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Development Projects, NFL Put A Charge In City Of Carson's Future

By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**
Assistant Editor

The City of Carson is in the midst of a period of growth, with developers continuing to invest in the city, major projects like the Porsche Experience Center coming to fruition, a growing university and the potential for 157-acres of landfill to be transformed into a hub for commerce and tourism.

According to Mayor Albert Robles, the city, which will celebrate its 50th anniversary next year, is "making tremendous progress" in achieving its motto: Future Unlimited. Robles was elected as mayor last June. He had been serving in the position after being appointed by the city council in 2015 when former Mayor Jim Dear stepped down to serve as city clerk.

"In the last couple of years, Carson has made
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Katie Pandolfo, general manager of the StubHub Center in Carson, welcomes Ken Derrett, senior vice president and chief marketing officer of the Los Angeles Chargers, to his team's temporary new home. The NFL team is using StubHub until a new stadium is built in Inglewood to house the Chargers and the L.A. Rams. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Larry Duncan)

Adapting To Climate Change: Aquarium Report Identifies Local Challenges And Strategies

By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**
Assistant Editor

Rising seas, hotter days, worsening air pollution and frequent droughts are in store for the future, according to a report by the Aquarium of the Pacific. The institution recently released a summary of this report that contains some advice for how the City of Long Beach can adapt.

In 2015, Mayor Robert Garcia requested that the Aquarium take the lead in creating a report analyzing the resiliency of the city to climate change. The Aquarium

worked with experts from regional universities and government agencies to create the City of Long Beach Climate Resiliency Assessment Report, which was released at the end of 2015.

To provide a more accessible, user-friendly document, the Aquarium brought on Tom Bowman, president-elect of Sustainable Business Long Beach and owner of Bowman Change, Inc. A summary report detailing the main impacts of climate change to Long Beach, the city's vulnerabilities and potential means of adaptation was released in February.

"We decided that the original

report was too long and too dense, and a lot of the people we would like to read it just don't have time to do it," Jerry Schubel, president and CEO of the Aquarium, told the Business Journal. Hard copies were mailed to elected officials and city management, and a digital version is available for download at http://www.aquariumofpacific.org/downloads/Climate_Resiliency_0217.pdf.

"We think Long Beach has a great opportunity to really develop a model [for climate resiliency] because we're a small

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Developers Beware: Activists May Sue

By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**
Senior Writer

With more than 50 projects underway, approved or under review, the City of Long Beach is going gangbusters with regard to development. Housing, retail, restaurants, industrial – developers are building it all. With so much activity, it is natural to see pushback from residents and local organizations.

Long Beach resident Warren Blesofsky and his group – Long Beach Citizens for Fair Development – have been exceedingly vocal about city practices when it comes to development. The group has vocalized its opposition for

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Long Beach Aim Is To Work With Businesses On Styrofoam Ban

By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**
Senior Writer

Long Beach Environmental Services Bureau Manager Diko Melkonian updated the Long Beach Sustainable City Commission on the proposed polystyrene ban at the group's March 23 meeting.

The purpose of the update was to put forth a framework to gain insight on the extent of the ban before city staff begins drafting an ordinance. The framework is meant to inform stakeholders on

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MILLENNIAL PULSE

By Assistant Editor Samantha Mehlinger

Will The Green Generation Step Up?

Many of us Millennials were born to Baby Boomers, the original flower children. Our parents popularized the phrase "tree huggers" both as a proud epithet and a lighthearted derision. The hippies among them coined "Save the Planet," "Save

the Whales," and many other phrases to preserve the ecosystem and all manners of species, though perhaps stopping short of opossums.

In the '60s, Lady Bird Johnson got the country to stop throwing trash out
(Please Continue To Page 5)

Dine On Pine: Conservation Corps' 25th Annual Event Supports The Futures Of At-Risk Youth

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**
Assistant Editor

The Conservation Corps of Long Beach (CCLB) has been providing at-risk youth with the opportunity to fulfill their secondary education while gaining valuable work and life skills for the past 30 years. The organization is celebrating the 25th anniversary of its Dine on Pine event this year, which helps sustain its initiatives and provides the means for Corpsmembers to continue on with their education once they have completed the program.

Former International City Bank President Jane Netherton, who is one of the founding boardmembers of the Conservation Corps of Long Beach, said the organization started out with 10 concerned community members who wrote personal checks to get the program started. "We had to really struggle to get 14 people to be Corpsmembers," she recalled. "That's not the case anymore."

Today, the Corps has more than 90 members whose ages range between 18 and 25. They primarily hail from North Long Beach and Westside Long Beach, according to Executive Director and CEO Dan Knapp. The remainder are residents of Paramount, Compton, Lynwood and Watts.

"As a certified Corps, our charge is we're first and foremost a youth development organization," Knapp said. The Corps contracts with public and private entities to provide litter abatement and recycling services, ecology and wetlands restoration, parks and recreation facility improvements, and more.

Corpsmembers who have not finished high school are required to attend the CCLB Charter School to earn credits toward their diploma, in addition to their workforce duties. "We have an open-door policy. Our only prerequisite to join the Corps is a willingness to work and work hard," Knapp said. The program runs about one year to 18 months.

CCLB's annual Dine on Pine event,



Pictured outside the Conservation Corps of Long Beach (CCLB) office at 340 Nieto Ave. are, from left: Executive Director and CEO Dan Knapp; founding boardmember Jane Netherton; Corpsmembers Errol Bennett-Valdez and Amanda West; and Tara Cannon, CCLB special projects coordinator. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Larry Duncan)

now a fundraiser for scholarships and the organization's educational programs, originally started as an event to provide a public face to CCLB.

"When we first started doing it, we wanted a way to let the community know more about who we were and what we did," Netherton said. "We thought, well, if we're doing this, why don't we have a real purpose besides just letting people know who we are. And it kind of blossomed into what we are today."

Dine on Pine is a progressive dinner fundraiser that takes participants to three restaurants on Pine Avenue for appetizers, salad and a dinner, followed by coffee and dessert, according to Tara Cannon, special project coordinator for CCLB. "Typically we get about 150 people, so it's a really great time to come together and network and mingle and see people you haven't seen in a while," she said.

Through the years, the event has raised \$460,000. "Of that \$460,000, over \$250,000 has gone specifically to scholarships. \$210,000 approximately has gone back into the programming here at the Conservations Corps of Long Beach for education over those years," Knapp said. Tickets for the event cost \$125. Event sponsorships are also encouraged.

Corpsmembers must apply to receive

scholarships from the organization, according to Knapp. "They have to apply, and the scholarships vary from a few hundred dollars to several thousand dollars, depending on where they are going to school," he said. "The average is about a thousand dollars for a scholarship."

Following their time in the Corps, about 80% of members seeking further education enroll at a community college. "About 15% are going to trade and technical schools, whether it's the union schools or some other. And then 5% go directly into a four-year university," Knapp said.

This year's Dine on Pine takes place Monday, June 26. "We start at 5:15 [p.m.] at The Federal Bar," Cannon said. After a short presentation and mingling, attendees are split into groups of 50, and each group heads to a different restaurant. They then rotate to each location throughout the evening. In addition to The Federal Bar, this year's participating restaurants include L'Opera and George's Greek Café.

"There are a few Corpsmembers at each of the restaurants so they can talk

about their experiences and answer any questions," Cannon said.

At the end of the evening, the groups return to The Federal Bar for coffee and dessert, an opportunity drawing and the annual presentation of the Founders Award, which is given to an individual who has been heavily involved in the Corps and community. "This year we are honoring Glenn Ray, who has been on the board for many years as a past chair," Netherton said, referring to the owner of airport-based business Million Air North.

"What I want to emphasize is that this is the mortar between the bricks that keeps this organization moving forward," Knapp said of Dine On Pine. "Most of our young folks have major barriers to success, whether it's homelessness, education, parents, all those kinds of things. This funding helps bridge that gap, and it really helps them be successful while they are with us and after they have left us."

For more information about Dine On Pine or to purchase tickets, contact Tara Cannon at 562/208-5059 or tcannon@cclb-corps.org. ■

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A photograph of two men in safety gear at a port. The man on the left, wearing a black cap, sunglasses, an orange safety vest, and white gloves, is pointing at a control panel on a large metal structure. The man on the right, also in a black cap and sunglasses, wears a yellow and orange safety vest and has a tattoo on his left arm. The background shows industrial equipment and a ship.

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(Continued From Page 1)

of car windows. (Guess that guy who cut me off and threw a burger at my windshield a few months ago didn't get the memo. Oh well, joke's on him. He missed.) In the '70s, Greenpeace was formed. And to this day, they're still heckling unsuspecting weekend shoppers. Thanks for that.

It has been a long and bumpy road for the tree huggers, but with a little help from a bunch of influential famous people and, you know, the majority of the scientific community that believes in climate change, it would appear they have succeeded in a raising a generation whose collective conscience is a bright shade of green.

It probably also didn't hurt that you let us watch a lot of children's programming with not-so-subtle pro-environmental messaging, which likely seeped into our collective subconscious. I'll never forget "Fern Gully: The Last Rainforest," (1992), in which Robin Williams voices a cartoon lab bat trying to help his fairy friends defeat maniacal tree-cutters who are being controlled by an evil oil/pollution monster voiced by none other than the heir-apparent to Vincent Price's creepy voice, Tim Curry.

You would be hard pressed to find an older Millennial who has not seen that movie. And most of us have seen it at least three times.

Then you had kids' TV programs like "Rocko's Modern Life" (1993-96), which among its double-layer of kid and adult themes also snuck in a pessimistic view of corporate responsibility for pollution. And its musical episode on the environment can still be quoted by many a Millennial who was lucky to have Nickelodeon at the time: "R-E-C-Y-C-L-E, recycle! C-O-N-S-E-R-V-E, conserve! Don't you P-O-L-L-U-T-E pollute the river, sky or seas, or else you're going to get what you deserve!"

Cartoons were a little disturbing in the '90s, now that I think about it.

A 2015 report by Pew Research found that 60% of people aged 18 to 29 years old attributed increasing temperatures to human activities rather than natural patterns or in lieu of holding the viewpoint that there is no evidence of climate change.

The report also found that 72% of Millennials supported curbing power plant emissions. Among this generation, 74% of those surveyed believed that alternative energy sources such as wind and solar should be a more important priority for addressing America's energy needs rather than oil, coal and natural gas.

The 2015 Nielsen Global Survey of Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability, which involved polling more than 30,000 online consumers in 60 countries, found that despite "coming of age in one of the most difficult economic climates in the past 100 years," 75% of Millennial respondents would pay extra for sustainable offerings.

See, we're great people. We're broke and we'll still shell out some extra change so our kids won't have to find another planet to live on.

Consulting firm Maru/Matchbox's recent white paper on the how Millennials are influencing the future of food found a similar pattern: most Millennials are willing to pay more for sustainably sourced foods. In fact, about 57% of Millennials actually expect their food to be sustainably sourced.

When it comes to the green-minded Millennials, businesses might want to take notice.

On April 5, findings were released from a study commissioned by Rubbermaid Commercial Products entitled "Recycling in the Workplace: A Millennial View." That study found that nine out of 10 Millennials ages 18 to 34 believe it is important to work for a sustainable company.

For those companies who might be at a loss of where to begin, don't worry – we'll help you out.

Eighty-two percent of Millennials seek opportunities to assist their companies in becoming more sustainable, with 67% believing they have enough influence to make an impact on workplace sustainability, according to the study.

In a grandiose gesture of selflessness, more than two-thirds of Millennials said they "are so committed to sustainability issues they would be willing to give up social media for a week if everyone at their company recycled," according to Rubbermaid.

If that's not commitment to the environment, I don't know what is.

As Earth Day 2017 (April 22) approaches, the majority of American Millennials who believe in climate change and who are pro-sustainability and pro-clean energy are faced with a quandary.

According to the Brookings Institute, only 37% of the Millennial electorate voted for Donald Trump. Considering that we make up the largest living age cohort in America, you would think the election might have turned out differently – but only 50% of us voted.

Now, a Millennial majority country that believes in climate change is contending with a presidential administration bent on rolling back environmental policies of previous administrations. On March 28, President Trump issued an executive order targeting about a dozen regulatory policies aimed at reducing pollution and improving the environment.

His intention, it should be noted, is to reduce regulatory burdens on industries.

The reprise of that song from "Rocko's Modern Life" went something like: "You can't fight city hall – they are big and we are small."

So what will the green-minded majority of Millennials who didn't vote for Trump do? Will half of them sit on their hands as they did this past election? Will they give up social media for a week and call it progress? Will the words of Rocko, the Hawaiian-shirt wearing wallaby, ring hollow for eternity?

I'll be curious to see what happens on Earth Day. And the next four years.

(Note: If you would like to make suggestions for future Millennial Pulses, e-mail me at samantha_mehlinger@lbbj.com.) ■



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Architecture firms Retail Design Collaborative (RDC) and Studio One Eleven celebrated the opening of their 34,300-square-foot creative office space (pictured below) with a ribbon cutting ceremony on March 30. The building is located on 3rd Street adjacent to The Promenade, and features a hospitality kitchen, open work clusters, idea lounges, flex offices, a community room, a material library, an outdoor patio (pictured at right), and showers and lockers. The office is part of a redevelopment and rebranding effort of the former City Place shopping center. Pictured from left: Steve Ruth, RDC CEO; Alan Pullman, Studio One Eleven founding principal; 1st District Councilmember Lena Gonzalez; Tony Shooshani, managing member of Shooshani Developers, owner of the center; Mayor Robert Garcia; and Studio One Eleven Senior Principal Michael Bohn. (Photographs by the Business Journal's Larry Duncan)



■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**
Senior Writer

Development News

Former City Place Gets A Facelift, New Anchor

Local architectural firms Retail Design Collaborative (RDC) and Studio One Eleven celebrated their new 34,300-square-foot creative office space on the northeast corner of East 3rd Street and North Waite Center, adjacent to Harvey Milk Park.

"I think today marks a great turning of the page for the downtown and Long Beach in general," Mayor Robert Garcia said during the ribbon-cutting event. "It was just a few years ago that if I was standing in this exact same place, this is not what you would see. It's amazing to see so many dreams and hopes being realized with this incredible space."

The office's programmed space includes a hospitality kitchen, open work clusters, idea lounges, flex offices, a community room, a material library, an outdoor patio,

yourself scenarios, the loss of expert advice and hands-on attention will ratchet up the stress level for all those involved in a transaction and cause many deals to fail. Period.

A good lesson in what this means can be taken from the travel industry. Websites and automated programs have pretty much taken over that industry and forced the traditional travel agent out of the business, in many cases. But as one travel agency owner recently said: "Try calling one of these on-line travel sites when you are stranded because your flight was canceled in Paris and you need to get home."

There is no doubt that technology has replaced the way just about every business interacts with its customers – from e-mail to apps and the latest programs on the web. But in the end, these are just tools to get more information and move it faster. In the world of real estate and finance – especially when it comes to transactions that involve hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars – it is going to be very hard, if not impossible, to replace human intelligence for many core activities.

(Terry Ross, the broker-owner of TR Properties, will answer any questions about today's real estate market. E-mail questions to Realty Views at terryross1@cs.com or call 949/457-4922.) ■

Realty Views

Will The Robots Take Over Lending?



By **TERRY ROSS**

Not a day goes by without headlines about technology taking over some task that we have relied on humans to do for decades – or longer. Just in the past few months, we have heard stories about driverless Uber cars (and all the red lights they ran) and robots that flip hamburgers and do our shopping.

Now there is a lot of chatter in the mortgage industry about how technology and robots can eliminate loan officers – especially on the residential and consumer side of things – and bring substantial savings to both the lender and borrower by eliminating the commissions and/or salaries of those who have serviced borrowers for years.

What remains to be seen is how good the technology will be in the near future to make this happen. Will borrowers really want to endure a do-it-yourself experience

for something that is as vital and complicated as financing for the biggest purchase of their lives? And will the process with little or no human involvement be efficient enough to meet consumer demands?

Some lenders are already touting the ability to glean just about all the financial information needed to underwrite a loan from job information, bank balances and credit history found online without borrowers submitting reams of documents.

One startup mortgage lender – Arrive Home Mortgage of Naperville, Illinois – is trying the automated approach in several states and is using technology to handle borrower engagement before an application is submitted.

"What loan officers get paid to do is find customers, counsel and educate those consumers as to what their best choices or opportunities are, pre-qualify them, and then get them to commit to making a loan application," said Dan Cutaia, president of Arrive. "That's why loan officers get paid so much – those three things – and we've automated all three."

Of course, that is if the borrower is tech-savvy and would rather invest their time learning about something they may know little about and take a chance making choices in an unfamiliar field.

With Arrive's business model, borrowers use mobile apps and encrypted data and firewalls to do preliminary applications without divulging borrower information, then they opt in and sign disclosures if they want to proceed.

Others in the industry are skeptical because this approach is passive in acquiring new customers and doesn't really generate leads for the salespeople that it has. Cutaia points out that his company hasn't eliminated loan officers entirely but keeps the headcount (and costs) down with this approach.

Then there are those that point out this kind of technology can save time for mortgage loan officers and enable them to spend more time advising clients rather than filling out paperwork and doing other mundane tasks. The question is, will the technology help the loan officer or broker originate more loans? And if so, at what cost? If borrowers need to go the do-it-yourself route, they will want the loan product for less, which means that those that work in the lending industry will end up charging less and must make up what they are losing with more volume to earn the same money as before.

In this scenario, the consumer is going to be the loser in the end. Just like most do-it-

and showers and lockers. The space was formerly a Nordstrom Rack as part of the former City Place shopping center.

Prior to the move, the architecture firms, which employ 165 people, occupied the 20th and 21st floors of Landmark Square on the corner of Pine and Ocean avenues for 20 years.

"As our firm evolved, we knew that we had to evolve our workplace as well. We wanted to create . . . something unique, something creative for our employees," Alan Pullman, Studio One Eleven founding principal, said. We also wanted to be in a place that we could catalyze neighborhood engagement and also create a sense of regeneration."

Michael Bohn, senior principal for Studio One Eleven, said he received many calls questioning the relocation but that he replied by saying the firms would bring new vision and life to the area. He said the area has "great urban bones" and noted its 97, 87 and 81 out of 100 scores for walkability, bikeability and transit, respectively.

The \$2.5 million project has spurred more than \$15 million in additional public and private investment, Bohn said. The facility has applied for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum, the highest certification for environmentally friendly facilities, through the United States Green Building Council. The firms have also applied for WELL Gold through the International WELL Building Institute, which promotes healthy working environments. If certified as WELL Gold, the building would be the first in Long Beach and one of 25 in the country.

"And once we get our solar panels on the roof, we will be net zero. Over the life of the building for years, we will produce as much energy as we need," Bohn said.

"We're very dedicated to a new, creative and exciting future and to be a part of the City of Long Beach and this wonderful neighborhood," RDC Chief Executive Officer Steve Ruth said. "It's a momentous occasion for us as a firm, and it's very special."

The creative office is the first phase in the redevelopment and rebranding of Shooshani Developers' former City Place shopping center. The project, between 3rd and 6th streets and Pine Avenue and Long Beach Boulevard, will not be named in the hope that the area will eventually self-identify through word of mouth.

"From today, we can start referring to the ground level of the six-block area as 'the streets.' And [we hope] that each street will develop as micro destinations with a unique personality based on tenant mix," Tony Shooshani, managing member of Shooshani Developers and owner of the former City Place, said. "We have envisioned something beyond a shopping center."

New tenant leases in the 350,000-square-foot mixed-use district include Bergeron, Creative Crepes, Party Monkey, Poke Cat, Romeo Chocolates, Table 301 and Plant Junkie.

In addition to retail and restaurants, a 20-unit mixed-use urban project will be constructed across the street from the vacant Wal-Mart building. Also, parklets will be constructed on 4th street and Pine Avenue.

The 4th Street parklet will front Milana's New York Pizzeria, Nataka Japanese restaurant and Fresh Kabobs, and pay homage to Long Beach's music legacy, while the Pine Avenue space will front Pie Bar and other retailers and feature connections to Long Beach's sister cities.

"It's one thing to create infrastructure as a city; it's another thing to partner with the investment that is coming here," 1st District Councilmember Lena Gonzalez said. "I'll tell you, Tony, Mike, Allen, Steve, you all have really created and helped us create the vision that we can see now. Many years ago, I think it was kind of blurry, but now it's very crystal clear for many of us. I know that this is just the beginning." ■

Real Estate News

Behavioral Medical Facility Approved

At its March 30 meeting, the Long Beach Planning Commission approved a 14,409-square-foot outpatient behavioral health urgent care center. Located at 3200-3220 Long Beach Blvd., the center would include 24-hour psychiatric urgent care and a crisis walk-in center. The facility would have capacity for 12 adult patients and six adolescent patients, not including the walk-in clinic.

Retail Plaza Sale

Lee & Associates Commercial Real Estates Services closed a \$9 million sale of a

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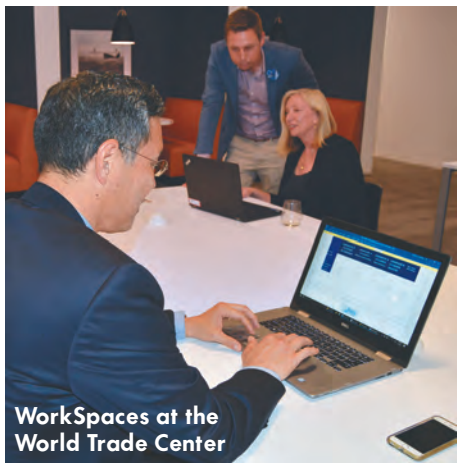
(Continued From Page 7)

29,908-square-foot retail plaza located at 10660-10708 Los Alamitos Blvd. in Los Alamitos. Shaun McCullough of Lee & Associates in Long Beach represented the seller, Los Alamitos Center I & II LLC, while John Scataloni of Encon Commercial represented the buyer, Xian Tian LLC.

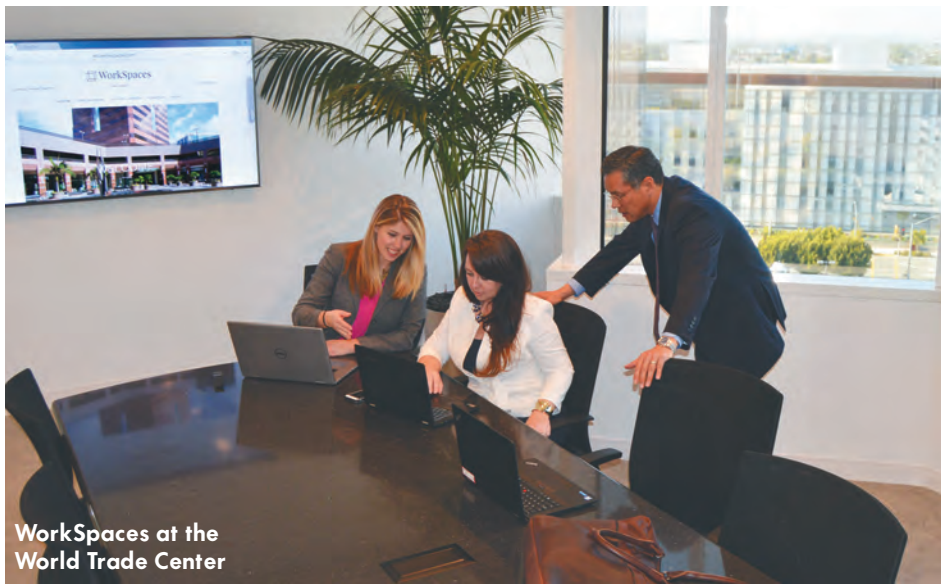
Retail And Professional Services News

Co-Working Space Opens At World Trade Center

WorkSpaces, a provider of offices, shared working space, conference rooms and virtual offices, recently opened a Long Beach location on the 8th floor of the One World Trade Center office complex in Downtown Long Beach. The company offers virtual offices, hot desks, dedicated desks and private offices ranging from \$95 to \$450 per month. WorkSpaces boasts more than 30 years of experience in the executive suite industry. For more information, call 562/269-4600 or visit wtcworkspaces.com.



WorkSpaces at the World Trade Center



WorkSpaces at the World Trade Center

Epson America Seeks To Build New Headquarters With ‘Modern, Creative Office Environment’

■ By SAMANTHA MEHLINGER, Assistant Editor

Epson America, Inc. wants to build a new headquarters building adjacent to the Kilroy Airport Center where it is currently headquartered, according to an item slated for tonight’s (April 11) Long Beach City Council meeting.

The company recently released a request for proposals for “the construction of a new building with the goal of providing a modern and creative office environment to enable them to attract and retain the most competitive workforce,” the staff report states. “Epson does not believe that these goals can be accomplished without a new building.”

Epson currently employs approximately 450 people at its existing headquarters. Creating a new, larger facility would enable the company to expand its workforce to 600 employees, according to the city document. Plans would include “creative office space, open floor plans, balcony decks, a showroom, restaurant(s) and coffee shop(s).”

Epson’s current lease at Kilroy expires in 2019.

The council is slated to vote on a request by Urbana Development LLC for exclusive negotiating rights for property owned by the city and its water department adjacent to the Kilroy Airport Center and the 405 freeway. The property was originally part of a planned development by Kilroy Realty, developer of the Kilroy Airport Center, which opened in the late 1980s and is one of the city’s premier business parks. The project never moved forward and a lease with Kilroy for the site was terminated in 2009.

Don Temple Storage is located on a parcel within the proposed Epson site. That lease may be terminated “under certain conditions provided by the agreement,” according to the city council item. ■

Medical Group Expands To Douglas Park

Last month, MemorialCare Medical Group, a member of MemorialCare Health System, announced two new offices located in Fountain Valley and Douglas Park in Long Beach. Located at 3828 Schaufele Ave., Suite 200, the Long Beach facility features several health care providers, including board certified obstetrician/gynecologists and a primary care physician. For more information or to request an appointment, visit memorialcare.org/obgyn.

Inclusive Kids Gym Opens In Long Beach

Raoul and Adriana Salas opened Long Beach’s first We Rock the Spectrum, a gym dedicated to providing therapy and inclusion for children across the autism



Raoul and Adriana Salas are pictured inside their new We Rock The Spectrum Kid’s Gym with their children Edith, Raoul Jr. and Edelyn. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Larry Duncan)

spectrum. Located at 2533 N. Lakewood Blvd., #200, the facility includes suspended equipment with swings, crash mats and pillows, a zip line, a trampoline, climbing structures, sensory-based toys and a fine motor skills and arts and crafts area. The mission of the franchise is to provide a safe space for children of all ability levels to improve sensory functions while learning social skills. For more information, visit werockthespectrumlongbeach.com.

Pop Culture-Focused Firm Launches In WeWork Offices

Power Level Productions, a live event and marketing strategy firm that specializes in pop culture and cross culture events, launched operations in Long Beach last month. The firm is utilizing a four-person

office space in the WeWork creative offices in The Hub at 100 W. Broadway, as well as virtual offices provided by WeWork. Members of the Power Level team have worked with brands such as Intel, Fullscreen Media, Funimation, MakeStuff and Sony Music.

Pediatric Provider To Open In Long Beach

Pediatric Therapy Network (PTN), a Torrance-based, nonprofit early child development and therapy center, opened a new location at 1406 Obispo Ave. in Long Beach. A ribbon-cutting ceremony and luncheon are scheduled for Tuesday, April 25, at 12:15 p.m. PTN provides physical, speech and occupational therapy to 2,500 children per year.

(Note: E-mail real estate and development news to: brandon_richardson@lbbj.com) ■

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Measure A Funds Paving The Way For Citywide Improvements This Year

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**
Assistant Editor

It won't be long before Long Beach residents start seeing more improvements to streets, parks and other infrastructure throughout the city, thanks to funds collected through the voter-sanctioned sales tax increase known as Measure A.

The measure raises the city sales tax by 1 percentage point for six years, after which it is reduced by 0.5 percentage point for four years before it sunsets. Funds generated by the tax increase are dedicated to restoring public safety services and improving public infrastructure.

Originally, \$19.5 million was budgeted for street improvements in fiscal year 2017, but the city council voted to reallocate \$2 million of those monies to restore Paramedic Rescue 12 in North Long Beach and to reinstate the police academy earlier this year.

"We're supposed to get the \$2 million back for streets in year four [of Measure A tax collection]," Craig Beck, director of public works, explained. "We think that public safety decision was good, and as long as we get the money in year four, we'll be able to address all the streets that we had shared with the public in our presentation before it was all voted on."

Beck shared an update on Measure A projects slated for fiscal year 2017 with the Business Journal after giving a PowerPoint presentation on the topic to the city's oversight committee for Measure A funding and projects on April 5.

Streets slated for improvements this year are those eligible for slurry sealing, a process in which streets are patched and then covered with a material that prevents them from cracking. This is a less intensive and less expensive process than repaving. "We're doing that preventative maintenance on all streets eligible for that work," Beck said.

Currently, the city is finishing up concrete work on these streets, such as adding curb cuts for ADA accessibility. Then the slurry sealing will begin, according to Beck. While previous estimates indicated this work would be done by September, Beck said it might be sooner. "I believe it's going to be done sometime in July. All of it," he said.

Broadway west of Redondo Avenue is the main arterial street slated for improvements this year, according to Beck. This work should be completed by the end of the year, he said.

The fiscal year 2017 Measure A work plan also includes \$5 million to create an alley management plan, which will identify alleys that are in most need of and are eligible for repairs.

The city is investing \$1.2 million of Measure A funds in improvements at City Place parking garages this year, according to Beck. "We're experiencing a lot of park-

ing needs in the downtown area, and we are looking at our City Place garages as a way to help address some of that need," he said. Elevators in the garages are going to be updated, ADA improvements made, and security cameras and LED lighting installed, he said. "And we are looking at adding solar to the roof of the garages to help make them more sustainable," he added.

Other infrastructure improvement projects planned this year include repairing the bridge connecting Naples Island and Belmont Shore as well as damaged fire station roofs.

Public facility improvements slated for this year include roof repairs and minor interior work for the Expo Building in Bixby Knolls, library branch improvements, a modern cat-housing system for Animal Care Services and more.

Parks facilities are receiving \$6,098,000 in Measure A funds this year. Rancho Los Alamitos and Rancho Los Cerritos are receiving \$1 million of this funding for seismic upgrades, irrigation and turf replacement, termite treatments and other needs.

"There are a lot of playgrounds underway. Pretty much all of the play equipment design has been completed, and right now we're working on kind of the surrounding elements," Beck said. These efforts are earmarked at \$2,850,000.

According to the city's Measure A website, public safety service restoration and maintenance budgeted for this fiscal year include:

- \$2,296,881 for the restoration of Fire Engine 8
- \$2,372,829 for the restoration of Police South Division

- \$628,300 for the restoration of Fire Paramedic Rescue 12

- \$821,802 for the restoration of police academy staffing

- \$2,254,496 to maintain police services
- \$909,853 to maintain fire services

"While the State Board of Equalization (BOE) has been collecting the Measure A sales tax since January 1, there is normal processing delay in the receipt of the actual cash to the city," Lea Eriksen, assistant finance director for the City of Long Beach, told the Business Journal via email. "We won't have an accurate report of the first quarter revenue estimate (January to March) until June. This was planned for in the estimated prorated amount of Measure A sales tax for the first year of \$35,640,000."

(Please Continue To Page 10)

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Measure A Funds

(Continued From Page 9)

Eriksen continued, “The FY17 adjusted budget for Measure A infrastructure projects is \$25,739,000. The department of public works is reporting that they are projected to be on track to spend all of those funds by the end of the year. However, it is still early in the year, and so things could change.”

The remainder of Measure A revenue is budgeted for public safety enhancements and for the city’s rainy day fund, she noted.

According to Beck, the city recently hired a communications representative to assist with community engagement related to Measure A. Public works staff members are in the process of uploading all Measure A project templates to the city’s Measure A web page at <http://www.longbeach.gov/city-manager/measure-a/>, he noted. “Additional information will be added in coming weeks. Also, the webpage will be moved to the city’s homepage.” ■

Four Appeals Made Against Belmont Pool Proposal

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**
Senior Writer

The revitalization of the former Belmont Plaza Olympic Pool through a \$103 million development project has encountered several hurdles in the years since the pool

closed in 2013. What has been informal opposition during public comment at planning commission meetings or op-eds posted online have been formalized with the submission of four separate appeals to the project.

At its March 2 meeting, the planning commission approved the environmental impact report (EIR) and other permits for the project, which spurred the appeals filed by Joe Weinstein and Ann Cantrell as the group Citizens About Responsible Planning (CARP), Belmont Shore residents Jeff Miller and Melinda Cotton, Belmont Heights resident Gordana Kajer, and Anna Christensen representing the Long Beach Area Peace Network.

This is not the first appeal Miller has filed against the pool project, having contested the lack of story poles on the site to demonstrate building heights for surrounding residents. His and Cotton’s most recent appeal also claims the story pole was inadequate.

Both the CARP and Kajer appeals cite the proposed 78-foot building height as too tall, which creates a hindrance to ocean views and migrating birds. Additionally, the appeals claim a traffic study should be conducted in the area, which would call for the EIR to be recirculated and opened for further discussion and public comment.

Christensen’s appeal focuses on the location of the pool being discriminatory by limiting access to low-income residents and residents of color. The appeal contends that the heavily white, heavily wealthy area of Belmont Shore does not need such a project and is too far for some residents to travel.

This is not the first time Christensen has made this claim regarding the pool project.

On August 16, 2016, Christensen posted an op-ed titled “#Swimmingsowhite: Long Beach Pool Project a Racial Justice Issue,” in which she voiced the same concern and noted statistics about the disparity between African-American and Hispanic children’s swimming ability compared to white children, saying it comes down to access to pool facilities.

Her appeal claims the EIR was too quick to disregard alternative locations for the pool downtown near the convention center or the Queen Mary.

“A public hearing on the appeals is scheduled for the May 16 city council meeting,” Amy Bodek, director of development services, said. “The EIR, as prepared by a team of CEQA [California Environmental Quality Act] professionals, is a valid disclosure document of all the environmental effects potentially associated with the project; otherwise, staff would not have recommended for the planning commission to consider certifying it.”

If the council turns down the appeals, opponents could file a lawsuit to combat the approved EIR. The California Coastal Commission also must approve the project if it moves forward.

The proposal consists of two 50-meter pools, a separate diving well, a recreational pool, a therapy teaching pool, a small spa near the diving well and a larger spa for the general public. However, the city only has \$60 million set aside and is currently evaluating various means of raising the remaining \$43 million minimum needed for the project. ■

City Auditor To Audit Business Improvement Districts

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**
Assistant Editor

Long Beach City Auditor Laura Doud has announced that she is pursuing an audit of all 10 business improvement districts. Doud notified the heads of each BID as well as the mayor, city council and city management in a letter dated April 4.

The announcement comes after a recommendation by Councilmembers Al Austin, Suzie Price and Daryl Supernaw that sought such an audit failed by a split vote during a council meeting on December 20. Councilmember Stacy Mungo joined her colleagues in support of the motion, but Councilmembers Lena Gonzalez, Jeannine Pearce, Roberto Uranga and Vice Mayor Rex Richardson voted against it. Sixth District Councilmember Dee Andrews was not present for the vote, resulting in the tie.

A representative from the city auditor’s office later told the Business Journal that staff was researching the matter further and would then determine whether to move forward in some way.

“After the conclusion of our preliminary research, we decided to initiate this audit due to the importance of BIDs to the economic vitality of the city and the benefit that BIDs

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provide to the citizens and visitors of Long Beach," Doud's April 4 letter stated.

The audit is to involve a series of interviews and requires information from city staff as well as the BID associations, according to the letter. Doud indicated that all involved parties would be contacted about the audit's objectives, scope and associated timetables.

When Doud spoke at the December 20 meeting, she reminded the council that she does not work for them but operates independently. "There is approximately \$11 million annually coming in from [BID] assessments," she told them at the time. About \$440,000 of that comes from fees assessed on city properties.

"In the ten-and-a-half years that I have been a city auditor, there never has been an internal control on the PBIDs or to look at whether or not the businesses and the property owners are receiving the intended benefit, whether or not the city is providing adequate oversight, whether or not . . . they are in compliance with the contract," Doud had said.

At the time, Doud said if her office were to pursue an audit of the PBIDs that "we would ensure that business owners and property owners are receiving the intended benefits that their assessments are supposed to give them."

The original motion by Austin, Price and Supernaw asked for a "review of internal controls over how funds are handled and spent by the PBID/PBIA; compliance with the City agreement; and possible benchmarking as to how other cities oversee PBID/PBIA's, and report back to the City Council with the findings."

The city's various BIDs assess fees on business and/or property owners, which are in turn used to provide services such as marketing, clean teams, special events and more. They are each run by nonprofit associations, including the Belmont Shore Business Association, the Bixby Knolls Business Improvement Association, the Downtown Long Beach Alliance, the East Anaheim Street Business Alliance, the Fourth Street Improvement Association, the Long Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, the Magnolia Industrial Group Inc., the Midtown Property and Business Owners Association, and the Uptown Property and Community Association. ■

Southwest Announces Sacramento Flights

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**
Senior Writer

On March 30, Southwest Airlines' Chief Executive Officer Gary Kelly announced plans to begin regular flights from Long Beach to Sacramento beginning August 1.

The announcement comes just over a month after American Airlines Inc. notified Long Beach Airport (LGB) officials that it would be reducing its presence by dropping two of its five allocated flight slots. The airline did not provide a reason for its decision.

Southwest's new flights mark its first expansion at LGB since beginning operations early last year, but Kelly doesn't believe it will be the last. "I've committed to the mayor

(Please Continue To Page 12)

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Southwest Airlines

(Continued From Page 11)

that if more slots become available, we will fly them,” Kelly said during a press conference with Mayor Robert Garcia. “We’re just here to do as much as we can within the constraints that we have at the airport.”

The two daily flights to Sacramento bring Southwest’s permanent flight slot count to six, with the other four dedicated to daily flights to Oakland. The airline also currently flies to Denver and Las Vegas on a temporary basis.

Garcia said the city is thankful and grateful for the investment and interest in growth that Southwest has dedicated to Long Beach. He said the city is encouraging the company to actively grow its footprint at LGB because it understands the community.

“They get what the restraints are. They understand that we are very respectful of the community and what the noise bucket means,” Garcia said. “So everything that we are talking about is all within the constraints of the noise ordinance that we have.”

The noise ordinance at LGB is one of the strictest in the country and only allows for 50 commercial flights per day. Allowable flight slots were set at 41 but increased at the beginning of 2016 following an announcement from former Airport Director Bryan Francis that modern jets were quiet enough to add flights while maintaining the ordinance. It was this flight slot expansion that gained Southwest its initial four slots.

Garcia noted that Sacramento is an important business connector for Long Beach and said further Southwest expansion at

LGB in the future could be beneficial to the city’s ever-growing tourism industry. When asked why the company did not opt for a market without current service from Long Beach, Kelly said Sacramento compliments Southwest’s other markets.

“It was very high on our list, and I think it will prove to be a very popular route,” Kelly said. “We generate a lot of flights, a lot of seats, a lot of customers. And this will be a wonderful way to serve our current customers and also win some new ones.”

Kelly noted that, in addition to its six daily flights at LGB, Southwest has 120 daily flights from Los Angeles International Airport, 60 from John Wayne Airport and around 100 from Ontario and Burbank airports combined, making it the largest airline serving Southern California.

JetBlue Airways, the airport’s largest carrier, and Delta Air Lines Inc. also expressed interest in obtaining the newly available slots. However, Southwest was allowed first pick as the newest carrier at the airport.

After the Long Beach City Council’s decision in January to not move forward with JetBlue’s request for a customs facility, which would have allowed international flights at LGB, there has been speculation that the company would lessen its presence at the airport. Garcia said there has been no communication between JetBlue and the city to indicate any change to the carrier’s presence.

JetBlue did not respond to a request for comment on how the Southwest announcement would impact its business or its future plans at LGB. JetBlue currently offers two daily flights to Sacramento.

Kelly explained that his company’s

Sacramento flights, and any further expansion, would only add meaningful competition to the market and give Long Beach and surrounding area residents more options for arrivals and departures throughout Southern California.

“We’re just getting started working to-

gether, and we’ll continue to work together to see what we can do to provide more service to Long Beach,” Kelly said. “We don’t take these types of relationships for granted. We are very pleased to be wanted, and I think we have been welcomed with open arms here.” ■

Styrofoam Ban Update

(Continued From Page 1)

the possible wording of the ordinance in order for them to be able to make more specific comments.

“We felt that it was important to at least provide a framework so they have something to comment on, as opposed to something too nebulous,” Melkonian said. “[We’ll] get some of that input before we actually draft an ordinance so everyone gets a chance to make some comments on it.”

Melkonian noted that more than 100 cities have varying degrees of polystyrene bans. The least extensive programs ban only expanded polystyrene products (Styrofoam), while stricter bans include polystyrene products such as non-recyclable and non-compostable plastic containers, including the common red Solo cups.

“The intent is for the city to work with businesses, not at businesses,” Melkonian said. “Use the carrot, not the stick, as they say. If the council should pass this ordinance, we want to help businesses be successful because it’s in the interest of everybody for that to happen.”

Alternative products include reusable containers, which Melkonian said would be ideal but impractical for many restaurants

(particularly those with a focus on takeout), compostable containers or those that are easily recyclable.

Robb Korinke, principal at Grassroots Lab, cited a polystyrene ban in Pasadena that saw drastic price increases for local businesses. Restaurants that focused on takeout saw the most drastic increase – jumping from anywhere between \$7,000 and \$17,000 per year for containers.

“We definitely oppose this ban,” Becky Warren of the California Restaurant Association said. “Bans harm the smallest restaurants in your city. So we would really hope that you consider working with the industry, the grocers, restaurants, to figure out a solution that’s win-win so that we can actually reduce waste, reduce litter and also allow for the restaurants to continue to not have another mandated cost put on them.”

Besides the standard questions of cost and economic impacts to the city and businesses, multiple commissioners said they think the issue cannot be completely resolved at the city level.

“It should be, in my opinion, a county-wide issue, so we are dealing with it once and for all if we are going to deal with it,” Commissioner Frank Colonna said. “I think, if we’re going to take an approach to

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it . . . it would be good to take a look at the feasibility of a broad approach so that we really take care of the problem and not just make Long Beach look like we're doing one more piece of legislation that's going to burn business and create hardship."

Commissioners said there are two reasons for looking at this as a statewide issue. The Styrofoam that litters Long Beach beaches does not all come from the city but is carried here from other cities via the Los Angeles River. And there is a fear that businesses will opt to open in other cities to avoid complying with the ban.

Commission Chairman Randal Hernandez noted that he does not expect litter to be reduced by the ban, rather the makeup of trash would change from Styrofoam to other items.

During public comment, Cory Allen, chief of staff for 1st District Councilmember Lena Gonzalez, said the councilmember's staff respectfully disagrees with the economic issues brought up by commissioners and business owners. He noted the

fact that polystyrene does not begin to decompose for 500 years and that the price difference for environmentally friendly products is only one or two cents more.

The original request for city staff to draft the ban, taking public comment into consideration, came from the city council at its December 20 meeting. The motion included a request for city staff to develop a timeline for implementation, a list of vendors who utilize polystyrene, a website containing information about the ban and a hotline to answer questions and concerns. The Long Beach Economic Development Commission is also creating incentives for businesses that adhere to the ban prior to the implementation date.

The commission voted unanimously to lay over the discussion until its April 28 meeting.

Melkonian said he expects a drafted ordinance to be presented to the city council sometime in June, at which point a public education campaign will be introduced to help businesses adhere to the ban. ■

Long Beach City Council Approves Draft Economic Development Blueprint

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**
 Senior Writer

At its April 4 meeting, the Long Beach City Council voted unanimously to approve the draft Economic Development Blueprint.

"The Blueprint defines priorities for the city and outlines specific strategies to advance the vision of Long Beach as a hub for innovation, jobs and development," Mayor Robert Garcia said in a statement following the vote. "It recommends a focus on areas that will drive economic growth over the next 10 years, including key industry clusters and emerging sectors, economic inclusion, workforce development, business assistance, the development environment, quality of life, and economic leadership and cooperation."

According to John Keisler, director of the Long Beach Economic and Property Development Department, comments, clarifications and additions asked for by councilmembers during the meeting will be incorporated into the document before returning to the economic development commission for review and finalization.

Keisler said several councilmember recommendations mainly focused on strengthening items or the implementation process. Some of the recommendations and comments are as follows:

First District Councilmember Lena Gonzalez wants an emphasis on tracking key performance measures, incentivizing innovation, addressing unemployment disparities and how to better leverage music and entertainment events for economic growth.

Second District Councilmember Jeanine Pearce suggested recommendations by the Downtown Long Beach Alliance be considered, including the White House Housing Development Toolkit and housing affordability. Pearce also recommended on-line accessibility and predictability for conditional use permits and licensing, and also would like a bigger focus on live entertainment downtown.

Third District Councilmember Suzie Price stated the importance of establishing realistic performance measures, identified by implementation phases.

Fifth District Councilmember Stacy Mungo recommended the formation of an implementation committee – consisting of members from both the city council's economic development and finance committee and its economic development commission, the chair of the Workforce Investment Board and city staff – to prioritize the initial measures.

Seventh District Councilmember Roberto Uranga said the document needs a stronger focus on air quality, transportation and mobility, as well as workforce training, jobs and living wages.

Eighth District Councilmember Al Austin said he would like a greater emphasis on creating and maintaining quality jobs, as well as tying economic development to "employment development."

Ninth District Councilmember Rex Richardson discussed a platform for tracking entrepreneurs through the startup process.

These comments and recommendations will be added to the document and considered by the economic development commission at its April 25 meeting, according to Keisler.

"At this point, the council did not include a motion to bring it back to council," Keisler said. "We know we will be going back with regular updates . . . [but] there's no date set for when we will come back to council with an update."

In an e-mail following the meeting, Pearce noted the months of hard work dedicated to creating the blueprint. She said the process included 26 public meetings, 25 individual listening sessions and discussions with 20 expert panelists. Garcia said the document is only the beginning of an ongoing discussion to improve the community and the economy.

"Our Long Beach economy is booming, and this Blueprint will advance our city's efforts to grow a 21st century city," Garcia said. "This is just the start of an ongoing discussion to find ways our city can help build a vibrant community, while supporting entrepreneurship, workforce development and a thriving, diverse economy." ■



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Developers Beware

(Continued From Page 1)

about 40 development proposals, according to Blesofsky, and has taken legal action on three.

“We’re pursuing a strategy of appeals and litigation citywide to change the way the city does business with regards to development. We really feel that the city government in Long Beach is by and for developers,” Blesofsky said. “The loss of the environmental, cultural, historic and fiscal resources in Long Beach is generally for the benefit of a few people and not for the many residents of Long Beach.”

The first formal appeal and lawsuit made by Blesofsky was against the second phase of the Shoreline Gateway project at 777 E. Ocean Blvd., adjacent to phase one, now called The Current. According to Ryan Altoon, executive vice president of Anderson Pacific LLC, the developer of the project, the suit was settled out of court. The settlement included a confidentiality agreement, so neither Anderson Pacific nor Blesofsky can disclose the terms of the settlement.

Currently, Blesofsky and his legal representation, Jamie Hall of Beverly Hills-based Channel Law Group LLP, are negotiating settlement terms for appeals at 100 E. Ocean Blvd. and 3655 N. Norwalk Blvd.

Hall has been involved in several other development lawsuits in Long Beach, including one against The Current and three on behalf of Debora Dobias and the group Long Beach Transportation and Parking Solutions (TAPS).

“I want to make sure that people understand that when people bring these lawsuits, it’s not because they just want to be gadflies and they hate developers and they want no buildings,” Hall said. “They’re not absolute NIMBYs. It’s about the details. It’s about whether or not there is adequate mitigation.”

The TAPS lawsuits were against downtown proposals by Ensemble Investment LLC, Raintree-Evergreen LLC and Broadway Block LLC. These lawsuits were settled together in November of last year and resulted in parking studies to be conducted in the Alamitos Beach and downtown areas.

Blesofsky said his appeal at 100 E. Ocean Blvd., the former site of the historic Jergins Trust Building, focuses on taxpayer abuse issues. He claims the site was sold under value, while other offers were millions of dollars higher. Blesofsky also claims the current zoning is for high-density housing but that, in a case of spot zoning, the city approved the land sale to a developer proposing a luxury hotel.

Blesofsky and Hall said negotiations are proceeding with developer American Life Inc., but that they could not share any details.

The Norwalk Boulevard property has been home to the El Dorado Park Community Church for the last 55 years. Developer Preface has proposed a 40-home gated community to complement the adjacent El Dorado Park Estates neighborhood.

“I look at that building as a beautiful, historic building. I see a town hall. I see a community meeting space,” Blesofsky

said. “Those are all uses that are allowed under the current zoning, and that’s why I object to the zoning change for high-density, single-family, million-dollar houses.”

Blesofsky said the proposed zoning change to residential is another case of spot zoning by city staff to appease developers, despite the site being surrounded by residential neighborhoods. He said the zoning change is meant to allow developers to minimize lot sizes to maximize the number of homes on the land, which doesn’t provide the best quality of life for residents.

Project data, however, tells a different story. Current zoning allows for up to 42 homes with 7.2 units per acre and 6,000 square feet of gross land per home. The Preface project only consists of 40 homes with 6.9 units per acre and 6,316 square feet of gross land area per home – less units per acre and more square footage per lot, including an average of 7% more open space per lot.

Additionally, Blesofsky claimed the zoning change would allow for smaller setbacks on the properties, including rear, side yard and garage. However, the only change to setbacks according to the site plan is a two-foot increase to the rear setbacks from the property lines.

Blesofsky’s appeal to the housing development also claims inadequacies in the environmental impact report, most notably the section in which alternative projects are identified. He contends the report is lacking an alternative that includes a housing element.

Alternatives listed in the document include abandoning the project and allowing the current structures to remain and function as a church, daycare and associated parking lots or converting existing facilities to a private elementary school or special event venue.

Alternatives that were rejected for various reasons of feasibility and scope included moving the chapel structure to preserve it and converting the chapel itself into housing.

“We are extremely disappointed litigation related to the City’s Environmental Impact Report has been filed by Warren Blesofsky,” a Preface spokesperson said in an e-mail to the Business Journal. “Despite the obvious and overwhelming community support for this project, as well as the thousands of hours of collaborative efforts between the development team and city staff, one individual – who chose not to participate in the planning process and does not live anywhere near the property – is attempting to undermine the project. With apologies to our friends in the El Dorado neighborhood, we will continue to work with all stakeholders in the city and community to move the project forward while we try to reach a resolution with Warren Blesofsky.”

Current negotiations between Blesofsky and Preface are focusing on the historical importance of the church and ways to mitigate the impact of losing the structure. Aside from the architectural importance, Blesofsky said the church’s past as a drive-in church, where residents could listen to a sermon in their cars while parked on the property, marks a time in American history that should not be destroyed without consideration. He explained that this is uniquely American and part of the country’s cultural landscape.

Blesofsky and Hall admitted that under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines, the best they can hope to achieve is mitigation beyond the proposed photographs of the church.

“One thing that we are trying to work on with developers, rather than just having some video taken with no context, is to actually do a documentary about the history of this church,” Hall said. “The best way to preserve it is to do something like that and have it available for public view in perpetuity.”

Bari Harris, an El Dorado Park Estates resident and local realtor, said she thinks the church is an eyesore and hopes the project moves forward quickly, despite Blesofsky’s appeals.

“I think it’s a shame that they are challenging the project and are holding it up,” Harris said. “With the housing shortage that we have, I just think it’s such a shame that they are holding up 40 more homes that we could have for people.”

The city was presented with a petition signed by between 40 and 50 residents in support of the development project, according to Harris. Additionally, residents and even congregation members of the church that recently vacated the premises submitted numerous letters of support into public record.

Despite community support, Blesofsky maintains that the process and proceedings are not acceptable and said more mitigation is needed on the Norwalk project and reform needs to be made to the development process at the city council level.

Hall said that each project he has worked on has resulted in better projects. He explained that these lawsuits are a direct result of elected officials’ tendency to violate CEQA guidelines by approving inadequate environmental reviews or bypassing them altogether, their poor treatment of developers and not listening to residents.


“I don’t earn my living doing this. I have my own business. In fact, I’ve lost money doing these appeals. It’s more just a matter of conscience to me,” Blesofsky explained. “I’m not anti-development, I’m pro-development. I think Long Beach does need more housing, and I believe in private property. I also believe in playing by the rules.”

Blesofsky said he is the owner of Linden River Capital LLC, in Long Beach. His company’s website states: “We are a real estate investment firm that specializes in the acquisition, management and sale of distressed properties and mortgage loans.”

Long Beach Citizens for Fair Development is in its infancy, with few core members, according to Blesofsky. He said he wished he did not have to resort to litigation, but claimed that the city does not take public comment to heart and instead focuses solely on staff reports. Because of this, he said the group has plans to continue taking action against development projects until changes are made to city procedures with regard to development approval.

“We want development weighted toward local developers and community development projects. I’d like to use the fiscal resources of the city for the highest good,” Blesofsky said. “If the city wants to give the citizens a real voice when it comes to development, then we won’t need to litigate anymore.” ■

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An Opportunity To Clean The Air And Stimulate Economic Growth



■ By **KIMBA ANDERSON**
And **DAVID PARK**

As environmental policy consultants, we develop advanced technology demonstration projects that inform policymakers on industry trends in emerging, low-environmental-impact technologies. One of our areas of expertise is the development of demonstration projects for the manufacture of renewable fuels. Within this niche, we have experienced great resistance in bringing these projects to California. At the surface, it appears to be a no-brainer given the abundance of renewable resources and a political culture of environmental stewardship. However, the reality is that renewable energy infrastructure companies are either hesitant or resistant to entering the California market—even with the carrot of a \$5 million California Energy Commission (CEC) grant. What is the reason for hesitation? Environmental permitting, specifically air pollution permitting, which drives up costs and therefore makes the end product less competitive.

Historically, environmental policy has been at odds with economic policy, driving industry out of California to more favorable economic climates, resulting in the removal of a rung in the economic ladder. This creates an even greater barrier for individuals to climb out of poverty. We perceive that a sea change in public policy is necessary to keep these two disciplines from working in silos, but instead, work together, synergistically.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District's (SCAQMD) Governing Board recently provided an on-ramp to this sea change in the adoption of the agency's 2016 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP), a historic document that, for the first time, emphasizes incentives for cleaning the air above command and control regulation. The incentives proposed are significant with \$1 billion a year over the next seven to 10 years. As SCAQMD develops that incentive program, we suggest the agency consider an investment strategy to both improve the air and stimulate regional economic growth.

Here are some ideas:

1. Streamline permitting for manufacturers of air pollution control technologies.

Permitting fees for manufacturing facilities in the South Coast Air Basin are significant, therefore a majority of control technologies are manufactured elsewhere and imported to the state, meaning dollars invested on local controls immediately leave the state, which leads to the next point.

2. Stimulate growth in entrepreneurship in clean technologies for testing and use in California.

These technologies are needed here,

but they can also be exported to other states and countries. This means incentive funds stay in California and there is an economic return to California greater than the original investment.

3. Offer subsidies, both cash and non-tangible (such as streamlined or fee-free permitting) for the installation of air pollution control equipment, especially to small businesses.

The irony is industries operating in California are required to install pollution control equipment. However, they are hit with a triple economic whammy: first they are required to invest in pollution-reducing controls; second, they pay a consultant to write a permit application, a highly technical document; third, they pay a fee to SCAQMD for the review and issuance of the permit. Lowering these costs will reduce the cost of doing business and improve price competitiveness in the larger global marketplace.

4. Should SCAQMD sunset RECLAIM, the region's cap and trade program, SCAQMD could provide a financial subsidy to facilities which voluntarily choose to adopt Best Available Retrofit Control Technology (BARCT) level controls earlier than will be required.

The program is not expected to end for another 8 to 12 years, so this would provide the region with greatly-needed air pollution reductions earlier than required and therefore provide a greater overall air pollution benefit. This could be offered in conjunction with other economic stimulus incentives such as tax breaks to these businesses.

5. Partner with citizen activists to identify and encourage businesses to invest incen-

tive funding to institute the most advanced environmental controls at local businesses, especially local small businesses.

This would foster a greater sense of community and provide economic assistance to businesses whose bottom line is more sensitive to the costs of environmental compliance.

6. Incentives for use of renewable energy sources at manufacturing facilities.

In a carbon-constrained world and a very competitive energy market, renewable energy technologies, which tend to be less mature, will be more likely to succeed if incentives are provided.

These are just a few ideas, but perhaps these will stimulate others to join the dialogue as SCAQMD develops their incentive funding plan.

(Kimba Anderson is senior associate consultant and David Park is director of air policy for Long Beach-based Alta Environmental.) ■

Long Beach Transit Puts Electric Buses Into Service

On March 31, Long Beach Transit put three of its new zero-emission, battery-powered electric buses into service on the free downtown Passport route. By releasing no emissions, the buses are set to reduce the transit agency's carbon footprint. Seven more of the electric buses are to be introduced to LBT routes in the future.

The long-awaited buses, manufactured by BYD Motors, are able to travel 150 miles on a full charge. They are charged overnight at LBT's headquarters on Anaheim Street. "Our new battery electric buses will help reduce noise and air pollution and provide an

environmentally friendly ride for customers," LBT CEO Kenneth McDonald stated. "When more of the buses are released into service, the Passport will become 100% battery electric, and LBT will deploy some of the buses on other routes throughout our service area." ■

Port Dedicates \$46 Million For Community Grants

On March 27, the Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners committed \$46 million for grants to fund health programs in communities directly impacted by pollution from the San Pedro Bay ports. The Community Grants Program will distribute the funding over the next 12 to 15 years, according to the Port of Long Beach.

Applications for grants will open to local organizations later this year, according to the port. The funding adds to the \$18.2 million awarded by the port through a previous grant program, bringing its commitment to community programs to nearly \$65 million.

"We believe in environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and this program loudly and clearly demonstrates the Port of Long Beach's pledge to the community to be a responsible neighbor," Lori Ann Guzman, president of the board of harbor commissioners, stated.

The port is hosting workshops on grant applications on April 19 at its offices at 4801 Airport Plaza Dr. A workshop on applying for air filter funding takes place from 2-3 p.m., followed by a workshop on health program grant applications from 3:30-4:30 p.m. For more information, visit www.polb.com/grants. ■



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City Asks Smokers To Can Their Butts

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**
Senior Writer

The Broadway corridor is the new testing ground for Long Beach's latest step down its environmentally conscious path – the Can Your Butts campaign. The program aims to stamp out cigarette butt litter along city streets, and on March 31, city officials unveiled its first cigarette waste receptacle at Gallagher's Pub & Grill.

"We know that people are still smoking. As much as we would like to encourage you not to do that, people are," 2nd District Councilmember Jeannine Pearce said at the unveiling event. "And we want to make sure that we are keeping it as clean and safe for our community as possible."

According to city data, 65% of cigarette butts, which are not biodegradable, become litter. These butts leach chemicals into the environment and are poisonous to children, pets and wildlife if ingested. The state spends \$419 million annually to clean up cigarette butts, which make up one-third of all litter found on roadways, public spaces, beaches and waterways nationwide.

Ciaran Gallagher, the Northern Irishman who opened his pub in Long Beach in 2005, partnered with the Long Beach En-

vironmental Services Bureau (ESB) Clean Team, as part of the Department of Public Works, and the City of Long Beach to become the first participant of the pilot program. The campaign, which was developed by the Clean Team over the last six months, will provide eligible businesses with free cigarette butt receptacles.

"We are proud to be part of this wonderful community. We're excited to be the first business to join the new Can Your Butts campaign," Gallagher said. "Working together with the city through this initiative helps businesses like mine promote a clean, safe and litter-free Long Beach."

According to Leigh Behrens, a recycling specialist with the ESB, 33 businesses along the Broadway corridor – between Alamitos and Redondo avenues – are eligible for the free, voluntary pilot program. She explained that initial outreach indicates that most businesses plan to participate and will sign up in the coming weeks.

Environmental Services Manager Diko Melkonian explained that the target businesses are mostly bars, restaurants and barbershops – places where people tend to smoke the most.

"Broadway is a very busy business corridor. If you look around, it does have a little bit of a litter issue," Melkonian said. "It's a great opportunity. We talked to a lot of the business owners up and down the street, and a lot of them showed a lot of interest in participating. So we thought it was a great place to start."

Melkonian said that disposing of cigarette butts in proper receptacles is only the first step in the litter abatement program.



The Broadway corridor is the first to take part in the city's Can Your Butts pilot program, which aims to eliminate cigarette litter along city streets. The program launched on March 31. Pictured from left: Diko Melkonian, Long Beach Environmental Services Bureau (ESB) manager; Gallagher's Pub & Grill Owner Ciaran Gallagher; and ESB recycling specialists Elisa Calderon and Leigh Behrens. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Larry Duncan)

LB RECYCLES



Mandatory Commercial Recycling

State law (AB 341) makes recycling mandatory for any commercial property or multi-family residential property (with five or more units) that generates four or more cubic yards of waste per week. Contact your waste hauler about recycling options.



Commercial Organics Recycling

Starting January 1, 2017, State law (AB 1826) requires businesses that generate 4 cubic yards of organic waste to arrange for organic waste recycling services. Organics include food, yard trimmings, nonhazardous wood, and food soiled paper.



Recycling Can Work For You

Did you know the commercial sector generates nearly 75% of the solid waste in California? Encourage employees and tenants to recycle with free flyers and signs that can be downloaded from www.longbeach-recycles.org. Some recyclables may generate revenue for your company.

Visit www.longbeach-recycles.org to learn more about commercial recycling options.



Pamphlets and other materials related to the Can Your Butts campaign are available through the Long Beach Environmental Services Bureau.

The campaign also encourages participating businesses to utilize free cigarette waste recycling through TerraCycle. The New Jersey-based company provides shipping labels for companies to ship extinguished cigarettes, cigarette filters, loose tobacco pouches, outer plastic packaging, inner foil packaging, rolling paper and ash to be recycled. Ash and tobacco are turned into compost, while filters can be melted down and used to make industrial products such as shipping pallets.

More than 9,800 locations participate in the program, according to TerraCycle's website. For every pound of cigarette waste collected, the company donates \$1 to the Keep America Beautiful Cigarette Litter Prevention Program.

In addition to the full-sized receptacles, eligible businesses can receive free resources from the city such as posters and pocket ashtrays.

"Rather than allowing them to go down

the storm drains and into the waterways, we're trying to be proactive and give people the opportunity to dispose of them and recycle them," Melkonian said. "Studies have determined that if you give people opportunities to dispose of them properly, they will."

Along with being environmentally friendly, city brochures for the Can Your Butts campaign note that retail establishments and restaurants that sell tobacco products or alcohol for consumption on the premises are legally required to provide and empty cigarette waste receptacles in all areas that smoking is lawfully permitted. Businesses also are required to keep properties and adjacent areas, including sidewalks, streets, gutters, catch basins and alleys, litter free.

About 38% of cigarette litter is associated with the number of ashtrays available and the amount of existing litter, according to city data. It's estimated that for each receptacle added, the litter rate decreases by 9%. Additionally, 41% of employees who smoke report that no cigarette receptacles are provided by their employer.

"This is an opportunity for Broadway, again, to take the next step in becoming a corridor that's really clean and leading the way in describing the kind of city we want to be," Councilmember Pearce said. "So we're encouraging business owners to get educated on the Can Your Butts campaign and take the opportunity to get one of the receptacles."

For more information on the Can Your Butts campaign or to request a receptacle for an eligible business, visit litterfreelb.org. For more information on TerraCycle's cigarette waste recycling program, visit terra-cycle.com. ■

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Street Sweeping

The City sweeps approximately 160,000 miles of streets and removes approximately 11,000 tons of debris each year to prevent it from entering storm drains and help comply with state and federal stormwater quality requirements.

Visit www.litterfreeLB.org to learn more about litter abatement efforts in Long Beach.



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES BUREAU | DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS



Adapting To Climate Change

(Continued From Page 1)

enough city to be manageable [but] we are a large enough city to have national impact,” Schubel said. “We experience most of the aspects of climate change. For example, we not only have the ones that happen on land but we also have the changes that happen in the ocean.”

As a coastal city, Long Beach will be impacted by rising sea levels, according to the report. Increasing oceanic temperatures due to climate change are causing seawater to expand, which, in addition to melting glaciers, is causing rising sea levels, the report stated. “Sea level in the Long Beach-Los Angeles area is expected to rise nearly one foot by 2030, up to two feet by 2050, and as much as 5.5 feet by 2100,” the summary report stated.

“If we cut off all greenhouse gases tomorrow, which we obviously can’t do, sea level would continue to rise for decades and perhaps longer,” Schubel said.

While this is a long-term threat, climate change also affects coastal communities in the short term, Schubel pointed out. “What’s an immediate threat when you have these coastal storms superimposed upon temporary rises of sea level, whether they are king tides or El Niño, those are the ones that are doing the damage now,” he said. “And the damage they will do in the future only gets greater because they are superimposed upon a higher stance of sea level.”

Such instances have already occurred. For example, the summary report noted that in 2014, Hurricane Marie caused 20-foot swells in Long Beach waters that caused \$10 million in damage to the Long Beach Middle Breakwater.

Areas currently most vulnerable to coastal flooding include the Peninsula, Alamitos Bay, Belmont Shore and the lot north of Alamitos Bay Marina, according to the report. While seawalls and additional breakwaters could help temporarily, eventually “retreat inland will be the only viable option,” it stated. The report suggested conducting a thorough review of where previous storm damage has occurred, a survey of sea walls and drainage infrastructure to create hazard modeling, and a review of all assets at risk of flooding.

While Schubel acknowledged that the Port of Long Beach and the city have made strides toward reducing air pollution, he believes air quality is bound to become worse, regardless. “Air quality gets worse as the temperature goes up. And Long Beach already has some bad air quality, even though it’s much better than it was 20 years ago,” he said.

“We have among some of the highest asthma rates, particularly for those people who live along the 710 corridor. We need more data. We need better studies,” Schubel said. “I think the Long Beach Health [and Human Services] Department and California Department of [Public] Health need to collaborate on those. But we also need to continue to reduce the emissions from the port. They have done a lot.

They should be applauded. But there is an awful lot more to be done.”

The use of trucks fueled with biodiesel could aid in reducing fine particles in the air, Schubel pointed out. “Biodiesel burns at a higher temperature, so it emits far fewer particulates than conventional diesel. And it’s one step above clean trucks,” he said.

The summary report includes a list of local initiatives to reduce air pollution, including the San Pedro Bay ports’ Clean Air Action Plan, an effort by the City of Long Beach to plant 10,000 trees, and more. According to Mark Taylor, chief of staff for Mayor Garcia, the city has been working to expand its use of green vehicles, and it has encouraged the use of electric cars through an electric car charger giveaway and by installing more charging stations.

Schubel views an expected increase in drought length and frequency as the most difficult climate change challenge facing the region. “We all felt a relief when we had so much rain this winter. But all of the studies suggest that the pressures on our water supply will increase as the earth warms,” he said.

According to Taylor, the mayor’s office has encouraged water conservation programs in partnership with the Long Beach Water Department. The city has also initiated the Long Beach Municipal Urban Stormwater Treatment (MUST) project to reclaim and reuse stormwater for irrigation and industrial uses, he noted.

The city is actively pursuing the creation

of a Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, and it has partnered with engineering firm AECOM to “help guide the city’s assessment/inventory of GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions and approaches to reduce them with specific goals and targets moving forward,” Taylor said via e-mail.

In recent weeks, President Donald Trump has taken executive action to roll back environmental regulations put in place during the Obama administration. Trump’s order revoked one executive order and three presidential memoranda from the previous administration, and rescinded the former president’s 2013 Climate Action Plan and a strategy to reduce methane emissions. It also initiated reviews of other policies, including the Clean Power Plan, and an analysis of the “social cost of carbon.”

Trump’s executive action also removed a ban on leases for coal operations on federal lands and initiated a review of regulations for oil and gas development.

“I do have concerns because I think the actions we take over the next decade are going to be very important in limiting the potential impacts of climate change,” Schubel said of the president’s recent actions related to the environment. “So we will step up our programs.”

Schubel added, “And as we have seen, the president doesn’t always get what he wants. And so I think we can continue and will continue to work on the science behind all of this and [building] an educated public, because the educated public then can influence what their congressional representatives do.” ■



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CITY OF LONG BEACH

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Long Deck LED Light Conversion	ITB PR17-070	04/20/2017
Red Car Greenway Project	R-7060	04/26/2017
Emergency After Hours Veterinary Services	RFP PR17-064	04/26/2017
Mailing System, Maintenance and Support	RFP TI17-054	04/27/2017
Placement & Operation of RMUs at Rainbow Harbor	RFP PR17-042	04/28/2017
Rainbow Harbor Sewage EVAC Repair & Upgrade	R-7089	05/03/2017
Develop & Implement Traffic Calming Measures		
For Traffic Exiting I-710 into Long Beach	R-7053/R-7056	05/03/2017
Citywide Parking Operations & Management Svcs	RFP PW17-033	05/11/2017
Development & Operation of Airport Advertising Prg	RFQ AP17-053	05/18/2017
Airport Security System Maintenance & Flight Info.	RFP AP17-065	05/24/2017

****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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Ecco's Pizza Restaurant

Though Jim Xanthos has owned Ecco's Pizza restaurant for nearly 25 years – since 1993 – the establishment has been a Long Beach staple since 1977. Located at 2123 N. Bellflower Blvd., Xanthos said he is planning a 40th anniversary event for early fall and hopes for city involvement. “I love Long Beach. It's a great city,” Xanthos said. “We've had some pitfalls here, as far as the recession. I don't think we have come back quite as strong as I would have hoped. But we're still a family atmosphere restaurant.” Xanthos owned another pizza business in Westwood prior to purchasing Ecco's. He said he sold that business in 1995 because of the commute. Ecco's currently has 24 employees, many of whom are Cal State Long Beach students. The cook has been with the establishment for all 40 years. The restaurant's bestseller is the Ecco's Special – a pepperoni, sausage and mushroom pizza – according to Xanthos. He said the space has new patio seating and more changes are in the works, including the possibility of offering a limited brunch on weekends. “But right now, our customers are pretty much creatures of habit. They don't like a lot of change. So whatever we do, we have to be very careful because they notice everything.” For more information, visit myeccospizza.com.

Copyco USA Inc.

After moving to Irvine from Dallas to pursue new opportunities, Albert J.J. Kwon took a chance on a small copying business in Los Altos. He purchased Copyco USA Inc. at 2155 Bellflower Blvd. in 2004, despite not having any experience in the industry. “But my wife thought that I could do it,” he recalled. When he bought Copyco from the previous owner, it was struggling. But Kwon learned the trade and built upon the business. “It was a good opportunity. . . A challenge, in a way,” he said. “I try [to provide] the best service, you know, at a reasonable price. I think our prices are the best in town,” Kwon said. In fact, he hasn't raised prices in more than a decade, although he may do so soon due to rising costs. Still, he is determined to keep prices low. “Our location is pretty good because Bellflower Boulevard has a lot of traffic, and a lot of students pass by,” Kwon said. “Actually, a lot of professors recommend it to other professors.” Many of his customers come from California State University, Long Beach, but he also serves local public schools, churches and small businesses. Services range from copying to bookbinding to printing blueprints and more. “We do everything,” Kwon said. For more information, visit: www.copycousainc.net.



Tattered

In 2013, longtime thrifter Leah Zahn opened Tattered, a secondhand clothing store located in the Los Altos Market Center North, to pursue her love of fashion in a way that would allow her to interact with others. Zahn studied fashion design at Long Beach City College. After graduating and working for various companies as an assistant fashion designer, she realized she preferred interacting with others to working at a desk. “I kind of went on this journey where I went back to retail, loved it a lot, and loved being around people,” Zahn said, referring to her experience managing a Buffalo Exchange secondhand clothing store. “I always liked the concept of secondhand clothing,” Zahn said. “Recycled fashion is great for the environment.” Zahn chose the location at 5555 E. Stearns St., Ste. 106 for Tattered because she recognized the center as a shopping hub for the local community. “I live in Belmont Heights, but I find that my family always comes to this area for whatever reason – to go to Target, go to Trader Joe's,” she said. Tattered purchases popular brands and vintage clothing to sell and also offers accessories and gifts made by local artists. For more information, visit: tatteredtrading.com.

Sushi Kinoya

Iris and Martin Gi have owned Sushi Kinoya, which translates to house of happiness, at 5521 Stearns St. for nearly nine years. The couple immigrated to the United States from South Korea about 25 years ago, at which time Iris' brother began teaching Martin the art of sushi. After years of working in various sushi restaurants, Martin decided to branch out on his own. He and Iris opened their first restaurant in the Riverside area. After a couple of years, the pair decided to move the business and spent a year trying to find the perfect location. “We were looking for a good location everywhere. But one day we just drove by and suddenly saw this shopping center, and both of us were like, ‘This is it,’” Iris said. “We are so lucky to be in this area.” Iris explained that the area appealed to the couple because of the good weather and its proximity to the beach. She said the restaurant has 10 employees, including her and Martin, and about 70 regular customers. “The regular customers are very loyal,” Iris said. “We're like a family. The best part [is that] if something happens, they tell me, and we share together the happiness or the sorrow. And we're all here.” For more information, call 562/598-8169.



Articles by Assistant Editor Samantha Mehlinger
and Senior Writer Brandon Richardson.
Photographs by the Business Journal's Larry Duncan

Support Local Small Businesses

This edition features small businesses in the Los Altos area of East Long Beach, primarily along Bellflower Boulevard and Stearns Street.

E.J. Malloy's

Janine and Dave Ritter have been friends with E.J. Malloy's founder Brent Brakebill for years. "Our kids grew up together playing soccer," Janine said. Sixteen years ago, Brakebill decided to open a second E.J.'s in addition to his original Broadway location, and Janine became the manager. After managing the second E.J. Malloy's in Bixby Knolls for 14 years, Janine and her husband went into business with Brakebill to open the third location in Los Altos. "We had heard the Fish Tale was closing, and so Brent and my husband discussed that this location would be a good opportunity because there is really nothing around here as far as a sports bar," she said, referring to a longtime restaurant at 5506 E. Britton Dr., where E.J. Malloy's is now located. "Being that I managed for so long, and all the hours that go into it and the heart and soul, I figured it would be nice to be an owner and do the same thing," she said. In addition to being located close to her home, Ritter said she likes the location because of its family-oriented atmosphere. "It's still a very family neighborhood pub, which is great," she said. "It's very casual. People are very friendly." For more information, visit: ejmalloypub.com.



Umberto International Clothier

In 1956, Umberto Autore immigrated to Long Beach from Italy where he was schooled as a tailor in Milan. One year later, Autore opened Umberto International Clothier in Los Altos, which was moved to its current location at 2141 N. Bellflower Blvd. in 1970. After 60 years of business in Long Beach, Autore still enjoys his work. "It's the design, the creation – it keeps me young and busy," Autore said. "I'd rather do this than play golf. I love it. It's not the money – it's my life, it's enjoyment. I love to create style and make people happy." His shop provides custom suits and tailoring from scratch for men and women, as well as ready-made suits. Autore said he is now serving third-generation customers, with some driving from as far as Reno and San Francisco. Autore explained that what sets his shop apart is that he is part of the old school of tailoring, skills that can't be found much in the United States. He forgoes computers and continues to do all his designs by hand. "We have everything in the store. If you come here, you don't have to go anywhere else," Autore said. "We can dress you up from the bottom to the top." For more information, visit umbertosmenswear.com.



Small Business Dollars & Sense

It's Not Too Early To Teach Your Children About Money



By BEN
ALVARADO

April is National Financial Literacy Month and teaching children about the importance of money management, budgeting and saving is the purpose of the American Bankers Association's Teach Children to Save Day on April 28.

Many of us can look back to our childhoods and relate to kids who love to play "store," complete with toy cash registers and fake currency. From a child's perspective, those plastic coins and paper dollar bills are just as valuable as the real thing!

Children are ever-observant and so very eager to learn. They understand that money is important to buying food at the grocery store, clothes and other essential items. But, when and how do they begin to understand you have to earn the money to buy groceries and pay bills, and you need to budget and save money for other wants versus needs? It starts earlier than we realize and it takes age appropriate teaching for them to learn the skills they will need to financially thrive when they become adults.

When 6,544 students aged 15-18 participated in a financial literacy test, the average score in 2016 was 60% according to the Financial Educators Council.

A Harris Poll Financial Literacy Survey found that of families who have had discussions

with their kids about money, more than half of those discussions were initiated by the kids. That same survey found that children actually want to learn about money.

So how can you prepare your kids for a successful, healthy, lifelong relationship with money? Here are age-appropriate things you can begin to talk with them about now:

- **Teach younger children where money comes from.** An allowance for completing chores can establish a work ethic early.
- **Practice waiting and saving.** The sooner your child makes saving a habit, the better, and the more likely it will become a habit that lasts into adulthood.
- **Help your child to create a budget.** Budgeting is one of the key components for financial success. Start simple for younger children then expand with age to prepare for the larger budgets they will need to manage later in life.
- **Help your child understand the difference between needs and wants.** The idea is for them to be aware of the balance between the two, so that spending on the "wants" isn't excessive. It's a lesson that many adults often struggle with as well!
- **Help your child to set financial goals.** Whether it's having enough money to buy a toy, the coolest new shoes, or even a car, helping your child establish a plan to reach that goal — and learning to have fun spending on a plan — can be one of the greatest financial teachers.

For fun, interactive and free lessons check out HandsOnBanking.com. The non-commercial online curriculum is easy to use and lessons are specifically tailored by age-group, adults included!

These are just a few of the ways you can get started. Whichever methods you choose, start now. Your child's financial future is at stake. Getting them on the road to financial success now can increase the likelihood that the ride has as few bumps as possible.

(Ben Alvarado, a 26-year veteran of Wells Fargo, is the president of the bank's So. Calif. Region, which stretches from Long Beach to Orange, Imperial and San Diego counties.)

Focus On The City Of Carson

(Continued From Page 1)

major leaps toward fulfilling that vision,” Robles said, referring to the Future Unlimited motto. This is in part because of what he called a “great” business climate in the city. “The best indicator of that is that people are coming in droves to explore opportunities here in Carson,” he said.

The biggest name to land in Carson this year is the NFL’s Chargers. The former San Diego team is temporarily relocating to the StubHub Center for at least two years until the new stadium it will share with the Los Angeles Rams is completed.

“Businesses see us as a business-friendly community, and they value our geographic location that provides the convenience of multiple freeways, port access, two airports – Long Beach Airport and LAX. . . . And we have our own university, Cal State Dominguez Hills,” Robles explained. “There are very few communities like that. I think businesses see that as a plus, and they are now waking up to the opportunity and the potential of Carson.”

To ensure that the city government stays on course and is able to foster a stable environment for this growth, once-interim City Manager Ken Farfsing has, after nearly two years in the role, decided to stay on in an official capacity. Robles said that Carson has not seen a city manager as well-regarded and experienced as Farfsing in a long time.

Farfsing, who served as city manager of Signal Hill for 19 years, first took what was originally intended to be a temporary position after Carson had experienced years of management turnover across departments.

“There are a lot of big projects that are going on right now, and I just didn’t feel it was appropriate for me as a professional manager to kind of walk out,” Farfsing said of his decision to stay on. He added that he intends to stay until the city government has achieved more stability.

“Every department has turned over the top management staff within the last two years, so it is a real unstable situation,” Farfsing explained. “That’s not good for the community. It’s not good for the employees. So providing some stability has kind of been the goal that I have set for leaving.” The most senior head of a city department is the director of public works, who has been with the city for a little more than two years, he noted.

“The biggest issue has been the budget,” Farfsing said. “The accounting software is DOS [disk operating system]-based so it’s floppy disks. . . . It doesn’t even have updates anymore. So it has been difficult to get a handle on the budget. That has been a real issue,” he explained.

“When I came in [in 2015], the prior year’s budget had not been printed. It was never completed,” Farfsing said. “And so no one could really point me to a budget.” The city is in the process of acquiring new software for its budgeting process, as well as for use in other city departments, he noted.

Farfsing hired a forensic auditor to get to the bottom of the budget and has since hired a new director of finance, Kathryn Downs. “Kathryn has done a really good job with an old system [and] getting a handle on where we are in terms of revenues and expenditures,” Farfsing said. “And what she found going back through historic budgets is that seven of the last 10 budgets have been out of balance. So we have been drawing down, essentially, our savings account.”

Although the budgeting process for the next fiscal year, which starts in June, is still underway, Farfsing estimated that the city is running a \$3 million deficit. Major costs associated with the deficit include a \$700,000 increase to the city’s contract

with the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, increasing city payments to the California Public Employment Retirement System and rising health care costs.

An additional \$500,000 had to be allocated for attorney costs, according to Farf-

sing. In 2016, a federal court jury found that Carson’s ordinance controlling mobile home park rental rates violated the rights of an owner of such a park. The city is appealing that ruling to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

To contend with the deficit, Farfsing is considering increasing fees for some community programs, and perhaps eliminating some. Before the budget is passed, two more workshops are planned with the city council, he noted.

Positive news for the city budget came when Carson voters approved the renewal of the utility users tax last year. The tax funds everything from law enforcement to street maintenance to parks and recreation programs. “It means that the city can count on a reliable financial stream of income,” Robles said. “[However,] while it has brought us some financial stability, it hasn’t provided and met our full expectations in terms of revenue,” he explained. Low gas prices are causing a shortfall in expected revenue, he noted.

Community Matters

Among various community issues, pollution, homelessness and crime are some that rise to the top of Robles’ priority list.

“I think there is a concern, because of our geographic situation, that our residents are exposed to pollution generated from the refineries, generated from the commerce at the ports . . . more than any other community, except maybe Wilmington,” Robles said, “and that Carson residents’ health doesn’t appear to receive as much consideration as the health of other communities.”

For example, Robles pointed out that the South Coast Air Quality Management District has held hearings in Torrance but none in Carson. “We’re asking them to have one here in Carson, and they refuse to. Why?” he asked.

As in surrounding cities, homelessness is also an issue in Carson. “We have made an effort to help our homeless population,” Robles said. “We have events at various parts of the city where we invite various nonprofits to come out to provide services for the homeless.” For example, the city sponsors events where mobile dentist units come to the city to provide homeless individuals with dental care. Similarly, a cosmetology school that the city partners with provides free haircuts for the homeless.

“Just last week, we had a conference here at a community center . . . where ways to address the homeless situation were discussed, and what could be made available to landlords so they could provide homes to the homeless,” Robles said.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department recently informed the mayor and city council that violent crimes in the City of Carson are “significantly down,” according to Robles. “We’re much safer than we were just a couple of years ago,” he said. There has, though, been an increase in non-violent crimes such as petty theft and vehicle break-ins, he noted.

Overall, Robles is excited about the city’s future. “I feel blessed to be here, the mayor at this moment in time,” he said. “We are at a stage in our development where I can confidently say that in five years, when we do this interview again, Carson is going to be significantly different, significantly better, because of the incredible new development that’s coming into Carson.” ■



Carson Mayor Albert Robles is part of the City of Carson’s five-member city council. The mayor and councilmembers are all elected at large. Mayor Robles’ term is through November 2020. Mayor Pro Tempore Lula Davis-Holmes’ term expires in November 2018, as does the term of Councilmember Elito Santarina. Councilmembers Cedric L. Hicks and Jawane Hilton are serving terms through November 2020. With so many development projects underway and planned in Carson, the mayor believes the city’s future has never been brighter. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Larry Duncan)



Carson City Manager Ken Farfsing, left, and Director of Community & Economic Development John Raymond have worked together to streamline the city’s building and planning fee system, which has enabled the city to charge for time and materials related to project application processing. This is just one of the methods Farfsing has employed to address budget challenges. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Larry Duncan)

City Of Carson Important Numbers

California State University, Dominguez Hills

1000 East Victoria Street, Carson CA 90747
www.csudh.edu • 310/243-3696
University Theater: 310/243-3588

Carson Chamber of Commerce

530 East Del Amo Boulevard, Carson 90746
www.carsonchamber.com • 310/217-4590

Carson City Hall

701 East Carson Street, Carson 90745
ci.carson.ca.us • 310/830-7600
Community Development Department
310/952-1773

Carson Community Center

801 East Carson Street • Carson 90745
www.carsoncenter.com • 310/835-0212

Dominguez Rancho Adobe Museum

1812 South Alameda Street
Rancho Dominguez 90220
www.dominguezrancho.org • 310/603-0088

Doubletree By Hilton

2 Civic Plaza Drive • Carson 90745
doubletree3.hilton.com • 310/830-9200

SouthBay Pavilion

20700 South Avalon Boulevard • Carson 90746
www.southbaypavilion.com • 310/366-6629

International Printing Museum

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Carson Business Is 'Booming'

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**
Senior Writer

With numerous developments, both residential and commercial, the City of Carson is seeing tremendous economic growth, according to Mayor Albert Robles.

The mayor attributes the growth in business popularity to less burdensome tax structures, including no local property tax, a low utility tax, and a lower sales tax and business license fee than surrounding communities.

"And the fact that we have areas of Carson, about a 20-square-mile area, that is focused on catering to the business community," Robles said. "You know, we have industrial parks, business centers. And I think businesses like that."

Carson Chamber of Commerce President John Wogan said he has been involved with the community for 20 years and that this is a great time for the city. He said the location between Los Angeles and Orange County and two airports – Los Angeles International and Long Beach airports – makes it ideal for business. Wogan explained that things are coming together and the city is coming into its own.

"Business is booming. We have new stores opening up. The feeling is excellent. We have so many new businesses that want to come to Carson. People now want to come and move here. We're going up."



The Providence Medical Institute – Carson Primary Care opened at 21501 S. Avalon Blvd. in 1996. The facility currently offers family medicine, internal medicine, and industrial and occupational health services. Pictured from left: Tu (Alfredo) Om, MD, site lead; Alwyne Barbee, practice manager; and doctors Jane Ekejiuba and Joyce Chang. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Larry Duncan)



Ozzie Martinez, chief administrative officer for Kaiser South Bay, said the company's Carson Medical Office is currently having 45,000 square feet built out to be used for a comprehensive women's health center and outpatient surgeries. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Larry Duncan)

Auto Dealerships

The City of Carson is home to five major car dealerships, including Carson Honda, Carson Nissan, Carson Toyota, Car Pros Kia and Win Chevrolet/Hyundai. The auto dealer industry generates 29% of the city's \$24 million in annual sales tax revenue, according to city staff.

Carson Toyota has been located in Carson since 1974, according to General Manager Diaa Ahmed. He said the dealership employs 168 people, about 70 of whom are Carson residents.

"I think 2016 was better so far, but maybe things will switch around in the next couple months. We don't know," Ahmed said. "Year over year, we're growing, like, 4% or 5%."

Ahmed said the construction on the 405 Freeway at Wilmington Avenue has created a challenge for the dealerships in the area. He noted that sometimes the exit will be closed, making it difficult for customers to get to the dealerships. Despite the construction, Ahmed said the city treats the dealerships well.

"I think they are doing their job. The city is clean. The streets are clean. I think they are doing their share," Ahmed said. "And when we really need them, when we are having a problem, they dispatch an officer to us right away. They've been helpful."

Health Care

Kaiser Permanente has two facilities serving the City of Carson, including its Carson Medical Office building located at 18600 S. Figueroa St. in Gardena and its Main Street Health Education Pavilion located at 23621 S. Main St. in Carson.

"Now we serve, in the South Bay service area, over 242,000 members," Ozzie Martinez, chief administrative officer for Kaiser South Bay, said. "What's exciting about that is that a large portion of those members – about 50,000 of our members – live in the Carson and Rancho communities."

Martinez explained that a large population of patients also work in the area, so the company is excited to be able to provide health care to its members at a location conveniently located close to home or close to the workplace.

The Figueroa facility is currently having 45,000 square feet of space built out on the third floor of the building, according to Martinez. He said the space would be utilized as a comprehensive specialty center, including a comprehensive women's health center and an ambulatory surgery center for outpatient surgeries.

The new services will increase the facility's provider count by 60 and is scheduled for completion in early 2019, according to Martinez. The Main Street facility provides addiction medicine and health education services.

"Kaiser Permanente is really doubling down on looking at mental wellness, psychiatry, addiction medicine," Martinez said. "We're really trying to make a huge impact in this work and really eliminating the stigma."

Health education classes are offered in both English and Spanish, and they aim to help patients live the healthiest lives possible, particularly while managing chronic illnesses, Martinez explained. He said the goal is to drive a partnership with the city and residents to improve quality of life.

Kaiser staff said the medical office serves approximately 2,000 patients per week, while the Main Street facility serves about 700 in health education.

"Things have been going great. We appreciate the partnership with the City of Carson," Martinez said.

The Providence Medical Institute - Carson Primary Care was established in the center of Downtown Carson at 21501 S. Avalon Blvd. in 1996. Today, the office provides services related to family medicine, internal medicine, and industrial and occupational health. Additionally, the facility offers radiology and laboratory services.

"Our philosophy is to provide the best patient experience by serving our patients with respect and compassionate care," Alwyne Barbee, clinic manager, said. "The pioneering physician of this clinic was Dr. Thomas Jaspersen, who practiced in the Carson community for over 30 years and joined Providence Little Company of Mary. As a result, we have served over four generations of families in the Carson community."

Barbee said the facility will open its immediate care and walk-in clinic in the fall of this year, which will provide an affordable alternative to emergency care for non-life threatening illnesses and injuries.

Hospitality & Tourism

The DoubleTree by Hilton is Carson's most prominent hotel, conveniently located off the 405 Freeway at 2 Civic Plaza Dr. near city hall. The hotel has 225 guest rooms, a fitness center, a pool, a 24-hour business center and conference facilities.

"We've been very lucky for the last couple of years with the hospitality business in Carson," General Manager Greg Guthrie said. "This year, . . . our first impressions and budgeting for the year is slightly down from what we've been used to the last couple years. But we're still anticipating [5%] growth year over year."

Guthrie said the amount of business in Carson and the South Bay makes it a great location for the hotel. He noted the opening of the Porsche Experience Center has been good for business, bringing in national and international business executives to the area. This has increased the amount of meetings and events held at the hotel.

"The news with the Chargers is also exciting for us. We know that we will definitely draw from people who will be going to the games for those weekends," Guthrie said. "There's [also] a possibility of us getting some business from the NFL in some form. So we're excited about that."

A hot topic in the area is whether or not tourism will decline due to government activity, according to Guthrie. He said he has heard reports of tourism declining on the east and west coasts. However, he said DoubleTree has not seen any drop yet and doesn't expect to.

(Please Continue To Page 26)



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Carson DoubleTree by Hilton General Manager Greg Guthrie said he anticipates 5% business growth year over year for the hotel. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Larry Duncan)



Jeff Jennison was named president of Watson Land Company in August 2015, and recently added the title of CEO. The company owns, leases and manages about 12 million square feet of industrial space in Carson and in the adjacent Rancho Dominguez area. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Larry Duncan)



Jon Woodworth has been with General Mills for 16 years and has served as the Carson plant manager for the past year. The Carson plant has produced Yoplait yogurt products since 1979. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Larry Duncan)

Industrial Real Estate

Industrial real estate is one of the largest economic drivers for the City of Carson. Watson Land Company alone owns, leases and manages approximately 12 million square feet of industrial space in Carson and Rancho Dominguez. Its corporate office is in Carson, and it has an Inland Empire office in Chino Hills.

"The market continues to be very strong. And industrial [real estate], for lots of reasons, seems to be the darling amongst many real estate sectors," Watson President and CEO Jeff Jennison said. "So while retail and self-storage and other sectors have had some issues, industrial continues to flourish."

Some of Watson's big-name clients include Price Transfer, Damco Distribution Services, Dependable Highway Express and Custom Goods, Jennison said. Currently, Watson's portfolio in the South Bay is full, and on the rare occasion that there is a vacancy, it is filled quickly, according to Jennison. Because of the high demand, Jennison said the company can be selective about to whom it leases.

"We tend to not always pick the user who is willing to pay the highest rent but the one who's going to bring the most jobs to the area, the biggest amount of investment, and who we think will be a better fit for the community long term," Jennison said.

The Carson Companies manages about 3 million square feet of industrial space in the city and another 12 million nationwide, according to President Jim Flynn. The Newport Beach firm has a corporate branch office in Carson, along with offices in Texas and Pennsylvania.

Flynn also said demand is high and business is good in the area. He attributed it to the uptick in the national economy, low unemployment rates and consumer activity.

"So you have those dynamics that are occurring – strong economy, strong consumer and the evolution of e-commerce," Flynn said. "All of those are supporting a vibrant industrial market, both manufacturing and logistics."

City Council Moratorium On Development, Leases Irks Business Owners

However, despite the demand for space in the area, industrial real estate landowners and tenants are currently at odds with city officials over a surprise emergency moratorium. The city approved the moratorium at its March 22 meeting. The decision blocks any new industrial development and requires new and renewal leases longer than three years to receive council approval for 45 days.

"It is an opportunity for the city to review its land use regulations," Mayor Albert Robles said. "Our land use regulations have not been updated – comprehensively reviewed and updated – since Ronald Reagan was governor of California. That's a long, long time ago. And I would submit to you that Carson is a completely different city today."

Robles said the temporary pause is allowing city officials to assess land use regulatory structure to improve the quality of life for all residents. He claims that under current regulations, the city cannot stop projects that may be hazardous to public health from being constructed near schools or residential areas.

Another concern voiced by landowners and businesses alike is the fear that the 45-day pause will be extended, which adds a great deal of uncertainty to doing business in the city. A comment by the mayor does little to quell this fear.

"I can tell you this: As the ordinance was approved at the city council meeting last Tuesday, it will not be extended like that at all," Robles said. "If it is extended, there will be amendments, adjustments to it."

Kim Snyder, president of the southwest region for landowner and manager Prologis, which has just under 5 million square feet of industrial space in Carson, said he understands that the city is having a hard time keeping up with infrastructure improvements and knows this has been an ongoing issue.

"I'm not crazy about it, but I understand where they're coming from," Snyder said. "We really care about that community's infrastructure and how it looks and how safe it is to drive and so on. So we kind of get what they're driving at and appreciate it."

Snyder said he views this as a way for the city to determine how to get more money in the coffers to keep pace with infrastructure needs, something that is sorely needed, especially if the area continues to grow in both development and population.

The city council said lease approvals could take between one to three months, according to Flynn. He noted that most leases are longer than three years due to the fact that many companies need more time to recuperate their investment in the property. Because of this, he said some companies are opting to look for space elsewhere. Flynn said the moratorium should never have been needed because city officials could have been looking into the problem already.

"They could have been doing that over the last five years. Why all of a sudden a moratorium? The city already has a lot of tools in its toolbox to regulate what's happening," Flynn said. "We're pretty dismayed about it and have talked to the city about it and tried to figure out what their endgame is."

(Please Continue To Page 28)



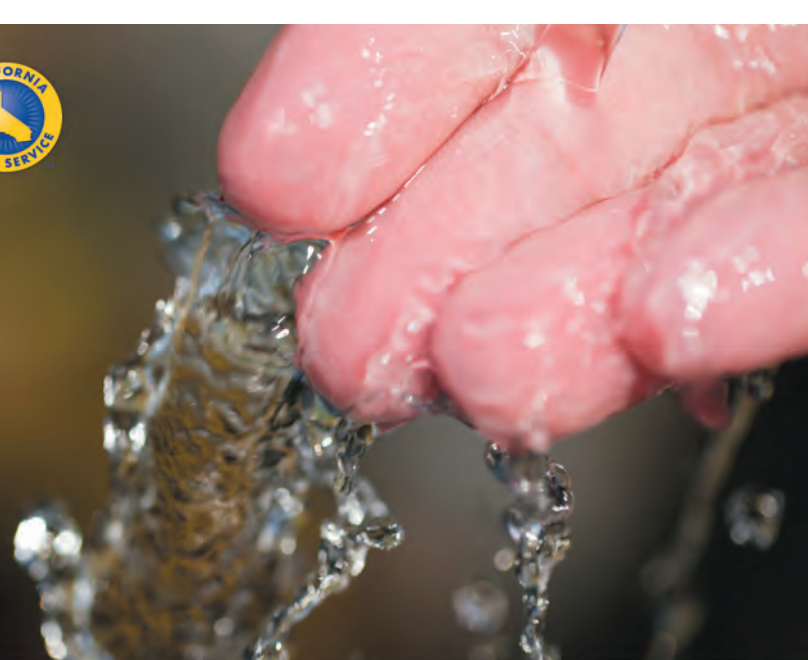
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Focus On The City Of Carson



The Carson IKEA at the SouthBay Pavilion employs more than 255 people, according to Store Manager Maike Buhmann, pictured. She said many employees have been at the location since the store opened in 1992. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Larry Duncan)

Jennison said he understands the city's issues and concerns and that he is sympathetic to them, but that the surprise moratorium, which feels like an attack, is not a good way to treat the largest employment and investment sector in the community.

"We're really concerned about it. We're concerned about the unintended consequences of a moratorium," Jennison said. "It's a large bubble of uncertainty that is already causing customers who are considering Carson to look elsewhere and, in one case already, to decide to go elsewhere."

One thing that Snyder, Jennison and Flynn can agree on is the fact that the city gave no advanced warning to landowners or tenants that it was considering the moratorium. Snyder and Flynn said the first he heard of it was two days before the council was set to vote.

Manufacturing

Carson is home to various manufacturers, including General Mills, which has operated a Yoplait yogurt products plant at 1055 E. Sandhill Ave. since 1979. The company also has a warehouse in the city.

"General Mills, across all of our locations, including Carson, tries to develop really strong relationships within our communities," Plant Manager Jon Woodworth said. "In terms of business . . . there are really no dramatic changes for the business here locally."

Woodworth said he has been with the company for 16 years but only relocated to Carson a year ago. However, he said his initial outreach to Carson city officials and the city's chamber of commerce has been positive and that the city makes it easy for manufacturers to operate.

Ducommun Incorporated, a supplier of products, engineering services and support services to the global aerospace and defense industries, has had a facility in Carson for more than 20 years and renewed its lease recently for at least another five years, according to Vice President Douglas Groves.

"Our business is stable," Groves said. "We've got a couple hundred people here, so it's a nice-sized factory that provides a nice base of employment for a multitude of different levels of employment – from the people working on the manufacturing shop floor [and] up through executives."

The company occupies about 100,000 square feet of office and industrial space in the city and has a supportive relationship with its landlord and the city, Groves explained. The Carson facility has also served as the company's headquarters for the last 10 years, previously located in Downtown Long Beach.

Groves said the company anticipates continuing slow but steady growth at the rate of about 5% per year. Earlier this year, Ducommun announced a multiyear, multi-million-dollar contract with Airbus to produce additional titanium structures for engine support and frames on the A320neo.

"It's a good location for us for a multitude of different reasons," Groves said. "We have a lot of long-tenured employees that live in this area. It's a pretty good labor market to draw from. We've been very happy here."

Oil Industry

Tesoro Corporation, a major player in the city's and state's oil industry, is currently facing roadblocks with the development of a \$460 million project in Carson. City officials have concerns regarding the project's environmental impact report, claiming it focuses on regional benefits rather than impacts on Carson itself.

Kenneth Dami, director of government and public affairs for Tesoro, said the project consists of shutting down a fluid catalytic cracking unit at the company's Wilmington refinery, which would reduce emissions by 70,000 metric tons – equivalent to removing 13,500 vehicles from the road – while creating about 4,000 jobs.

"It's going to be a big economic boom to the area," Dami said. "We're in discussions with [the city] about where their concern is. We're addressing their concern, and I think we have a very good story to tell."

In a letter to the South Coast Air Quality Management District on April 5, Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia weighed in on the issue, asking for the certification of the environmental report to be delayed while local environmental impacts are examined.

"With some of the highest asthma rates in the nation in West Long Beach and the surrounding area, it is important to be cautious and deliberate while considering this project," Garcia said.

Should the project receive certification and proceed, Dami said construction would begin this year, with completion set for sometime in 2019.

The California Resources Corporation also has a modest presence in Carson's oil industry with two wells that produce approximately 100 barrels of oil per day, according to Amy Fronzo, manager of external relations for the company. She said no significant change is expected to Carson production in 2017.

Retail And Restaurants

Carson has seen continued increase in the number of retail stores and restaurants with ongoing construction, renovations and conversions, according to John Raymond, director of community development for the City of Carson.

Recently, work was done to bring F21 Red, a Forever 21 concept, to the South Bay Pavilion. The store is scheduled to open at the end of the month. The former Sears Automotive is being converted to restaurants, including Chipotle, Smashburger, Jersey Mike's and Applebee's, which is still under construction.

Raymond also said there is a proposal to convert the former 50,000-square-foot Kmart facility into a John's Incredible Pizza, which he described as a play place between Chuck E. Cheese's and Dave & Buster's.

"Their facades are very colorful with yellow and purple and blue and checkerboard and all that," Raymond said. "They've come in with that plan, and we think that's going to go forward. That's on Figueroa near the 110 Freeway."

John Desco, executive vice president of asset management for South Bay Pavilion owner Vintage Real Estate, said the site has seen pretty solid growth in retail and restaurant sales, which can be attributed to the city's growing popularity and development.

Besides F21 Red, which he thinks will have resounding success, Desco said the company is working with a couple other notable retailers that will hopefully be announced soon. Sears has plans to subdivide its building to allow for two tenants to share the space with the company, which recently announced store closures throughout the country. The plans have not been finalized.

"We've been very pleased, impressed, and certainly we're going to continue to try to develop the center and bring more good venues for shopping and dining to the City of Carson," Desco said. "We're always working on the mall itself – doing improvements, keeping up the facilities there, trying to keep it clean and lively and fresh and a good shopping environment."

IKEA is one of Carson's largest brands, with the company making just under \$40 billion worldwide last year, a 7.9% increase from 2015. The Carson store currently employs more than 255 people, including many who have been at the location since it opened in 1992, according to Store Manager Maike Buhmann.

The company often launches new products, according to Buhmann. She explained that the store gets a lot of business from people moving into the area, as well as current Southern California residents. She said the company's goal is to create lifelong customers, who will use the store for every major life event, including marriage, buying a new home and having children.

"We look forward to constantly growing and working with the City of Carson and neighboring cities," Buhmann said. "The [city] really has blown up a lot, and we were pleased to learn about all the housing development and senior living center. That's really great. We're pleased to see that positive growth in the City of Carson." ■

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Carson Amidst Large-Scale Citywide Development

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**
Senior Writer

From retail to restaurants to housing, the City of Carson is taking off in terms of development projects.

“When you think about it, Carson doesn’t really have a traditional downtown,” City Manager Ken Farfsing said. “We’re kind of creating a downtown.”

One of the largest projects in the works will be taking place at the 157-acre site where the city had hoped to build a massive football stadium complex for the Chargers. After the team’s decision to opt for Inglewood, Carson had to decide what to do with the site, now divided into five areas, or cells.

The city currently has an exclusive negotiation agreement with Santa Monica-based developer Macerich Real Estate Co. to build a large outlet mall on cell two of the property. John Raymond, director of community development, said the city has selected a developer to construct a traditional big-box, cross-entertainment retail center on cells three, four and five.

“The way that site is configured is the big box would be in the back, and there’s this kind of donut hole in the center where they would put like a Dave & Buster’s or that sort of thing, plus a cluster of restaurants and other entertainment kind of retail,” Raymond said. “The interesting thing about their proposal is that it has two hotels.”

Farfsing said it has yet to be determined what the remaining cell will be developed into, but noted it could be residential or retail.

The site is a landfill area, which Raymond and Farfsing said makes it very difficult to develop. Due to waste decomposition, structures must be built on piles that go through the trash and 20 feet into the native soil to prevent the buildings from sinking. There are also environmental issues to be considered.

“This has been the most complicated project. We are lucky to have [Raymond] because he’s got so much experience at it,” Farfsing said. “But he’s spending three-quarters of his time, easily, on it, while still trying to run his department, which has a lot of stuff going on.”

Several housing and mixed-use developments are under construction or in the works for the city, as well. Raymond noted that a number of projects recently approved are for affordable housing developments.

Raymond made special note of a project by Los Angeles-based developer Meta Housing Corporation that consists of 45 affordable units set aside for working artists.

“Carson doesn’t really have an arts economy. There are no galleries here. There’s no music store. There’s no anything like that,” Raymond said. “So when you start looking at how you would like to change the community, introduce some positive change, we think that could be a really tremendous boost and a different sensibility to what Carson’s about.”

One of the largest housing developments coming to the city is Union South Bay – formerly The Avalon – by Faring Capital, which will include 357 residential units and 30,000 square feet of commercial space for retail and restaurant uses.

“We believe Carson’s future is bright, and we are excited to be a part of the city’s growth,” Faring CEO Jason Illouliau told the Business Journal.

Other large projects in the city include the Shell Revitalization Project and a proposal by Tesoro to merge two of its refineries. The revitalization project was put on the backburner by Shell Oil Products U.S. years ago, but the company recently said they plan on presenting the city with a proposal eventually, according to Raymond.

As for the Tesoro merger, the company hopes to shut down a Wilmington operation and develop a new facility in Carson to reduce emissions to the region. Carson city officials do not think environmental impact reports take

into account negative impacts to Carson, focusing on regional benefits instead.

“We’re in negotiations with Tesoro right now, [which] is probably the best description of it right now,” Farfsing said. “We’re at the point now with Tesoro and the air district that we don’t necessarily agree that the EIR has everything in it that we need to mitigate the health impacts on our communities. But we’re still meeting with Tesoro to try to figure this thing out.”

Carson is also undergoing several infrastructure improvements, including a \$20 million project along one and a half miles of Carson Street. Farfsing said this is currently the largest infrastructure project, and it consists of traffic calming measures as well as beautification and drought tolerant landscaping.

Other infrastructure improvements include a Wilmington Avenue ramp off the 405 Freeway, which is nearing completion; intersection work near city hall; and a stormwater capture project at Carriage Crest Park, which is in the planning stages.

Farfsing said that the city does not have a lot of general fund monies to allocate toward infrastructure improvements due to a budget deficit. He explained that much of the construction is paid for through redevelopment agency bond funds or grants the city has applied for.

“All this was laid out in the ’40s and ’50s – very automobile-centric but not really a pedestrian environment. Very little of Carson is a pedestrian environment,” Raymond said. “So we are trying to take our main commercial street, Carson Street, and make it more so.”

The following is a list of development projects in the City of Carson that were recently completed, currently under construction, approved or in plan check, or under review.

Recently Completed

1. 20700 S. Avalon Blvd. – Remodel of the existing South Bay Pavilion Mall to accommodate a new Forever 21 retail store.

Under Construction

2. 402 E. Sepulveda Blvd. – Mixed-use development consisting of a four-story building with 65 affordable residential units for seniors and 3,000 square feet of commercial space to accommodate retail use.

3. 21601 S. Avalon Blvd. – Mixed-use development consisting of one four-story building and one five-story building with 357 residential units and 30,000 square feet of commercial space to accommodate retail and restaurant uses.

4. 21801 Vera St. – Single-family residential development consisting of 18 three-story units.

5. 21721 Moneta St. – Multifamily residential development consisting of 13 two-story units.

6. 20700 S. Avalon Blvd. – Remodel of the existing South Bay Pavilion Mall to accommodate two new retail tenants.

7. 1802 E. Carson St. – Commercial development consisting of a new Starbucks business.

Approved/In Plan Check

8. 21205 S. Main St. – Affordable multifamily development consisting of 46 units for working artists.

9. 600 W. Carson St. – Affordable multifamily development consisting of 51 units for military veterans.

10. 19200 S. Main St. – Commercial development consisting of a 40,000-square-foot airship hangar for Goodyear Tire Company.

11. 1281 University Dr. – Commercial development consisting of a 47,000-square-foot neighborhood retail center.

No rendering available. 22300 S. Avalon Blvd. – Commercial façade remodel for an existing 2,775-square-foot restaurant.

12. 20920 Chico St. – Commercial development consisting of an 11,500-square-foot DaVita dialysis clinic.

Under Review

13. 20330 S. Main St. – Multi-family development consisting of multiple four-story buildings with 300 units.

14. 123 E. 223rd St. – Multi-family development consisting of a three-story building with 10 condominium units.

(Source: Prepared by City of Carson Community Development Department. Renderings also provided by the city.)





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Los Angeles Chargers To Shine A Spotlight On The StubHub Center



Katie Pandolfo, general manager of the StubHub Center in Carson, shows Ken Derrett, senior vice president and chief marketing officer for the Los Angeles Chargers, around his team's temporary new home field. Season tickets for the 30,000-seat stadium are sold out. For more information about the team, visit www.chargers.com. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Larry Duncan)

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**
Assistant Editor

Carson's StubHub Center is now home to the Los Angeles Chargers – at least, until the NFL team's new stadium is built in Inglewood. But with the Chargers playing in Carson for the next two years, both the city and the center are set to enter the massive national spotlight afforded by the NFL.

"The leadership and the folks in Carson have welcomed us with open arms," A.G. Spanos, president of business operations for the Chargers, said via e-mail. "The area will provide a tremendous home for the Chargers while our the new L.A. stadium and entertainment district at Hollywood Park is constructed."

While the new planned stadium for joint use by the Chargers and Los Angeles Rams will feature 80,000 seats, StubHub Center only has about 27,000. It is expanding its capacity to 30,000 seats for the Chargers' run, according to StubHub Center Manager Katie Pandolfo.

Spanos has a positive take on the

smaller venue size. "StubHub Center provides a rare opportunity to fans to see NFL action in such an intimate setting," he said. "We want our fans to have a superior entertainment experience, and playing at StubHub is the first step in that direction. Every seat will feel close to the action."

The team's greatest challenge will be accommodating everyone who wants tickets, according to Spanos. In fact, as announced in recent weeks, the team's season at StubHub is already sold out.

"We're excited about the welcome we've received from the community and fans throughout the area. But we know we have a tremendous amount of work to do," Spanos said. "We know we have to fight for our place in L.A. and earn the community's support. And we know it won't happen overnight."

The Chargers' current mission is to get to know the community and discover how to make a meaningful contribution, Spanos stated.



"Obviously, we are a building that operates 365 days a year already, and we're used to doing very large-scale events," Pandolfo said. "And so it was just a turnkey solution for them to come in and have all the amenities that they need for an NFL game."

The Chargers are contributing to some necessary improvements at the stadium, including the addition of goal posts and netting. Some slated improvements, such as switching out the southerly scoreboard with an LED one, have been in the works for some time, Pandolfo noted.

Pandolfo said that having the Chargers at StubHub is an "exceptional opportunity" and one that elevates the center to a national and international stage. "While we have had the great fortune of having amazing soccer experiences here – we've had David Beckham and a lot of the soccer stars come through the stadium – I think this reaches a whole different demographic."

StubHub was built in 2003 as the home of the Los Angeles Galaxy, a Major League

Soccer (MLS) team. The Galaxy and its affiliate teams, such as the LA Galaxy II reserve team, still call the facility home.

"The Galaxy are doing great. We have been growing year over year, I think, at the same rate that soccer has been growing in this country," Pandolfo said. When she started working at the center in 2004, there were only about 10 teams in the MLS. Now there are 22, she said.

In addition to its main stadium, StubHub Center has a number of other professional sports facilities, including the VELO Sports Center, America's largest indoor wood bicycle racing track; a tennis stadium; and a track and field facility. The center often hosts a variety of sporting events, including professional boxing matches and cycling competitions.

"I think, because of our location on the campus of Cal State Dominguez Hills, our role is very important to be an active community partner," Pandolfo said. "We partner with the city and a lot of the other nonprofits and organizations within the city to make sure that we are being a good corporate citizen, a good neighbor."

StubHub Center puts on a variety of events for the community each year, including events for Easter, Halloween and Thanksgiving. "We just did a huge Read Across America event a few weeks ago on Dr. Seuss' birthday," Pandolfo said. Athletes from the Chargers and Galaxy came to the stadium where they read to hundreds of local elementary school children. "It was just an incredible atmosphere – just one example of things that we do with schools in this area to try and give back to the kids who live right here in this community." ■

Tesoro Gives \$1.25 Million For Playground Benefiting Disabled Carson Children

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**
Assistant Editor

The Tesoro Charitable Foundation is giving a \$1.25 million grant to the City of Carson Parks and Recreation Department to install playground equipment for children with disabilities at Dolphin Park, 21205 Water St. The foundation presented the department with the first installment of this grant at the opening day of the park's baseball, softball and t-ball program on April 8.

"The city does not currently have a playground with equipment that children with disabilities can easily access," Carson Mayor Albert Robles stated. "Thanks to the Tesoro Charitable Foundation, this grant will fill this gap in our park amenities, and as Carson receives the future progress payments of the \$1.25 million grant to complete this project, we say thank you to the Tesoro Charitable Foundation."

The City of Carson is partnering with the nonprofit organization Shane's Inspiration to design the playground. ■

Arts, Cultural And Academic Institutions Offer Array Of Programming For Community

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**
Assistant Editor

The City of Carson is home to a variety of cultural and arts institutions, including historic sites, museums, a major university, and a community center with various recreational and support programs.

Carson is one of 11 South Bay cities that was originally part of Rancho San Pedro, the first Spanish land grant in California. Manuel Dominguez, grandson of grant recipient Juan Jose Dominguez, eventually became mayor of what was then known as El Pueblo de Los Angeles. He later resided with his six daughters at the Dominguez Rancho Adobe, which is now a historic site and museum. His descendants – the Carson, Watson and Del Amo families – are still involved with the site today, according to Executive Director Luis Fernandez.

“The museum was opened to the public in 2004,” Fernandez said. “The mission statement of the Friends of Rancho San Pedro, which is the funding arm of the museum, is to preserve and increase community awareness of the Dominguez family and the homestead and the Rancho San Pedro, which is the first land grant in California.”

The nonprofit museum, located near

Carson in Rancho Dominguez, is open to the general public via scheduled tours between 1-4 p.m. on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays. Third and fourth grade students from regional public schools regularly visit to learn about the site and its history in Southern California.

“Throughout the tour, you would actually learn more about the Dominguez family, the legacy of the South Bay and the political history as well,” Fernandez said. “So we have artifacts here, paintings [and] photographs from the family.” The original structure on-site was built in 1826, he noted. The facility is available for rental for events.

Another local museum, the International Printing Museum, also places an emphasis on education. The museum houses a working collection of antique and replica printing presses and machinery. Originally founded in 1988 in Buena Park, the museum relocated to Carson in 1998.

“The collection probably represents 300 years of machines and artifacts,” Executive Director Mark Barbour said. “The oldest physical printing press [in the collection] is from 1806.” This printing press is the same kind that Benjamin Franklin – who spent a

(Please Continue To Page 34)



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Luis Fernandez came on as executive director at the Dominguez Rancho Adobe Museum about six months ago. The museum features displays of artifacts from the Dominguez family, which was gifted the entirety of the South Bay via a Spanish land grant in 1784. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Larry Duncan)

portion of his life working as a printer – would have used, he noted.

The museum is open to the general public on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. During the week, it hosts group tours, including many from local schools. “One of the delightful parts about that museum is that it is a working collection,” Barbour said. “We are able to use the machines to demonstrate the process of printing and print keepsakes and historical documents to . . . help in our process of storytelling about American and world history, great inventions and inventors [like] Benjamin Franklin, Gutenberg and others like that, and the advance of the printing press across the states in the 19th century.”

The International Printing Museum has a mobile trailer modeled after a Benjamin Franklin-era printing shop that visits schools and groups throughout California

and Arizona, Barbour noted. The museum itself is in the midst of expanding its galleries, which currently encompass about 18,000 square feet.

When it comes to the arts, California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) offers year-round performances and programming open to the surrounding community.

The university’s theater and dance programs produce two plays and two dance concerts each year at the University Theatre on campus, which seats about 500 people, according to Bill DeLuca, professor of theater arts. Smaller productions are also mounted in the Edison Studio Theatre, which seats about 65 people.

Last year, the theater department partnered with the City of Carson to produce the large-scale musical “Hairspray” in addition to its regular lineup of productions. For

years, the department had been considering putting on a popular musical as a means of public relations outreach and recruiting, DeLuca said. To assist in this effort, the city awarded the university an \$18,000 grant. The grant enabled the university to hire professional musicians to play during the performance, as well as professional actors to supplement the cast of students.

DeLuca leads Teatro Dominguez, a theater group within the department that, through an academic course, visits local schools to provide educational performances. “It’s multicultural children’s theater,” DeLuca said. “A lot of the things we do with Teatro are historical kinds of plays.” Last year, the group visited schools to put on a play about the Dominguez family and the origins of the South Bay. “That was a nice historical play that we toured to 4th grade classes,” he said.

CSUDH also houses an art gallery that is open to the public. “The University Art Gallery is one of the major exhibition spaces in the South Bay, and it is a valuable resource for the campus and surrounding community,” Director Kathy Zimmerer told the Business Journal via e-mail. “We are dedicated to serving our campus and local community by exploring art and culture in all its diversity through our exhibitions and events.”

The University Art Gallery also works with local groups. “We have worked closely for years with the Boys and Girls Club of Carson to create K-12 Arts in the Schools workshops, including a series of workshops in conjunction with two exhibits last year, ‘Inciteful Clay’ and ‘Wild Land,’” Zimmerer wrote.

The gallery features between seven and 10 exhibitions per year, including two annual exhibitions by CSUDH seniors, according to Zimmerer. It also hosts visiting exhibitions. “We recently hosted the exhibit ‘Heated Exchange: Contemporary Encaustic,’ which featured 10 artists who use the ancient art of encaustic (hot wax) to create their paintings and sculpture,” Zimmerer said. “This exhibition was organized by Virginia Commonwealth University, with artist Reni Gower as curator.”

Upcoming exhibitions include a showcase of works by 16 CSUDH design program graduates, which is showing on April 13 from 5:30-7:30 p.m., and the annual senior studio art exhibition, which runs April 24-May 4.

One of the city’s largest hubs for community events and programming is the Carson Center, a municipal facility with 40,000 square feet of event space. “Primarily the Carson Center is a banquet/convention center type facility for bookings for the public,” Community Center Manager Adrian Reynosa said. The Carson Center offers 23 bookable spaces for weddings, small conventions and other events, including a ballroom capable of seating up to 800 people.

The center also houses various community programs sponsored by the city, including a Dial-A-Lift transportation program, a stroke center to help stroke victims rehabilitate and an early childhood development program. “We also have our career center housed here at the facility, where the public can come in and get information on jobs, resume critiques [and] interview workshops. They also provide a variety of job fairs throughout the year here at the site as well for the public to help them gain jobs and employment.” ■

The Emotional

■ By **MICHAEL GOUGIS**
Contributing Writer

The 911 Carrera S fires down the straight that parallels the 405 Freeway, shoving me back into the driver’s seat. I am not giggling at the snarled traffic just a few feet to my left – there is no room in my brain for that. My foot holds the accelerator hard on the floor, 420 turbocharged horsepower are flinging me forward, and my attention is focused like a laser on the billboard that is my braking marker. At these speeds, I do not want to be late on the brakes. My mind is riveted to the task at hand.

A lift off the gas, moderate pressure on the brake pedal, a hard left to drop into a recreation of the steeply-banked Karussell hairpin from the legendary Nurburgring’s Nordschleife circuit, and my driving coach in the passenger seat is urging me already, impossibly, to feed in more throttle, more power, more speed.

I tell the panic center of my brain to shut the heck up, look through the corner, nail the gas hard and the Carrera drifts slightly sideways and climbs up and out of the banking, the rear end sideways and driving hard. The tires graze the edge of the road and we fire back down the straight, and I’m thinking, that was good but nowhere near perfect, please, please, can I do this about a thousand more times. . . .

This experience is available to the public at the new Porsche Experience Center in Carson. The \$60 million, 53-acre facility opened late last year and has already drawn more than 10,000 visitors through its doors. It is one of only two in the U.S., a handful in the world, and even among that small number, is unique in that it is the home of the company’s North American racing operations. Porsche recently allowed the Business Journal to tour the facility, experience the driving training curriculum, and interview Andre Oosthuizen, vice president, marketing, Porsche Cars North America, Inc.

“The Porsche Experience Center is, for us, a vision to realize our brand connection with our followers, our customers, our enthusiasts,” Oosthuizen said. “In an age when we’ve been challenged with the electrification of vehicles . . . nobody necessarily needs a sports car on a day-to-day basis. So for us, it’s a method to emotionalize, to engage, educate people, give them a really deep dive into the technology. And it’s an opportunity to demonstrate those technologies in a controlled, brand-appropriate, safe environment.”

To accomplish this mission, the Porsche Experience Center offers a series of circuits and testing grounds for drivers to experience surface conditions that would be unsafe on a public road. Polished and epoxied pavement, further slickened with water, and a steep, wet, downhill slope allows drivers to experience spins and locked brakes and to find out what a car does under those circumstances. Drills marked out with cones on the broad, flat expanse of the skidpad teach you how to avoid obstacles, snake your way through a slalom course and really use the brakes to their limit. The handling circuit simulates a mountain road; the acceleration course,

Cal State Dominguez Hills: A Community Resource

California State University, Dominguez Hills is a growing institution within the CSU system and stands to contribute to Carson, not only through its existing academic programs but also through future development.

The university is working on a campus master plan to carry it through the next two decades and beyond, according to Naomi Goodwin, interim vice president of administration and finance. “The focus is on setting the stage for the next 20-plus years for life at the campus and really envisioning the future buildings and facilities that we need to support our academic mission,” she said.

“We are looking to create a university village on the east side of campus that would expand the campus as a living/learning community,” Goodwin said. “It would be a blend of residential, pedestrian-oriented retail and then open spaces for meeting and entertainment, as well as business development,” she explained.

Residences would include student residence halls, faculty housing and market rate units for anyone wishing to live on campus, according to Goodwin. The development would generate funding for the university.

The plan also addresses needs associated with academic facilities. “Dominguez Hills is a really vibrant and energetic sort of campus community,” Goodwin said. “Unfortunately, though, all of our academic buildings were built in the late 1960s and ’70s, including the current sci-

ence building which was built in 1973.”

The university received a \$4 million grant from Toyota to create the Toyota Center for Innovation in STEM Education within a planned \$82 million science building. “It’s designed to provide cutting-edge instruction for our own students who are in the science disciplines but then also to help teacher candidates . . . in terms of learning how to teach science,” Goodwin explained.

This fall, the university had 14,731 students enrolled, according to Dr. Rod Hay, provost and interim vice president of academic affairs. Of those, 10,862 were full-time students. “This is my 21st year, and we just continue to grow our reputation and the number of applications pretty significantly,” Hay said. About 55% of CSUDH students say they work more than part-time in addition to pursuing their degrees, he noted.

The student body is diverse, with 60.3% of students identifying as Hispanic, 14.5% as African American, 10.9% as white, 10.8% as Asian, 0.3% as Hawaiian-Pacific Islander, 0.1% as American-Indian, and 3.1% as two or more races.

“This CSU is such a resource for the surrounding community. A large percentage of our alums still live within this area,” Hay said. “Basically, they are coming [here], being educated and then going back into the community and taking positions. So I think we are an incredibly good resource for the region.” ■

Connection: The Porsche Experience Center In Carson

a drag strip. It is fun, but it's not just a game; time spent in one of the 90-minute driving sessions, which start at \$385, really does make you a better driver in a panic situation.

In addition, rather obviously, Los Angeles traffic doesn't allow many opportunities to experience what a Porsche really can do. And Southern California is home to many (and legendary) Porsche dealerships, places that are revered in the community of the marque's enthusiasts. The Experience Center serves as a real showcase for the dealerships. Not only are the cars gorgeous in the showroom, but letting the customers really

experience the performance is a convincing way to seal the deal. After a helicopter tour of Los Angeles, Oosthuizen said, the Carson location's desirability was easy to see. It was close to Los Angeles International Airport, easily accessible via freeway, and Watson Land Company and city officials at Carson were happy to help make the deal work.

The 50,000-square-foot building houses nine conference rooms, with one large enough to accommodate vehicles. The store offers high-end Porsche products like sunglasses, luggage and purses, as well as model vehicles that previously only could be pur-

chased in Germany. The Porsche Speedster Cafe echoes the design details of that iconic car; Restaurant 917 is a five-star dining experience with menus crafted in Germany from the same leather used in the company's vehicles. Driving simulators allow you to experience famous tracks from around the world (and the handling course just outside the door); for the discerning client there is a personal design studio where you can sit with a consultant and customize your new Porsche in any manner you choose.

What makes this particular Porsche Experience Center unique is that it shares space

with the Porsche Motorsport North America operation. Porsche always has supported customer-racing programs, and around the world to this day, it is rare to find a sports car series without a class for the production race cars turned out by Porsche. Porsche Motorsport North America had grown into three different buildings in Santa Ana, and the company decided to bring the racing operation onto the Experience Center site.

One large room of the facility is a spare parts inventory for the production race cars. In a stroke of marketing genius, the actual workshop is visible to the public. Separated by a floor-to-ceiling glass wall, all of the work of preparing race cars, restoring priceless vintage race cars for private collectors, goes on where the public can watch.

During our visit, technicians were restoring the Porsche 962 that Mario and Michael Andretti drove at the 24-hour race at Daytona in 1984. Porsche customers and enthusiasts can press their noses against the glass to see the exacting, detailed work that goes into race car preparation and restoration, as well as getting a close-up view of incredibly historic cars just on the other side of the glass. The car that won the Dakar Rally in 1986 was on display, with a huge sign warning technicians not to wash it – the car is shown as it came off the course, original dirt a badge of honor.

Cars from the company's museum in Stuttgart, Germany, are shipped to the center and put on display for six months to a year. Some cars are not behind the glass wall, but are displayed in the expansive lobby. The company wants visitors to get close to the vehicles, to really get a feel for their size, the cramped driver accommodations, to develop a sense of what it would be like to pilot one down the Mulsanne straight at Le Mans at well over 200 miles an hour.

On display during our visit was perhaps one of the most famous racing cars Porsche ever built – the soft blue and orange 917K (kurzheck, or short tail) in the livery of Gulf Oil, the type of vehicle that starred in the Steve McQueen movie "Le Mans."

This very car's real-world exploits are mythical to Porsche enthusiasts. In 1971, on the challenging, dangerous and fast public road Circuit of Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium, Mexican driver Pedro Rodriguez used this car to set a world lap record for closed-course competition and – with co-driver Jackie Oliver – a world record for average race speed, en route to the win.

The car is visually stunning from a distance, more so from up close, and as you stand there and appreciate what happened all those years ago, in this very vehicle, the absolute best the company could create, the racer becomes a vehicle for the visitor to connect in a very real way with a monumental accomplishment of the company's past.

Those moments on the track, experiencing the company's latest car, or the moments in the showroom, reminiscing about the company's past, are entirely emotional. And they are exactly why the Porsche Experience Center exists. Immersing the visitor in the company's environment, it generates a connection, not with a specific car, but with Porsche itself.

(For more information about the Porsche Experience Center, visit: www.porschedriving.com.) ■



Top: The 53-acre Porsche Experience Center adjacent to the 405 freeway in Carson is one of two in the U.S.; the other is in Atlanta. Center: Porsche technicians prep racing vehicles and restore vintage race cars behind the glass wall as visitors watch. Porsche also places race cars, replicas and production cars in the lobby for visitors to examine closely. Above left: Andre Oosthuizen is the vice president of marketing for Porsche Cars North America, Inc. Above right: The Gulf Oil-liveried Porsche 917 starred in the Steve McQueen film "Le Mans," but this particular car's real-life story is spectacular as well. This restored racer took Pedro Rodriguez and Jackie Oliver to a record-setting win at Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps in 1971, and was recently on display in the lobby at the Porsche Experience Center in Carson. Right: The Porsche 917 Restaurant is located on the second level. The name and decor were inspired by the legendary 917 racecar, which gave Porsche its first overall wins at the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1970 and 1971. (Exterior and restaurant photographs provided by Porsche Experience Center. Other photographs by the Business Journal's Larry Duncan)

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