

# Long Beach Business Journal

December 2018

Long Beach's Newsmagazine

[www.lbbusinessjournal.com](http://www.lbbusinessjournal.com)

## FOCUS ON DOWNTOWN LONG BEACH



Photograph by Jose Cordon  
[www.deadendbrigade.com](http://www.deadendbrigade.com)





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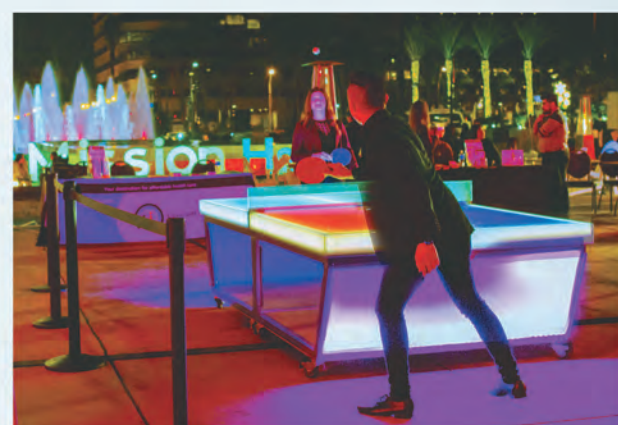
From the readers of *Successful Meetings* and *M&C*

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Photograph by the Business Journal's Brandon Richardson

# Mayor Robert Garcia: Downtown Evolution Is Accelerating

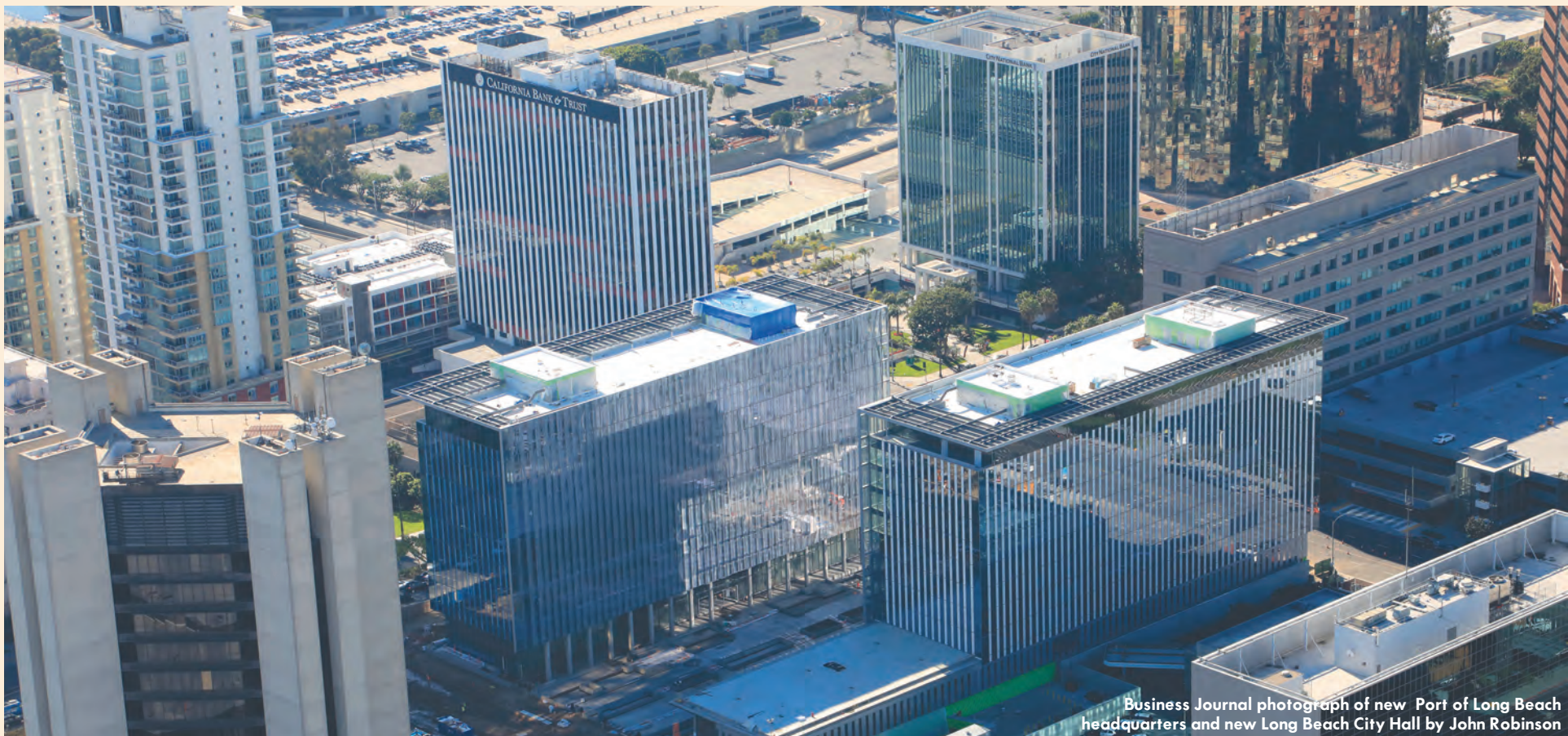
**D**owntown Long Beach continues to evolve as one of the most thriving and walkable places to live and work in America. As we approach the end of the year, I want to reflect on the many great projects that are changing our downtown in 2018 and what we are looking forward to in 2019.

Leading this list is our new Civic Center. It was one of the first projects that the Council and I approved in 2014 and it is on track and on budget. We will begin moving into our new City Hall and Port Headquarters in May and will have a grand opening soon after. The beautiful 92,500-square-foot Main Library will open a few months later and will offer extended services for academic and social success, job training, 3D printing and more. Our Civic Center is one of the most important investments we have made in a generation and we are immensely proud our community will benefit from this for decades to come.

There are now nearly 5,000 new homes under development with more on the way! More than 800 of these homes are affordable housing for low-income veterans, seniors and families. Most are concentrated in Downtown and Midtown close to transportation, employment and shopping.

As a Metro Board Member, ensuring our residents have a multi-modal transportation system is a high priority. We are adding new trains to replace the oldest cars in service and fixing signal prioritization to make trips faster from Long Beach to Los Angeles. Most importantly, crime on the Blue Line decreased by 50% while crimes against property decreased by 80% thanks to LBPD partnering with Metro to provide law enforcement on the trains and stations. Metro will continue to invest millions to upgrade the line and bring new signage, lighting, and landscaping in 2019.

All of this has been made possible thanks to the partners we have working to improve DTLB. I want to thank the Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau for another great year in tourism and the Downtown Long Beach Alliance for their outstanding work to clean and bring programs to our downtown. Finally, thanks again to the Long Beach Business Journal for their long-standing support of our downtown and the opportunity to share my thoughts with you.



Business Journal photograph of new Port of Long Beach headquarters and new Long Beach City Hall by John Robinson





Photograph at the  
Retail Design Collaborative by the  
Business Journal's Brandon Richardson

# Welcome To Downtown

By **TONY SHOOSHANI**, Board Chair  
Downtown Long Beach Alliance

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

**D**owntown Long Beach continues its progressive trajectory to new heights, yet still holds onto its unique and fun personality that makes our 1.38 Un-Square Miles a destination for businesses and residents to call home and for visitors to enjoy.

In alignment with this continued growth and creating opportunities, the Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) recognizes the importance to preserve what makes Downtown unique – both from its geographical perspective and the human capital that brings out the district’s personality. The businesses, residents, property owners and visitors are all integral in creating the eclectic character of DTLB that we know and love.

This past year, 199 net new businesses made the decision to call Downtown home, and the business environment remains healthy and evolving. Additionally, 31 either mixed-use or strictly residential projects, planned or under construction, are in development. Pedestrian traffic numbers are strong with over nearly 4 million people tracked in 2018 to-date. While foot traffic serves as one great indicator of potential economic

benefit for our local businesses, the DLBA strives to implement programs and activate public space to build the appeal of a downtown destination.

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

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

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RESIDENCES



# Perspectives On Downtown



Business Journal photograph by John Robinson



## Charlie Beirne

General Manager  
Long Beach Convention  
& Entertainment Center

The Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center is very fortunate to be a part of the reimagining of the downtown. The changing landscape for new residential units, additional hotels, and hotels with major renovations will add to the Convention Center's business models.

The new hotel rooms will allow the Center and our partner, the Convention & Visitors Bureau, to secure new business that may have been out of our reach in previous years, allowing us to attract new associations and corporate clients to our Center.

With the new residential units under construction, the residents will be able to attend the first-class arts programs at the Terrace Theater and Beverly O'Neill Theater, and the increased attendance with help all the arts programs and theater events well into the future.

Trends in the convention industry are ever changing with attendees requiring turnkey event spaces, areas where they can connect and communicate in a more personable setting. We feel that the Center has been the leader in the industry regarding these trends. However, we could not have been in this position without our partners, the City of Long Beach and the Convention & Visitors Bureau recognizing these trends and providing the direction to have the Center in the forefront of this trend.

Finally, our attendees are constantly looking for a downtown that is walkable and safe. A downtown that provides first-class dining and shopping during their visit to our destination. Not only does our downtown provide these amenities now, but the downtown is positioning for many added amenities in the future.



## Randal Hernandez

Chair, Long Beach Economic  
Development Commission  
and Executive Director  
External Affairs, Verizon

The current development boom taking place downtown has fostered new investment and economic opportunities across the city making Long Beach one of the most desired places to live, work, and play in Southern California.

The current and planned developments in downtown will enrich the city's fabric and are creating a spectacular new skyline. In 2019, we will see the completion of the first phase of Long Beach's innovative new Civic Center, the nation's largest municipal P3 (Public-Private-Partnership). The project has catalyzed nearly 2,500 housing units and over 200,000 square feet of new retail space in the surrounding area, providing new housing and business opportunities.

This explosive growth in the downtown core is fueled by the City's commitment to a 10-year "Blueprint for Economic Development" that was finalized in early 2018. At the heart of the Blueprint is a vision to create opportunities for workers, investors and entrepreneurs. In partnership with the Economic Development Commission, City staff have been working to enhance business development programs and regulatory processes to attract additional private investment. Next year, the Commission will focus its efforts on economic inclusion, small business growth and further strengthening the city's workforce. Another aspect of the Blueprint involves promoting Long Beach as a destination for entrepreneurs and innovators by positioning the city as one of the world's most livable, inventive and inclusive cities.

The city's combination of a vibrant downtown, a business-friendly environment, and access to global markets makes Long Beach a compelling city to explore for new investment. The economic opportunities in Long Beach are indeed "limitless."



## Russ Hill

Chairman & CEO  
Halbert Hargrove

Great downtowns are not only self-sufficient in terms of culture, industry, housing, and creature comforts. They feed far more than themselves, providing sustenance to the regions that surround them.

All of us headquartered in Downtown Long Beach over the past two decades can attest to a stunning transformation. My firm, Halbert Hargrove, has been rooted here for 85 years, always with a home on Pine Avenue. Having worked here for more than 40 years, I can certainly recall a period when "thriving" was not what came to mind in describing our downtown.

Our political and community leaders have led the current renaissance. In discussing the bright future of downtown Long Beach, I'm compelled to point to the founding and growth of the Aquarium of the Pacific, which has been an anchor for redevelopment and impact—and critically, has helped put us on the map as a major American city. In 1994, I took part in a volunteer group convened by Mayor Beverly O'Neill to envision a new undertaking for the marina site. Today, we're celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Aquarium, a world-class educational and research institution committed to safeguarding our oceans.

With the addition of the Aquarium's Pacific Visions wing next spring, some two million visitors are projected to visit annually. In the sphere of global influence, the Aquarium's footprint is significant. It takes enormous engagement by many community partners to inspire, build, and sustain a great downtown; we're fortunate to have the Aquarium help lead the way.





**John Molina**  
Founding Partner  
Pacific6 Enterprises

As a long-time downtown business resident, I've had the great pleasure of observing the downtown Long Beach renaissance first hand and predict a bright future ahead.

From our past personal and professional involvement in the Press-Telegram, Meeker Baker and ARCO Center investments, to Pacific6's current investments in the Breakers Hotel and Ocean Center Building, we're putting our money where our mouth is, participating in the continued revitalization of the downtown and assisting in making that vital connection between the downtown and waterfront districts.

As active participants in local organizations such as the Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Downtown Long Beach Alliance, we are fully invested in not only our projects but all projects currently planned and underway. They say it takes a village, but it takes more than that – it takes an engaged, active community of individuals, business owners and government officials each doing their part to activate and sustain a vibrant, exciting and profitable downtown.

I speak for myself, my family and my partners at Pacific6 when I say that we all feel so very fortunate and grateful to have such a tremendous municipal government, from the Mayor on down, as well as organizations such as the CVB and DLBA, that share a common love and enthusiasm for our City, its diverse residents and amazing downtown district.

We're so very proud to be part of the Downtown's historic past, exciting present and limitless future!



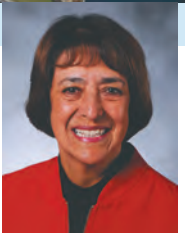
**Alan Pullman**  
Founder, Studio One Eleven

Our architecture and urban design firm, Studio One Eleven, facilitated a community visioning process for Downtown in 2005. That process culminated in a document called "Waterfront Metropolis" which formed the basis of the Downtown Plan. As Downtown Long Beach continues its renaissance as the cultural and commercial center of the City, it's heartening to see many of the concepts called out in the vision plan are coming into realization. New mixed-use buildings are replacing the gaps in downtown's urban fabric caused by surface parking and vacant lots. New towers and revived existing structures are transforming our streetscapes and skyline, attracting new residents who will contribute to the local economy. A new Civic Center, Library and revived Lincoln Park are revitalizing the civic heart of the City. With the success of that vision of course come issues of equity. Downtown will be at the center of continuing conversations about rising rents and displacement, difficult but unavoidable dialogue, the outcome of which will shape the expectations of future development.

As for future urban design and planning for downtown, upcoming opportunities should focus on the waterfront. While the downtown community plan had an emphasis on the core, the stretch of the City from Alamitos Beach to the lower L.A. River is now ripe for revitalization, with an opportunity to replace the automobile dominated infrastructure currently in place with human-focused place-making and additional community uses. Having the waterfront selected as one of the 2028 Olympics' premier venues can act as a catalyst for the creation of a true world-class waterfront.

I speak for myself, my family and my partners at Pacific6 when I say that we all feel so very fortunate and grateful to have such a tremendous municipal government, from the Mayor on down, as well as organizations such as the CVB and DLBA, that share a common love and enthusiasm for our City, its diverse residents and amazing downtown district.

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**Hilda Sanchez**  
Owner, Minuteman Press

Downtown today is vibrant, active, fun. So different from when we opened our doors in 2002. It even has an acronym – DTLB. Who would have imagined that in 2002? It's been exciting watching the growth. Families are out in the evening, walking with their kids and their pets and business people are out at lunch or happy hour. Of course, with more people come issues, but the positives definitely outnumber those.

For us at Minuteman Press, the changes have been good. More businesses in close proximity to us means more potential customers. And while the construction that's going on adds to the number of businesses, it also has an upscaling factor. Neighboring businesses or buildings then decide to upgrade their look too. We upgraded our facade a couple of years ago and our lobby earlier this year. We're not alone in our efforts to spruce ourselves up, plenty of others are doing it too - and on a bigger scale than what we did.

I still see more growth for DTLB. While the big growth spurt may have already peaked, at least in terms of approved and/or under construction sites, there still is room for more. Now people and businesses are moving in to all the nice new buildings and that will continue as the new sites are completed. The additional people and businesses will only continue to add to the energy level. Plus, they will generate further needs that will extend the growth yet some more. Life is still good in DTLB.





# Downtown: Transforming Into ‘An Even Better Version Of Itself’

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**  
SENIOR WRITER

**O**n numerous occasions, Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia has described the downtown area as “booming,” particularly with regard to the amount of development underway, planned or proposed. Currently, there is an estimated \$3.5 billion being invested to further develop Downtown Long Beach, a number that does not include several sizeable projects that are proposed or under review, according to city staff.

“[Development] continues to enrich the fabric of downtown,” Long Beach Development Services Director Linda Tatum said. “Of course, with the addition of a residential community in the downtown, you obviously need services to support them, which we’re continuing to strive to do in partnership with our economic development staff.”

The downtown has multiple residential and mixed-use projects, totaling 5,261 units, that are under construction, planned or proposed. These projects include condominiums and townhomes, as well as market rate, luxury, affordable and assisted living apartment units.

On the commercial side of downtown development, more than 1,100 hotel rooms, 583,500 square feet of office space, and 206,141 square feet of retail, restaurant and event space, such as meeting and ballroom areas, are underway, planned or proposed. All office space is within the new city hall and Port of Long Beach office buildings, which are part of the Long Beach Civic Center development.

“It’s putting Long Beach back on the map of desirable Southern California cities, which means a lot to the whole city, not just downtown. The renaissance of the downtown is a brand new opportunity for the city to highlight and become an even better version of itself,” Tatum said. “We have a really rich character in the downtown. The opportunity for a very strong quality of life is already here and, with new residents, that will continue to get strengthened.”

A complete list of projects under construction, planned or proposed for Downtown Long Beach is on Pages 9 and 10, along with a map showing each project location. ■

Dozens of development projects are under construction, planned or proposed in Downtown Long Beach. On the top photo, the 216-unit Oceanaire (A) residential development can be seen with a portion of its exterior completed. The historic Breakers building (B) is being repurposed as a boutique hotel. In the same photo, Ensemble Real Estate’s 113-unit Sonata Modern Flats (C) can be seen. In the center picture is The Huxton, a 40-townhome development with several units completed and more under construction. Above, construction has begun on Shoreline Gateway, a 315-unit residential project that, at 35 stories, will be the tallest building in the city. (Business Journal aerial photographs by John Robinson; Huxton photograph by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)



Linda Tatum



# Thank you, Long Beach!

Coldwell Banker Commercial BLAIR WESTMAC has been a part of the growth and the exciting future of Long Beach. Our unrivaled success in Downtown Long Beach and beyond is all because of you!

With deep appreciation,



Becky Blair, CCIM



Tim Macker, CCIM



John P. Eddy



George Bustamante



Steve Warshauer

Sheva Hosseinzadeh



Austin Carr



David Crespo



Patrick Michel



Linda Treffry



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Photo by J. Christopher Launi Photography



Focus On  
Downtown  
Long Beach

December 2018  
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City Of Long Beach Downtown Residential/Hotel/Mixed-Use Development Projects

COMPLETED

1 Regency Palms Long Beach Assisted Living & Memory Care – Meridian Senior Living

Address: 117 E. 8th St.  
Developer: Global Premier Regency Palms LLC  
Building height: Eight stories  
Units: 49 semi-private suites, 105 beds  
Commercial space: 872 square feet  
Parking: 46  
Amenities: Two levels of medical offices, and kitchen, living room and dining room on each floor  
Start/Completion: 2016/Late 2018  
Status: Completed

UNDER CONSTRUCTION/APPROVED

2 Long Beach Civic Center:

Address: 411-415 W. Ocean Blvd.  
Developer: PECP  
Building height: 11-story City Hall, 11-story Port Building  
Start/Completion: 2016/2019

3 The Pacific:

Address: 230 W. Third St.  
Developer: SARES REGIS Group (SRG)  
Building height: Seven stories  
Units: 163  
Parking: 244  
Amenities: Roof top deck and club-room with a kitchen, fitness center, outdoor kitchen, community living rooms and bike workshop and storage room (Ground floor bike kitchen with 50 bicycle storage spots).  
Start/Completion: June 1, 2017/Summer 2019

4 The Alamitos:

Address: 101 Alamitos Ave.  
Developer: SARES REGIS Group (SRG)  
Building height: Seven stories  
Units: 136 condominium units  
Commercial space: 2,560 square feet  
Parking: 174  
Amenities: Fitness Center, roof top deck and club-room, bike kitchen and storage room  
Start/Completion: May 2017/2019

5 The Linden:

Address: 434 E. 4th St.  
Developer: SARES REGIS Group (SRG)  
Building height: Six stories  
Units: 49 apartments  
Commercial space: 2,550 square feet  
Parking: 82  
Amenities: Fitness center, outdoor kitchen and multiple outdoor community spaces, and ground floor bicycle kitchen.  
g. Start/Completion: June 2017/Early 2019

6 The Beacon:

Address: 1201-1235 Long Beach Blvd.  
Developer: Century Housing  
Building height: Beacon Place seven-stories, Beacon Pointe five-stories  
Units: 160  
Commercial space: 6,184 square feet  
Parking: 200 car stalls, 72 bicycle stalls  
Amenities: The two buildings will be connected at their third levels by a 23,735-square-foot courtyard. Within the courtyard area will stand a 1,311-square-foot community room. Other residential amenities include a 1,100-square-foot library, two media rooms (one per building), supportive services space, a 1,400-square-foot fitness center, and large building lobby areas.  
Start/Completion: 2017/2019

7 Oceanaire:

Address: 150 W. Ocean Blvd.  
Developer: Lennar Multifamily Communities  
Building height: Seven stories  
Units: 216 apartments  
Commercial space: 1500 square feet  
Parking: 406  
Amenities: Additional project components include improvement of the Victory Park stretch along Ocean Blvd., and the development of a new City park at the Seaside Way grade.  
Start/Completion: December 2016/2019

8 Sonata Modern Flats:

Address: 207 Seaside Way  
Developer: Ensemble Real Estate  
Building height: Five stories  
Units: 113  
Commercial space: 2,000 square feet  
Parking: 176  
Amenities: Amenities including a media room, a 3,309-square-foot roof deck, a 2,058-square-foot landscaped area and a 3,000-square-foot club/exercise room  
Start/Completion: 2017/2019

9 The Place:

Address: 495 The Promenade North  
Developer: Long Beach Center, LLC.  
Building height: Four stories  
Units: 20  
Commercial space: 4,604 square feet  
Parking: 30  
Amenities: TBA  
Start/Completion: 2018/2019



**10 Ocean View Tower:**

Address: 200 W. Ocean Blvd.  
Developer: MEIAO Investment  
Building height: 12 stories  
Units: 106  
Commercial space: N/A  
Parking: 150  
Amenities: Pool & Spa, Community/Pool Room, Fire Pit, Fitness Room, Outdoor Dining/Dog Run  
Start/Completion: 2017/TBA

**11 Shoreline Gateway:**

Address: 777 E. Ocean Blvd.  
Developer: Anderson Pacific LLC  
Building height: 35 stories  
Units: 315  
Commercial space: 6,700  
Parking: 458  
Amenities: A 4,081-square-foot rooftop deck with multiple deck areas featuring landscaping/hardscape amenities, including lounge-type tables/seating, 793-square-foot community room.  
Start/Completion: October 2018/2019

**12 AMLI Park Broadway:**

Address: 245 W. Broadway  
Developer: AMLI Residential  
Building height: Seven stories  
Units: 222  
Commercial space: 6,007 square-feet  
Parking: 320  
Amenities: Amenity-rich building featuring the pool and pool deck areas, a podium-level clubhouse, and ground floor fitness center and multi-purpose room areas.  
Start/Completion: 2016/2018

**13 Huxton:**

Address: 227 Elm Ave.  
Developer: City Ventures  
Building height: Three stories  
Units: 40 townhomes  
Commercial space: N/A  
Parking: 40 one-car garages, 10 guest parking spaces  
Amenities: Solar powered, all-electric townhomes. A community room building, outdoor courtyards, and an integrated pedestrian paseo that will activate the streetscape and promote connectivity in the Downtown. On-site bike storage and a bike repair room for residents.  
Start/Completion: May 2017/2019

**14 442 Residences:**

Address: 442 W. Ocean Blvd.  
Developer: Ensemble Real Estate  
Building height: Four stories  
Units: 94  
Commercial space: N/A  
Parking: 152  
Amenities: 1,633-square-foot rooftop deck with outdoor kitchen, fitness center, new plaza-level pedestrian paseo and dog park  
Start/Completion: 2017/2019

**15 The Broadway Block:**

Address: 200-250 Long Beach Blvd  
Developer: Ratokovich Properties  
Building height: 21 story tower, a 7 story mid-rise  
Units: 400, including 14 affordable units for professors and graduate students of California State University, Long Beach  
Commercial space: 32,807 square feet  
Parking: 582, 104 bicycle: Proposed partnership with California State University, Long Beach for programming of commercial/public spaces, and a housing component for students.  
Start/Completion: 2019/TBA

**16 Magnolia and Broadway:**

Address: 500 W. Broadway  
Developer: Ensemble Real Estate  
Building height: Seven stories  
Units: 142 apartments  
Commercial space: 4,110 square feet  
Parking: 191, 21 EV stalls, 94 bicycle  
Amenities: ground floor retail/restaurant space, ground floor bike kitchen  
Start/Completion: TBA/TBA

**17 Residences at Linden:**

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

**18 Residential Project:**

Address: 320 Alamitos Ave.  
Developer: Urbana Development LLC  
Building height: Seven stories  
Units: 77  
Commercial space: N/A  
Parking: 105  
Amenities: A 4,081 square foot rooftop deck, which contains multiple deck areas featuring landscaping and hardscape amenities, including lounge-type tables and seating, as well as a 793-square-foot community room.  
Start/Completion: TBA/TBA

**19 Pacific-Pine:**

Addresses: 635 Pine Ave./636 Pacific Ave.  
Developer: Holland Partner Group  
Building height: Two eight-story buildings  
Units: 271, 11 affordable units  
Commercial space (sq. ft): 1,305 square-feet  
Parking: 341 stalls, 56 bicycle  
Amenities: Pine Avenue building features active ground floor uses (one retail space, one main resident lobby, and one amenity room); Pacific Avenue building features a main resident lobby and ground floor residential uses along its two street frontages (Pacific Avenue and W. 7th Street).  
Start/Completion: 2018/Expected Mid 2020-21

**20 Mixed-Use Project:**

Addresses: 1101-1157 Long Beach Blvd.  
Developer: Rockefellers Partners  
Building height: Eight stories  
Units: 120 apartments  
Commercial space: 6,000 square-feet  
Parking: 150 stalls, 45 bicycle  
Amenities: Pool deck  
Start/Completion: TBA/TBA

**21 Locust Long Beach Apartments:**

Address: 1112 Locust Ave.  
Developer: Locust Equities, LLC  
Building height: Seven stories  
Units: 97  
Commercial space: N/A  
Parking: 122 stalls, 20 bicycle  
Amenities: Proposed bicycle kitchen, approximately 2,000 square feet of fitness center recreational space, 2,588 square-foot courtyard, and 2,500 square-feet of open space. The Project will contain a courtyard area on the third floor with a pool, spa, outdoor seating, and landscaping measuring 3,710 square feet. The Project includes on the third floor a recreation room and gym measuring 1,850 square feet.  
Start/Completion: TBA/ Expected March 2019

**22 Aster:**

Address: 125 Long Beach Blvd.  
Developer: Raintree-Evergreen LLC  
Building height: Eight stories  
Units: 218 – A mix of studios, one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments, and townhouses  
Commercial space: 7,292 square feet  
Parking: 312, 44 bicycle  
Amenities: 11,600-square-foot, open-to-the-sky courtyard out-fitted with a swimming pool, spa, barbecue area, and lounge seating amenities on the third floor. A bicycle kitchen and a coworking space on the building’s ground floor Long Beach Boulevard frontage. A 749-square-foot rooftop lounge on the eighth floor  
Start/Completion: TBA/TBA

**23 Inkwell:**

Addresses: 127-135 E. Broadway  
Developer: Raintree- Evergreen LLC  
Building height: Eight stories  
Units: 189 apartments  
Commercial space: 10,000 square feet  
Parking: 268 car stalls, 40 bicycle  
Amenities: proposed amenities include a fitness room, club room, roof decks, and a swimming pool  
Start/Completion: TBA/TBA  
Status: Approved

**24 The Breakers Building:**

Address: 210 E. Ocean Blvd.  
Developer: Pacific 6  
Building Height: 14 stories  
Units: 185 hotel rooms  
Commercial Space: 13,300 square feet  
Parking: TBA  
Amenities: ground floor dining and wine bar, penthouse dining, rooftop bar, spa and fitness spaces, and meeting rooms

**PROPOSED/UNDER REVIEW**

**25 Third + Pacific:** (under review)

Addresses: 131 W. 3rd St. – 3rd St. and Pacific Ave.  
Developer: Ensemble Real Estate  
Building Height: Two buildings, 23-story high rise, and an 8-story building.  
Units: 345  
Commercial space: 16,000 square feet  
Parking: 483 stalls  
Amenities: 5,841 square-feet of club rooms, fitness, and amenity areas..

**26 Fifth & Pacific:** (under review)

Address: 507 N. Pacific  
Developer: Anastasi Development Company  
Building Height: Seven stories  
Units: 157 condominiums, one-and two-bedroom units  
Commercial space: 9,000 square feet  
Parking: 209  
Amenities: Two proposed recreation decks and rooftop deck

**27 Hotel Project:** (under review)

Address: 100 E. Ocean Blvd.  
Developer: American Life, Inc.  
Building Height: 30 stories  
Units: 429 Hotel Rooms  
Commercial space: 50,359 square feet  
Parking: 151  
Amenities: 23,512 square feet of restaurant space, and 26,847 square feet of meeting and ballroom functions

**28 Adaptive Reuse Hotel Project:** (proposed)

Address: 110 Pine Ave.  
Developer: Pine Street Long Beach LLC  
Building height: 13 stories  
Units: 210 hotel rooms  
Commercial space: 6,000 square feet  
Parking: TBA  
Amenities: rooftop food and beverage space and 7,659 square-feet of recreation space

**29 First Street Hotel:** (proposed)

Address: 123 W. 1st St.  
Developer: Pacific Property Partners  
Building Height: 38-stories  
Units: 280 rooms  
Commercial Space: TBA  
Parking: 252 stalls in an eight-level parking structure  
Amenities: Lounge, fitness room, terrace, restaurant space

**30 Ocean Village:** (under review)

Addresses: 1-11 Golden Shore (Phase 1A + Phase 1B)  
Developer: Greenlaw Partners  
Building Height: Eight-stories (Buildings 1 & 2), Seven-to-Eight-Stories (Building 3)  
Units: 738 units  
Commercial Space: 10,000 square feet  
Parking: 1,063  
Amenities: Entertainment Terrace, fireside terrace, garden room, game lawn, and resort pool and spa

**31 Assisted Living Facility:** (under review)

Addresses: 810 Pine Ave.  
Developer: Global Premier Development  
Building Height: Ten stories  
Units: 78 units  
Commercial Space: N/A  
Parking: 70 stalls  
Amenities: front porch, rooftop garden, and terrace

**32 West Gateway/World Trade Center:** (under review)

Addresses: 600 W. Broadway  
Developer: Trammel Crow  
Building Height: 40-stories  
Units: 694 units  
Commercial Space: 3,200 square-feet  
Parking: 1,440 stalls  
Amenities: TBA

**33 Residential Project:** (proposed)

Addresses: 825 E. 7th St.  
Developer: Firth Howard  
Building Height: Five stories  
Units: 19  
Commercial Space: N/A  
Parking: TBA  
Amenities: TBA





Business Journal photograph by John Robinson

- 1 Governor George Deukmejian Courthouse
- 2 State Office Building
- 3 Long Beach Police Department Headquarters
- 4 New City Hall
- 5 New City Council Chamber
- 6 New Port of Long Beach Headquarters
- 7 Current City Hall and City Council Chambers
- 8 Current Main Library and future Lincoln Park
- 9 New Main Library
- 10 AMLI Park Broadway 222-unit residential project
- 11 The Pacific 163-unit residential project

# Long Beach Civic Center Development Progressing Ahead Of Schedule

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**  
SENIOR WRITER

Interior work is well underway inside the new 11-story city hall and Port of Long Beach office buildings, both part of the city’s largest and most expensive development – the new Long Beach Civic Center.

“They are working up from the bottom to the top. [Crews] have essentially done all the drywall and are currently finalizing drywall work on the 11th floor of city hall,” Long Beach Public Works Department Director Craig Beck told the Business Journal. “On the third floor, [crews] finished all the painting, there is carpet and they’re actually installing furniture.”

Whereas the current city hall has a traditional office layout, Beck explained the new buildings have an open floorplan. Offices, conference rooms and auxiliary spaces are concentrated at the building’s core on most floors, with open work stations around the perimeter to allow staff to collaborate and enjoy ample natural light and views of the city.

“[In the current city hall] we have a pretty challenging time . . . trying to find a conference room to have some of the meetings that we need to have, so we’ve added more conference rooms,” Beck explained. “In fact, on the second level of the new city hall, we’ve actually built out a conference center.”

“We also don’t really have formalized break rooms in city hall now, but we did build those in the new building so that every single floor has a formal break area,” he added.

Attached to city hall is the new Long Beach City Council chambers, a circular structure much different than the current meeting area, Beck said. The chamber does not have stadium seating, which allows it to be easily accessed by those with disabilities, particularly people in wheelchairs. The interior has a wood finish and the space will utilize more technology, such as power outlets in the audience seating and monitors that allow the council to remain facing the audience during presentations. The Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners will also use the chambers for its meetings.

Work has begun on the civic plaza – the space between the two office buildings – with concrete planters poured, Beck said. Chestnut Avenue between Broadway to Ocean Boulevard has been graded, with concrete and asphalt for the street to be poured within the next 30 to 45 days, he added. The street will be accessible to vehicles, and Beck said he anticipates a lot of pedestrian foot traffic, which is why the city is looking at a large midblock crosswalk and other safety measures. However, the sidewalk on the east side of the street will be closed for several years as work continues at the site of the current city hall.

The new 92,500-square-foot main branch library has a modern feel, with an open layout, a glass facade to allow natural light in, and exposed wood beams, Beck said. “There’s an expanse to the library and an openness . . . I’ve never felt that in our [old] downtown library. It was kind of built, in my words, as a bunker – a lot of it is below ground,” he explained. “I know that was done to try to create a park experience on top of the library, but it only created a number of maintenance challenges. This new library, you can go in there and there’s this wow factor. It’s spectacular.”

The civic center development is financed through a public-private partnership between the city and Plenary-Edgemoor Civic Partners (PECP). In addition to the office buildings and library, the project includes a new Lincoln Park, for a total cost of approximately \$520 million for municipal facilities. The deal also includes a private midblock development where the current city hall stands, which will bring the estimated overall project cost to over \$1 billion.

As outlined in the original contract with Clark Construction, the office buildings and library must be completed no later than June 30, at which point staff could begin moving in. However, with construction ahead of schedule, Beck said negotiations are underway to allow the city, port and library to move in 30 days early, which would allow the buildings to open to the public in July. Construction of the new Lincoln Park is expected to begin as soon as the current library is vacated.

Once the existing city hall building is vacated, it will be razed to make way for the private midblock project, originally to be developed by PECP. Demolition could begin as soon as 45 to 90 days after the current city hall is vacated, Beck said. However, he explained that PECP is negotiating with Canadian real estate development firm Onni Group for the rights to develop the midblock. Plans for the project are not expected to be submitted until this deal is finalized, Beck noted. PECP would retain ownership of the city hall, port and library buildings for the original 40-year lease agreement, he added. ■





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# Royal Treatment: How Urban Commons Is Restoring The Queen Mary

■ By **PIERCE NAHIGYAN**  
STAFF WRITER

**W**hile the Queen Mary is arguably the most iconic fixture of the Long Beach skyline – and one of the most historic – she has hardly been treated like royalty. For decades, the city’s landmark fell into

major disrepair. That’s all changing with new leadership and a long-term plan to transform the Queen into a major entertainment venue.

When real estate developer Urban Commons (UC) took over the Queen’s lease in 2016, the boiler room – a cavernous space utilized for its “Ghosts and Legends” tour – had been turned into a junkyard. “When I say junkyard, I mean junkyard,” UC Chief Development Officer Dan Zaharoni told the Business Journal during a tour of the ship. Steel, construction materials, drywall and old furniture were heaped in piles and inundated with black water. “It was six feet high,” he said of the mess. “There was standing water there for decades.”

Adam Grandorff, vice president of construction for UC, said there were six to 10 inches of rust sitting on the tank top, the lower level of the ship above which the fuel tanks are stored. “When a piece of steel rusts, it expands exponentially,” he explained. “It was like walking through a forest.”

Zaharoni estimated that Urban Commons removed nearly 1,000 tons of waste from the area. “We pumped out tens of thousands of gallons of standing water,” he said. This water had traveled down from the upper levels of the ship and collected on the tank top for years, corroding the steel beneath the neighboring exhibit hall. “Underneath that exhibit hall, these steel beams, [about] 24 inches thick, were completely rusted through,” he said. “It was about to collapse.” After conducting an X-ray of the entire ship – the first such procedure to be performed on the Queen – UC immediately shut down the exhibit hall.

Cleaning out and sterilizing the boiler room and exhibit hall, replacing rotten steel and coating the surfaces with anti-corrosion solution cost approximately \$1.33 million, according to a September 2018 report from the City of Long Beach. That represents 5% of the city’s initial \$23 million investment in the ship’s renovation, a sum that will be depleted by the end of this year. Such was the extent of the Queen Mary’s degradation that only seven of the 27 necessary repairs identified by the city have been fully completed.

These seven projects represented the most severe health and safety risks aboard the vessel. “We’ve gone a long way to making it as safe as it has been in decades,” Zaharoni said. He is also confident that UC can secure enough funding to complete the remaining repairs over the next few years. It may take longer than anticipated, Zaharoni said, “but it’s moving in the right direction.”

A major project that cost far more than originally projected was the update to the ship’s fire sprinkler system. The city fire department and a third-party contractor inspected the system and informed UC that the approximately seven thousand sprinkler heads needed to be replaced and



Urban Commons Chief Development Officer Dan Zaharoni, left, and Vice-President of Construction Adam Grandorff are pictured at the freshly painted Queen Mary. “We’ve got what we think is the best long-term plan for success that they’ve ever had here in terms of the entertainment district, the music, the dynamism we plan on injecting into this development,” Zaharoni said. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)



Repairs on Sir Winston’s restaurant at the Queen Mary began following the heavy rains of January 2017. The original teak roof rotted, and much of the original steel beneath it was corroded beyond salvaging. “We re-plated it, waterproofed it, put some new PVC roofing on it, and while we were at it we replaced the HVAC [heating, ventilation, air conditioning] systems,” Vice-President of Construction Adam Grandorff said. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)

the lines flushed out. Originally estimated at \$200,000, the final price tag was \$5.29 million. “We could see it was taking away from our other projects,” Grandorff said. “But obviously, safety first.”

Being escorted from one end of the 1,019-foot ship to the other and coming face to face with the many repairs in progress, the question arises: how was the Queen Mary reduced to such a state in the first place? “That’s a great question,” Grandorff said. “I can only speculate, and I won’t do that. The simple fact is, we got this thing and it needed help.”

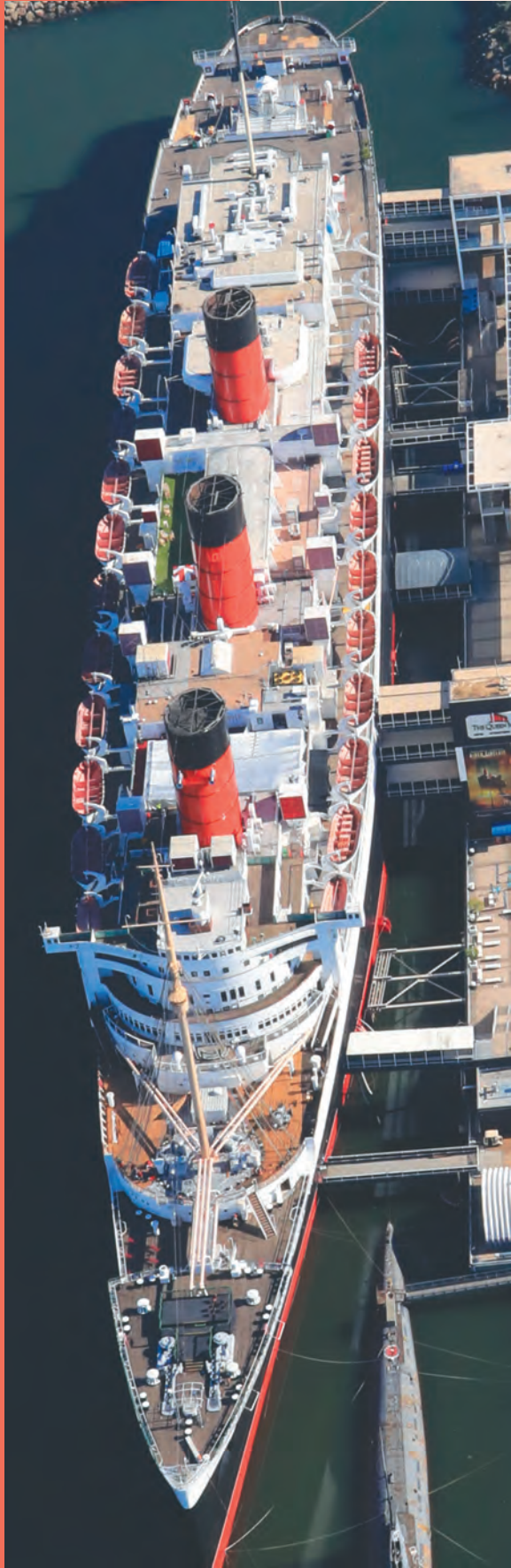
According to Johnny Vallejo, business operations manager for the city’s economic development department, maintenance on the ship was deferred by its prior leaseholder for about a decade.

When UC pursued the Queen Mary lease, Zaharoni said, it did so with the understanding that the total cost of renovation, plus new construction for a new entertainment venue on the adjacent land, could run up to \$600 million. The city’s \$23 million investment was essential to making the first critical repairs, he said, but emphasized that it was just the beginning. “The city has been an amazing partner from day one,” he said. “The \$23 million is a perfect example. They came up with a solution even though the city didn’t have the funds to fix the ship. They found a way to do it based on revenues that were generated from the Carnival passenger fees, which didn’t touch taxpayer money.”

Zaharoni credited Mayor Robert Garcia, City Councilmember Jeannine Pearce and the rest of the city council and staff for working with UC to restore the Queen. “They have been nothing but enthusiastic about helping us not only be financially successful but making sure the guests we have on here are safe and healthy.”

Progress on ship repairs continue above and below. In addition to cleaning out the boiler room and exhibit hall, UC has replaced the rusted and leaking sewage tanks with new PVC tanks that connect to city sewage. Every day, workers are strapping on respirators, crawling into the side tanks between the boiler and hull, and scraping away the rust. Afterwards, the steel is coated with a rust inhibitor.

During the heavy rain of January 2017, the roofs of the executive offices



Urban Commons is the first operator of the Queen Mary to station its staff members directly on the ship. “We have three guys, sometimes four, that are on the ship,” Chief Development Officer Dan Zaharoni said. “They work with the ship staff to get things done, not only to deal with ship issues but for development as it comes online.” (Business Journal photograph by John Robinson)



and Sir Winston’s restaurant were destroyed. “It was like a river in Sir Winston’s,” Zaharoni said. “It was terrible.” Repairs to replace the rotted teak and steel in the ceiling, as well as the structural damage to the restaurant, took five months. During that time, UC also water-proofed the deck to prevent further leaks. These repairs coincided with repainting the Queen’s three funnels.

Many of the repairs UC has undertaken are hidden from view, Zaharoni said. “It’s not sexy. It’s stuff nobody sees.” Such projects included replacing the expansion joints, electrical and storm drain systems, heating, air conditioning and ventilation.

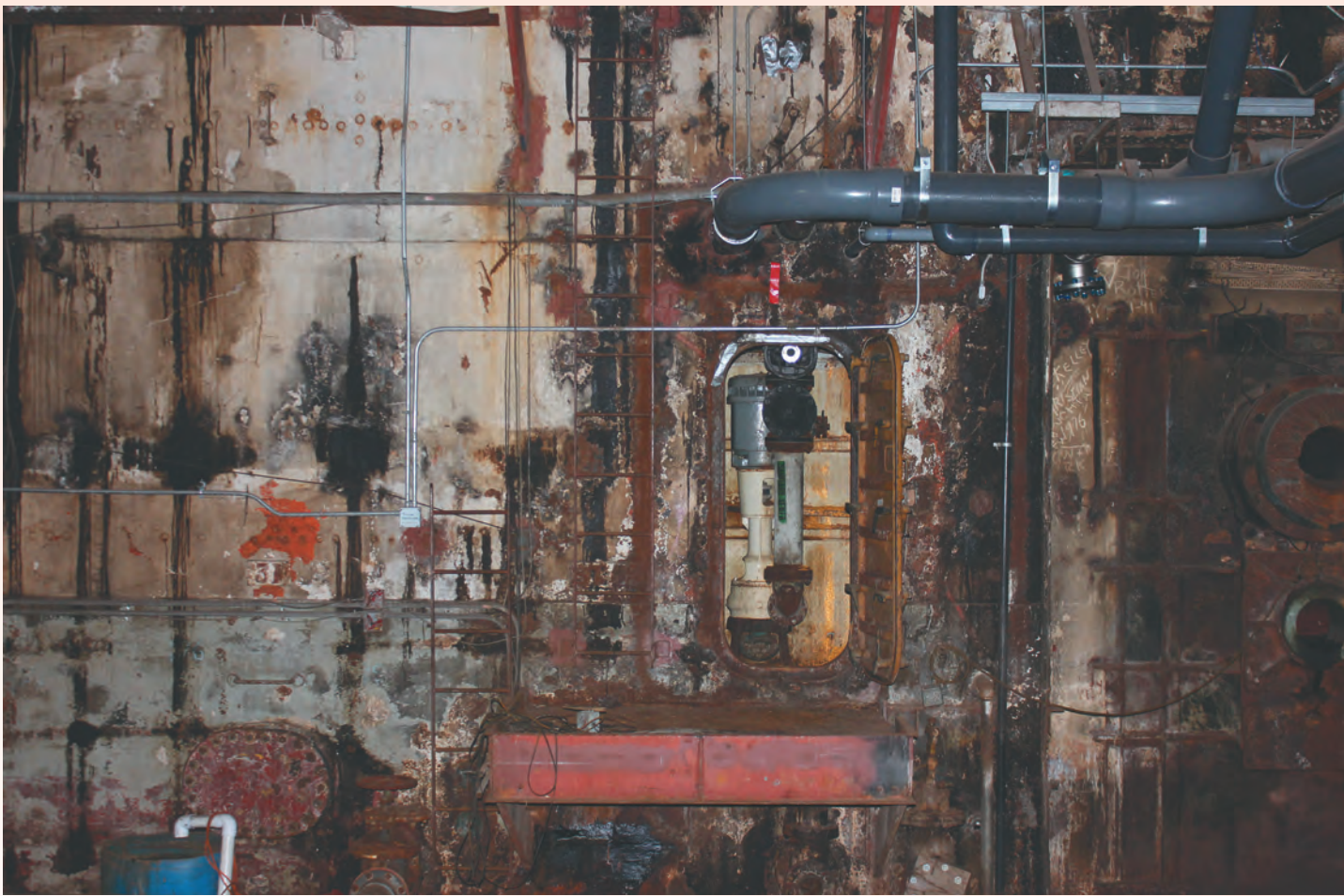
Returning the Queen to her former glory has proven be a more challenging task than expected, Zaharoni said, but he emphasized Urban Commons remains undaunted. The developer’s mission is to transform the ship into the centerpiece of a dynamic waterfront attraction. Its proposed Queen Mary Island development would offer locals and tourists 500,000 square feet of retail and entertainment, including a new boardwalk and a boutique hotel. A six-story parking garage would be constructed between Harry Bridges Memorial Park and the dome. The ship’s current parking lot would be converted into a dynamic space for live music, restaurants, street performances and a village of pop-up shops made out of shipping containers.

Zaharoni pointed to UC’s partnership with Goldenvoice, a music festival operator, as the first stage of the Queen’s commercial transformation. This year, the Queen Mary hosted 10 days of concerts at its four-acre events park, with each night averaging around 15,000 guests, Zaharoni said. Next year, UC hopes to increase the number of concerts to 15 or 20. If those concerts sell out, Zaharoni said, it could mean a wealth of new exposure, and commercial potential, for the city. “Those people are eating at the restaurants across the bay, they’re staying at the hotels.”

Negotiations are also underway to bring even more music programming to the Queen by utilizing its several ballrooms, sports deck and smaller rooms for more intimate performances.

Urban Commons has also created a home for new kinds of shows, like magician Aiden Sinclair’s “Illusions of the Passed.” Located in the newly-christened Revenant Room in Forward B deck, the space was formerly a glorified “storage closet,” Grandorff said. The room now features curios, magical oddities and a bar serving such supernatural concoctions as Smoke and Mirrors (hickory smoked bourbon) and the Lady in White. Having opened in September, the show has garnered rave reviews and packed seats, Grandorff said.

Zaharoni said that UC’s mission onboard the Queen is to expand her entertainment of-



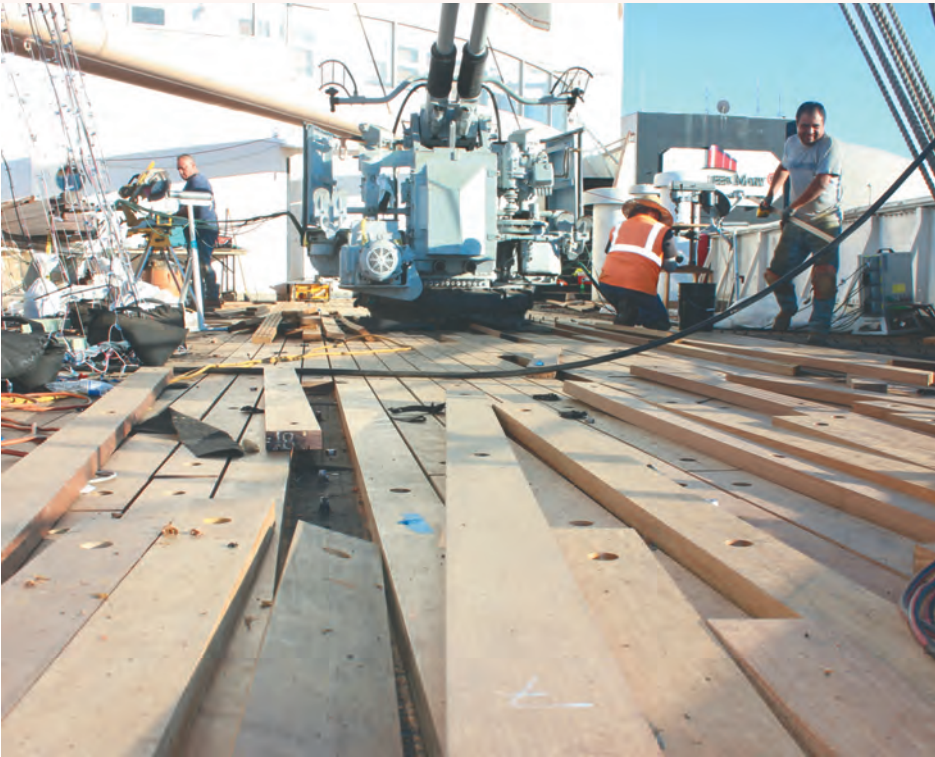
The Queen Mary’s original septic tanks were made of non-stainless steel. By the time leaseholder Urban Commons came on the scene, the tanks were rusted and leaking. Water seeping in from the decks above had corroded and destroyed the walls and piping. “We created whole new tanks,” Vice-President of Construction Adam Grandorff said. “We bought new tanks, put them [in the adjacent room], with new pumping systems. Everything from these tanks out is brand new.” (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)

ferings so that visitors are compelled to return again and again. It’s not a museum, he said. “We have great food, we’re doing concerts, we’re having live events, we have exhibits all the time. It’s even a great place to have a conference. It’s a place to experience life.”

UC is in talks with Doppelmayr Garaventa, a leading manufacturer of urban people movers, about the possibility of building a cable car that connects the downtown shoreline to the Queen. Doppelymayr has previously built such a gondola over the River Thames in London, England. Zaharoni said the gondola could work in concert with Long Beach Transit’s AquaLink bus in transporting people to and from the ship.

Zaharoni said that UC originally proposed a grand opening for Queen Mary Island in 2026. Achieving this timeline is dependent on obtaining subleases for Queen Mary Island and construction. Once that happens, he said, the Queen could become an entertainment destination on par with Universal Studios. “As a developer, it’s Holy Grail stuff,” he said. “The road to get there is arduous and challenging, but once it’s done? Not only does the development become something way beyond real estate, but for the City of Long Beach . . . it’ll take it to a different level.”

At the end of the day, Zaharoni said, the community of Long Beach owns the Queen Mary. “This should be the community’s place to gather and dine and create memories,” Zaharoni said. “That’s what we’re trying to do. We’re trying to create pockets here on the ship that’s going to give them something to do on a Tuesday and a Wednesday and a Friday night.” ■



Construction crews replace the old wood on the 4,500 square foot M Deck with lpe, priced at \$36 per square foot. The city’s historical society requested that the upper 2,000 square foot Bridge Deck be replaced with teak wood (at \$91 per square foot), which was used in the construction of the original Queen Mary. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)



Urban Commons has torn out the flooring and begun patching leaks and treating the corroded steel below the ship’s exhibit hall. When repairs are complete, Chief Development Officer Dan Zaharoni said, the area may be converted into a new kind of space. “We have a lot of ideas about what to do, so this one’s going to take a little bit longer,” he said. “We’re not just going to slap everything back together and start charging for it. I’d rather wait an extra year and create an amazing experience (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)





# Expansion To Enhance Aquarium's Reputation On A 'National Scale'

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**  
SENIOR WRITER

**T**he Aquarium of the Pacific's (AOP) new 29,000-square-foot Pacific Visions wing is its first major expansion project since opening in 1998. "When it opens, the new wing will be distinguished among aquariums as a bold and unique venue for connecting the public with science and environmental issues, and for exploring our relationship with our planet," Jerry Schubel, AOP president and CEO, said. "It will also increase the Aquarium's visitor capacity, and enhance our reputation on a regional and national scale." The project includes the two-story, 300-seat immersive Honda Pacific Visions Theater (at left, under construction and rendering). The theater features a 130-foot-long, 32-foot-tall, 180-degree-arc'd digital projection wall and a 30-foot diameter floor projection disc. Other elements of the expansion include special exhibition and art gallery space (at left, under construction, and below, rendering), and live animal exhibits. Designed by San Francisco-based EHDD, the architecture firm that designed the original Aquarium more than 20 years ago, the exterior of the building is covered by 800 uniquely sized and angled glass panels. The design is meant to mimic the reflective qualities of the sun on the deep ocean. The \$53 million wing is slated to open in spring 2019. "Just two years ago, we broke ground on Pacific Visions," Schubel said. "It is exciting to see the project go from renderings to the biomorphic building standing before us." (Photographs by the Business Journal's Brandon Richardson; renderngs provided by the Aquarium of the Pacific) ■



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# New And Existing Downtown Businesses Supported By A Variety Of Local Programs

■ By **PIERCE NAHIGYAN**  
STAFF WRITER

For entrepreneurs looking to set up shop or invest in Downtown Long Beach, there are a number of assistance programs at their disposal. This includes city resources, as well as those provided by the nonprofit Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) hosted by Long Beach City College.

On the municipal side, many programs now available to businesses and investors are a result of the Long Beach Economic Development Blueprint adopted in 2017. The blueprint outlines a 10-year strategy to engage and enhance Long Beach’s commercial ecosystem. John Keisler, director of economic and property development for the city, summed up his department’s mission like so: “Really, our job is to help people make more money.”



Long Beach Director of Economic Development John Keisler and Sheneui Weber, chief operating officer for Long Beach City College’s College Advancement and Economic Development Program, are both deeply engaged in Long Beach’s commercial growth. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Annette Semerdjian)

to research current statistics on population, economy, housing, transportation and health. The information is synced with national databases that are updated automatically, Keisler said, so it will always be as up-to-date as possible. The dashboard is a means of measuring the success of city’s blueprint, he went on, and also functions as DIY consumer market research for investors and developers.

Like Kiva, StartitUp is a public-private partnership designed to get new businesses on their feet. Long Beach was the first city in the United States to offer this mobile app, both a “pocket coach” and roadmap to help new entrepreneurs build a sustainable business plan, obtain financing and avoid common pitfalls. “StartitUp is an incredible story of how we’re leveraging technology to help entrepreneurs get the support they need in an efficient way,” Keisler said.

The app was developed in partnership with Long Beach’s Small Business Development Center (SBDC), which is hosted by Long Beach City College (LBCC). Sheneui Weber, chief operating officer for LBCC’s College Advancement and Economic Development program, said that SBDC was interested in finding a way to help new businesses off the clock. “Everything we do is face to face,” Weber explained of the SBDC, which provides daily workshops and business advising to hopeful entrepreneurs. “The problem is, we’re only here eight hours a day. Entrepreneurs don’t sleep.”

What most attracted SBDC to the app, Weber said, was its interest in reducing the failure rate of new businesses. With 24/7 access to the most up-to-date information on business development and bite-sized tutorials to prepare entrepreneurs for each step of the

(Please Continue To Page 20)





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The Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) offers business workshops and training seminars throughout the year. In December, DLBA led a free training workshop on how to utilize Google Ads (formerly Google Adwords), an on-line digital marketing tool. "We do this for free in partnership with Google," DLBA Economic Development and Policy Manager Austin Metoyer said. "All participants get a \$100 credit to go towards their ads." (Photograph Courtesy of the DLBA)



(Continued From Page 18)

process, the app received SBDC's approval. Perhaps most essential, Weber continued, is the app's mentoring feature. "There's a lot of information about how to start your business out there, but there's so much noise," Weber said. "Research has shown that if you have a mentor you're a lot more successful." The interactive app puts users in touch with their own advisor to assess their strengths and weaknesses and help them to improve. Weber said the app garnered positive feedback from entrepreneurs who tried it during its pilot phase.

SBDC also manages the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Plan. "It's kind of like a mini-MBA for small businesses," Weber explained. "It's an intensive four-month executive management program." SBDC has graduated 21 cohorts, or classes, in the Long Beach area alone, and tracks the success of its alumni. "What we've seen is that, compared to the national average of small business job creation and revenue growth, the Goldman Sachs scholars or alumni increase their revenues and create jobs within six months of completing the program."



Austin Metoyer is the economic development and policy manager for the Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA). Metoyer said one of the DLBA's main functions is to support both new and established businesses. "If they've been here for three or four years and need additional promotion assistance or access to capital, our level of services is the same," Metoyer said. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Brandon Richardson)

Weber said LBCC views the Small Business Development Center as an integral extension of its curriculum. "It's about job creation," she explained. "Economic development is one of the three primary missions of the California Community Colleges [System]." LBCC's leadership wants to produce students who are either moving into the workforce or moving on to advanced degrees and then entering the workforce, Weber said. "If we don't focus on job creation in our communities, we can educate all day and then our students have no jobs to go into. It's all about retaining local talent, keeping the jobs here, helping local businesses grow. It's the circle of life."

By Weber's count, the Long Beach SBDC helped secure about \$14 million in loan funding for small businesses last year, while also creating about 193 jobs and 36 businesses. Those figures have increased in 2018. As of Sep-

tember 30 (the most recent figures available), SBDC has secured \$22 million in capital, created about 340 jobs and helped start 43 businesses.

The nonprofit Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) manages the overlapping property and parking improvement districts that are located in the downtown area. The parking district charges an assessment fee on businesses while the property district assesses commercial and residential property owners. These fees are used to fund city beautification, economic development and marketing, explained DLBA Economic Development and Policy Manager Austin Metoyer. "So, trying to make downtown an attractive place to do business, an attractive place for people to come to and hang out, shop, eat and so forth," he said.

When a new business joins the district, Metoyer explained, the DLBA may assist with promoting its grand opening. That includes social media coverage, connecting the business owner to neighborhood associations, city officials and the mayor's office, and helping with press release materials. "For us, it's about trying to get each business on the right foot, and the successful foot, at the beginning," Metoyer said. That means building a community that embraces new businesses and, in turn, putting a spotlight on new businesses for the community.

The DLBA also hosts workshops and training seminars throughout the year. One such program is the Entrepreneur and Small Business Education Series, a partnership between the DLBA and California State University, Long Beach. This free, seven-week course is focused on providing entrepreneurs with the tools they need to take their business from idea to implementation, and includes instruction on accounting basics, HR practices, funding opportunities, digital marketing, employee hiring, industry-specific site selection and much more. "It's kind of a 101 business training," Metoyer said.

The DLBA also hosts 1 Million Cups, a monthly gathering to help startups pitch their ideas to investors and other entrepreneurs in the community. Founded by the Kauffman Foundation, the gathering takes its name from the idea of connecting entrepreneurs over a million cups of coffee nationwide. "That has created a network of startups [downtown], which is really cool," Keisler said.

Despite offering multiple services in education and assistance, Metoyer said, the DLBA's biggest challenge is making contact with every business in its purview. "As [much as] humanly possible you could try to reach everyone, but you still won't be able to," Metoyer said. "Just trying to get the word out about what we do, who we are and getting it across to everybody, across all mediums and platforms, that's still an ongoing challenge."

Metoyer said that, of the more than 1,600 businesses located downtown, the DLBA's staff of 10 regularly interacts with perhaps 30% of them. That's partially because many businesses are located in office towers like World Trade Center and Landmark Square rather than at the ground level, Metoyer said, but he'd like to see the interaction grow. The best way to do that, he went on, is to just "drop in." That means stopping by or calling the office at 100 W. Broadway, or messaging them on social media or online. However the DLBA is able to get in contact with its businesses, he said, the team is happy to reach out. ■



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# Community And Diversity Bring New Businesses Downtown

■ By **PIERCE NAHIGYAN**  
STAFF WRITER

**W**hen it comes to Downtown Long Beach, businesses move in for the same reasons that people do: the sunshine, salty breeze and progressive social scene. New business owners that spoke to the Business Journal said they were attracted to the area’s blend of history and hip vibe.

For Denise Maldonado, co-owner of Confidential Coffee, setting up a new coffee shop in the neighborhood made more than good business sense; it was a chance to be a part of the unique downtown community. “It’s so diverse,” she said. “You have everything in Long Beach, and downtown is the heart of it.”



Confidential Coffee co-owners Gustavo De La Rosa and Denise Maldonado met at California State University, Long Beach. Maldonado said that when they discussed starting a business together, downtown was their ideal location. “It just meant more to open in Long Beach,” she said. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)

Confidential Coffee first opened at 137 W 6th St. in late August. Coffee is a passion of Maldonado’s, and with her business partner Gustavo De La Rosa, the two hope to bring that passion to the city’s residents and workers. From their location, Maldonado said, the shop sees cross-traffic from the surrounding apartments and businesses. “I know there’s going to be a lot of new housing coming in as well, so that means good news for us,” she said.

Maldonado’s culture influenced Confidential’s menu. One of her most popular drinks is the cajeta latte, a blend of Mexican caramel and goat milk.

Licensed marriage and family therapist Henry Campagna has been working in therapy for about 10 years. He opened his first private practice, Long Beach Queer Therapists (LBQTs), in the East Village Arts District. In addition to LBQTs, Campagna works at the SoCal Club, a program offered through the Men’s Health Foundation for queer youth ages 12 through 29. Between that job and his private practice, Campagna works weekdays and weekends. “I’m quite busy,” he acknowledged. “I love what I do, though.” (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)



“It just reminds me of warmth, family, my grandmother at Christmastime,” Maldonado said. “I grew up around cajeta. All my drinks have a story behind them, and it creates an experience for everybody.”

Creating an experience for business patrons is key at Snake Eyes Society, a new women’s clothing shop in the East Village Arts District that hosts a friendly happy hour on the first Friday of each month. A DJ comes in to spin records, a bartender serves drinks and shoppers can get their eyebrows done and enjoy B12 shots from health and wellness specialists right on site. “It’s not so much sales-motivated, it’s more of a communal thing,” co-owner Ben Neuhaus said. “We just want guys and gals to come, hang out and listen to good music.”

Neuhaus and fellow co-owner Miranda Malloy grew Snake Eyes Society out of Snake Oil Provisions, a men’s clothing shop currently located on 132 Linden Ave. “We’ve been in three different physical locations,” Malloy said of the men’s store. With each move, she explained, the shop grew in size, brand recognition and inventory. After five years in the retail business, she and Neuhaus launched their second storefront at 435 E 1st St. The two are quite pleased with the space. “I would say the bang for the buck for the space that we have is better than any space that we’ve had for our men’s store,” she said.

Snake Eyes Society opened in April with the idea of using a similar aesthetic to their men’s brand – fewer garments made of longer lasting quality than other retail brands. “We’re not doing fast fashion or trend-driven [selling], which is what most women are used to,” Malloy said. Many of their pieces are domestically made, with both footwear and denim manufactured in California.

Malloy and Neuhaus said the changes in downtown over the last few years, both aesthetic and commercial, have been striking. Their goal is to attract high-end retail into the area and to continue to host fun events that unite the community. “Long Beach residents are rabid for small business and very supportive,” Neuhaus said.

Licensed marriage and family therapist Henry Campagna cited the friendliness and diversity of downtown as a major factor in setting up his private practice there. Located at 121 Linden Ave., LBQTs (Long Beach Queer Therapists) offers mental health counseling for the LGBT community. “I found something affordable that was in a great area with other therapists,” Campagna said of his office.

Campagna formerly lived in the Cooper Arms building, a historic Renaissance Revival apartment tower located in the East Village. Campagna and his husband have since moved into a house about 10 minutes across town, but their ties to the East Village remain strong.

“We still have friends in the area. There are a bunch of great dining options in the East Village Arts District, plus it has a really cool vibe,” Campagna said. “It has a strong queer community.”

Campagna bikes to work from his home, which he said is a definite plus. His clients also appreciate the short walk from anywhere within the East Village. Though his standard rate is \$100 per session, Campagna said he provides payment options for clients who are committed to seeking treatment. “People who have a strong motivation to heal and work through their trauma . . . I definitely want to provide a safe, confidential space where they can do so,” Campagna said.

Over at 121 W 4th St. off of Pine Avenue, The 4th Horseman has begun offering downtown residents comfort of a culinary variety. With craft beer, fine wine and “apocalyptic pizza” on the menu, the three-week-old bar has already made an impression on the local scene. “The city has been wonderful, the community’s been wonderful,” co-owner Ryan Hughes said. “We had to shut down the Monday after our first opening weekend because we literally ran out of beer and dough.”





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# Congratulations on the new openings in 2018.

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"The Streets" in the heart of Downtown is centered in between Third Street, Sixth Street, Pine Avenue and Long Beach Boulevard. The Streets is growing and now offers more than 40 retail stores, specialty shops, entertainment venues, and dining outlets.

## New Openings in 2018:

- AMMATOLI
- Burgerim
- Long Beach Coffee & Tea
- Loose Leaf Boba Company
- Pine Avenue Parklet
- Pinot's Palette
- Plant Junkie
- Poki Cat
- Table 301
- The ThickShake Factory
- 4th Street Parklet

## Opening Soon:

- Natural Culture
- Portuguese Bend Distillery



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Ryan Hughes is the co-owner of The 4th Horseman, a bar and pizzeria located at Pine Avenue and 4th Street. Its official grand opening is scheduled for Valentine's Day weekend 2019 after its new oven is installed. "We have a lot of good connections up there so we're hoping to just have a ridiculous tap list for the whole weekend," she said. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Annette Semerdjian)



(Continued From Page 22)

Inside the Horseman, customers are greeted by original murals painted on the walls, horror movies on TV and comic books plastered to the tables. "It's not a sports bar," Hughes said. "It's something different for downtown." The bar and pizzeria is the brainchild of Hughes and Martin Svab, co-owner of the Phantom Carriage Brewery in Carson, and Jeremy Schott, the owner of the Dark Art Emporium, a downtown shop featuring oddities and original art.

The three partners have teamed up to offer the neighborhood craft beer in a gothic atmosphere, with tongue firmly planted in cheek. "There's something for everybody, literally," Hughes said. "We just wanted it to be not pretentious and approachable." That extends to the selection of drinks, he added, which includes everything from local brews to Miller High Life. "Everything is good and still affordable, and you probably still want to take a bottle home," Hughes said. The bar features a cooler with a rotating selection of drinks for those interested in picking up something to enjoy at home.

Finding a space on 4th Street was fortuitous, Hughes said. The downtown location is near where all three owners live, clinching the deal. "We are a small mom and pop shop, so this is perfect for us," Hughes said. "We're stoked to be here."

The 4th Horseman's grand opening is scheduled for Valentine's Day weekend 2019. By then, Hughes said, the bar plans to be open for lunch as well as brunch and offer menu items for delivery.

From its new vantage point across Ocean Boulevard, Pacific6 is counting down the days to its grand re-opening of the Breakers building. The investment group purchased the historic landmark in 2017 and is renovating its 13 stories into what they've termed a "boutique destination hotel." The company located its headquarters at 211 E Ocean Blvd. a little less than a year ago, where construction on the Breakers can be clearly viewed through its large, floor-to-ceiling windows. "It's like having a live feed of what you're doing right outside your door," founding partner Jon Heiman said.

With its soothing color scheme and open office design, the Pacific6 offices feel more like an art studio than an investment firm. Communications Director Brandon Dowling said the layout was intentional. "We're all being exposed to the work that everyone else is working on," he said. "It really contributes to a great flow of information."

"We've been trapped in corporate worlds for the last 15 to 20 years," Heiman said. "When we had the opportunity to have a say in what it looked like here, everyone was like, 'Man, we want to be as hipster as possible.' More like broken hipsters because of our age but . . . the views are amazing."

Before collaborating on Pacific6, four of the company's six founders previously worked at Molina Healthcare, also headquartered downtown. "Our kids go to school in Long Beach," Heiman explained. "I worked downtown for the last 12 years of my life and I really enjoy this area. I've seen it go through ebbs and flows and it seems like now it's going through a renaissance." Heiman added that he his partners in Pacific6 are excited to be on the front end of that wave.

Heiman also gave a shout out to the Downtown Long Beach Alliance, the Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau and the Long Beach City Council for establishing a good working relationship with Pacific6, which plans to continue making property investments in downtown and beyond. "What I love about Long Beach [is] it's sort of a big little city or a little big city, whichever you want to call it," Heiman said. "Everybody's on board."

The Breakers is slated to open in 2020 with 185 rooms, restaurants, a pool, jazz lounge and rooftop bar. Pacific6 is also developing the nearby Ocean Center building into an 85-unit apartment complex slated to come online around the same time as the Breakers. "I think our company's going to be in a position to talk about a lot more of our projects coming up next year," Dowling said. "Stay tuned for 2019." ■

Miranda Malloy and Benjamin Neuhaus are co-owners of Snake Oil Provisions and Snake Eyes Society. Malloy said Snake Eyes Society, their women's fashion store, offers a higher quality of material than other women's retailers that sell disposable fashion. "We're really trying to . . . create a new consumer versus catering to an existing consumer," she said. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Brandon Richardson)







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The Port of Long Beach’s Middle Harbor now boasts some of the world’s greenest cargo moving equipment, including electric cranes and zero-emission automated guided vehicles. When the port’s Middle Harbor Redevelopment Project is complete in 2020, the terminal will be akin in size to the sixth largest containerized port in the United States. (Business Journal photograph by John Robinson)



# Myriad Of Industries Shape Downtown’s Business Community

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**  
EDITOR

**D**owntown Long Beach, the largest urban downtown waterfront between San Diego and San Francisco, provides a scenic backdrop for area residents, visitors and employees. Its proximity to the San Pedro Bay ports and major freeways, its waterfront attractions, its comparatively affordable real estate to surrounding beach cities, and its central location between the Los Angeles and Orange County markets have made downtown a hub for several industries.

Among the top employment sectors and office users in Downtown Long Beach are international trade, health care, financial services, oil and gas, and hospitality and tourism.

## International Trade

Situated on Long Beach’s westernmost portion of waterfront, downtown is located adjacent to the Port of Long Beach, the second largest port in the country. The port continues to grow is container traffic; in 2017, the port broke its record for the highest volume of containers that have ever moved across its docks, and it is on track to do so again by the end of 2018. Through November, total cargo volumes were 7.3% higher than in the same period in 2017, according to the port.

Growing international commerce means more business for industry sectors tied to it, such as trucking, rail, freight forwarding and warehousing. Companies representing these sectors have offices throughout downtown, many in the office towers along Ocean Boulevard, according to Michele Grubbs, vice president of the Pacific Merchant Shipping Association. Grubbs’ organization represents the interests of shipping lines and terminal operators along the West Coast.

“The international trade industry has a large economic impact on downtown. It has a strong economic base,” Grubbs said. “There are several international trade businesses located downtown on Ocean Boulevard. These are businesses such as shipping lines, customs brokers, freight forwarders, maritime attorneys. . . there are a wide range of companies that are part of the supply chain ecosystem.” Grubbs noted that positions within these firms are typically high-paying. Jobs on the docks are also among a higher wage bracket. Longshore workers within the International Longshore & Warehouse Union often make upwards of \$100,000 annually.

International trade through the port also supports government jobs, from within the city government – the Long Beach Harbor Department employs more than 400 people – as well as federal and state agencies. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) operates an office on Ocean Boulevard, and while a representative could not disclose the exact number of employees there, he did provide the following statement: “It is

safe to say – CBP employs hundreds of professionals ranging from front-line federal law enforcement officers, trade specialists, attorneys, chemists, administrators, analysts, biologists, etc.”

Commerce generated by the Port of Long Beach is a major job creator not only for the region, but for the country as a whole. Port staff estimate that containers leaving its docks touch every congressional district in the United States, and related business activity supports 1.5 million jobs nationwide.

## Health Care

The health care industry in Downtown Long Beach is dominated by the presence of Molina Healthcare, a national provider of Medicare and Medicaid health plans. Despite cutting back on its office footprint – the company eliminated its offices at the World Trade Center, for example – the firm maintains significant real estate holdings in the area with the dual-tower Molina Center and Millworks buildings.

Founded in Long Beach in 1980, Molina Healthcare employs 3,400 people citywide, most of them concentrated downtown, where it is headquartered.

Just one block north of downtown’s 10th Street border, Dignity Health – St. Mary Medical Center is also a significant presence in the area’s health care industry, and, as the nearest hospital, provides care to downtown residents. The medical center operates a 24-hour Level II trauma center and emergency room, and also provides crucial health care such as cancer, cardiac, cardiovascular, gastroenterology and other specialized services. The hospital employs more than 1,000 workers.

“St. Mary Medical Center has been serving the Long Beach community for 95 years strong. We take pride in our commitment to provide high-quality, compassionate care in a safe and healing environment for all those who come through our doors – from our patients and their loved ones to our employees, physicians, and volunteers,” President and CEO Carolyn Caldwell told the Business Journal. “We look forward to continuing our mission and expanding our services to meet the needs of the growing downtown area.”

Various privately-owned medical facilities are located throughout downtown, including several dentist offices, U.S. HealthWorks Medical Group’s occupational health clinic at 100 Oceangate, an independent urgent care at 555. E. Ocean Blvd. and others.

## Financial Services

Two banks are headquartered in Downtown Long Beach – International City Bank (ICB), founded in 1984, and Farmers & Merchants (F&M) Bank, founded in 1907.

Located on Ocean Boulevard, ICB is focused on meeting the financial needs of the business community. It is ranked among the top 100 U.S. banks with less than \$1 billion in assets and operates a second location in Irvine. “We are located in the center of all the new activity and growth in Long Beach, which puts us in a great position to not only be visible but contribute to the ongoing success in the downtown area,” ICB President and CEO Michael Miller told the Business Journal.

Located at 301 Pine Ave., F&M’s headquarters were built in 1923 on land purchased by founder C.J. Walker. “Our foundation, our beginning, was in Long Beach,” President W. Henry Walker said. Referring to the company’s historic headquarters, he added, “It embodies who Farmers & Merchants is, our 112-year heritage and our commitment to the city.”

(Please Continue To Page 28)





# TOGETHER WE POWER LONG BEACH

California Resources Corporation is honored to partner with the City of Long Beach and the State Lands Commission to supply ample, affordable, reliable energy for California by Californians. CRC's facilities in Long Beach have generated more than \$4.4 billion in revenue since 2003 for the city, state and port based on the government share of ownership in these operations and from fees and taxes while also providing jobs for members of the local community.





(Continued From Page 26)

Walker said that he is excited to see so much development occurring around F&M in downtown. “We’re adding more viability to downtown. The average combined incomes I am told at some of the new apartment buildings downtown are anywhere between \$150,000 to \$200,000. That’s a huge change,” he noted.



International City Bank has been headquartered in Downtown Long Beach since 1984. The bank employs 33 people and offers personalized financial services to the business community. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)

F&M also operates F&M Trust Company, the oldest state-chartered trust company in California – at its headquarters. The firm manages in excess of \$3 billion in assets and estates.

Downtown’s diverse financial services industry also boasts offices for Wells Fargo’s California Trust Center, City National Bank’s regional banking center, accounting companies such as Windes, Holthouse Carlin & Van Trigt and Rossi LLP, and other investment and wealth management firms, some of which are covered more in depth in this edition’s article on downtown professional services businesses.

**Oil & Gas**

Long Beach’s history is tied to that of the oil and gas industry in California. The city’s downtown sits on the Wilmington Oil Field, and its waterfront views are punctuated by the four THUMS oil is-

lands, on which offshore drilling takes place. The islands, decorated with structures made to appear like resorts, hide oil rigs that generate revenue for the city.

California Resources Corporation’s southern operations are housed in offices at 111 W. Ocean Blvd. in downtown. The oil and gas company and its THUMS and Tidelands affiliates operate natural gas and oil production for the City of Long Beach and the state. In downtown, CRC directly employs 375 people and supports approximately 500 contractors, according to a company representative.

Overall oil and gas production citywide averages about 12 million barrels per year, the vast majority of which are generated from Tidelands area operations in and around downtown, according to city data.

**Hospitality & Tourism**

One of downtown’s most visible industries is its hospitality and tourism sector. Along the waterfront, this sector is driven by the city’s attractions, including the Queen Mary and Aquarium of the Pacific, as well as tourism-driven businesses, the largest of which is Carnival Cruise Line.

Locally owned businesses such as Catalina Express’s service ferrying

tourists to Catalina Island, Harbor Breeze Cruise’s wildlife and harbor tours, and the restaurants and shops at the Shoreline Village boardwalk also serve as a draw for tourists. Harbor Breeze and Catalina Express both recently told the Business Journal that business was steady this year. Debra Fixen, general manager of Shoreline Village, said that sales have grown each year since she first took the job five years ago.

Key to the hospitality sector is the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center, which annually draws convention and meeting attendees to the city, as well as entertainment events and performances. The center has undergone a series of upgrades over the course of the past five years, which have helped attract new clientele. In 2018, business secured for the center by the Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau brought more than 1.4 million convention attendees to the city, generating more than 208,000 overnight stays at area hotels. According to CVB leadership, bookings for 2019 are already pacing ahead of this year’s events.

Hotel occupancy in downtown and the city remains at a 25-year high of 79.4%, according to data from CBRE Hotels. Overnight visitors have a variety of options in downtown, including high-end hotels such as the Renaissance Long Beach Hotel, the Hilton Long Beach and others, as well as more affordable options such as the Best Western Plus Hotel. The Hotel Maya and the Queen Mary both offer sweeping views of the downtown skyline from their location across the water, adjacent to the port. ■

**The Port Of Long Beach**

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**  
EDITOR

To the west of downtown, the Port of Long Beach looms large – its cranes, stacks of shipping containers and visiting vessels are a visual reminder of the steady flow of commerce entering the city through the nation’s second largest port. Even as one passes through the streets of downtown, cranes peek between and above buildings, a representation of the port’s influence and importance to the economy of downtown and the region.

The Port of Long Beach and neighboring Port of Los Angeles process about 40% of the nation’s maritime trade. This commerce supports an array of industries, including transportation and warehousing, logistics and goods movement, freight forwarding and customs brokering, and others. One in eight jobs in the City of Long Beach and more than 300,000 jobs in Southern California are supported by the port, according to figures from the harbor department. More than 1.5 million jobs nationwide are connected to commerce generated by the port, which sits on 3,000 acres of land and includes 4,600 acres of water.

In 2019, the port is relocating its headquarters to the new Long Beach Civic Center, where its staff will have a stronger connection not only to the port itself but also to the myriad of port clients and stakeholders located downtown.

“We promised to return to the waterfront, and that promise will be ful-

(Please Continue To Page 30)

**PortSide** Keeping Up With The Port Of Long Beach

David Espinoza, senior human resources business partner at the Port of Long Beach, started working for the City of Long Beach in 2015 after moving from Texas. His position there involved staff recruitment, often for the police and water departments. Early this year, Espinoza was offered an opportunity with the human resources department at the Port of Long Beach. He is currently assigned to the security division and works on site at the port’s Joint Command and Control Center. His position covers a myriad of duties, including recruitment and addressing the concerns of more than 100 employees in the security division. Espinoza recruits armed special services officers, which involves a lengthy background process. “Human resources is typically known as being like the principal’s office,” Espinoza said. “And under [Port of Long Beach Director of Human Resources Services] Stacey Lewis’s leadership we have been able to change that culture and that idea.” One such change to the culture of the department is the practice of referring to workers at the port as “contributors” instead of “employees,” according to Espinoza. Although workers at the port are occupied with their own duties, Espinoza makes sure the team understands the bigger picture of what other divisions are doing. Espinoza, who has a master’s degree in counseling, pulls from his educational background when listening to individuals who come to him with issues. “What I enjoy is helping people and being a conduit and connecting people,” he said.

Article and photograph by the Business Journal’s Annette Semerdjian





# CITY OF LONG BEACH

## BID OPPORTUNITIES

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>BID NUMBER</u>	<u>DATE</u>
West Seaside Way Storm Drain Project	R-7104	12/19/2018
On-Call Public Health/Human Svcs Comm. Partners	RFQ HE18-099	12/19/2018
Purchase & Dev. Opportunity at 925-945 East PCH	RFP EP19-028	12/20/2018
Trauma & Resiliency Informed Systems Consultant	RFP HE19-025	01/08/2019
Contract for Concrete Repairs & Related Improv.	R-7137	01/09/2019
Technology Infrastructure Upgrade Project	WD-22-18	01/10/2019
Citywide Backfile Scanning Services	ITB TI19-024	01/15/2019
Fire Rescue Tools and Equipment	ITB FD19-052	01/15/2019
Alamitos Beach Concession Building	R-7106	01/17/2019
Fire Hose and Fittings	ITB FD19-036	01/17/2019
Library Hearing Loop System	RFP PW19-044	01/22/2019
Westside Storm Drain Phase 3	R-6751	01/23/2019
Citywide Paint	ITB LB19-016	01/24/2019
Steams Park Irrigation Upgrade	R-7061	02/28/2019
Qualification and Selection of Peer Reviewers	RFQ DV17-112	Continuous

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

### Bidder Registration

To receive notifications of bid opportunities, register with the City of Long Beach at [www.longbeach.gov/finance/business-info/purchasing-division/purchasing-division/](http://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.

## AUTO LIEN SALE AUCTION

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January 8 & 22, 2018  
Registration & Viewing Hours:  
8:00 A.M. – 9:50 A.M.

<http://www.longbeach.gov/finance/services-and-permits/towing-and-lien-sales/auktion/>

# CITY OF LONG BEACH



## TREECYCLING RECYCLE YOUR TREE FOR FREE

**DECEMBER 26, 2018 - JANUARY 11, 2019**

**Mon. – Fri. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

**Sat. – Sun. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

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**El Dorado Park**  
2760 N. Studebaker Rd.,  
South parking lot, behind  
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**Bixby Park**  
1st St. at Cherry Ave.

**Cesar E. Chavez Park**  
Golden Shore St. at 4th St.

**CSULB Recycling Center**  
5800 Atherton Blvd.,  
east of Bellflower Blvd.

**Houghton Park**  
Myrtle Ave. at Harding St.

**North Police Substation**  
4891 N. Atlantic Ave. at  
Del Almo Blvd., enter on  
46th St.

**Hudson Park**  
Hill St. at Webster Ave.

**Fire Station #14**  
5200 Eliot St at  
Colorado Ave.

**Stearns Park**  
Corner of 23rd St. and  
Roycroft Ave.

**Environmental Services  
Bureau**  
2929 E Willow St.

**Veterans Park**  
28th St. at Pine Ave.

**Wardlow Park**  
Monlaco Rd. at Rutgers Ave.

## FREE PICK UP Saturday, January 12, 2019

If you have City refuse and recycling service, place tree curbside by **7:00 a.m.** where your recycling is normally collected. All decorations and stands **MUST** be removed. Cut trees over 12' tall in half. Flocked trees are accepted.

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(Continued From Page 28)

filled when the Port of Long Beach moves into its new downtown headquarters this summer,” Mario Cordero, executive director of the port, told the Business Journal.

“Located next door to the new Long Beach City Hall, the port administration building will be more accessible to the community, our tenants and business partners who attend our board meetings,” Cordero said. “The LEED gold-certified facility will also be a model for green development,



The replacement for the existing Gerald Desmond Bridge is under construction at the Port of Long Beach. At left, the main span of the new bridge rises 205 feet over the harbor, while the Gerald Desmond’s water clearance is 155 feet. The higher structure will allow larger vessels to pass beneath it. (Business Journal photograph by John Robinson)

Despite an ongoing trade war with China, the No. 1 country shipping goods to and from the Port of Long Beach, the port is on track to break its annual record for containerized cargo volumes in 2018. (Photograph by Jose Cordon, deadendbrigade.com)



demonstrating our ongoing commitment to reducing pollution and operational excellence.

“Most importantly for downtown, moving 400-plus harbor department employees to the new civic center will help provide an economic boost for the area, with multiple opportunities to dine and shop. We’re definitely excited about being a part of the downtown community family environment.”

Also in 2019, the port is finishing the massive new replacement for the Gerald Desmond Bridge, a \$1.467 billion project designed to improve the flow of vehicular traffic and allow larger ships to pass beneath it. The ongoing redevelopment of Middle Harbor, where Long Beach Container Terminal is located, will continue through 2019 into late 2020. Now in its third phase of construction, the \$1.493 billion project involves adding on-dock rail capacity and shore power hookups for ships, creating a longer wharf, and installing some of the cleanest cargo moving technologies available.

In order to reduce its environmental impact on surrounding communities, the Port of Long Beach continues to innovate in the realm of air and water quality. In 2017, both San Pedro Bay ports adopted a new version of their Clean Air Action Plan agreement, which set ambitious goals for air emissions reductions and clean technology implementation. By 2030, all container terminal operations must be converted to produce zero emissions. By 2035, all drayage trucks servicing the port must operate at zero emissions. Greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 and 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.

In order to give back to the community and to help alleviate environmental impacts, the port expanded its Community Grants Program in 2016, with the goal of distributing \$46.4 million over the next 12 to 15 years to community-based projects that improve air quality and reduce traffic, noise and water quality impacts. This initiative – originally called the Mitigation Grants Program – represents a total commitment of nearly \$65 million in community grants since it launched in 2009. ■

# Professional Services Executives Are Keen On Downtown Long Beach

■ By **PIERCE NAHIGYAN**  
STAFF WRITER

**W**hether dealing in advertising or financial management, professional service providers in Downtown Long Beach all agree: it’s better there.

The professional services field includes knowledge-based occupations such as law, accounting, computer services, architecture, marketing and engineering. According to a recent report from the Center for a Competitive Workforce, a collaborative project of Los Angeles colleges and the L.A. Chamber of Commerce, this field is predicted to add 14,000 new jobs to the L.A. Basin by 2021. Much of its job growth has been driven by the growing role of technology and technical consulting. In Long Beach, downtown’s proximity to the port, diverse business environment and pool of local talent were all cited as major reasons why businesses locate to the city.

Founded in 1926 by William Norment Windes, the Windes accounting firm has been a stalwart

member of the city’s professional community for 92 years, surviving through the Great Depression and the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake. In nine decades, the firm has changed locations three times, all within roughly a quarter mile of each other. “We haven’t gone very far,” Managing Partner John Di Carlo told the Business Journal. “Not planning on going anywhere or anywhere else anytime soon.”

Windes provides accounting, tax planning and business consulting services for privately held businesses, nonprofit organizations and high net worth individuals. Based in Long Beach, its market reach has grown over the intervening years from Los Angeles to San Diego County. “There’s still a lot of Long Beach that we serve, but our geography has expanded rather substantially outside of the city,” Di Carlo said. That includes international expansion. As an independent member of Baker Tilly International, an accountancy and business advisory network, Windes’ reach extends across 147 territories and more than 960 offices around the world.

Di Carlo, who grew up in nearby San Pedro, has been associated with the firm for 37 years. He said the growth of Long Beach from a Navy town to a bustling center of commercial and residential development has been “interesting” to see. “I remember as a kid driving through Long Beach,” he said. “Ocean Boulevard had its share of bars and tattoo parlors and other places that sailors might think about going to enjoy themselves. It’s been quite a transformation.”

Di Carlo said that, with its international reach, Windes intends to bring more business in and around the harbor, “Either with foreign companies coming in or expansion of domestic work,” Di Carlo said. “We’ll continue to see some business growth in that area.”

Today, Windes employs about 110 workers in its Long Beach office. Chief Marketing Officer Craig Ima estimated that its members hold about 65 seats on boards throughout the city. “We’re helping out non-profits and are extremely involved with the community,” he said. “It’s not just all about business for the firm.”

Wealth advisory firm Halbert Hargrove has been headquartered in Long Beach almost as long as Windes. Since 1933 it has remained on the same street, Pine Avenue, and even kept its same phone number. In the words of its President and Chief Operating Officer JC Abusaid, the firm “provide[s] fiduciary investment management and wealth advisory services to the quietly wealthy.” This includes financial and retirement planning, insurance reviews, estate plan overviews “and just about any other service that helps mitigate financial risk to our clients,” Abusaid said.

Halbert Hargrove employs 42 associates in offices across the country and





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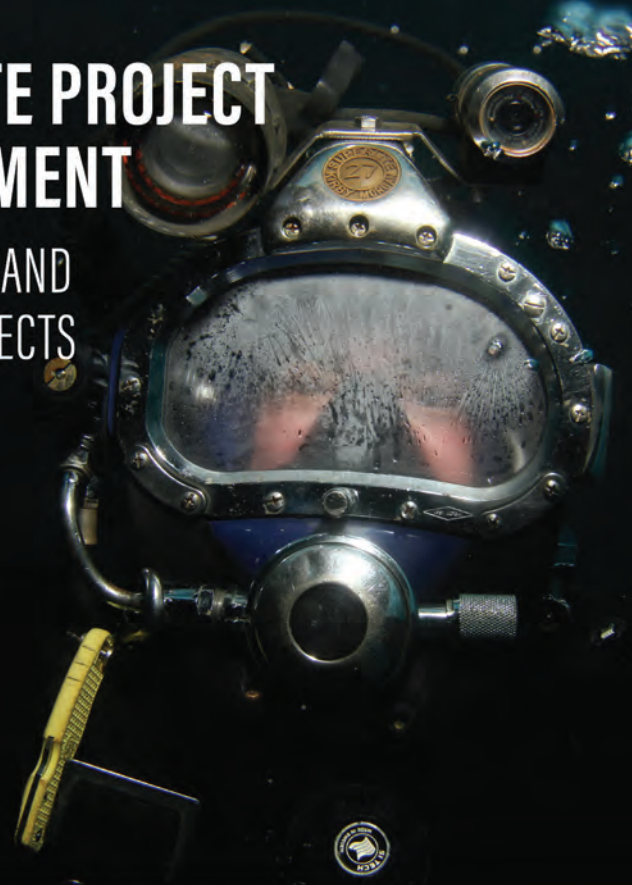
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(Continued From Page 30)

was recognized this year by InvestmentNews as a “Best Places to Work” for financial advisors. Abusaid called Downtown Long Beach “the perfect venue for our headquarters.”

“The recent surge and development of downtown and The Pike, along with the [new] housing, has provided a lot of convenience for associates to live close by,” he said. “We have now several associates who walk to work, which is incredible in this day and age.”



Brand strategist Fabian Geyrhalter runs his agency, Finien, from the top floor of the Farmers & Merchants building in Downtown Long Beach. Geyrhalter said he works with Silicon Valley and Fortune 500 companies that are creating new, innovative products. “I love to be surrounded by a city that is not so fully developed where you only see franchises and big retailers, but where you feel like there’s still that entrepreneurial spirit,” he said of Long Beach. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)

Though not headquartered in Long Beach, accounting firm Holthouse Carlin & Van Trigt (HCVT) has done steady business in the city since 1993. “With us sitting by the largest port complex in the country, we have a lot of food-related companies, a lot of transportation-related clients, and we have a bit of an international flavor,” HCVT Partner Blake Christian said of the firm’s Downtown Long Beach office.

HCVT’s primary service is tax planning and preparation for corporate entities and high net worth individuals. The company’s revenue is in excess of \$150 million this year, Christian said, and its steady growth is matched only by its need for new, skilled employees. “We hire over 100 people a year and [we’re] still looking for people,” he said.

The wide diversity of the Long Beach branch makes it unique among HCVT’s 12 offices, Christian said. “We have, I think, every ethnicity, and people that speak about seven different languages in the office. Again, with the proximity to the port, we’re as international as the community.”

Cindy Allen, founder and president of advertising firm ETA Agency, has

Founded by Cindy Allen in 2005, ETA Agency has been recognized several times for its marketing campaigns with Long Beach and other cities. “This is my fourth location that I’ve had in Downtown Long Beach,” Allen told the Business Journal. “I often say I started up on Pine and I keep on moving closer [to the water]. Now I’m on Ocean, so maybe the next place is a yacht. Who knows?” (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Annette Semerdjian)



been part of that community for nearly her entire life. After moving from Kentucky as a young woman, Allen grew up on the west side of the city, attended Long Beach City College and California State University, Long Beach and served as a Long Beach Police Department officer for 10 years before sustaining an injury in the line of duty. Launched in 2005, her full-service ad and marketing agency provides everything for its clients in house, from creative to branding to messaging and full production campaigns.

ETA has been recognized several times by the American Advertising Awards, one of the industry’s largest creative competitions. Last year the agency earned an ADDY Award for its campaign to promote EZparkLB, a free real-time mobile parking app provided through the Long Beach Public Works Department. In 2016, the agency earned two awards for its MissionH2OLB campaign, which encouraged Long Beach residents to conserve water on behalf of the water department. This year, the agency won two more ADDYs for water conservation campaigns in the cities of Rowland Heights and Redlands. “We tend to do really well in the government sector,” Allen said. “Anything that’s . . . environmentally friendly, water or sustainability, those kinds of things are what we’re really interested in.”

Allen has continued to work with Long Beach government, most recently launching the new website for Long Beach Transit. “We’ve been getting a lot of good feedback on that,” she said. “I definitely see transportation as a big industry that we’d like to do more of.”

After starting her company by herself, Allen now has a team of 24 employees and reported steady growth year after year. “It seems like every five years we’re on a mission to find a bigger office,” she said. “I really like where we’re at now.”

For Allen, the City of Long Beach has furnished not only great clients but also a reliable workforce. “There’s so much talent here,” she said. “I’m surprised there aren’t more creative companies in Long Beach . . . because I have such a pool of people to pull from. I can hire right here in our backyard. Heck, half of my employees ride or take public transportation, which is beautiful because they live so local.”

Wells Fargo employs about 200 team members at its 111 W. Ocean Blvd. location in downtown. Natasha Mata, bank president of Wells Fargo’s Greater Central Los Angeles Area, said there are more than 500 Wells Fargo team members that either live or work in the Long Beach area. “Long Beach is such a wonderful city,” Mata said. “Being located in the hub of such a thriving, bustling location allows us to be engrained in the community while meeting their personal, business and financial needs.” Mata added that Wells Fargo team members volunteered over 1,900 hours serving more than 42 local non-profits in 2017. This year, members volunteered approximately 1,400 hours and supported 121 organizations.

In addition to personal banking services, the bank’s Downtown Long Beach location offers business banking, wealth management, financial advising, business payroll services and mortgage lending. “Our customers have commented that they appreciate us being located downtown near their businesses,” Mata said. “Our convenient location provides easy access for businesses to do their banking.” Mata said the bank looks forward to continuing to support the Long Beach community and helping its residents succeed financially.

The appeal of the downtown community has not gone unnoticed by Fabian Geyrhalter, founder and principal of branding agency Finien. After working in Santa Monica for some 15 years, Geyrhalter said that he and his wife “fell in love with Long Beach.” Multiple factors persuaded the couple to move south, not least of which was the increasing density and traffic snarls in the Downtown Santa Monica area. “The entire west side [of Los Angeles] has become very difficult to get in and out [of],” he said. “We used to live in Malibu, which added to the complexity of traveling on [Pacific Coast Highway].”

The cost of living in Long Beach is comparatively more affordable than Santa Monica, Geyrhalter said, which is better for both his family and his employees. “It just made sense all around,” Geyrhalter said. “You get more for your buck.”

Finien has been operating out of the top floor of the Farmers & Merchants Bank building in Downtown Long Beach for four years now. “Just looking at the developments in downtown over the last four years is mesmerizing,” Geyrhalter said. “I could not have been happier to move here at this time because I love seeing that change.”

Though a small agency, Finien works with clients regionally, nationally and internationally – from fledgling startups to Fortune 500 companies – creating a brand name and then crafting an entire identity around them. “We wanted to have a place that is strategically located between Orange County, L.A. and the Pasadena Valley area,” Geyrhalter said. “And I have all the airports to fly in and out of that I could possibly need.” ■





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# Apartments And Retail Spaces In High Demand Downtown

■ By **PIERCE NAHIGYAN**  
STAFF WRITER

**R**eal estate experts say urban development in Downtown Long Beach is attracting affluent renters and retailers eager to capitalize on their new wealth.



International Tower houses 240 condominiums that range in size from 880-square-foot one-bedrooms to 2,180-square-foot three bedrooms. Barbara Irvine-Parker, a realtor associate with Coldwell Banker Coastal Alliance, said that downtown condos are staying on the market longer in 2018. “But it’s still a good market,” she added. Compared to other beach cities, Irvine-Parker said, Long Beach remains “the most reasonably-priced coastal community.” (Photograph by Jose Cordon, deadendbrigade.com)



The Flossie Lewis House, located in Long Beach’s historic Willmore City/Drake Park District, was built in 1905. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)

This craftsman bungalow, built in 1913, is located in Long Beach’s oldest neighborhood. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)

Robert Stepp, president and founder of brokerage firm Stepp Commercial, predicted that downtown’s multi-family residential market “will remain strong” through the next few years. “Investment dollars are still pouring into a number of revitalization and expansion projects, and we expect the momentum to continue,” Stepp told the Business Journal.

The high number of residential and mixed-use projects in development, Stepp added, are transforming downtown “into a world-class urban center.” When the shoreline reaches full development, he said, investors may eye inland opportunities and older buildings due for renovation.

Both demand and rental rates for downtown apartments are on the rise, Stepp said. Since this time last year, rental rates have increased roughly 3.9%. The vacancy rate in the area is 4.4%, with forecasts indicating that it will near the 4% mark in 2019. “Long Beach is doing a great job of attracting and retaining world-class companies,” Stepp said, adding that and the accompanying demand for highly-skilled and educated workers has raised the profile of the average downtown renter. Both the Edison and the Current, two of the area’s newest luxury high-rises, achieved more than 97% occupancy just one year after completion, Stepp noted.

Steve “Bogie” Bogoyevac, senior managing director of investments at Marcus & Millichap and the founder of Bogie Investment Group, said there is currently “lots of excitement” about the downtown area. “Obviously, there’s a lot of development going on, a lot of new projects, a lot of enthusiasm,” he said.

Bogoyevac characterized the market as “extremely strong” from both a rental and operational standpoint. “New construction these days is almost all Class A construction,” he said. “That costs a certain amount to build and has a certain cost to rent. It’s going to attract a certain profile of renter . . . which is improving the area.” At the same time, Bogoyevac noted, the Long Beach City Council has required a low-income or senior housing element “to almost every one of these [construction] projects that’s happening.”



think, because the rents for institutional product [larger or newer properties of greater interest to investors] are considerably more expensive than the ‘lower-end’ stock,” Stepp explained. For example, the price of a studio in the Current might be \$400 above a studio in a smaller building down the street.

The median rent for all apartments downtown is about \$2,114, Stepp said, but the stock available exhibits a significant price range. “The new apartment stock is not affecting the smaller apartment market as much as one would

## Single-Family Homes

While the housing costs and available inventory of units in the downtown multi-family market continue to rise, the same cannot be said for detached single-family homes. The stock of houses in the largely urban area is low relative to the rest of the city and, according to Phil Jones, owner and CEO of Coldwell Banker Coastal Alliance (CBCA), right now “demand isn’t very strong.”

This November saw five new listings and two closed sales on detached single-family homes in the 90802 zip code, Jones said. Overall, 54 sales closed in the downtown market in the last 12 months. The median price for homes is currently \$215,000, Jones said, an 18% drop since last November. The average sales price decreased 8% over the same time period. “It’s clearly more of a condo market,” Jones concluded.

Condo sales are more robust downtown, Jones said, with 33 closed sales in November and 503 in the last 12 months. The median price of condominiums was \$378,000 during the last 12 months, but was \$430,000 in November. Jones said this disparity could be due to new developments coming online. “The last 12 months has seen a 5% appreciation in condo values,” he said. That figure represents moderate growth but is consistent throughout the city, he added.

Barbara Irvine-Parker, a realtor associate with CBCA, said that downtown condominiums range in size from studios to penthouses, with prices falling between \$225,000 and \$1.4 million. “Of course, there’s a big difference in whether it’s a one-bedroom or a two-bedroom . . . and whether it’s on the second floor or the 21st,” she said.

In general, Irvine-Parker said, condos are staying on the market longer than they have in the past. “More people are kind of staying put,” she said. Jones called it a “normalization” and predicted that 2019 would be similar, if not a little slower.

## Commercial Real Estate

Demand is up for retail real estate in Downtown Long Beach, according to Brian C. Russell, vice president of Kinnery’s Brokerage. “People really like Long Beach,” he said. “I think the investment community has discovered Long Beach, and it really has value added opportunity compared to marketplaces like West L.A. or Manhattan Beach, or perhaps coastal Orange County.”

Becky Blair, president and principal at Coldwell Banker Commercial BLAIR WESTMAC, said the price per square foot on retail spaces has increased year over year for both older properties and new developments. “Overall, if you’re looking at second generation or older properties that have retail [space], you’re probably looking at anywhere from \$1.75 to \$2.50 a foot,” she calculated. New product is going for \$2.75 to \$4 per foot, she added. That’s for retail spaces at or under the 2,000-square-foot range, which is in greater demand in the downtown area, she said.

Some experts have voiced concerns that the rapid development “in almost every direction” of downtown may lead to an oversupply of retail spaces, Blair said. “Others like myself really have a lot of confidence in the anticipated growth of the downtown area. Given the younger population that’s enjoying downtown living, they will demand a variety of restaurants and offices to satisfy those needs.” Blair forecasted a continued growth in the retail market through next year, with a slight slowdown near the end of 2019 or beginning of 2020.

In contrast to the active retail market, Russell characterized the 2018 office market as “soft.” He suggested that this may have to do with companies cutting costs, downsizing their office space and allowing more employees to work from home. “That said,” he continued, “we’re starting to get some businesses coming to Long Beach because of quality of life and comparative cost-to-housing and good school districts.” That may ultimately lead to more demand for office space in 2019, he said.

Blair reported that asking rents for office spaces in Long Beach are up 0.4% in the third quarter, with expected year-end annualized growth to be 0.3%. “With no competitive office space added in 2018, absorption will be flat and will reduce vacancy by 0.1% to 14.5%,” she said.

In its third quarter survey of the downtown area, commercial real estate services firm Cushman & Wakefield reported that about 77.5% (or one million square feet) of available Class A office space was occupied as of mid-October. About 82.9% of available Class B office space (roughly two million square feet) was occupied. The three Class C office buildings – 115 Pine Ave., Pacific Tower and the Farmers & Merchants Bank building – were 93.9% occupied in Q3 2018. Monthly lease rates across all three classes ranged from \$1.40 to \$3.15 per square foot. ■





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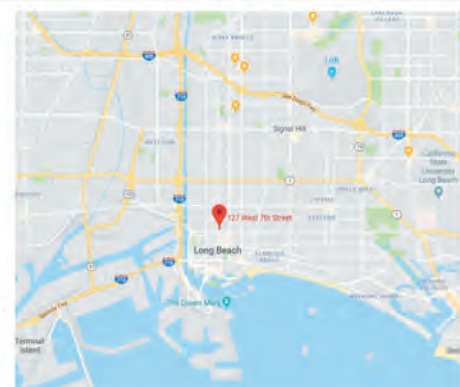
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# Collective Retail Spaces Are On The Rise In Downtown

■ By **ALENA MASCHKE**  
STAFF WRITER

The women who are leading the expansion of retail in downtown all have one thing in common: their commitment to unique products and local collaboration. With those key elements in mind, Michelle Molina

artifacts and products. “It was the people, one hundred percent. It was the people and their artistry, that’s what inspired me.”

Just a 10 minute walk away on Pine Avenue between 3rd Street and Broadway, Michelle Molina’s MADE by Millworks invites visitors to browse the light, airy store for unique, locally designed and manufactured souvenirs. Open since 2014, MADE by Millworks offers more than just a locally curated shopping experience for visitors. The centrally located venue also features a gallery and spaces to host talks and workshops. Early next year, Molina plans to open a bar featuring locally-brewed craft beer, an idea she credited to MADE’s Dream Facilitator – even the titles get creative here – Heather Kern.

“I think that everybody who is paying attention to the economy knows that the traditional retail store is going to have to reinvent itself to stay alive, and we wouldn’t be in the retail business if we didn’t offer such a unique experience,” Molina explained. In a fitting choice – given the female leadership of the venture – the bar will be named Elinor, after Elinor Otto, a real-life “Rosie the Riveter” who picked up work at a Long Beach airplane factory in 1942 and continued working in factories well into her 90s.

When Millworks decided to take over the store – the previous operator had decided they were no longer interested in running it – its downtown location was a major selling point, Molina said. Millworks is a development company run by Molina. “Downtown is unique from a retail perspective, because we’re an urban center on the ocean,” Molina said. In addition to the unique draw of restaurants and shopping right next to surfboards and beach towels, Molina had already worked on several projects in the area and developed a connection to it. “I couldn’t imagine doing anything outside of downtown for many years, because that was like my home,” she said.

For Elizabeth Kobliha, the decision to set up shop on North Pine didn’t come quite as naturally. She had been looking for the right space for a while, after she was laid-off and decided to turn her hobby of collecting and selling vintage items into a business. When her realtor suggested a property on North Pine, she was skeptical. “I’ve lived in Long Beach my whole adult life,” Kobliha said. “I just remembered Pine as being kind of dicey.” Without many other businesses around, she was also worried she couldn’t draw enough customers on her own. “I was the only one,” she remembered. “I feel like I was sort of a pioneer down here.”

Since then, Kobliha has seen her store flourish, as vendors filled up the stalls and the area around her slowly began to develop into an eclectic neighborhood with a record store, barber shops and a tattoo parlor. “It worked out, we were able to fill it and then some,” Kobliha said about her store, which is a modern take on the traditional antique mall. The shop features carefully designed nooks rather than caged-off stalls for vendors to present their merchandise in.

“When I opened this place, I wanted to do a little more freeform, free flowing, and have everyone create their own space,” Kobliha explained. In Downtown Long Beach, she found the space to do just that. Now, she’s planning to expand to a space next door, doubling her 5,000 square-foot store to add a showroom fully dedicated to larger, mid-century items. Today, she’s confident that her neighborhood, paired with a pinch of social media marketing, can carry the weight of all this merchandise. “I feel really good about the direction that Pine, and essentially downtown is taking,” Kobliha said. “It’s a real community.” ■



At MADE by Millworks co-op retail space, shoppers can find unique gifts and souvenirs created by local artists and manufacturers. Pictured from left: Amanda Basson, creative media captain; Heather Kern, dream facilitator; and Britany Barron, expert flare designer. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Annette Semerdjian)

and Heather Kern of MADE by Millworks, Kathleen Engel of MAKE Collective and Elizabeth Kobliha of Long Beach Vintage Etc. set out to create a different kind of retail environment featuring local vendors, artists and manufacturers in open spaces that invite shoppers to explore.

“It really evolved as I got to know my community and the neighborhood, being in the East Village Arts District, and I fell in love instantly,” Engel said, recalling her store’s transformation from selling vintage furniture, clothing and records to featuring more local artists. “Nobody was doing that in my neighborhood at the time.” Engel left her nine-to-five job in the fashion industry in 2012 to start the collective, for which she curates locally produced



Vendors at Elizabeth Kobliha’s modern antique mall, Long Beach Vintage Etc., mainly sell clothes, artifacts and small furniture from the 1980s or earlier, meeting the current standard for “vintage” items. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Annette Semerdjian)



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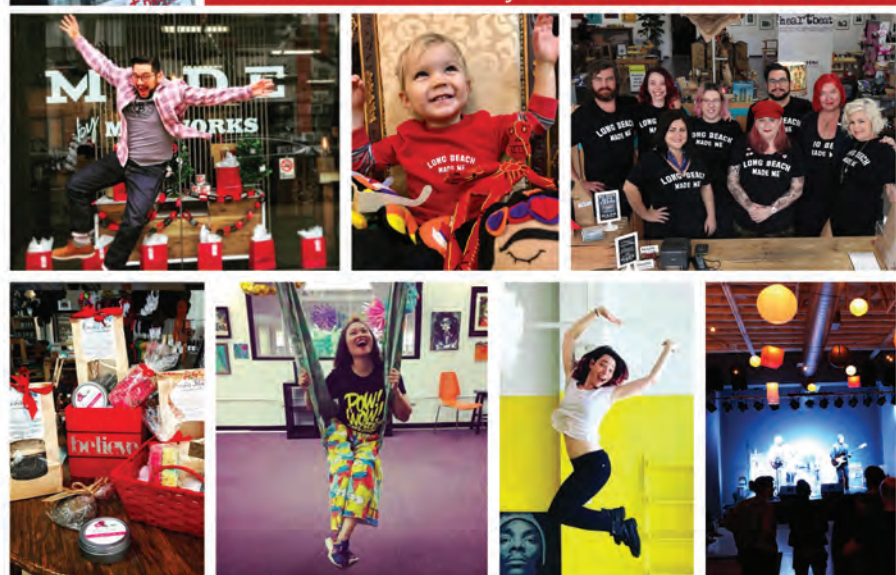


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# DLBA President/CEO Kraig Kojian On Creating A Thriving Environment For Businesses In Downtown

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**  
EDITOR

Since 1937, the Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) has spearheaded business improvement efforts in the city’s diverse downtown. Originally founded by the owner of Buffum’s Department store, a mainstay of the Pine Avenue of yesteryear, the organization evolved over time and was tasked in 1973 by the city council to manage a new parking improvement area in the downtown. In 1998, oversight of a new property-based improvement district was added to the DLBA’s role, establishing the entity as the manager of both parking and property-based fees paid by downtown stakeholders.



In that time, the DLBA has developed a toolbox of core services for its members centered on economic development, cleanliness and safety, beautification and placemaking, and marketing and communications. According to Kraig Kojian the DLBA’s president and CEO, the organization has made strides in changing the perception of downtown for the better. The area the DLBA oversees spans east to west from the Los Angeles River to Alamitos Avenue, and southward from 10th Street to the waterfront.

“Our efforts over the last 15 or 20 years have been dedicated to changing the perception of our downtown,” Kojian said, adding that during that

time period one could “fill in the blank” with any number of less than ideal opinions floating around about the area. “Now there is a different, positive perception of our downtown versus what people thought of it 10 to 15 years ago. I am really proud of the fact that we have been able to come so far. . . . To change that is not a very easy thing to do.”

New businesses that moved into downtown over the past 10 years have helped change the area for the better, according to Kojian. “They are really collaborative. It certainly tells us that the community has turned the corner, and the business community has turned the corner,” he said.

The majority of the DLBA’s funding goes toward its efforts to keep the area clean and safe. “Clean and safe is the most visible portion of our program. It really serves as another set of eyes and ears for our community members, businesses, residents and the police department,” Kojian said. The DLBA employs a clean team that removes litter, pressure washes sidewalks and removes graffiti. It also employs safety ambassadors, identifiably uniformed individuals who patrol the downtown on foot, bike and Segways up to 18 hours a day.

Economic development is also among the nonprofit’s key priorities. “Economic development for the purposes of what we’re doing is really to recruit, retain and create jobs,” Kojian explained. In recent years, the DLBA has centered this strategy on data collection, which it leverages to identify trends in the economy of downtown and to inform existing and potential business owners in the area.

In Fiscal Year 2017-2018, 185 net new businesses were added to the downtown area the DLBA oversees, a 6% increase in new businesses from the prior year. In that time, the DLBA’s pedestrian counters tracked 5.7 million people walking through the area.

“We have electronic pedestrian counters located throughout the downtown in key locations, and this is something we didn’t have two or three years ago,” Kojian said. The technology enables the DLBA to identify trends in foot traffic. The DLBA provides this data to entrepreneurs looking to start businesses in the area to help them determine the best location. The information also helps the organization identify areas that might need some assistance in terms of boosting pedestrian activity.

“We’re getting a lot of dining and entertainment venues coming into the downtown, which is great for our street activities and certainly having people on the street,” Kojian observed. “But I think we need more consistency throughout the course of the week. Where there are slower days Sunday through Wednesday, we want to build that up a little bit more.”

Kojian noted that the boom of residential developments in downtown should provide an organic boost to daily activity in the area. “By bringing in more residents and having these new housing developments filled with users of our downtown, that will help complement what the convention center is drawing during the week,” he said.

“We’re always trying to think of new programs both from an economic development standpoint as well as a marketing and event standpoint,” Kojian noted, adding that the organization might come up with some new events for calendar year 2019. “We’re definitely going to be re-evaluating all the events that we have been doing for this year, especially with our new events person and her team coming on board.”

In addition to serving existing businesses in downtown, the DLBA provides a number of resources to potential investors and entrepreneurs. Its Woman Owned Business Accelerator and entrepreneurial grant programs, for example, help potential new business owners get a leg up. “Those are two very popular programs that we are now seeking sponsorships for,” Kojian said. “I want to be able to identify and find partnerships to support these programs to help launch business and the entrepreneurial ecosystem for our downtown.” In order to fund such endeavors with donations, the DLBA established a 501-c3 nonprofit, the Downtown Foundation.

The top challenges to overcome in the downtown area aren’t unlike those of other urban cores, according to Kojian. “Our number one problem in downtown is homelessness,” he said, noting that the issue is attributable to multiple factors, include mental health care and the cost of housing. “It’s a community centric issue and we all have to be concerned about it,” he said.

The DLBA has a homeless outreach specialist who builds relationships with homeless individuals in downtown to help connect them to social services. In the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the organization made 1,680 homeless outreach contacts.

Kojian noted that the abundance of new residential buildings being constructed in the downtown should help address overall housing needs. “We need all types of housing,” he said. “If we could continue to emphasize housing in our downtown and build higher density in our downtown, I think that is going to at least address some of the issues the city is feeling.”

Asked to gauge the business climate in downtown, Kojian said his response was dependent upon the type of business sector. “Retail is changing . . . I think online shopping has made a huge impact for that retail shopping experience,” he said. “However, you see a lot of smaller, independent boutiques becoming stronger based on their brand recognition and connecting to their neighborhoods or their communities. They are really capturing a stronghold on that market, which is very encouraging.”

Kojian noted that there is not a strong demand for office space in the downtown, given its current occupancy rate of around 82%, per Cushman & Wakefield. However, he noted that the area has always been and will continue to be a mainstay for professional services companies such as accounting and law firms. “Once we see the port headquarters move back into the downtown, I think it’s going to be a great boost in international trade and transportation [sectors] in our downtown,” he said.

Businesses continue to be attracted to downtown because of its unique, authentic vibe and urban waterfront, according to Kojian. Plus, he noted, the area’s real estate is more affordable than other waterfront cities.

Going forward, Kojian said, “We want to be able to continue serving as a leading voice for the downtown, and obviously being a clearing house of accurate information that can be used by members of our community, potential investors and members of the media.” ■



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# Eclectic, Scenic, Professional, Entertaining, Delicious: Downtown’s Business Districts

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**  
EDITOR

**D**owntown Long Beach is made up of five business districts – the waterfront, the West Gateway, the East Village Arts District, the Pine Avenue and Promenade area, and North Pine –representing different hotbeds of business activity with unique clusters of industries, shops and restaurants, each boasting a distinct vibe and energy.

The downtown waterfront is perhaps the most iconic area of Downtown Long Beach, as it is home to the city’s most widely recognized sites and attractions. The heart of the city’s hospitality and tourism industry, the waterfront is home to the historic RMS Queen Mary, a floating museum, hotel and attraction, as well as the Aquarium of the Pacific, Southern California’s largest aquarium.

Also on the water are the retail areas of Shoreline Village, a boardwalk featuring tourist-centric shops and restaurants, and The Pike Outlets, a shopping center boasting national brands such as H&M and Nike, national and local restaurants, and a Cinemark movie theater. Across Pine Avenue from The Pike is the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center, which attracts more than one million convention attendees each year, generating steady business for downtown hotels.

Debra Fixen, general manager of Shoreline Village and the boardmember representing the downtown waterfront for the Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA), told the Business Journal that improvements to the area have resulted in increasing business activity. About three years ago, a renovation to The Pike Outlets was completed, and there are a number of ongoing developments underway, including an expansion of the Aquarium and multiple residential projects.

“With the general revitalization of the downtown area, more people come out to the downtown waterfront,” Fixen said. “There are more restaurants, more housing. And with more housing being built, it’s going to increase.” She added, “It has made the area more desirable.”

The downtown waterfront extends north to Ocean Avenue, the southernmost touchpoint of three of downtown’s other business zones. The gateway to the Pine Avenue and Promenade area – considered the “downtown core” – is the intersection of Pine Avenue and Ocean Boulevard. Between Ocean Boulevard and 4th Street, Pine is a bustling thoroughfare, celebrated for its collection of unique restaurants frequented by workers in surrounding offices, conventioners, tourists and locals alike. It also features a handful of retail shops. Similarly, the Promenade, a pedestrian path stretching from Ocean Boulevard to 3rd Street, is also known for its eateries and bars.

Although referred to by the DLBA as the “Pine and the Promenade” dis-



Utopia Good Food and Fine Art opened in the East Village Arts District at 1st Street and Linden Avenue in 1999. The restaurant often features works by local artists on its walls. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)

trict, the area also extends eastward to Pacific Avenue, encompassing a number of office buildings including The Hubb, home to Long Beach’s We-Work coworking offices, the DLBA, the local office of Rep. Alan Lowenthal and various creative and professional services firms.

The northernmost portion of The Promenade serves as the entrance to The Streets, a massive shopping center and residential complex spanning from 3rd Street northward to 6th Street, and eastward from Pine Avenue to Long Beach Boulevard. This entryway was recently improved with designs by Studio One Eleven, a Long Beach-based architecture firm that relocated from a nearby office tower with its parent company, Retail Design Collaborative, to the corner of 3rd Street and The Promenade about two and a half years ago. This year, several new eateries and quick serve restaurants have opened there, including Table 301, Poki Cat, Ammatoli and others.

Alan Pullman, founding partner of Studio One Eleven, said his company’s move to The Promenade has made its employees feel more connected to the city. “We really are much more present in the street life of the community,” he said.

“We have seen the Promenade become revitalized with new mixed-use buildings, with groundfloor restaurants and retail establishments,” Pullman said of the area. “You see more pedestrians on the street, which creates a safer street . . . There is a lot more vibrancy to our sidewalks. People are riding their bikes more.”

Pullman said that residential developments planned in the Pine and Promenade district, including one at Broadway and The Promenade North and another at Broadway and Long Beach Boulevard, would infill gaps between business corridors. Plus, he noted, more residents mean more business.

Also north of the downtown waterfront is the West Gateway district of downtown. Spanning from Pacific Avenue westward to the Los Angeles River and north to Willmore, this district is known for its office high rises, including One World Trade Center, the California Bank & Trust building, the 100 and 400 Oceangate buildings and the twin Molina Towers. Concentrated along Ocean Boulevard, these buildings house some of Long Beach’s largest and most well-respected professional services companies, such as the law firm Keesal Young & Logan, the accounting firm Holthouse, Carlin & Van Trigt and Ensemble Real Estate Investments, to name a few.

West Gateway is also a hub for local, county, state and federal government agencies. The new Long Beach Civic Center is currently under construction next to the existing city hall. Scheduled to open by summer, the site will in-

clude a new Main Library, port headquarters and city hall – and joining the existing Long Beach Police Department headquarters. The Gov. George Deukmejian Courthouse, an architectural gem with glittering pillars and a floor to ceiling glass facade, is part of West Gateway.

Alan Burks, the DLBA boardmember representing the area, moved his firm Environ Architecture to the plaza of West Gateway’s 100 Oceangate tower in 2010. “We made the move because we were growing and had to find larger quarters,” he said. In that time, he has not seen much change in the area. “If anything, we have

The large structures encompassing three square blocks within this image comprise The Streets, a downtown shopping center that is currently undergoing a facelift. Its southernmost entrance at The Promenade North has been redesigned and re-opened with several new eateries. The center is a part of the Pine Avenue and Promenade district of downtown, as well the North Pine district. (Business Journal photograph by John Robinson)







Shoreline Village, a boardwalk with locally owned shops and restaurants, is one of two major retail zones within the downtown waterfront district. The other is The Pike Outlets, located across Shoreline Drive. (Business Journal photograph)

seen office buildings fill up and then empty out again,” he observed. However, he noted that new developments planned in the area – including a mixed-use development behind the World Trade Center building and an apartment building under construction behind the California Bank & Trust tower – should inject some new energy into the area. “It will certainly benefit the area. More people and more activity are always a good benefit,” he noted.

Burks described West Gateway as having a professional, “button-down shirt type” of vibe as the financial district of downtown. “It doesn’t have the youthful energy that Pine Avenue or the East Village has yet. We’re hoping that that will change,” he added.

Further inland, the downtown business area known as North Pine radiates outward from the stretch of Pine Avenue that runs northward from 4th Street to 10th Street, and eastward from Pacific Avenue to Long Beach Boulevard.

North Pine offers a host of options for apartment and condo living, including in historic buildings such as the Kress Lofts and the Walker Building. In the past few years, a resurgence of businesses has populated Pine Avenue in this district, primarily between 4th and 7th streets. The mix of businesses is eclectic: Long Beach Vintage Etc. (an antiques shop), DC Boxing, Toxic Toast Records, King Buffet and the Press-Telegram among them.

Laurie Gray, the DLBA boardmember representing the area, opened The Pie Bar at 450 Pine Ave. in 2016 and has since seen the area grow as a desirable place for businesses to locate. “I have seen a lot of positive changes and growth since we opened two and a half years ago,” she said. “We now have new neighbors like Plant Junkie, Envy Body Piercing, Romeo’s Chocolates, Pinot’s Palette, Long Beach Coffee and Tea, and Saints and Sinners Bake Shop. . . . It’s an affordable place to move, get involved with the community and start to build your business.”

Downtown’s largest neighborhood is the East Village Arts District. Named in part for an abundance of Art Deco architecture in the area, the East Village is an enclave of niche retailers, tattoo parlors, nightlife, bars, eateries, coffee shops and apartment buildings. True to its name, the area is a hub for artists – it is home to the nonprofit Arts Council for Long Beach, which supports Long Beach artists through grant programs, as well as LBMAX, an art center featuring a gallery and artist-in-residence program.

Walking through the streets of the East Village feels a bit like taking a step back in time to the origins of Long Beach, due to restored historic buildings such as the Lafayette apartment tower and the old brick Broadlind hotel. But blended with these time capsule-like structures are bright contemporary murals and a mix of businesses that represent Long Beach’s diversity and eclecticism.

Kerstin Kansteiner opened her thriving café, Berlin Bistro, in the East Village at 420 E. 4th St. in 2011. Already a business owner – Kansteiner also owns Portfolio Coffeehouse in the city’s Retro Row corridor – she decided to open the cafe when Rand Foster, owner of Fingerprints record store previously located in Belmont Shore, suggested they set up shop alongside one another.

“At the time I felt like downtown and the East Village was not quite ready. I didn’t see the foot traffic,” Kansteiner recalled. However, once she opened Berlin, she found that the neighborhood was much busier and safer than she once thought. Over the years, Kansteiner said she has seen a steady flow of new businesses open in the East Village. “If you come to town and you want to experience different cuisines, it’s all here,” Kansteiner said. “From vegan to Indian to Korean to burgers, beer, wine – there are a plethora of options. . . . Downtown has become more of a gourmet playground.”

Like other business owners in downtown, Kansteiner looks with optimism on the many residential developments planned and underway, including a Sares-Regis Group project under construction right next to Berlin. Although there are challenges for her business – homelessness remains a problem throughout downtown, for example – overall, she said the area is moving in a good direction. “I am looking really positively into 2019,” she said. ■





# Growth In Downtown Fosters Blossoming Quality Of Life

■ By **ALENA MASCHKE**  
STAFF WRITER

**T**he growth of Downtown Long Beach as a hub of residential life and commercial development has sparked a wave of new businesses, dining options and infrastructure upgrades, all benefiting quality of life.

“Downtown is becoming more livable, with diverse restaurants, retail, and thriving nightlife,” 2nd District Councilwoman Jeannine Pearce, who represents much of downtown, said in an e-mail. “We have tackled many challenges, with more work ahead.”

One example of the work ahead is the substantial renovation of the Metro Blue Line, which will update existing infrastructure and add new amenities, like interactive maps to help riders navigate the local transportation system. Additionally, the city is planning to double its bikeshare fleet, and might also expand its e-scooter pilot program.

Downtown residents are working to beautify their neighborhoods and add resources available to all. The Willmore City Heritage Association, for example, recently received a \$440,000 grant to upgrade the Willmore Heritage Garden near the 710 Freeway. The East Village Association continues to plant trees and pick up five to seven tons of trash during its bi-monthly neighborhood clean-ups, according to community organizer Anthony Formoso.

The downtown is currently undergoing a development boom, with thousands of new apartment units planned, a new civic center under construction, and multiple new hotels in the works. Among these developments is the interactive addition to the Aquarium of the Pacific, scheduled to open in spring of 2019. The \$453 million Pacific Visions project will include an interactive theater, a changing exhibit gallery with live animals, and an art gallery.

“With thousands of new residents coming to our downtown, we will see more retail growth and more pedestrians, which will be great for the cultural diversity,” Councilmember Pearce said. “These investments will completely change the quality of life for residents and businesses, increasing walkability, air quality, and ensuring economic vitality.” ■

## Downtown Dining Scene Experiences Influx Of Locals And Visitors

■ By **ALENA MASCHKE**  
STAFF WRITER

**D**owntown Long Beach dining is becoming increasingly diverse, as a mix of new restaurants and tried-and-true favorites draws in visitors and attracts new residents. Venues ranging from tablecloth restaurants to small cafes and casual eateries offer cuisine from every continent and cater to an eclectic palette, from classic Italian pasta to perfectly seared scallops.

With its sweeping view of the water, Parkers’ Lighthouse in the Shoreline Village area of Downtown Long Beach has long been a favored destination for visitors and Long Beach residents alike. A staple of the downtown dining scene, Parkers’ has been serving up fresh seafood and classic American fare for more than three decades. The restaurant is looking forward to its 35th anniversary in 2019.

“Overall it comes down to the quality of the service, the quality of the food, and the location is second to none,” David Maskello, general manager



Parkers’ Lighthouse has seen an influx of customers, influenced by the good weather of 2018, the work of the Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau, and the increased popularity of downtown, according to General Manager David Maskello. (Photograph by Jose Cordon, deadendbrigade.com)



Owner Carl Dene renamed Michael’s Pizzeria to be Michael’s Downtown: Italian Kitchen out of concerns that the “pizzeria” label carried the stigma of fast-food and failed to emphasize the high-quality ingredients and craftsmanship that go into every meal at his restaurant. Pictured from left: David Ginter, general manager; Carl Dene, owner; and Guiseppe Anzelmo, executive chef. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)

at Parkers’, told the Business Journal. The last year has been especially positive, he remarked, with more tourists coming in from cruise ships and conventions. “It has been a good year; we’ve seen a good influx of overall business,” Maskello said. “I think the [Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau] and the Chamber [of Commerce] have done a really good job of getting conventions and people into the town. I know we’ve benefited from it, I’m sure others have too.”

Terrence Antonelli, owner of another well-established dining institution in downtown, L’Opera Ristorante, also credited the convention and visitors bureau (CVB) and the convention center for the positive climate and steady influx



At his Crazy Creole Cafe, Chef Guy DuPlantier and his wife Aliza offer traditional creole food, complete with exotic meats like alligator, homemade boudin sausage and turtle. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)

of customers to the downtown dining scene. “They are very aggressive in the marketplace,” Antonelli, who sits on the CVB’s board of directors, told the Journal. “The convention business is a major factor in the longevity of our restaurant, and I believe the convention center’s leadership is extraordinary.”

Antonelli said his restaurant, which has



been serving Italian fare on Pine Avenue for 29 years, has benefited from the increasing number of experienced business owners who have invested in downtown in recent years. “For many years, we had people who didn’t have their finances set forth or their business plan set forth, and they were floundering,” Antonelli said. “That seems to have matured to a point where we have a lot of good operators on the street and a lot of varied cuisines.”

When it comes to Italian cuisine, downtown offers a variety of options. Carl Dene, owner of Michael’s Downtown: Italian Kitchen, said he aims to serve fine-dining quality dishes in a cozy and relaxed atmosphere. The handcrafted menu and carefully picked ingredients are a reflection of food he grew up with at home, the born-and-bred New Yorker explained.

“Growing up in New York, we didn't go to Italian restaurants, we had it at home,” Dene said. “In Italian culture, food is family.” Dene, whose family owns the critically acclaimed Michael’s on Naples Ristorante, said his establishment and the other businesses on downtown’s Promenade were trailblazers. “We wanted to get in when we did because we’d never get that opportunity again,” Dene, who opened his downtown location over five years ago, said. “Right now is the most exciting time it’s been for us down here.”

It has also been an exciting few months for Husam “Sam” Habibeh and his wife Dima Habibeh. The couple opened their restaurant, Ammatoli, at the end of July, and said they’ve had a very positive experience so far. “The response from the community was amazing,” Sam Habibeh said about their first months in downtown just north of The Promenade. “Everybody was in here.”

Like Dene, the Habibehs aimed to create a family atmosphere. “My wife is the main chef, so all of these recipes are hers,” Habibeh said about their menu, which features elements from a culturally rich Levantine area that includes Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Israel. “We wanted to make sure that it feels homey, like you’re sitting at home and you’re having nice and warm comfort food.” At night, the casual dining spot turns into a more traditional restaurant, with table and wine service. “We wanted an area where you had a business lunch and a nightlife, so Long Beach was the ideal location for that,” Habibeh said. “It’s attractive to those who want to live the city life.”

New residential projects have already contributed to an exceptionally good year for Utopia Good Food and Fine Art in the East Village. “It’s been a good year for us. I haven’t crunched the numbers, but it’s been actually a good year,” the restaurant’s owner, Kamran Assadi, told the Business Journal. He estimated a 10% increase in revenue at his restaurant in 2018. “The new demographic helps,” Assadi said. “Downtown is changing dramatically.” His restaurant, which offers “California cuisine” with a diverse menu that includes salads, seafood and Italian-inspired dishes, relies on a mixed customer base of residents and visitors.

“We are a neighborhood restaurant, but conventions definitely help,” Assadi said. The restaurateur said he is optimistic about the future, but the growing popularity of downtown also comes with challenges. “It gives people more choices and it makes the business a lot more competitive,” Assadi said. Additionally, he’s worried about the current lack of parking in his area. “It will become a deciding factor. Not having parking is somewhat problematic,” he said.

Parking is already a major issue for Guy DuPlantier, whose Crazy Creole Cafe serves up authentic Creole food off of Long Beach Boulevard and 9th Street. “If we had parking, this would be a goldmine,” DuPlantier said. Still, after starting his business from a lunch truck, DuPlantier said he’s grateful for the space he’s got.

“The lunch truck was difficult. That was a hard, hard road,” DuPlantier said, referring to how his business got its start. “We're blessed to have a place.” Together with his wife Aliza, DuPlantier prepares traditional Creole dishes using ingredients he imports from his ancestral home state of Louisiana, down to the Blue Plate Mayonnaise. “I try to bring in all authentic products, if possible. We ship in live crawfish during the season,” he said. “Where can you get live crawfish delivered to your house or boiled crawfish delivered to your house, that was just swimming in a swamp two days ago?” Delivery is what has kept the Crazy Creole Cafe afloat, its owner said. “We have to fight to stay in business. It's a battle every day.”

The Potholder Cafe Too is also facing some tough times. Temporary as it may be, massive construction going up around its West Gateway location has made it challenging for customers to access the lunch and brunch-focused cafe. “They are moving quick, but there's just so much to do,” Kevin Pittsey, the restaurant’s owner, said. He estimated that revenues have been down 20% since the construction started.

“You close all the streets around us, you’re blocking our driveway with a tractor [and] we're basically closed. Who’s going to make up for that?” Pittsey asked. “The bills don’t change.” Pittsey said he’d appreciate a little bit more communication from everyone involved in the construction, maybe even some consideration for his busiest hours. “Who wants to sit on our beautiful patio drinking mimosas with a jackhammer right on the sidewalk?” he asked.

Looking towards the future, Pittsey is still hopeful that once the construction is done, more people will come to the cafe to enjoy a hearty plate of country-fried steak, syrup-dripping French toast or a sparkly mimosa. “It’s going to look nice, there’s no doubt about it,” Pittsey said. “Once everything is finished and opened up, we might be up 20%.” ■



Co-owners Tom West and Shannon Francis are pictured inside Long Beach Coffee and Tea, which they opened at 480 Pine Ave. about four months ago. A customer enjoying a cup of coffee said she visited the shop when it first opened and has been coming in ever since. The shop offers espresso and craft coffee, teas and specialty drinks. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Annette Semerdjian)

# Where To Go Downtown For A Cup Of Joe

A place to meet friends, catch up on studying and make part of an everyday routine, a coffeehouse offers more than just a morning cup of Joe. Located throughout Downtown Long Beach, a busy district full of nonprofit organizations, businesses and residences, coffeeshops provide a chance to take a break from the hustle and bustle of urban life.

The Business Journal, in collaboration with the Downtown Long Beach Alliance, compiled a list that showcases the area’s coffee scene. Ranging from espresso to boba tea, downtown cafes carry a variety of coffee and tea favorites for business people on the go, out-of-town visitors and local coffee lovers.

## Long Beach Coffee and Tea

480 Pine Ave.  
562/619-8299  
longbeachcoffeeandtea.com

## Loose Leaf Boba Co.

315 The Promenade N.  
562/435-1559  
bobacompany.com

## Recreational Coffee

237 Long Beach Blvd., Suite A  
562/436-4954  
recreational.coffee

## Saints & Sinners Bakeshop

595 Pine Ave.  
562/676-4090  
saintsandsinnersbakeshop.com

## Starbucks @ Gallery 421

421 W. Broadway #800  
562/495-9527

## Starbucks @ Renaissance Hotel

111 E. Ocean Blvd.  
562/437-5900  
starbucks.com

## Starbucks @ The Current

707 E. Ocean Blvd., B  
562/335-1122  
starbucks.com

## Starbucks @ The Pike

11 The Paseo #430  
562/233-4674  
starbucks.com

## Starbucks on Long Beach Blvd.

500 Long Beach Blvd .  
562/590-5996  
starbucks.com

## Starbucks on Pine Ave.

242 Pine Ave.  
562/436-6883  
starbucks.com

## The Village Grind

443 E. 1st St.  
562/432-4033  
thevillagegrind.us

## Twisters & Coffee

419 Shoreline Village Dr., Suite M  
562/495-1060  
shorelinevillage.com

## Aroma di Roma

444 W. Ocean Blvd. #110  
562/432-7662  
aromadiroma.com

## Berlin Bistro

420 E. 4th St.  
562/435-0600  
berlinbistro.com

## Birdcage Coffee House

224 W. 4th St  
562/628-9835  
the-birdcage-coffee-house.local-cafes.com

## Café 301

301 E. Ocean Blvd.  
562/256-7557  
cafe-301.cafes-city.com

## Café Cabinet

250 W. Ocean Blvd., B2  
562/337-8585  
cafecabinet.com

## Confidential Coffee

137 W. 6th St., Suite 101  
562/349-0271  
confidentialcoffee.com

## Cuppa Cuppa

455 E. Ocean Blvd.  
562/528-8920  
cuppacuppa.com

## Doly’s Delectables

245 E. Broadway  
562/435-9400  
dolysdelectables.com



# Bar Owners Embrace Growing Nightlife Scene in DTLB

■ By **ALENA MASCHKE**  
STAFF WRITER

The past year has been a busy one for the downtown nightlife scene. With a number of new locations opening their doors on The Promenade and Pine Ave, options for drinking, dancing and escaping the troubles of everyday life are increasing steadily.



Above: Co-owners Eric Johnson, left, and Christy Caldwell recently opened The Ordinarie, a modern take on the traditional American tavern, which will offer live entertainment, craft cocktails and weekend brunch.



Left: Chris Krajacic, owner of Pier 76 restaurant, is pictured inside The Harbor, his newest endeavor. To restore the building's historical charm, Krajacic removed panels that had covered the room's brick walls and resurfaced the original pink marble floor, a relic from the building's history as the former home of the Seaside Bank.

Below: Sean Flynn, general manager of Shannon's on Pine, is pictured in front of the basement space that will soon become the home of Long Beach's latest speakeasy-style bar, hidden behind the studio of Long Beach Public Radio, a new public radio station. (Photographs by the Business Journal's Brandon Richardson)



Ron Hodges, owner of Shannon's on Pine, is one of many well-established business owners expanding their properties downtown. After purchasing the building that hosts Shannon's on the corner of Pine and Broadway in 2016, Hodges is in the process of opening a new restaurant and building a speakeasy-style bar within the same property.

Shannon's general manager, Sean Flynn, said he's excited about the new businesses cropping up around their multi-venue complex. "This is what Long Beach is all about: having a good time, being safe, having fun and being able to enjoy yourself no matter what day of the week it is," Flynn said. "Our objective is to always have something going on."

As the downtown nightlife scene continues to grow, the Shannon's team is making moves towards shaping the scene in the form of a new business alliance, the Downtown Entertainment District Association. "The association itself is just [a way] to organize and put a singular set of goals together, so that we can all benefit. If our neighbors do well, then we're going to do well," Flynn said. "We want to help control what's coming down here and help drive people down here."

Across the street, another established player in the downtown entertainment scene is expanding his reach. Chris Krajacic, owner of the Pier 76 Fish Grill, recently opened his newest venture, a spacious bar called The Harbor. With skee ball, darts and a pool table, The Harbor offers plenty of activities to keep guests entertained. "We wanted to create an environment that was a real, true, social gathering," Krajacic explained. The name is a nod to a hobby he shares with his brother, who co-owns the bar. The two brothers enjoy sailing and have often embarked on long trips together. "A harbor is a place that you always return to," Krajacic said. "You roll in, and the first thing you want to do is go get a beer."

As an entrepreneur, Krajacic has found his own haven in downtown. "There's not this huge competition down here, it's more of a collaborative business environment," he said. "If you are somebody looking to open up a business, it's a very supportive community."

Eric Johnson, owner of several ventures across the city, also added a new location to his portfolio. The Ordinarie, a take on the traditional American tavern with a modern twist, recently filled the space that once hosted the Blue Cafe on The Promenade. The concept of the bar was the brainchild of Johnson's long-time staffer and Ordinarie co-owner Christy Caldwell.

"I've been living in the states for 20 years, and I've always enjoyed and loved going to old school American taverns," Caldwell, who immigrated to the U.S. from Ireland more than 20 years ago, told the Business Journal. Eric Johnson, Caldwell's former boss at the Auld Dubliner, was convinced, but wanted to wait for the right time to expand in downtown. "Downtown can have a very strong daytime population, but at nighttime it was lacking," Johnson said. "Over the last four years, the last six years, that's changed dramatically." When he heard about a new student housing project that the California State University, Long Beach was working on, he thought it was finally the right time to make a move. "That really signaled to us that downtown was ready," Johnson said.

New residential developments have been a beacon of hope for some of downtown's nightlife staples. "Business has been good," Jeff Osborn, general manager at The Federal Bar, wrote in an e-mail. In addition to The Federal's main restaurant and the live music club, The Federal Underground, the venue offers guests a speakeasy-style experience at The Parlour, where guests can enjoy craft cocktails prepared by experienced mixologists after requesting a password to enter through the company's website.

"We're looking forward to 2019 [and] 2020 when the new high-density apartment buildings and condos begin to open and fill up with new residents," Osborn said. Eventually, Osborn said he's hoping "for more residents and businesses to open and for downtown to become a destination spot similar to the Gas Lamp [Quarter] in San Diego."

Next door, at the Sevilla Cafe and Nightclub, Director of Marketing Holly Losey expressed an equally positive outlook on the future of downtown nightlife. The chain of clubs and cafes has locations in San Diego, Riverside and Downtown Long Beach, where they've been in business for more than 10 years. "Long Beach is very unique in that it caters to both locals and tourists alike," Losey pointed out. At the Sevilla Café, guests can enjoy tapas and live performances every day of the week, while the adjacent nightclub offers theme nights focused around Latin music, from banda to reggaetón. "Our business has been doing really well, both with the restaurant and the nightclub, and we love to see downtown growing with us," Losey said. ■





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The Metro Blue Line will be partially suspended from January to September of 2019, due to a renovation project that will take place in two phases, covering the entirety of the Metro system's oldest light rail line. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Brandon Richardson)



# DTLB Is Growing And So Are Its Transit Options

■ By **ALENA MASCHKE**  
STAFF WRITER

As Downtown Long Beach continues to grow, new residents and visitors are likely to put a strain on existing facilities and transportation systems, from parking structures to bus lines. To accommodate the increasing number of people who come to live, shop and work in downtown, local and regional agencies are working to improve existing

infrastructure and add new options to the transit network, starting with the modernization of the Metro Blue Line.

The \$350 million project will replace 22 miles of overhead power lines spanning the entire light rail line, as well as upgrade existing signals and crossover tracks to prevent stalled trains from interrupting regular service. Additionally, the New Blue Improvement Project, as the modernization was coined by Metro, will add interactive map screens and new signage to all stations. “It’s the busiest line of the entire system and Metro is widely used in Long Beach,” Mayor Robert Garcia, who sits on the Metro board and has spearheaded the project, told the Business Journal. “We want people to take the Metro, but in order for people to do it, it’s got to be safe, it’s got to be clean and it’s got to run efficiently.”

The system’s oldest line is in need of upgrades to ensure safety and com-

After quarrels with the previous operator of its bike-share program, the City of Long Beach is currently in negotiations with a new company that will operate and maintain the city’s fleet of bikes. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Annette Semerdjian)





fort for its passengers. “The Blue Line is going to be 29 years old next year. As a result of that, there are many upgrades, repairs and modernization projects that we need to conduct in order to bring it up to the same level and standards as our other rail lines,” Ayda Safaei, Metro’s community relations manager, told the Business Journal. “The main goal is to enhance safety, increase reliability and improve the customer experience.”

Once the southern part of the line shuts down on January 26, commuters and local riders will have three alternative shuttle bus options offered by Metro, in addition to existing local transit offerings. The free Blue Line Local Shuttle will service all closed stations during regular hours of operation; the Blue Line Select Shuttle will serve all closed stations during the first closure phase and select high ridership stations during the second phase; and the Blue Line Express Shuttle will take commuters directly from Downtown L.A. to Downtown Long Beach. The first phase of the project, which will result in a suspension of service south of the Willowbrook/Rosa Parks Station, is expected to last from January to May 2019. The second phase will result in a service suspension of the line’s northern portion from May to September.

“There’s no question that it’s going to be disruptive for a lot of people,” Garcia said. “However, I hope that we can all focus on the light at the end of the tunnel and know that when the project is complete, it’s going to be a much better riding experience for everyone.”

In the meantime, there are local alternatives, such as bus lines operated by Long Beach Transit (LBT). The transit agency’s public information officer, Michael Gold, said LBT is prepared for a potential increase in ridership during the Blue Line shutdown. “People may be using Long Beach Transit a little bit more, so we’re going to make sure we have strong and frequent connections,” Gold said. In addition, the transit provider is currently reviewing its own system in a quest to improve overall operations, with plans to implement the study’s recommendations starting next year.

Changes are likely to include improved connectivity between job centers and the Metro rail, as well as an expansion of late night and weekend services. Especially as downtown’s nightlife and dining scenes gain more traction among Long Beach residents, alternatives to driving are in increasing demand. “That’s what people have been asking for with downtown being such a destination,” Gold said.

One change already underway is the company’s transition to a more environmentally-friendly bus fleet. LBT’s free downtown shuttle, The Passport, is entirely powered by electricity. A new stop on Pine Avenue in front of the convention center was recently dedicated as a charging station for the shuttle buses. “We’re utilizing that to test out how we can extend the range of those battery-electric buses so we can serve other parts of the city,” Gold said. The transit company plans to switch its entire fleet to alternative fueling options, such as natural gas, hybrid or electric buses, by 2020. “Our long-term goal is to be all electric,” Gold added.

LBT riders should expect another significant change in 2019: mobile ticketing. The bus operator plans to add a mobile ticketing option, putting it ahead of Metro, which still requires passengers to pay through prepaid Transit Access Pass cards or exact cash. “We’re trying to stay ahead of the game,” Gold said.

For short distances, visitors and residents of Downtown Long Beach have the option of using the city’s bike share program or the new fleet of electric scooters offered by a number of independent providers. The e-scooters, which were introduced through a pilot program in August, are currently available in three operational areas covering most of the city, including downtown. Michelle Mowery, mobility and healthy living programs officer at the city’s public works department, said the city took a proactive approach on the issue.

“The scooters in Santa Monica’s and San Francisco’s cases were dumped on the city. We worked very specifically to develop a pilot program in that we put together guidelines and invited the vendors to come talk to us,” Mowery said. “We haven’t had some of the difficulties that were incurred by those other agencies because of that.” In other cities, the introduction of e-scooters was met with concerns and protests, as residents perceived them as a threat to pedestrian safety and an obstruction on public sidewalks.

Currently, there are six e-scooter companies operating in the City of Long Beach, two of which – Bird and Lime – chose to expand their fleets when the city extended the opportunity to all providers in October. The maximum number was initially set at 150 scooters per provider, with the option to double the fleet size after the program’s first month. These figures still constitute a small fleet compared to other cities, Mowery said, but her department aims to collect more feedback and data before allowing the program to expand further. The department will present the results of these efforts to the city council at the end of January.

“Some people love it and adore it, and they’re begging for more scooters. And some hate it,” Mowery said, adding that attitudes towards scooters appear to differ based on location. “I think the overall program has been more warmly received in downtown.” The city’s bike share program received more universal appeal, Mowery said. “They are well-loved,” she said.

“Even the people who don’t like the scooters really like the bikes.” The city is planning to add 500 to 600 new bikes to its existing fleet of 400 in 2019. ■



In the pilot phase of its e-scooter program, Long Beach’s established “drop-off” zones where scooters have to be placed every morning by the contractors who charge them overnight. The program has garnered interest from other cities struggling to manage the increasingly controversial transportation devices.(Photograph by the Business Journal’s Annette Semerdjian)



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# Improving The Neighborhood – One Plant, Meal Or Book At A Time

■ By **ALENA MASCHKE**  
STAFF WRITER

**W**alking through the Children’s Gateway Garden in Cesar Chavez Park, one can hear the pitter-patter of small sneakers on the nearby playground, children’s laughter wafting over from the Jenny Oropeza



In addition to the Children’s Gateway Garden at Cesar Chavez park, Willmore City Heritage Association’s President Kathleen Irving helped expand and upgrade the amphitheater at Jenny Oropeza Community Center, where families can host events like Quinceañeras and attend a summer program full of theatrical and musical performances. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Annette Semerdjian)

Community Center and the chirping of birds in the tree crowns above. In the raised garden beds, purple eggplants the size of light bulbs sit next to bright orange pumpkin flowers and deep green chard sprouts.

The community garden was the brainchild of Kathleen Irving, a professional landscaper, president of the Willmore City Heritage Association and one of a number of community members who have taken action to improve their downtown neighborhoods. Determined to create what she called a ‘true’ community garden – no fees, no gates – Irving designed a space for local residents to grow fresh produce at their leisure. “Having been a landscaper, I really was sensitive to what is necessary to make something really easy to maintain and for people to use,” Irving explained.



Julie Lie, new executive director of Urban Community Outreach, a nonprofit serving the homeless in downtown, also sits on the mayor’s Homeless Services Advisory Committee, where she hopes to learn more about the city’s approach to resolving homelessness. (Photo by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)

When Irving moved to Long Beach from Los Angeles, she immediately fell in love with the Willmore area because of its proximity to downtown, the easy freeway access and the community’s diversity. Still, as she settled into the neighborhood, which is located on the eastern side of the Los Angeles River, she began to notice the barriers some of her neighbors were facing, including a lack of access to fresh produce. “There aren’t any immediately accessible places for fresh fruits and vegetables,” Irving said. The idea for a community garden was born, not only as a source of fresh produce, but also as a meeting point. “When we put the community garden in, the idea was to get people more involved and to try to bring [together] a cross-section of the different kinds of people who live here,” she explained.

To ensure that the garden could be used by all members of the community, Irving approached its design with accessibility in mind. The garden is equipped with drip irrigation systems to provide for easier maintenance, and the raised beds make plants accessible to children, elderly residents and wheelchair-bound gardeners alike. The fruit trees planted on the edges of the garden are “dwarf” trees, which makes it easier for people of all heights to reach the fruit they bear. Even the walkways between beds are plastered with concrete to create an easy surface for anyone to walk on. “Anybody can walk on it, whether you have high heels or a walker,” Irving said.

As downtown continues to grow and neighborhood resources improve, however, Irving has started to notice a worrying trend: gentrification. “It’s a big concern for us, because a lot of our neighbors are being evicted because of rising rents,” Irving said. “We don’t want to lose our neighbors, we don’t want this to become an exclusive, very expensive area.” Irving said that if gentrification can’t be stopped, she wants to help provide more resources to help her neighbors, and especially children in Willmore, succeed in their changing environment. “If there is gentrification, I want them to be a part of it, not a victim of it,” Irving said.

The increased cost of housing in California has also been credited as a main factor driving the state’s homelessness crisis. In Downtown Long Beach, real estate development is pushing more of the city’s homeless residents onto sidewalks and into the public eye. When the construction of the new civic center shut down Lincoln Park in 2016, Belmont Shore resident Julie Lie noticed that people who had previously congregated at the park began dispersing throughout downtown. Lie, now the new executive director of the Urban Outreach Center, decided it was time to take action.

“As a problem solver I just couldn’t understand why homelessness was becoming a bigger problem instead of a smaller problem,” Lie, who has a background in civil engineering, said. She set out to better understand the factors that could cause a person to become homeless and the system in place to help them out of it. After two years of volunteering at the Urban Outreach Center, a nonprofit set up to provide food, clothing and social services to the homeless in downtown, Lie became the organization’s executive director. But many of her questions remained.

“It doesn’t make sense why we have such a vibrant, wonderful, resourceful city of 480,000 people and we have – they keep telling me it’s less than 2,000 – people who are homeless and we can’t seem to accommodate them,” she said. But instead of mulling over the various factors that contribute to the state’s homelessness crisis, Lie decided to focus on the individual clients she and her team of volunteers could provide assistance to every week. “Complaining about it doesn’t get us any closer to fixing it,” Lie said. “Every day, the staff and I, we just try to meet our milestones and get people closer to where they need to be.”

The center, which is hosted at the city’s historic First Congressional Church every Sunday afternoon from 12:30-4 p.m., was founded in 2010 by Janet Rhodes, a member of the congregation. “At that time, there were not as many services and public spaces available,” Elena Larssen, the church’s senior minister, remembered. “The program is designed to help hungry people in the mo-



ment, on that weekend day,” she explained. “The meal allows for people to create a relationship with the volunteers or with a social worker and create a pathway, perhaps, out of homelessness.”

By providing a space for homeless clients to connect with services or just take care of basic needs like food and clothing, a place to charge their phone or to access the Internet, Lie hopes to meet her clients where they are. “Sometimes they just need a hand because they’ve been so shut out of our sense of normalcy that they just lose confidence,” she explained. Lie also hopes that her organization’s weekly service hours can serve as a meeting space for Long Beach residents with and without a home. “I do need people to understand the individual nature of each person,” Lie said. “I think the biggest challenge is to stop thinking of them as ‘them’. They’re one of us, they’re not ‘them.’”

A few blocks to the east, a new generation of neighborhood organizers is getting engaged in improving their community, and East Village resident Anthony Formoso is one of them. A graduate of Long Beach Development Services’ Neighborhood Leadership Program, Formoso has helped organize neighborhood cleanups and plant trees. Most recently, he set up a program of small street libraries, commonly known as “little libraries,” across Long Beach. “I feel very passionately about neighborhood associations being the voice of the community,” Formoso said. “We all have the power to make a difference.”

A native of Stockton, California, Formoso came to Long Beach as a new student at its California State University campus in 2004. After graduation, he decided to put



Anthony Formoso is pictured with his dog Brad in front of the first installment of his Little Free Libraries project, which will bring small, stocked libraries to six locations across Long Beach. (Photo by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)

down roots in the city. “I love the diversity and that it’s a strong, grass-roots community,” Formoso explained of his love for Long Beach. With his library project, for which he received \$10,000 in private donations matched by a \$10,000 grant from the city, Formoso hopes to inspire others to get involved and help foster a sense of community. “You’re not obligated to give a book or take a book, so it’s just learning how to share and give, and not expect,” Formoso said. “I don’t know. I guess my goal is just to spark and influence other people to do stuff.” ■



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Hip-Hop duo Method Man & Redman perform at the Queen Mary during the Summertime in the LBC music festival on July 7, 2018. (Photograph by Jesse Gassaway)

## Music Festival Scene Continues To Expand In Downtown Long Beach

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**  
SENIOR WRITER

**T**hrough the years, Downtown Long Beach has woven in and out of the Southern California music scene. Venues focusing on live music are sparse, and some, such as the former Vault 350, shut down. Others had a hard time bringing in acts and attendees, forcing them to focus on other forms of entertainment, such as burlesque shows in the case of Harvelle's. But despite such ups and downs, outdoor festivals and events have brought music to the streets of downtown for years.

"Music is an international language. Music provides an opportunity for people to come together. It's a connector of culture, a connector of genres,

a connector of people," Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) President and CEO Kraig Kojian said. "Music is a factor that most people can relate to. And when you do that for a downtown, I believe it really solidifies its soul and certainly speaks to people coming together and appreciating the art of music."

In the spirit of bringing music to the people, the DLBA hosts or sponsors a number of events throughout the year. The organization's Live After 5 event occurs on the third Thursday of every month, with free street performances at rotating locations to help promote surrounding downtown businesses. Another long-running DLBA event is its New Year's Eve celebration. In years past, multiple blocks of Pine Avenue were shut down to allow for a large-scale concert production. Now, the event has moved to the waterfront for a more family-friendly atmosphere; however, Kojian said music is still a key element.

Kojian noted the positive impact numerous music festivals have had in the downtown. While residents of Long Beach and surrounding areas have long enjoyed events such as the annual jazz and folk festivals, Summer and Music (SAM), a series of events sponsored by the DLBA, has acted as a catalyst to bring younger musicians to the downtown area to attract a younger audience.

"This past year was our 10-year anniversary. It was maybe one of the best we've ever done," SAM Co-Founder and Organizer Rand Foster said. "With the DLBA's encouragement, we really swung for the fences [and] picked lineups that were incredibly strong, and people responded."

SAM events include FKA720, which pairs music with skateboarding, the carnival-centric Twisted At The Pike, and Buskerfest. Music producer and artist Dâm-Funk headlined this year's FKA720, while Los Angeles-based Fartbarf and L.A. Witch, and Long Beach band Shave headlined Twisted.

Taking place in the East Village Arts District of downtown, Buskerfest is a battle-of-the-bands-like event for local groups to showcase their music, with attendees ultimately deciding which performance is best. Each guest is given several wooden chips to award to the groups they like best. The group with the most chips at the end of the night wins. The event also features headlining bands at the end of the night, such as The Blasters and Mike Watt & The Secondmen. This year, Buskerfest drew in between 4,000 and 5,000 people, according to Foster.

"From the beginning, we wanted to focus on local talent as much as possible, which I think we've been very successful with. We've entered an era where Goldenvoice is coming to town and doing . . . big festivals," Foster said. "On the one hand, it's great because we set out . . . to

Rapper Lil B performs during the Music Tastes Good festival on September 29, 2018. (Photograph by Mathew Tucciarone)





demonstrate that there was a supportive community that lobbied for music. But some of the bigger festivals we're getting, the community isn't part of it. One of my favorite things about SAM is . . . it is a community building exercise and it does make people feel proud of Long Beach."

This year, music festival creator and operator Goldenvoice (organizer of Coachella and Stagecoach) partnered with Queen Mary master lease holder Urban Commons (UC) to bring a steady stream of largescale music festivals to Long Beach, including One Love, Tropicalia and Summertime In The LBC. According to UC Chief Development Officer Dan Zaharoni, Goldenvoice put on five festivals totaling about 10 concert days this year. For the 2019 festival season, Zaharoni said UC is working with Goldenvoice to increase to as many as 20 festival days.

"We average around 15,000 people per day. That would be 300,000 people that came to Long Beach and had a great time. Instead of thinking about Long Beach as a place they don't know about, it's a place they've gone to party," Zaharoni said. "They've maybe come to the Queen Mary for the first time and discovered this historic icon sitting right in their backyard. Also, those people are eating at the restaurants across the bay and staying at the hotels."

The homegrown Music Tastes Good (MTG) festival celebrated its third year in 2018, which was its smoothest running to date, according to talent buyer Jon Halperin. The festival combines music with food, featuring numerous local and imported chefs. A record-setting 7,500 people watched long-time English rock band New Order perform Saturday night, Halperin said. The previous two years, Halperin explained that the festival did not spring for such a notable headliner, instead relying on several smaller acts to draw crowds. "Just seeing how well New Order did this year for us was a huge indication of what having a huge headliner that a wide variety of people love can do," he said.

While MTG affords an opportunity for local musicians to perform, Halperin said organizers spend as much time curating the food as they do music. The food element and the local emphasis on music and community are what sets MTG apart from other festivals, he added. The 2019 budget has not been set, but Halperin expects the festival to continue gaining notoriety within the music and culinary industries.

Being centrally located between Los Angeles and Orange County is detrimental to Long Beach's music scene, Halperin said. Due to radius clauses in contracts, bands and artists are not allowed to perform within about 30 miles of a previous or forthcoming show for a certain amount of time. So, if a national tour has a stop in L.A. or Orange County, contractually it cannot come to Long Beach. However, festivals have succeeded in bringing national acts back to Long Beach, Halperin explained.

While there are not many music venues in the downtown, several continue to operate with varying success. The Federal Underground, located beneath the Federal Bar on Pine Avenue, continues to host live music performances. However, General Manager Jeff Osborn said events are hit or miss. Reggae continues to do well for the venue, he added.

Fingerprints, a record store in the East Village Arts District owned by Foster, hosts 50 to 60 live performances every year, with a capacity of about 250 people. The Foo Fighters, Thrice, Chris Carrabba of Dashboard Confessional, This Wild Life, Matt Costa, Anti-Flag, Prophets of Rage and John Rzeznik of the Goo Goo Dolls are a few among many who have performed in the store since it opened at its original location in Belmont Shore nearly 27 years ago.

One year ago, Andy George, owner of Toxic Toast Records on North Pine, opened up the storefront beside his shop as the Toxic Toast Theatre. The first show featured AJJ (formally Andrew Jackson Jihad) and, with 350 in attendance, sold out. Throughout 2018, George said the venue hosted between 20 and 30 shows. One issue George is facing is getting his venue on the music industry radar as a viable option for booking shows, he explained.

"Music is my life. I grew up in the punk and ska scene in the '90s in Orange County, and there just wasn't a lot of all-ages spaces that had music," George said. "I'm just trying to provide a space for young people to be able to experience music without the stress of alcohol or anything like that."

The future of Toxic Toast Theatre is currently up in the air due to a lack of support from the city, George explained. He said he has been battling for almost three years to obtain a long-term entertainment permit. According to George, the city is citing a lack of parking



Carla Morrison performs at Fingerprints record store in the East Village Arts District prior to her appearance at the 2018 Latin Grammy Awards. (Photograph courtesy of Fingerprints owner Rand Foster)

as the reason for not issuing the permit; however, parking has not been a notable issue for any of the shows, he added. Despite this hurdle, George said he hopes to continue operating the space with shows as frequently as possible. He is kicking off the new year hosting ska veterans Suburban Legends on January 4.

"It's a space for people to express themselves artistically and emotionally. A way for people to escape," George said. "It's just a way to experience something fun and artistic, and communicate with other people through music." ■

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# Arts Scene Continues To Grow In Downtown

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**  
EDITOR

**W**hether looking to see a professional theatrical or musical performance, catch an act by a well-known comedian, or take in stunning works of visual artistry, Downtown Long Beach has it all. From community arts groups to professional theater companies, small art galleries to internationally renowned murals, there is no shortage of options for soaking in some culture in the city’s downtown.

One of the newest groups on the scene in the arts community is the Long Beach Landmark Theatre Company, a theater organization that grew out of

the historic First Congregational Church at 241 Cedar Ave. Executive Director Mark Wheeler said the organization officially debuted in 2017 and has since produced two musicals per year. The organization is adding a third annual performance to its seasons.

Wheeler and Artistic Director Megan O’Toole first came up with the idea for the new theater company when they realized how many of their fellow churchgoers were talented performers. “We started doing a couple things, and it quickly evolved into a desire to do more, growing into more of an outside entity,” Wheeler said, explaining that the organization operates under the umbrella of the church’s nonprofit entity. “We still have ties to the church, and we do performances there, but it’s a freestanding entity now.”

Landmark publicizes auditions in the theatrical industry publication Backstage West, opening them up to artists well beyond Long Beach’s borders. While actors are unpaid volunteers, Wheeler and O’Toole hope to be able to pay them through grants and donations in the future. Musical performances do include a paid professional orchestra, as well as professional lighting and sound. “We go big. We always have a live orchestra,” O’Toole said, noting that the historic church venue makes for a beautiful backdrop.

One of the longest-running theatrical companies operating in Downtown Long Beach is International City Theatre (ICT), which calls the Beverly O’Neill Theater at the Long Beach Performing Arts Center home. When ICT moved downtown in 1996, the Beverly O’Neill Theater – then called the Center Theater – had been underutilized for many years, according to ICT Artistic Director/Producer caryn desai.

“I have to believe ICT’s success in the space attracted other groups who are now utilizing the space on a regular basis,” she said. “With the [Long Beach] Opera, Musica Angelica, Camerata [Singers] and Musical Theatre West, along with ICT, the Performing Arts Center lives up to its name. There is great synergy and community participation in our beautiful theaters.” The groups desai named committed to annually producing multiple productions at the theater starting in 2016.

“International City Theatre has built a reputation for producing quality theatre that includes musicals, comedies, classics and dramas,” desai said. “More than half the works produced over 33 years have been premieres. There is something for everyone.”

For those seeking smaller productions, 66-seat The Found Theatre at 599 Long Beach Blvd. in The Streets shopping center produces multiple original plays each year. The nearby Garage Theatre, located at 251 E. 7th St., is also known for showcasing original and alternative theatrical productions.

The Long Beach Performing Arts Center, which includes the Terrace Theater, is part of the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center complex. Located on Ocean Boulevard and the end of Long Beach Boulevard, the Terrace is host to a variety of entertainment throughout the year, including performances by local professional groups such as the Long Beach Symphony and Long Beach Ballet.

John Braun, assistant general manager of the convention center, noted that the theater is quite popular among comedians. “It goes way back to when Richard Pryor had first [performed there] in ’78,” he said. “And it’s a good venue. It’s 3,000 seats, so it’s kind of a sweet spot for comedians.” In 2019, comedians scheduled at the Terrace thus far include Tom Segura on February 7 and Jim Gaffigan on May 19. Braun also expects Sebastian Maniscalco to return to the venue sometime next year.



An exhibition at LBMAx in the East Village Arts District earlier this year, “Art in a New Place,” included a performance by California State University, Long Beach’s contemporary dance troupe. Art work was curated by LBMAx Executive Director Ron Nelson. The exhibition was a collaboration with the Venice Institute of Contemporary Art and featured 39 selected works by internationally known artists from Long Beach, San Pedro and the Greater Southern California. (Photograph courtesy of LBMAx)



Since first gracing the streets of Long Beach nearly five years ago, POW!WOW! has brought local and international artists to the city annually to beautify buildings and walls. This mural by artist Leon Keer is found on Broadway between Pacific and Pine avenues. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)



But the Terrace isn't just for comedians. On the books next year is the popular scientist Neil DeGrasse Tyson on March 25. Traveling performing arts and cultural groups regularly perform at the center, including the Chinese cultural group Shen Yun, Dancing With The Stars, Disney on Ice and others. And before the end of 2018, Long Beach Ballet will yet again delight audiences with its annual production of holiday favorite, The Nutcracker.

The visual arts are thriving in downtown, primarily concentrated in the aptly named East Village Arts District. The neighborhood features a number of independent galleries, one of the newest being C Gallery at 441 E. Broadway. The area is known for artist lofts, its monthly second Saturday Art Walks, and an eclectic mix of retailers, some of which sell wares by local artisans.

The East Village Arts District is home to two major arts organizations. The Arts Council for Long Beach, a nonprofit funded with support from the city, has its offices in the East Village. The organization serves the local arts community by providing grants to individual artists and to organizations. It also runs arts education programs and supports public art.

Nearby, LBMAx – formerly known as the Art Exchange – houses artists in residence, operates a gallery showcasing local living artists and provides arts education programs. LBMAx is a series of four connected historic buildings at 356 E. 3rd St., which has operated under the umbrella of the Long Beach Museum of Art since summer 2018.

"There are plans for changing, expanding and upgrading the physical space," Sue Ann Robinson, curator emerita for the museum, told the Business Journal. She added that LBMAx's gallery presents an opportunity "for emerging artists to have their work seen."

"Since 1950 – we're about to celebrate 70 years – we have always worked closely with living artists and we have always supported living artists creating their work, exhibiting their work. And LBMAx is another opportunity to continue doing that," Robinson said.

The museum's director of education has been working with the Long Beach Unified School District to develop a program for school children in the area. "So far we have had two schools involved, and the program is called 'Walk, Talk, See,'" Robinson said.

Thanks in large part to an annual mural painting event that began in Long Beach nearly five years ago, massive, colorful murals by both international and Long Beach artists are found throughout the downtown area. The event, POW!WOW! Long Beach has thus far



New to the downtown arts scene, Long Beach Landmark Theatre Company has already put on a handful of musicals, including the largescale "Hunchback of Notre Dame," pictured here. The production, performed at the First Congregational Church on Cedar Avenue, included 29 people and a choir with more than 35 voices. (Photograph courtesy of Landmark Theatre Company)

blanketed the city with 74 murals and counting. Supported by downtown advertising agency interTrend Communications, LBMA, the Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau and other local entities, POW!WOW! is returning to city streets again in summer 2019.

"It has elevated the public art here in Long Beach because we do bring artists from all over the world," Tokotah Ashcraft, regional director of POW!WOW!, said. "These are people who are not only professional artists who have showed in museums, but also have major ad campaigns, whether it's with Tiffany & Co. or Vans. . . . These are really talented people who are donating their time to something that they believe in and to brighten up the city."

At the end of the day, Ashcraft said, the goal of POW!WOW! is "to beautify cities and bring communities together." She added, "We want to give a platform to locals and international artists. That's really important." ■



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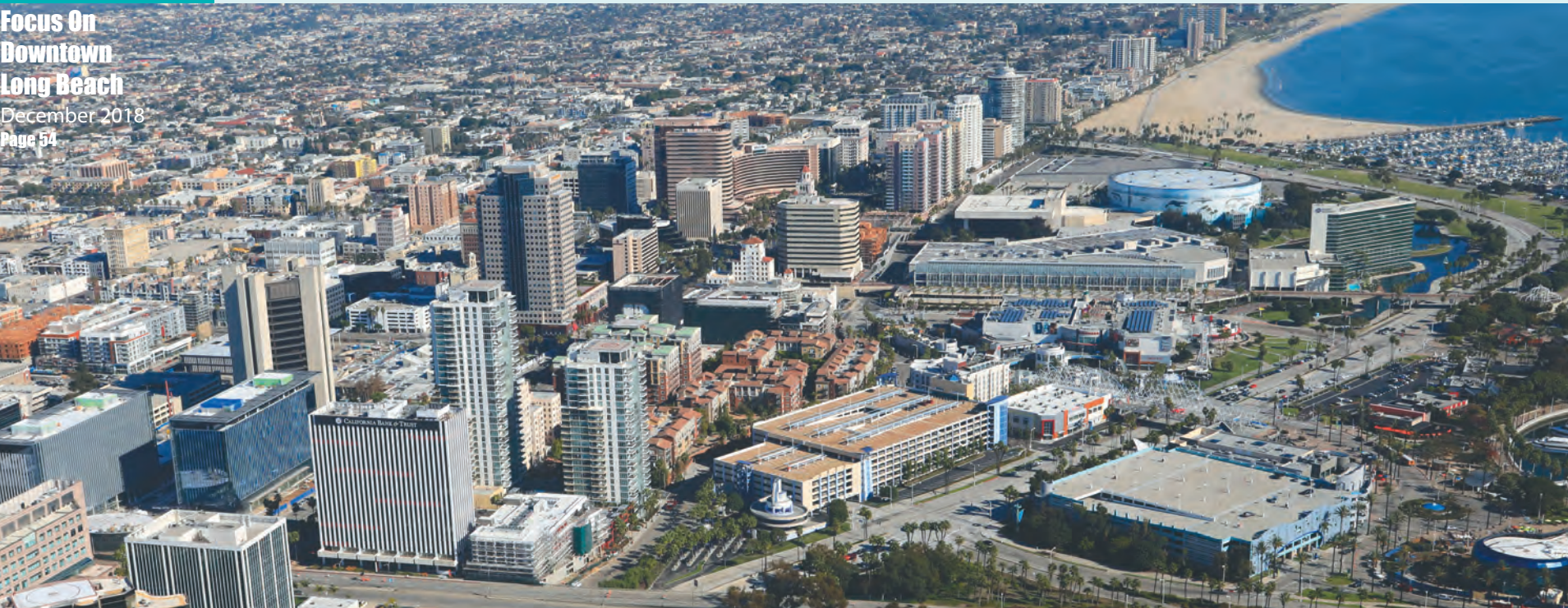
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