,” a string of small businesses downtown that offer desserts and delicacies.

MADE is not only a store, but also a mixed-use space that hosts art openings and a monthly storytelling event. It features a pop-up restaurant, called The Wild Chive, that serves a vegan brunch every Sunday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

“Our general philosophy is that the store allows ‘makers’ to have a place to sell their products to tourists and locals without the expenditures of rent or insurance,” Owner Michelle Molina said.

MADE by Millworks takes a “hyper-local” approach, featuring only

brands from within 20 miles of the shop, according to Manager Heather Kern. Kern and Molina coordinate a theme for the art, readings and products in the store so it has a consistent feel. This month’s theme, “punk rock Christmas,” encompasses a book signing with former DJ Richard Blade on December 21 from 6 to 9 p.m., 240 Pine Ave. Blade’s autobiography, “World In My Eyes,” traces the DJ’s rise from spinning tunes at European clubs to becoming a well-known radio personality in Los Angeles.

Similarly, the art gallery features a collection of works from four photographers who are also musicians. The closing reception is from 7 to 10 p.m. on December 29 and the artists will be in attendance.

“It’s not just a retail shop, it really is a showcase for Long Beach culture,” Kern said. “Someone came in once and asked me if it was a store because she thought it was a gallery. This was a huge compliment.”

Both Saints & Sinners Bakery Owner Traci De La Torre and Gray said they were attracted to the active energy and vivacity of the downtown area.

“I think it’s awesome,” De La Torre said of the neighborhood. “I’ve lived in Long Beach for 15 years and I love it. I think this area is up and coming. I love that people are walking their dogs constantly and coming in here on rollerblades. I wanted to be a part of that vibe.”

Gray agreed that Downtown Long Beach is an ideal location for a small business, as the community embraces independent vendors and local artisans. Though her goal is to expand the Pie Bar in the next 10 years to multiple locations around the country, she said she would like to build up from her own backyard.

“I knew downtown was the number one place I wanted to be,” she said. “I just knew growth was coming to Downtown Long Beach in the form of new residences being built and new businesses coming in. We also get a lot of visitors from conventions downtown who are always looking for something local, that’s special and unique.” ■

Local merchants with businesses on “Decadent Row,” a string of downtown shops featuring desserts and delicacies, pose at MADE by Millworks, where they each got their start. Pictured, from left, are: MADE by Millworks Owner Michelle Molina; Romeo Chocolates Owner Romeo Garcia; Saints & Sinners Bakeshop Owner Traci De La Torre; The Pie Bar Owner Laurie Gray; and MADE Manager Heather Kern. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Anne Artley)





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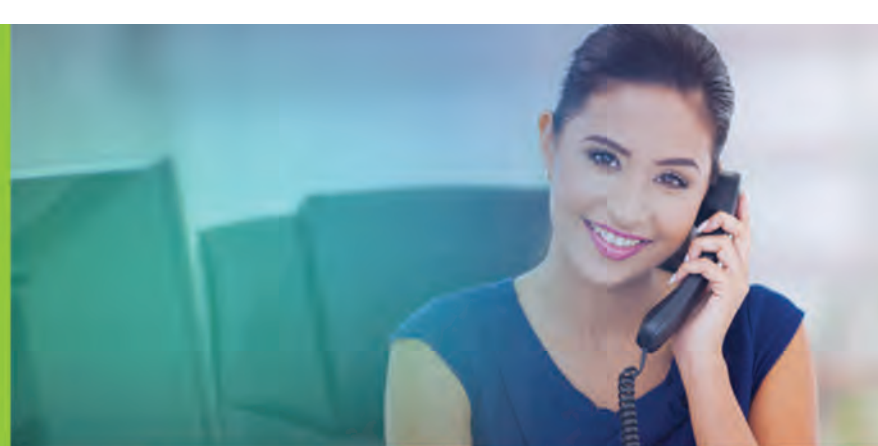


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Community Members Pitch In To Create A Hub Of Culture And Connectedness

■ By **ANNE ARTLEY**
STAFF WRITER

From beautifying public spaces to providing social services to supporting local artists and galleries – and even pitching our city to a global behemoth – local volunteers have taken on projects to enrich Downtown Long Beach and help outsiders recognize Long Beach’s assets.

Arlene Mercer is the executive director of Urban Community Outreach, a nonprofit organization based in Downtown Long Beach that connects the homeless population with resources. She also started her own organization, Food Finders, in 1989, which distributes donated food from grocery stores, to missions, shelters and other agencies.

“We have too many homeless,” she said. “It’s particularly painful for me to see so many homeless families and children in the street.”

The First Congregational Church of Long Beach started Urban Community Outreach in 2006, after congregants expressed dismay at the number of homeless people outside on Sunday since many public agencies are closed that day, Mercer said.

“Sundays are now intake days where we have a nutritionist come in,”

an agency rather than giving homeless individuals food or money.

Last year, Urban Community Outreach provided more than 20,000 hot meals and drew in about 1,371 volunteers, according to Mercer. The community advocate said she has seen an improvement in homelessness in the past 10 years since the nonprofit became incorporated.

“I don’t live in Downtown Long Beach, but I consider it mine since I’m serving the people there so much,” she said.

Michael Mosselli and Marty Meier, owners of Brushstrokes and Beverages, also identified an unmet need in Downtown Long Beach. Last June, when the organizers of the Long Beach Art Walk decided to stop hosting the monthly event because street closures were no longer allowed, Mosselli and Meier revived it, but with a few changes.

The walk runs from 4th Street to 1st Street. Before, the businesses had closed for the event, and now they can choose to participate by showcasing work from local artists. A pink balloon outside signifies a gallery and a blue one indicates retail. “Now it runs through about 23 different businesses,” Mosselli said.

“The businesses really love the design of it since they’re getting traffic now,” Mosselli said. He reported that seven artists showcase their works in his shop. The event takes place on the second Saturday of every month.

POW! WOW! Long Beach is another project in Downtown Long Beach that centers on art. The city welcomed the global initiative two years ago. The project encompasses installation of murals around the neighborhood and partnerships with restaurants and bars to create food and beverages to serve at POW! WOW! events.

Dani Concepcion, the regional director of the Long Beach chapter of POW! WOW!, took over the project in its third year in the city.

“The reason I had interest in it is because it represents culture. It draws out emotions,” she said. “Art is culture, music is culture, people

are culture. It just made sense to be part of something so big and so local at the same time.”

Last year, Long Beach Creamery created an ice cream flavor with a splatter pattern from a POW! WOW! mural to serve at a POW! WOW! event at the Museum of Latin American Art, Concepcion said.

“What better way to amplify these brands that are in Long Beach than by integrating them into our project, [whose aim] is simply to beautify the community?” Concepcion expressed.

In addition to her involvement with POW! WOW! Long Beach, Concepcion works at interTrend Communications, a downtown advertising firm. interTrend’s Group Account Director Joe Minh also took part in a side project: a pitch to bring a second Amazon headquarters to Long Beach and Huntington Beach.

The team, which worked on the proposal pro bono, submitted a video pitch featuring actor Kevin Pollack and presented the proposal as a coffee table book as a nod to the company’s roots as an online book retailer, according to Minh.

“We put the book together as a creative way to package the art of the response,” Minh said. “We decided the book was an interesting way of seeing

your art come to life.”

Minh said the interTrend team became involved in the project when The Long Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau approached the agency.

“We have quite a few folks [at interTrend] who live in the city,” Minh said. “It was a great way to get connected into Long Beach and be part of it in a different way.”

Minh described the proposal as “our little baby that went out the door.” He said it posed a unique challenge to create a brand identity and tell the story of two metropolitan areas. ■



Dani Concepcion and Joe Minh are with interTrend Communications, a creative firm in Downtown Long Beach. Concepcion and Minh have taken part in projects that invest in the Long Beach area. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Anne Artley)

Mercer said. “We provide two hot, nutritious meals. This is to draw people in. When you have good food, they’ll come to you and this is what you want.”

Among the services the nonprofit provides, Urban Community Outreach offers help with résumés and job searches. They also have computer labs open and a system for backing up documents, since personal papers are often stolen or lost to bad weather.

The organization aims to instill a philosophy of self-reliance. “A lot of people don’t know the proper way to help people out of homelessness,” Mercer said. She encourages those who want to help to work through



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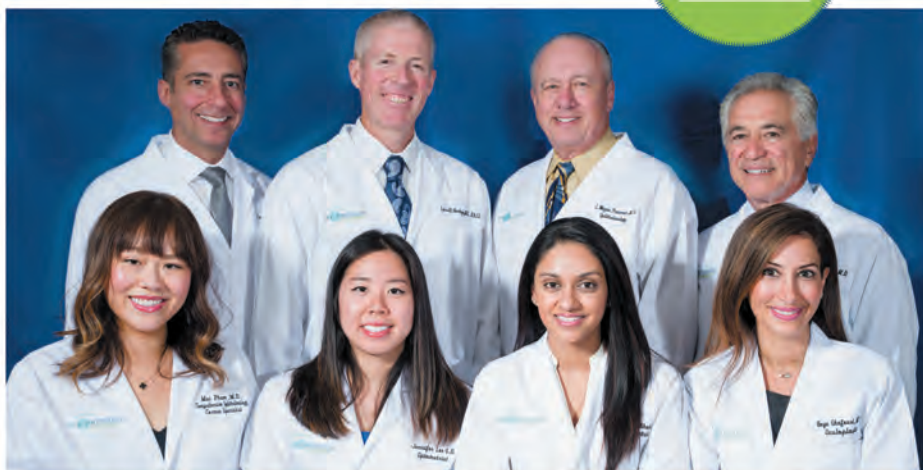
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Options Galore For Shopping And Dining In Downtown Long Beach

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Much like the city as a whole is made up of a collection of neighborhoods and business corridors with their own unique character, Downtown Long Beach itself is home to a number of different districts for shopping and dining, each with a distinct personality. At downtown’s eastern edge is the East Village Arts District, which spans



Thomas R. Kerns opened his menswear store, Butterscotch, in August. He focuses on premium clothing meant for daily use, and has an in-store coffee bar. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)

from Long Beach Boulevard to Alamitos Avenue east to west and from 1st Street to 7th Street north to south. The village is named for its history of arts institutions and businesses, and the neighborhood retains a historic flair, with its buildings ranging in date from the early 1900s to contemporary times. Thomas R. Kerns opened his men’s boutique, Butterscotch, in August in the heart of the East Village Arts District at Broadway and Linden Avenue. His shop is located across the street from a number of historic buildings, including the Broadlind Hotel – now host to businesses such as the Blind Donkey, a whiskey bar featured in the movie “La La Land,” the eatery Linden Public and District Wine, and he is located adjacent to the home goods store ReCircle Home. A resident of the city for eight years, Kerns said he knew he wanted his business, a dream of his, to be located in the East Village. He described the

Burgerim, a quick-serve gourmet hamburger restaurant, is opening soon at The Streets on Long Beach Boulevard and 3rd Street. From left, Owners Barry, Stephany and Jaz Estrin are pictured with their staff. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Pat Flynn)



neighborhood as “curated” and “eclectic.” “The East Arts Village is a really great location,” Kerns said. “We have a really good mix of everything. We have some vintage, we have some home goods. We have modern, contemporary furniture stores. We have a menswear shop, ladies boutiques,” he said adding a number of area restaurants to his list: James Republic, Utopia, and Padre among them.

The East Village has great foot traffic, according to Kerns. He noted that people often stop into his shop after visiting an area restaurant or other shops, or even while waiting to get their hair cut at the barbershop across the street. Bridging the East Village with the downtown core of Pine Avenue is The Promenade, a strip of restaurants, shops and businesses that run from just south of Broadway up to The Streets, a shopping center that encompasses several square blocks. The Promenade, which is closed to vehicular traffic, features an array of businesses – from the casual beer joints Beachwood BBQ and Congregation Ale House, to the gourmet hot dog eatery Dog Haus, and the old-fashioned cocktail bar, The Stave.

The Promenade North, located on the north side of 3rd Street, recently received a contemporary facelift thanks to an investment by its owner, Shooshani Developers LLC. According to Owner’s Representative Tony Shooshani, the vacant retail spots at the refurbished center are 100% leased, with most tenants slated to move in next year. Once they do, the spot may become known as something of a locale for international cuisine. New tenants slated to open at The Streets on The Promenade North and on 3rd Street include: The Thick Shake Factory, an India-based gourmet shake franchise; Loose Leaf Boba Tea Company; Poke Cat, a poke (a Hawaiian raw fish salad dish, pronounced ‘po-kay’) restaurant; a Lebanese restaurant; Party Monkey, an acai bowl eatery; and Burgerim, a gourmet hamburger quick-serve restaurant.

Table 301, a restaurant by the same owners as Signal Hill’s Delius restaurant, is slated to open in January where The Promenade North meets Harvey Milk Park, according to Shooshani, who added that the restaurant will feature outdoor dining right at the park. “That is truly the connection that is going to connect the southern part of The Promenade to the north[ern part],” he said. Luis Navarro, a local restaurateur, plans to open a restaurant, Willmore Yards Eatery, and a distillery, Portuguese Bend Distillery, across from Table 301 in a building mostly occupied by Retail Design Collaborative and Studio One Eleven. Shooshani said the mix of tenants moving in next year were curated and “hand-picked.” “We wanted to keep it local and keep it more of an international flavor but with a local base to it [in terms of] operators and ownership,” he said.

A number of new businesses have moved into The Streets this year, including several along Pine Avenue, such as Pinot’s Palette, Romeo Chocolates, Plant Junkie and others, Shooshani noted. Existing businesses, such as King Buffet, Chuck E. Cheese’s and Big 5 Sporting Goods, have been doing well, he added. “This is an exciting time for Long Beach and we just are so super happy to be a part of it,” Shooshani said. “And 2018 is going to be a phenomenal year for us because of all of these openings and businesses that are going to come to downtown and come to our project and to The Streets.”

South of The Streets from 4th Street to Ocean Boulevard, Pine Avenue is home to an array of business restaurants, including The Federal Bar, BO-beau kitchen + roof tap, George’s Greek Cafe, Agaves, Octopus, Shannon’s On Pine, Taco Beach and many others. It is also home to retailers like Sheikh Shoes and the artisan collaborative MADE by Millworks, a number of gyms, and many other businesses. “I think Pine is doing great,” Jeff Osborn, manager of The Federal Bar, said. The restaurant is located at Pine Avenue and 1st Street in the historic Security National Pacific Bank building, and features an underground music venue and speakeasy. “I’m excited for all the new housing and stuff that’s opening up. There is a lot of construction going on right now, so I think in the next couple of years it’s really going to take off.” Osborn noted that The Federal Bar benefits when conventions come to the area. “We had really busy lunches this week because there was a large convention in town,” he said.

Past 4th Street, the street is known as “North Pine,”

an up-and-coming area home to an eclectic assortment of businesses, including Long Beach Vintage Etc, DG Boxing Gym, the offices of the Press-Telegram and Toxic Toast Records.

“Toxic Toast Records opened about three years ago,” Owner Andy George said, noting that he and a silent business partner bought the building the business is housed in at 757 Pine Ave. “We have been operating in the black and have been doing a lot to grow our stock and carry more diversity in the genres of music.” Toxic Toast is particularly known for its selection of rock and punk rock music.

George said he chose the shop’s location on North Pine because of its proximity to diverse communities. “What’s going on with punk rock is like a lot of the younger punks are mostly from the Latino community,” George said.

“I feel like the area of North Pine that we’re at has a lot of potential to become more revitalized,” George said. “It’s kind of like a transition area. My business partner and I foresaw the neighborhood getting better, not worse.” George added that he is opening a music venue in the same building, which should help bring more traffic to the area. “I want to revitalize the neighborhood. I don’t want to gentrify the neighborhood,” he said.

There are many businesses located to the west of Pine on Pacific and Magnolia Avenues, which have proximity to the George Deukmejian Courthouse and Long Beach City Hall. Some of these businesses include coffee shops and breakfast joints like the Birdcage Café and the Potholder Restaurant, and chain retailers and eateries like Jimmy John’s and Starbucks.

By the water, Shoreline Village and The Pike Outlets provide visitors and locals alike with a myriad of restaurants, national retailers and small mom and pop shops. Shoreline Village, a Cape Cod-style boardwalk, features activities like an arcade and rentals of tandem bikes, Segways and other modes of transit perfect for a ride down the city’s beach

Craft Beer, Wine And Cider Businesses Make Up A Growing Scene In Downtown Long Beach

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**
ASSISTANT EDITOR

As the popularity of craft brews has taken off nationally, Downtown Long Beach has developed its own blossoming craft beer, wine and cider scene that continues to grow.

Alex Naticchioni and co-owner Mike Menges opened The Wine Bar, which offers craft beers and libations from smaller wineries, in 2009. At the time, Naticchioni recalled that downtown was not looked upon as a safe place by many. Since then, however, efforts by the city and community groups have energized the area, he said. That energy has helped foster the burgeoning popularity of craft beer and wine joints like The Wine Bar, which is located on Ocean Boulevard at the ground floor of the Camden Apartments.

The Wine Bar has always specialized in boutique wines by wineries with a more hands-on approach, according to Naticchioni. Its selection of craft brews grew over time. “We kind of changed our program and got away from all of the domestic stuff and only focused on the craft stuff,” he said. “And it has taken off. . . . I think people are seeking craft beer more than they are anything else right now.”

Naticchioni attributed the growing craft beer scene in downtown to Beachwood BBQ and Congregation Ale House, two restaurants located on The Promenade that were some of the first to offer craft brews in the area. Gabriel Gordon, owner of Beachwood BBQ, expanded by opening the Beachwood Blendery around the corner on Long Beach Boulevard in 2015. The tap room began with limited hours, offering special sour beers brewed in house, and is now open five days a week.

“We didn’t really release any beer until towards the end of 2016. And even then, we only started in March of this year producing core beer that we will be making regularly,” Gordon said. “We have our base Lambic style beer which is called ‘Chaos is a Friend of Mine,’ and then we do fruited and dry-hopped iterations of it. . . . So at any given time there are like four core beers out.”



The Wine Bar, located on Ocean Boulevard beneath the Camden Apartments, offers a variety of boutique wines and craft beers. Pictured, from left, are Co-Owners Mike Menges, Zack Walters and Alex Naticchioni. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)

path. Restaurants like Parkers’ Lighthouse and Tijuana Jack’s offer waterfront dining. Shoppers at Shoreline Village can find everything from Middle East-inspired home furnishings at Istanbul Home, to comics at Shoreline Comics, to any type of hot sauce they could imagine at Hot Licks, and much more.

The Pike Outlets is another of downtown’s larger shopping centers, and is home to about a dozen national brands, including the new Express Outlets, H&M, F21 Red, Gap, Converse, Restoration Hardware and more. It is also boasts about a dozen restaurants, including Islands Restaurant, The Auld Dubliner, California Pizza Kitchen and others. Across Shoreline Drive, there are several restaurants along Rainbow Harbor, including Bubba Gump Shrimp Co., P.F. Chang’s, Famous Dave’s, The Outback Steakhouse and Gladstones. The Pike Outlets is also home to a Cinemark theater and the Laugh Factory.

“For dining you have got a ton of options, from fresh seafood to Asian cuisine, barbecue, burgers and fries – anything you can think of, you can get here within walking distance,” Morgan Erickson, regional general manager for DDR Corp., operator of The Pike Outlets, said. A WaBa Grill is expected to open in the spring, as is a Kay Jewelers, he added.

Visitors to The Pike Outlets are typically a blend of area residents and out-of-town travelers visiting for conventions, he said. “We see a lot of familiar faces who walk over, go to the movies, get dinner. And you do notice people coming in on cruise ships and doing quite a bit of shopping as well,” he observed.

“If you just take a walk around town, there is a ton of construction,” Erickson said. “City Hall is being redone. There is a new multi-family residential development that is going on right next to our property here. So, I guess what I am saying is, between the Aquarium, the Pike, the Queen Mary and Shoreline Village, it’s all very encouraging. There is a lot going on.” ■

Gordon said that he has had a good experience running businesses in Long Beach. “The city and the people who live in the city have totally embraced us and supported us. It’s a fun place to do business and we’re super glad to be part of the community,” he said. “We are stoked to see more restaurants and breweries, and maybe a distillery or two, opening. It just makes for a really vibrant kind of hospitality zone in our area.”

Gordon reflected, “I think the whole craft movement of food and beverage is a growing movement in every community, and Long Beach being a big city has the potential to do it well, and better, due to the density of population.” Plus, he added, the community here tends to be very supportive of Long Beach enterprises.

Downtown Long Beach is also home to Great Society Cider & Mead, one of very few cider bars in the state, and even in the country, that offers 12 ciders and eight meads on tap, according to owners Otto and Brenda Radtke. The two opened the bar and restaurant in 2016.

“It’s really niche. The closest you can get to a business like ours is San Francisco,” Otto Radtke said. “We are kind of on the forefront of this.” In addition to cider and mead, Great Society also offers some apple and other fruit-based wines, as well as hard kombucha.

Though the cider bar originally experienced a great deal of interest, business has slowed down a bit, Radtke said he expects it to pick back up as more people learn about Great Society, and as the overall craft beverage scene continues to grow.

Gino Espinosa bought Public Beer Wine Shop last year, after the business had been open at 121 W. 4th St. for three years. Since then, he has brought in Chef Eduardo Ruiz as a co-owner and has begun offering a menu in addition to craft beer and wine. “Our collaborative dinners with breweries that include a high-end five-course dinner and beer pairing, in addition to our special menu weekends have been big hits in the community,” he said via e-mail. “And of course, making new beer available to the [Long Beach community] that normally is not, has also been essential in our growth and being recognized as a destination craft beer bar and bottle shop.”

Espinosa personally does all the buying for the shop, and dedicates “a significant amount of time and effort into establishing new accounts with up-and-coming breweries, or acquiring popular and sought-after beer from breweries that may not distribute.” Making trips to breweries in the Bay Area, Ventura County and San Diego to bring back brews are not uncommon for Espinosa.

“There is no questioning the progressive growth of the craft beer/wine/spirits scene in DTLB,” Espinosa said. “Since taking over Public last April, it has been great to see the new businesses come into downtown with a focus on libations.” ■

No Shortage Of Arts And Entertainment In Downtown Long Beach

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Like any major urban downtown, Downtown Long Beach is a hub for arts and entertainment. Residents needn't get in their cars to catch a musical, opera, symphony or comedy performance in Los Angeles, but instead can enjoy a variety of performances in their own backyard. The area is also home to a number of arts institutions and galleries, many of which are concentrated in downtown's East Village Arts District.

The Long Beach Performing Arts Center at the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center includes the 825-seat Beverly O'Neill Theater and the 3,000-plus seat Terrace Theater, which boast year-round performances by local arts organizations, as well as touring acts.

The Terrace Theater is growing in population with comedians, according to John Braun, assistant manager of the convention center. "We are really getting a reputation in the Terrace Theater for comedians because they like the 3,000-seat venue, which is not common," Braun said. "Just this year we have had Louis C.K., we just had Joe Rogan, we have had Brian Regan, we had Kevin Hart. Coming up we have Sebastian Maniscalco on February 18."

The Terrace Theater hosts numerous cultural acts and events throughout the year, including the international phenomenon Shen Yun, a traditional Chinese performance group, and E Hula Mau, a celebration of Hawaiian culture. It is also home of the Long Beach Ballet's annual production of The Nutcracker, and hosts performances by the Long Beach Symphony.

The symphony is now in its 83rd year serving the Long Beach community,

according to Executive Director Kelly Lucera. The symphony has a new music director, Eckart Preu, who is leading an era of artistic growth for the organization, Lucera noted. "We are seeing an extraordinary amount of community support not just for him but for the initiatives we are launching and for the vision of his that we share," she said.

"There are a lot of exciting things happening to the symphony right now," Lucera said. "We have increased our board from 23 members to 43. So we have a very active, thriving board that is incredibly diverse and visionary."

An increasing number of employees and residents in downtown are helping to bolster the arts community, Lucera observed. "I see a lot of authentic musical performances popping up in the restaurants on Pine Avenue and in the coffee shops, as well as the 4th Street area. And it's really exciting to see those kinds of organic performances," she said.

Located in the same center, the Beverly O'Neill Theater offers a full season of performances by International City Theatre (ICT), Musical Theatre West, baroque orchestra Musica Angelica, the Long Beach Opera and the Long Beach Camerata Singers.

Near the convention center, The Pike Outlets offers two venues for a night on the town, including Sgt Pepper's Dueling Pianos and the Laugh Factory.

Further inland, The Streets also offers theatrical performances at The Found Theatre, a black box theater run by a long-time Long Beach organization dedicated to producing original works. The theater seats 66 people.

"We have always done original material," Found Theatre Executive Director Virginia DeMoss said. "This past year we worked with a group of graduates from Cal State Long Beach, a great bunch of kids who are trying to do the same thing we did when we started out – they want to work in theater, [and] they don't want to audition for things they won't get." The students put on a play festival in September, an event that will be repeated in 2018. "They solicited two plays from Long Beach residents and brought in actors and directors and things like that and did two weekends of short plays," DeMoss said.

"Once again, we're going to try to start bringing back the downtown schools for daytime performances," DeMoss said of the theater's student outreach. "We did that for quite a few years. It's really a neat thing, because most of the kids have never been inside a live theater before, and so it's their first experience."

ICT, Musical Theater West, Long Beach Symphony and other arts organizations also have programs for students.

In the East Village Arts District, the nonprofit-run ArtExchange provides local students with an opportunity to learn about the visual arts. "We just concluded a fall program with Long Beach Unified School District," Executive Director Jay Hong said. "We had 800 kids come through the gallery for a private tour of the art on exhibit." After students viewed an exhibit, they engaged in an on-site class. Hong hopes to continue the program next year.

"Our objective is to work with the local art institutions and use the ArtExchange as a catalyst to exhibit the art of the faculty and students of Cal State Long Beach and Long Beach City College," Hong said. The ArtExchange gallery features rotating showings. Through December, the gallery is hosting a Holiday Salon, in which local artists are invited to show and sell their work.

The ArtExchange is also home to a handful of resident artists, including

(Please Continue To Page 40)

Joel Michalski is one of five resident artists at the ArtExchange in the East Village Arts District. He makes furniture form reclaimed wood. His works can be found online at www.joelthomasdesign-works.com/. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Pat Flynn)



Jay Hong, executive director of the ArtExchange, said the nonprofit organization and arts venue is going to host six exhibits in 2018. He is pictured in the facility's main gallery, which is currently displaying the Holiday Salon exhibit, a showing of local artists' works for sale. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Pat Flynn)



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The Long Beach Symphony's new music director, Eckart Preu, faces the crowd at a performance. (Photograph provided by the Long Beach Symphony)

The Found Theatre, located at 599 Long Beach Blvd., produces original plays, such as this production of a new take on "Cinderella." (Photograph provided by Found Theatre)



(Continued From Page 38)

Joel Michalski, a Wisconsin native who transforms salvaged wood into furniture. He moved in November 1, and has a studio that fronts the street so passersby can see his works. "I use mostly solid wood and I design and build my own. It has a modern, clean aesthetic," he said.

Michalski has lived in Long Beach for about a year, and said he loves it. "I feel like it's a vibrant, growing community," he said. "It's super diverse. It's still affordable. It has got all these qualities and energy that I feel make it the place to be right now."

Now celebrating the one-year anniversary of the debut of the ArtExchange's interior renovation, Hong is hoping a campaign to raise capital for exterior renovations will wrap up soon.

There are a number of arts-oriented businesses in the East Village, including Hellada Gallery and the Clay Pottery Studio. Several restaurants in the area also host live music. Two art museums mark the Northeast entrance to the East Village: the Museum of Latin American Art and the Pacific Island Ethnic Art Museum. The former is dedicated to modern and contemporary Latin American Art and, in addition, to its sizable galleries also features a 15,000-square foot sculpture garden. The latter, located just across the street, is a small museum with a permanent collection and rotating exhibits of Pacific Island art and cultural items. ■

Annual Events Spotlight Downtown Long Beach

■ By **ANNE ARTLEY**
STAFF WRITER

Lowtown Long Beach is home to several major annual events that draw both spectators and participants to the urban waterfront. The JetBlue Long Beach Marathon & Half Marathon, the Toyota



Grand Prix of Long Beach and the Long Beach Lesbian & Gay Pride Festival and Parade all take advantage of the blend of skyline and shoreline in the city's center.

The next Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach occurs April 13-15, 2018. On December 5, the city council unanimously approved an agreement to allow the Grand Prix Association of Long Beach to continue running the event through 2023. The event, which attracts more than 183,000 people, features six races: the Verizon IndyCar Series, IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, Moteqi Racing Super Drift Challenge, Pirelli World Challenge, SPEED Energy Stadium Super Trucks and the Historic Trans Am Challenge. The race course loops around Shoreline Drive and Seaside Way.

"The downtown location was originally selected because the city was look-

ing for events which would bring some prestige to the area as well as hopefully stimulate development, which that area desperately needed back in the mid-70s," Grand Prix Association of Long Beach CEO Jim Michaelian wrote in an e-mail statement to the Business Journal. "Once established, the race event and the city have grown dramatically over these past 43 years."

In addition to the races, the event features concerts on Friday and Saturday nights that are free to race ticket holders. Drivers will be available for autographs at the lifestyle expo and racegoers can take in exhibits outlining the history of the Grand Prix. Ticket prices range from \$33 for a Friday general admission ticket to \$147 for a three-day ticket. General admission for kids ages 12 and under is free with a ticketed adult. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit: gplb.com.

Run Racing, the event management company that operates the Long Beach Marathon, held the event at Long Beach Community College the first year it took it over in 2001. But company CEO Bob Seagren said the city asked him to move it downtown.

"It's a lot more scenic and probably a lot better for the downtown businesses," Seagren said. He reported that the marathon itself draws 15,000 to 20,000 participants, and about 2.8 spectators per runner – for a total of 57,000 to 76,000 people.

The Long Beach Marathon & Half Marathon take place on October 6 and 7 next year. Both races start and finish on Shoreline Drive. Other weekend events include a health and fitness expo and a 20-mile bike tour traveling in the opposite direction of the marathon course. Runners also have the option of competing in a shorter race: a five-kilometer run at the Aquarium of the Pacific. Kids can take part in a one-mile fun run, also at the Aquarium.

Long Beach Lesbian & Gay Pride (LBLGP), Inc. puts together the annual Long Beach Lesbian & Gay Pride Festival & Parade, a two-day event that attracts more than 80,000 participants, according to the organization's website. Next year's celebration takes place on May 19 and 20. The parade starts on Ocean Boulevard and Redondo Avenue and works its way to the convention center. More than 200 groups and floats are in attendance, representing religious, governmental and human rights organizations. It is the third largest pride festival in the nation, according to LBLGP. Next year's theme is 'Remember the Past to Create the Future,' the designated theme of pride celebrations nationwide. For updates on this year's event, please visit: longbeachpride.com/about-us/.

In addition, the first day of the Amgen Tour of California (a professional cycling event in its 13th year) is taking place in Downtown Long Beach on May 13. This is the first time in 11 years the city is hosting the event. The race ends May 19 in Sacramento. ■



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The Scene Is Noticing Long Beach’s Embrace Of Music

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**
SENIOR WRITER

Downtown Long Beach continues to embrace music through festivals, events and even the lone guitar player or singer at restaurants. New live music venues are on the verge of opening, to join those already operating in the area, and the music industry is beginning to take notice of Long Beach’s music scene.

“The biggest news is Goldenvoice making a deal with the Queen Mary. It’s not Goldenvoice’s first time over at the Queen Mary. They did All Tomorrow’s Parties over a decade ago and it was awesome,” Jon Halperin, talent buyer for Music Tastes Good, said. “It’s just one of those things that, if you live in Long Beach, there are going to be a lot of bands that you’d normally have to travel quite a distance to go see, and they are going to be in our backyard. They are going to be an Uber or a bike ride away.”

Goldenvoice produces large-scale festivals such as FYF, Coachella and Stagecoach. Such large-scale productions would join Long Beach’s moderately sized jazz and folk festivals, as well as the Music Tastes Good festival.

That music and food festival began in 2016 with a three-day event and followed up this year with a two-day event, a new location and a focus on New Orleans cuisine. Halperin said

there has been growth in attendance year over year, but that it is hard to really compare considering the change in the number of days and location.

The location change – from the streets in downtown to Marina Green Park along Shoreline Drive – solved several festival issues, Halperin said, particularly being able to set up a week in advance, rather than the night before. The park space, already more inviting than asphalt, included more art installations than the previous year, with even more additions planned next year.

Though Music Tastes Good has already grown to the point where national and international booking agents are aware of the festival without explanation from Halperin, he said the main focus is showcasing Long Beach talent, whether it be musicians, chefs or artists. This sets it apart from other festivals.

“You look at all these festivals around Southern California, and how many are including local talent like we are? You’re just not going to find that at other mid-level festivals,” Halperin said. “It’s just all touring bands from start to finish but we want to include local bands in there and showcase them and it’s the same with the food.”

Halperin said Music Tastes Good 2018 is going to be bigger and is already in the planning stages, with a larger talent budget and several bands already booked. Though a focus for food has not been decided, Halperin did say there would be a focus either from around the world or another city, as well as showcasing Long Beach chefs. The event is scheduled for September 29 and 30, once again at Marina Green Park.

In contrast to the young fest that is Music Tastes Good, Long Beach’s Sum-

mer And Music (SAM) series is already gearing up for its 10-year anniversary next year, according to event organizer Rand Foster. He explained that 2017 posed a new challenge for the event series: competing with other events. “On one hand that is a problem, but on the other it’s a wonderful problem to have,” Foster said. “But it was almost the case of there was too many great things going on. We did end up having a couple of our events up against other events.”

The 2017 SAM season also faced budget and marketing issues due to changes of venues, slightly lower attendance and other unforeseen challenges. However, Foster said the year was a good learning experience and the events were still solid.

For the 10-year anniversary, Foster said SAM staple Buskerfest would return, as would a variation of Punk Rock Prom – a new event from this year – and another music and skateboard event. If the budget allows, Foster said there are talks of adding a fourth event in honor of the milestone, but that remains to be seen.

“My continuing message is, if you like these events and you like seeing them, you have to support them. For Summer and Music, the events are free, so supporting them is coming out and bringing your friends,” Foster said. “There are very few barriers to being a part of it other than getting off the couch. If people want to have a robust cultural environment then they have to get out and support it.”

To complement Long Beach’s downtown music festival scene, the area has a number of live music venues for local and touring acts. Foster’s Fingerprints record store hosts numerous shows throughout the year with artists such as Foo Fighters, Thrice and John Rzeznik gracing the removable stage. The Federal Underground hosts touring acts under The Federal Bar. Though the venue’s focus is now burlesque shows, Harvelle’s still hosts musical performances from time to time.

Earlier this year, Ron Hodges, owner of Shannon’s On Pine, opened a multi-purpose event space that has the capacity and equipment to hold shows; however, the space may also be used for weddings and other parties. The former Vault 350, which has been vacant for over a decade, was purchased by Michelle Molina of Millworks several years ago, but has not progressed much. However, Molina said that, as of recently “things are looking good for a lease to a major player in the music business.”

The newest (almost full-fledged) music venue to the downtown is Andy George’s Toxic Toast Records. In 2014, George opened Toxic Toast as a specialty record store specializing in hand-curated Japanese import pressings of vinyl records. Fast forward to December 10, 2017, and he held his first sold-out all-ages show in the adjoining space with AJJ (formerly known as Andrew Jackson Jihad) taking the stage.

“We’re still battling with the city on our permits – it’s an issue of parking. That’s been a two-year battle, so we can only get temporary event permits. But we have a ton of people advocating for us,” George said. “It’s completely open. It’s 2,000 square feet of standing room space. We have a 380[-person] capacity and a stage and a sound system and everything.”

In addition to getting a music venue off the ground, George said he is planning on starting his own record label. As he describes it, Toxic Toast will assist independent music from beginning to end – the label would produce records, the store would sell them and the venue allows the groups to perform them. George added that he already does his own merchandising, such as shirts, enamel pins and patches.

Steve Mintz, owner of Bagatelle Records, has been at his current location at 260 Atlantic Ave. for 30 years; however, he said he has operated the store in the downtown for 40 years, since 1977.

“There was a big music scene in Long Beach long before me – when the Navy was here, and all the clubs that were downtown and people like Anita O’Day would sing in certain clubs on American Avenue at the time,” Mintz said. “But that’s going back to ancient history when we had the Pike and everything else.”

In the early 1990s, the emerging punk rock and rap scenes took their toll on the city with a number of incidents where rowdy crowds spilled into the streets, which turned Long Beach officials off to music shows and events for a number of years, according to Mintz. However, slowly events came back, such as the shutting down of Pine Avenue for New Year’s Eve, and slowly but surely, music made its way back into the heart of Long Beach.

“I think there are more places that have recognized the value of music,” Foster said. “Long Beach has grown up and people are realizing the value of having cultural events in our neighborhoods and around us so we don’t have to get in the car and drive to Orange County or L.A. for entertainment.” ■



Top: Luke Andrew Edwards of L.A. Edwards performs during the Music Tastes Good festival on September 30. (Photograph courtesy of Lauren Galvan)

Center: AJJ (formerly Andrew Jackson Jihad) performs to a sold-out all-ages crowd of around 380 people at Toxic Toast Records. (Photograph courtesy of Toxic Toast Records)

Bottom: Wargirl, featuring Matt Wignal, producer of several Cold War Kids albums, preforms during Summer And Music 2017’s Buskerfest. (Photograph courtesy of Summer And Music)



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DLBA And Arts Council For Long Beach Partner To Present DTLB UNFILTERED Inaugural Photography Contest Showcasing Downtown Long Beach

The Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) and the Arts Council for Long Beach have partnered to present DTLB UNFILTERED Photography Contest, a signature public art program that will archive the cityscape through the lenses of its residents and visitors. Aligned with Arts Month, close to 300 photos were submitted in the month of October.

Downtown’s first photography contest provided an opportunity for novice and professional photographers to engage with the downtown area as contest participants acted as envoys providing their take on five categories for submission that include: people/places, events, architecture, environment, and skyline of Downtown Long Beach. A panel of 5 judges selected 25 finalists, and then chose 5 Viewfinder Award recipients from the finalists.

The photos are on display through January 11, t at The Collaborative Gallery (421 W. Broadway). Additionally, through January 5, the community is invited to vote for a Fan Favorite online at <http://bit.ly/UNFILTEREDFanFavorite>. A second showing of the 25 finalists in partnership with MADE by Millworks will take place on January 13, 2018, and the Fan Favorite Award will be announced. Lastly, all 25 photos will be framed and on display at the DLBA office for the entire year.



Architecture Viewfinder Award

Rachel Heimerman

Caption: I am lucky enough to have a photo buddy here in Long Beach that doesn't mind waking up at 5:30 in the morning to get sunrise pictures with.

Thank you Heather. One of our outings this month lead us over to the Queen Mary at 7 in the morning. She looked beautiful.



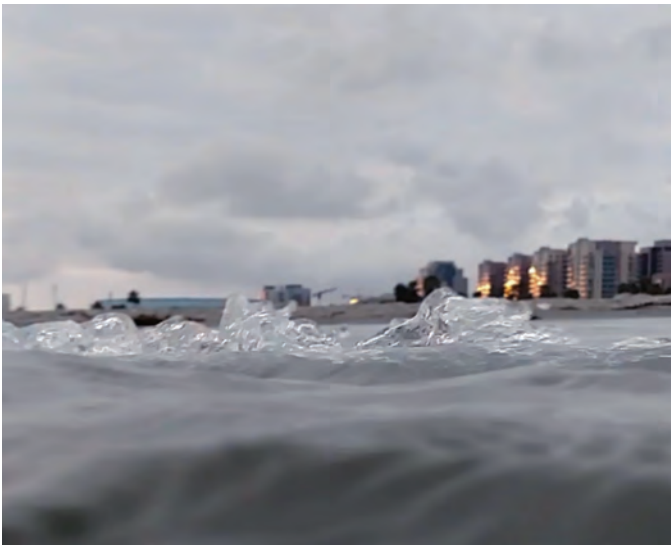
People And Places Viewfinder Award **Jose Cordon**

Caption: Woman paying homage to Dia de los Muertos by lighting candle. (picture – “faith”)



Events Viewfinder Award **Brenda Knepper**

Caption: Face painting at the Dia de los Muertos Festival at MOLAA



Environment Viewfinder Award **Melissa Flower**

Caption: This photo was taken in the water through a waterproof camera case, looking back at the city. Digital manipulation was used to blur the buildings in the background, bringing even more focus to the wave.



Skyline Viewfinder Award **Heather Lemmon**

Caption: Next to the beautiful Queen Mary, which is full of her own history, is a sweeping view of Long Beach's skyline. Taken at sunrise, the buildings start to get the first light of morning and the busy bustling of a beach city gets underway. This panoramic is comprised of 7 photographs and stitched together in post processing.



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The Aquarium took major steps on its expansion and opened new major exhibits in 2017. The institution also conducted conservation work and public outreach, and served as a convener and facilitator for the local community, scientists, and other stakeholders in the search for sustainable solutions.

A groundbreaking ceremony was held and construction on the Aquarium's expansion, Pacific Visions, began in spring. In May the Aquarium opened new exhibits, including FROGS: Dazzling and Disappearing, highlighting the diversity of amphibians and their surprisingly uncertain future, and Our Water Future, an interactive space to help visitors understand where our water comes from and what conservation issues our supply faces now and in the future.

The Aquarium hosted two forums co-sponsored by the American Honda Motor Company, one on restoring coastal areas and wetland habitats by introducing native oysters and the other examining a Japanese principle for coastal management and how it might be applied in Southern California.

The Aquarium is helping residents of Long Beach to prepare for the impacts of climate change. In 2017 Aquarium educators launched a Twitter feed on climate resilience (@resilientLBaop), traveled to community events with a special booth, and released new quick reference guides.

In 2018 the Aquarium will celebrate its twentieth anniversary. We invite you to celebrate with us by sharing your memories and photos of our early days at <http://pacific.to/shareaop>.

To read more about 2017 at the Aquarium visit aquariumofthepacific.org.



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Garnica Interiors Inc.

Joan Garnica will celebrate the 15th anniversary of Garnica Interiors next April. “I’ve always been in the creative visual industry and, as a very young person, I didn’t think that I could make money off the thing that I was really passionate about, that I really loved, which was interior design,” Garnica said. “At the corporate job I had in the visual industry, I was being sexually harassed. I decided that’s not the environment for me. I did not want to be there.” The shift led her to open her interior design business at 216 The Promenade N. The goal of Garnica Interiors is to take the stress of designing a space away from clients, Garnica said. She explained that about 70% of business comes from residential clients, with the remaining 30% being commercial spaces. She noted that she does not have a signature style of design. “That’s by design. When I leave a client’s space, whether it’s commercial or residential, I don’t want me to be left at that project. I want my client to be left in that project,” Garnica said. “We really take care in custom-tailoring our design to what the client is. I want the client to feel like that’s their space, their home, not leave my fingerprint all over it. I’m actually proud of that.” For more information, call 562/242-9122 or visit www.garnicainteriors.com.



DG Boxing

Ever since he was a kid, David “DG” Gonzalez (pictured in back back) has been boxing. He explained that he always thought boxing coaches had the best job and that, after years of seeing how gyms operated, he decided he could do better. “When I was getting older I was seeing other gyms and they’d hurt the guys – it was just for fighters,” DG said. “But there are some people who just want to learn to fight to defend themselves so I thought I need a gym that just teaches the average person. You don’t have to fight to come to this gym.” In 2000, George Orduna (also pictured) and DG opened the original location near Cal State Long Beach. About five years ago, they opened the downtown location at 745 Pine Ave. The gyms teach boxing at a variety of skill levels and classes include boxing for fitness, low-contact boxing and a kids’ program that DG takes special pride in. “It’s one of the best things for the kids. Even if you’re not fighting, just hit bags, you can learn how to fight,” DG said. “It was one of the best things for me and kept me out of trouble. If it weren’t for boxing I don’t know where I’d be. But I’ll be here until I die.” DG said that anyone who presents this story at one of his gyms will receive one free month of kids’ classes. For more information, call 562/606-2665 or visit www.dgboxinggyms.com.



ReCircle Home

Christine and Darian Parsley opened ReCircle Home at 501 E. Broadway in August 2016. The couple worked as bartenders before turning Darian’s woodworking hobby into a source of income several years before opening up shop. Working out of their home workshop, Darian handcrafts all the wood products and shelving in the store. “He’s always been super crafty, super talented and just always enjoyed making things,” Christine said. “We both were just looking for a change in our lives and we wanted to make things, so we started to do it together.” Once focusing on small furniture in his woodworking, Darian now specializes in shaped shelves to complement and showcase the various crystals and home decor items also for sale in the store. Christine explained that the couple moved to Long Beach several years ago, instantly fell in love with the vibe and culture of the East Village and wanted to be a part of it. “Downtown everybody has expensive rent and apartments are small. And I feel like, even with those restrictions, we can still love where we live, and be surrounded by things that are beautiful and that make us happy,” Christine said. “So I feel fulfilled about being able to help people with that. And, you know, being able to make things ourselves is very rewarding and it always has been.” For more information, call 562/822-6026 or visit www.recirclehome.com.

Buono’s Authentic Pizzeria

The Buono family has owned and operated a food-based business since 1965 when the family opened a market and Italian deli. The family opened the pizzeria 45 years ago in San Pedro. The first Buono’s Authentic Pizzeria in Long Beach opened in the Wrigley area in 1980 with the downtown location at 250 W. Ocean Blvd. opening in 2004. “At the time [Wrigley opened] I was 14 years old and my brother George was 11 and we worked in the restaurant with our dad,” owner Frank Buono said. “We have been in business so long that we have generations of families that we know. We have grandparents, parents and grandkids.” The downtown location has 20 employees and continues serving up fresh pies and other Italian classics. No matter how many gourmet pizzas the brick-oven-using restaurant introduces, such as the Pizza Giorgio or Buona Lisa, Frank said pepperoni remains the best-selling pizza. Other customer favorites include lasagna with meat sauce and the eggplant parmesan sandwich, among others. Frank said he is proud his family has utilized practices such as farm to table, dishes from scratch, artisan breads, fresh spices and buying local produce for more than 50 years. “I like the friendships that we make and just wowing people. It’s gratifying,” Frank said. “My favorite part is making our customers happy and being an integral part of the neighborhood. We love being part of the growth that is occurring downtown. That is very exciting to us.” For more information, call 562/432-2211 or visit www.buonospizza.com. (Pictured from left: Carlos Ruiz, Matthew Juarez, Frank Buono, Alyssa Reed and Clarivel Huizar.)



Kress Market

Javier and Hilda Ortiz opened Kress Market in the historic Kress Building at 443 Pine Ave. in August 2010 to bring healthy food options to surrounding residents. “We believe in eating healthy and that’s why my wife and I wanted to open a business,” Javier said. “People are eating healthier and healthier. That’s good because our culture eats big portions and gets full but they don’t pay much attention to quality. It’s just important for people to understand and learn. I’m happy that younger and younger kids are starting to eat healthier and realize how important that is.” Kress Market includes a separate market and deli. On the deli side, Hilda created the menu including the best-selling turkey-avocado sandwich with her homemade chipotle aioli. Javier said Hilda’s salads are “awesome” and another customer favorite. In the market, Javier said the focus is keeping a small inventory of a wide variety of organic food, as well as craft beers and organic wines. “Being a mom and pop shop, the community is very responsive. Whenever they can support us they come by. We have made so many friends,” Javier said. “We work very close with the community. We love that part. We love that support.” For more information, call 562/436-8300 or visit www.kressmarket.com.

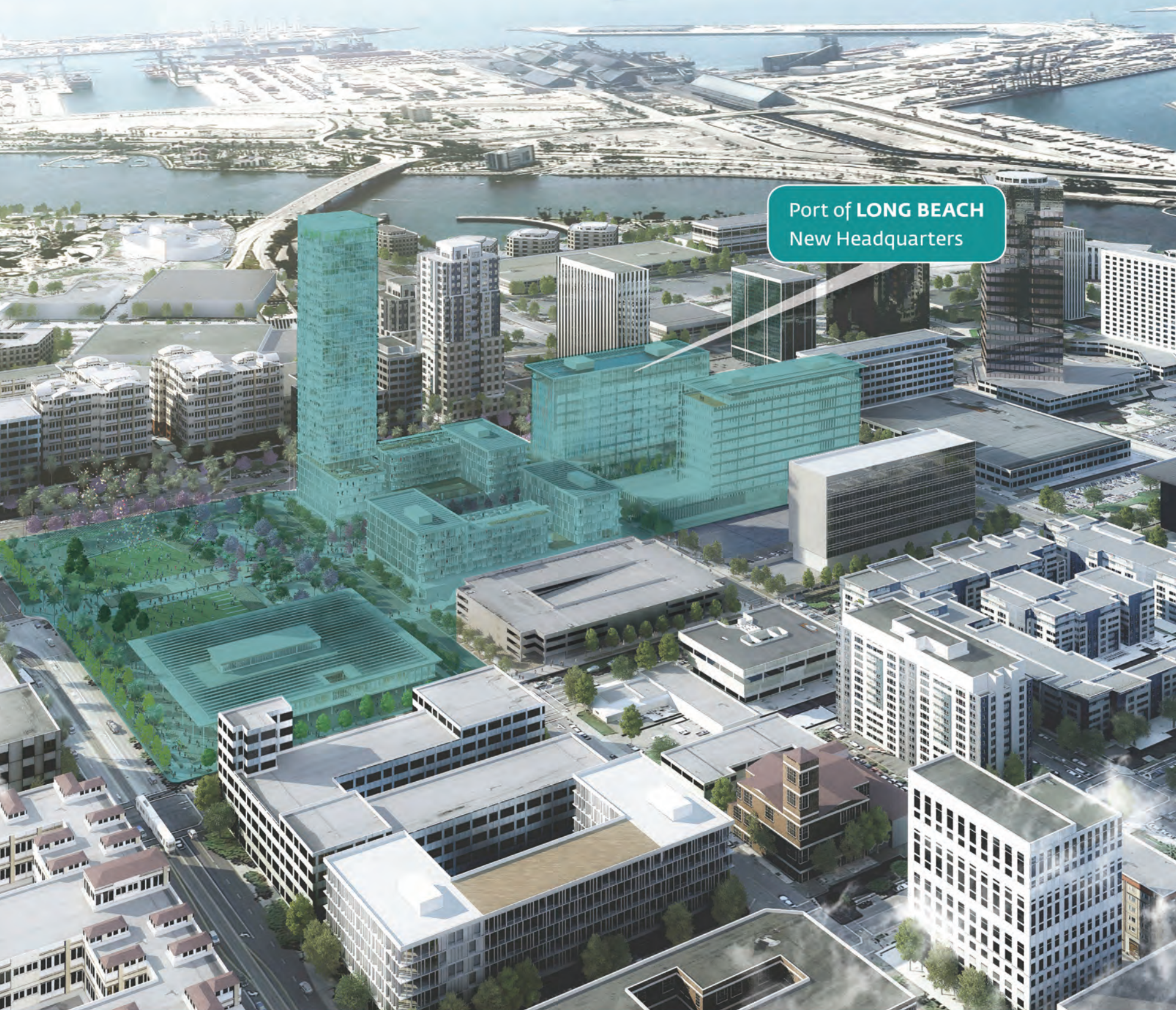


Bark! Bark! Daycare & Grooming

Vivian Dominguez (left) established Bark! Bark! as a dog walking service in 1999. A decade later, she and business partner Danielle Portillo (right) opened Bark! Bark! Daycare and Grooming at 325 Atlantic Ave. followed by a second location in Signal Hill in 2012. “I’ve always loved dogs. I grew up with dogs – we both have, actually. And there was a demand. We were the first dog daycare in Downtown Long Beach when we opened,” Portillo said. “There was a high demand because Long Beach has a ton of dogs and the dog beach. Long Beach in general is just very dog friendly. It just made sense to open up here.” The business has about 25 employees and offers daycare, grooming, walking and overnight boarding for dogs only. Being located downtown, Portillo said much of the business comes from pet owners living in high rises who don’t want to leave their pups at home all day. She added that conventioners also generate business. “We’re really involved in the community, too. We just did the Belmont Shore Christmas Parade. We really try to help the downtown area. We are doing the Santa Paws, which is donations and stuff,” Portillo said. “We really are a business that tries to be involved in the community and not just go to work every day and go home.” For more information, call 562/437-3655 or visit www.barkbarkdaycare.com.

La Traviata Bar and Lounge

For nearly 21 years, La Traviata Bar and Lounge has operated at 301 N. Cedar Ave. Owner Mario Nasab previously owned The House of Madame Jojo on East Broadway but said he was always drawn to his current location in the downtown core. “I always liked this location. There was another restaurant here, but it wasn’t very well looked after and I had big dreams for it,” Nasab said. “So I did it and turned it into a very nice corner and what it is today. It shows very beautifully.” Today, the restaurant has about 15 employees and serves up Italian cuisine with pastas and sauces made from scratch with ingredients imported from Italy. To create a fun and memorable atmosphere, Nasab said there is always some kind of music, whether it is live jazz performances, pianos, singers or DJs. Early next year, Nasab said he is opening a dog-friendly outdoor patio for dining. “I’m always around myself, asking how customers are and people tell me they like that. I like it too. I like to be around and have fun with people. The interaction with people – with happy people – is my favorite,” Nasab said. “We’re always sharing moments and time with people who are happy and content. That is very pleasant. We’re lucky – people come to eat and drink and celebrate.” For more information, call 562/432-8022 or visit www.latraviata301.com.



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