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As \$100,000 Club Balloons, A More Elite Circle Of City Employees Emerges: The \$200,000 Club

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**
Editor

In 1997, George Economides, founding publisher of the Long Beach Business Journal, coined the phrase “\$100,000 Club” in an analysis he published about rising city salaries. At the time, there were 43 members of this then-limited club, each a city employee earning \$100,000 or more. Today, as the group has grown to a decidedly less exclusive 1,606 members, a new elite club of 40 high-paid city earners has emerged: the \$200,000 Club.

City staffers earning \$200,000 or more are all management level and highly specialized positions, according to City Manager Patrick West. They include the directors of city departments, as well as some deputy directors and second-in-command positions.

Based on August 1, 2019 paychecks, the highest paid employee in the City of Long Beach is the executive director of the Port of Long Beach, with a salary of \$351,201. The only other person on the city payroll earning a

\$300,000-plus salary is the elected city attorney, who now earns \$303,537 annually, an amount dictated by the city charter.

Since the late 1990s, the Business Journal has annually published an analysis of city salaries, detailing the evolution of the \$100,000 Club by analyzing city budget documents. In 2009, West offered to directly provide data to the newsmagazine, and every year since that time we have met with West and some of his staff to discuss salaries, pensions, overtime and more. West sat down with the Business Journal for this annual interview one last time on August 16 – he departs the position on September 20 to pursue consulting in the private sector.

About 28%, almost one-third, of city staff are earning \$100,000 or more, based on data provided by West’s office. Between August 1, 2018 and the same day in 2019, there was a 4% increase in \$100,000 club members.

Geoffrey Hall, assistant to the city manager, told the Business

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Highest Paid City Employees		
Position	Department	Salary
Chief Executive-Harbor Department	Harbor	351,201
City Attorney	Law	303,537
Capital Programs Executive	Harbor	296,013
General Manager-Water	Water	284,029
City Manager	City Manager	276,816
Assistant, Executive Director-Harbor (2 Positions)	Harbor	265,929
Assistant City Manager	City Manager	262,333
Chief of Police	Police	260,068
Fire Chief	Fire	257,107
Assistant City Attorney	Law	255,349
Managing Director	Harbor	249,631
Assistant Chief of Police	Police	242,973
Assistant General Manager-Water	Water	239,861
Managing Director	Harbor	239,594
City Prosecutor	City Prosecutor	237,425
Director of Public Works	Public Works	232,172
Deputy Chief of Police (2 Positions)	Police	231,506
City Auditor	City Auditor	225,843
Director of Development Services	Development Services	225,420
Director of Financial Management	Financial Management	225,372
Director of Human Resources	Human Resources	225,368
Director of Health & Human Services	Health & Human Services	225,107
Assistant General Manager-Water	Water	224,399
Director of Parks, Recreation & Marine	Parks, Recreation & Marine	222,871
Director of Technology Services	Technology & Innovation	221,237
Director-Disaster Preparedness & Emer. Comm.	Disaster Prep. & Emer. Comm.	220,732
Director-Energy Resources	Energy Resources	217,547
Deputy Fire Chief (3 Positions)	Fire	215,802
Director of Library Services	Library Services	213,321
Director of Economic Development	Economic Development	212,244
Deputy General Manager-Engineering	Water	211,200
Deputy City Manager	City Manager	208,082
Assistant Fire Chief (2 Positions)	Fire	203,215
Managing Director (2 Positions)	Harbor	201,313

Source: City of Long Beach

Meet The Female Entrepreneurs Driving Sustainable Business Practices In Long Beach

■ By **ALENA MASCHKE**
Senior Writer

Watching the shampoo, body wash and laundry detergent containers pile up in her recycling bin, Bring Your Own Long Beach owner Julie Darrell felt like she needed to do more to protect the environment. She saw her bathroom shelves grow with individually packaged products, thanks in part to the relentless marketing campaigns for household goods and personal care items leveled at women on a daily basis, she not-

ed. Something needed to change, she thought.

“I felt like there was more I could do,” Darrell said. She had already made waste reduction a part of her household’s everyday routine, and wanted to help others do the same. When she realized that there were no stores focused on providing package-free products in Los Angeles, Long Beach or Orange County, she knew she had found her niche. “I can’t be the only one looking for this,” she remembered thinking to herself. Since last year, customers can

now refill their laundry detergent, baking soda, shampoo and many other pantry and household items at her East Village retail location.

Darrell is one of many female entrepreneurs driving the implementation of sustainable business practices in Long Beach. Many are part of the city’s green business certification program. The program recognizes businesses from a variety of industries – from hair salons to architecture firms – that have shown a commitment to sustainability by

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Stormwater Parcel Tax Begins This Fall

■ By **DENNY CRISTALES**
Staff Writer

Los Angeles County residents will see a new charge on their property tax bills this fall. Measure W, which was approved by county residents last November, will implement a parcel tax that is intended to increase stormwater capture. The intent is to increase local water supply, improve water quality and invest in community projects.

Measure W, or the Safe Clean Water Program, will charge its tax based on impermeable area, as op-

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Is #MeToo Derailing Mentorship Opportunities for Women?

■ By Editor **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**

Early this summer, Lean In – an organization dedicated to supporting women entrepreneurs and women in the workplace – and SurveyMonkey released the results of a survey of 5,182 workers in the U.S. that found male managers to be increasingly unlikely to mentor women. Conducted in late February, the survey found that 60% of male managers

feel “uncomfortable engaging in common workplace interactions with women, including mentoring, socializing, and having one-on-one meetings.” This is a 32% increase from a similar survey conducted in 2018.

According to Lean In and SurveyMonkey,

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PortSide: Keeping Up With The Port Of Long Beach

■ By **ALENA MASCHKE**
Senior Writer

Like most desk-bound employees, Danielle Ornelas starts her day at the office by catching up on her e-mails while drinking a much-needed cup of coffee. But unlike most other office workers, Ornelas' inbox may include an e-mail from law enforcement, asking her to help solve a murder. "Between the time I go to sleep and the time I get up, a lot of things can happen since we're a 24-hour operation," Ornelas explained. "Sometimes I wake up and it's pretty normal; other times I'll wake up in the middle of the night to a phone call with somebody letting me know of a fatality." As the Port of Long Beach's harbor control center supervisor, Ornelas is tasked with coordinat-

ing not only her team of local control center operators, but with assisting law enforcement by providing video footage that can help solve crimes or prevent them from occurring at one of the nation's busiest ports. The port's location – facing the open sea – makes it vulnerable, Ornelas said. Its great economic importance as one of the region's largest sources of employment and as a major throughput for commerce makes protecting it an especially impactful job, she explained. "I feel like this is the closest I can get to serving my community, serving my country, ultimately, if something happens here," Ornelas noted. "I feel privileged to be able to do this and protect the critical infrastructure down here." (Photograph by Brandon Richardson) ■

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Corner Pop-Up Gives Entrepreneurs A Space To Showcase Their Ideas

■ By **DENNY CRISTALES**
Staff Writer

Emerald Austin had always dreamed about opening her own baking business and sharing her sweets with the community. But for years, she never took the time to act on her passion. A health scare in October 2018 changed everything. “That prompted me to say, ‘You know what, I finally have to do what I want to do,’” she said.

The Bixby Knolls resident then took efforts to make her concept come to life. After utilizing the resources of the Long Beach Small Business Development Center to expand her knowledge of being a business owner, she applied for a business license in February to introduce her dream to Long Beach: Royal Gourmet Cookies.

Currently operating out of her home, Austin said she aspires to open an actual shop for the community to visit. Later this year, she will get a chance to run a pop-up version of her business as the first entrepreneur to utilize the Corner Pop-Up.

Introduced to the community at a ribbon-cutting ceremony August 15, the Corner Pop-Up is a site for aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners to showcase their products and services on a cyclical basis. The space is a partnership between the City of Long Beach, LINC Housing and Pacific Gateway Workforce Innovation Network.

Nestled in a corner space of the historic Palace Hotel at 2640 E. Anaheim St., the Corner Pop-Up will also provide youth programming and workforce development services. At its August 13 meeting, the Long Beach City Council approved the lease agreement with property owner LINC Housing for the city to use the suite. The Corner

Pop-Up is funded in part by a \$100,000 grant provided to the city by the Citi Foundation and Living Cities, a collaborative of foundations and financial institutions, according to Seyed Jalali, the city’s economic development officer.

John Keisler, the city’s director of economic and property development, said the Corner Pop-Up will officially launch in October. On average, individual pop-ups within the shop will last for about two weeks each, at no cost to the entrepreneurs.

Keisler said the city’s motivation in opening the facility is to allow business owners to pilot their concepts with zero risk. “What we found in a lot of our work with entrepreneurs is that, to test out their first business, they have to sign a lease, take a huge financial commitment and then try and work out all the kinks,” he said. “And, oftentimes, they struggle and fail.” He said the Corner Pop-Up is the city’s attempt to find a solution to that problem.

As they operate at the site, business owners will test prices for their products, promote their services on social media and potentially partner with other businesses involved with the Corner Pop-Up during a two-week cycle, Keisler said.

Suny Lay Chang, chief operating officer of LINC Housing, said the nonprofit took ownership of the Palace Hotel in June 2010. Renovations were completed in 2012. The site offers 14 apartment units for transitional age youth, individuals between the ages of 16 and 24 who are in transition from state custody or foster care. The units are located above the Corner Pop-Up.

“These are kids who are coming out of the foster care system and are on their own for the first time and need a place to stay,” Chang said, adding that



The City of Long Beach, LINC Housing and the Pacific Gateway Workforce Innovation Network hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony on August 15 to for the Corner Pop-Up, a creative space where startup businesses will be able to pilot their products. Pictured, from left: Erick Serrato, deputy director of Pacific Gateway; Zane Kupper, Egg Productions; Krystal Ray Moreno, founder of Micho & Mary; Karina Martinez, founder of Avana Creative; Arturo Enciso, founder of Gusto Bread; Seyed Jalali, City of Long Beach economic development officer; Jay Trinidad, Aguas Way; Suny Lay Chang, chief operating officer of LINC Housing; Leoh Sandoval, founder of Aguas Way; Dina Feldman, founder of Feel Good Salsa; Emerald Austin, founder of Royal Gourmet Cookies; and Kim Armstrong, board chair of Pacific Gateway. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

LINC’s mission is to build and preserve affordable housing to benefit the community. “Ultimately, it’s not about providing the housing; it’s about serving the individual,” she said. “And in addition to housing, an individual needs employable skills.”

Erick Serrato, deputy director at Pacific Gateway, said the workforce agency has two focuses: to help the youth living onsite and to expand workforce training for the community. “Our primary focus is finding ways to connect the entrepreneurs – the activity on the first floor – with the youth upstairs,” he said. “Every time there’s a pop-up,

there is a ready supply of workers upstairs who can develop their skills.”

As businesses use the space to pilot their concepts, Pacific Gateway will concurrently host workforce development workshops and counseling. Serrato said the business owners who have been connected with the city through its business development programs, such as Kiva Loan, will be the primary target for the pop-up. However, he indicated that applications will open for all businesses for the pop-up in September.

Visit popuplb.com for more information. ■



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The \$200,000 Club

(Continued from Page 1)

Journal that pay increases reflected in August 1, 2019 payroll data he provided ranged from 2-15%.

Over the past 10 years, \$100,000 Club membership has increased from 579 employees to 1,606. The vast majority – 59.3% – of \$100,000 club members are public safety employees in the police and fire departments. This is what it takes to attract and retain talent in public safety in

order to be competitive with departments in nearby cities, according to city management.

Total city payroll for 5,709 employees amounts to \$476,175,548, a 3% increase compared to August 1, 2018, when there were 35 fewer city employees on the payroll. Over the past two years, city payroll has increased 9.5%, while total staffing has increased by about 1%, based on data provided by the city manager’s office.

As of August 1, there were 358 city employees earning \$90,000 to \$99,000, a

23% increase compared to 2018. The majority, 38.3%, of these positions are in departments overseen by the city manager. Following closely behind are the police and fire departments, which employ 36% of city positions in this salary range.

The city is currently negotiating with all 11 of the union bargaining units representing city employees. When new contract terms were agreed upon in 2012, \$100,000 Club membership increased by 45%. Assistant City Manager Tom Modica told the Business Journal that this

spike was in part due to a change in pension formulas – employees were required to increase their contributions to their pensions, and to help ease the burden, they got higher pay bumps.

Club membership increased by 27% under new memoranda of understanding with labor groups in 2017. Given this trend, and the number of city employees already earning nearly \$100,000, it’s likely that the number of earners in this salary class will again significantly increase once new labor contracts are hashed out.

Shortly thereafter, Long Beach voters will be asked in March 2020 whether to approve the Measure A sales tax for three key reasons: to maintain and, when possible, increase public safety staffing; to fund infrastructure improvements; and to pay down the city’s commitment to the seismic upgrades needed to reopen (and keep open) Community Hospital.

West and Modica maintain that the City of Long Beach’s payroll reflects what must be paid to remain competitive in attracting talent. “Basically all of our department heads are making over \$200,000. That’s a fact, and that’s what it takes to get a department head to work at one of the largest cities in America,” West said.

In the past three years, there has been noticeable turnover among department heads. The city’s technology, fire, parks, and development services departments, as well as the Long Beach Airport, have all had their top positions turn over. According to Modica, the City of Long Beach offers comparatively lower salaries for top department positions in contrast to some other Southern California cities; often, these are cities that tend to be smaller, with fewer financial burdens. West said this is at least “a little bit” of a factor in the turnover the city’s top positions have experienced.

It’s true that other cities have a history of snatching up Long Beach department heads, and, for that matter, public safety personnel. So if any Long Beach taxpayers reading this are befuddled or even frustrated by ever-increasing municipal salary levels that many average private sector employees could never dream of (the household income in Long Beach is around \$60,000 a year, for example – and when was the last time you heard of a private sector employee with a pension?), perhaps they need to take up their issue on a broader basis. Is it time for a statewide conversation about government salaries and pensions, and how they’re serving the public interest?

Pensions And Unfunded Liabilities

Total unfunded personnel-related liabilities in FY 2020 amount to \$1.4 billion – an amount that takes into account pensions, workers’ compensation, general liability insurance, and retiree sick leave and health insurance subsidies. Pensions make up about 75% of the city’s total unfunded liabilities.

According to the Proposed Fiscal Year 2020 budget, the City of Long Beach is projected to spend \$154.1 million across

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A Decade of Long Beach \$100,000 Club Members By Department Groupings

	City Manager Departments-General			City Manager Departments-Police/Fire			Non-City Manager Departments		
	Full-Time Department Employees	# Employees Base Salary \$100,000+	% Employees Base Salary \$100,000+	Full-Time Department Employees	# Employees Base Salary \$100,000+	% Employees Base Salary \$100,000+	Full-Time Department Employees	# Employees Base Salary \$100,000+	% Employees Base Salary \$100,000+
2009	2,120	139	6.56%	1,871	299	15.98%	754	141	18.70%
2010	2,195	141	6.42%	1,798	292	16.24%	781	141	18.05%
2011	2,004	135	6.74%	1,707	317	18.57%	805	141	17.52%
2012	1,844	133	7.21%	1,627	581	35.71%	810	148	18.27%
2013	1,659	153	9.22%	1,508	598	39.66%	781	170	21.77%
2014	1,716	208	12.12%	1,578	636	40.30%	831	204	24.55%
2015	1,736	235	13.54%	1,597	653	40.89%	858	231	26.92%
2016	1,748	239	13.67%	1,586	670	42.24%	876	242	27.63%
2017	1,815	268	14.77%	1,621	934	57.62%	879	260	29.58%
2018	1,883	288	15.29%	1,657	976	58.90%	889	281	31.60%
2019	1,922	305	15.87%	1,677	993	59.21%	906	308	34.00%

Source: City of Long Beach. Employee counts are for full-time employees who received a paycheck on August 1 of each year.

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Cost: \$40 for the series; \$25 for Aquarium members and students. \$10 extra for CEU credit from CSULB CCPE. Includes parking in Aquarium parking structure.

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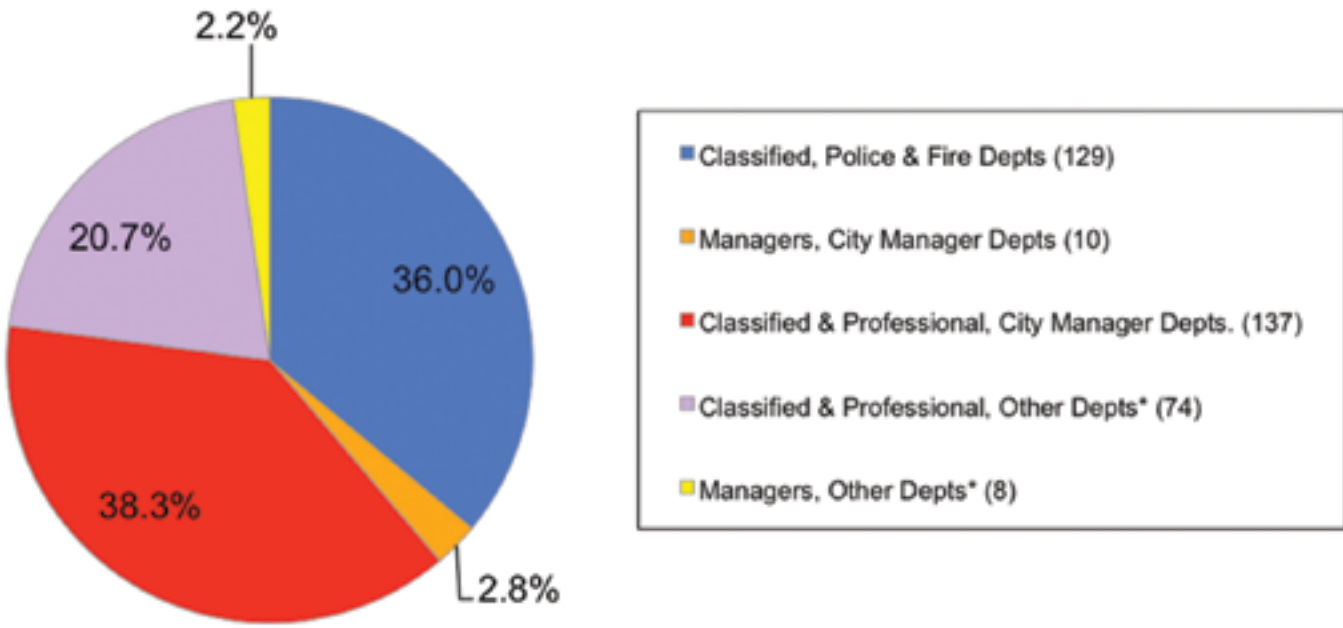
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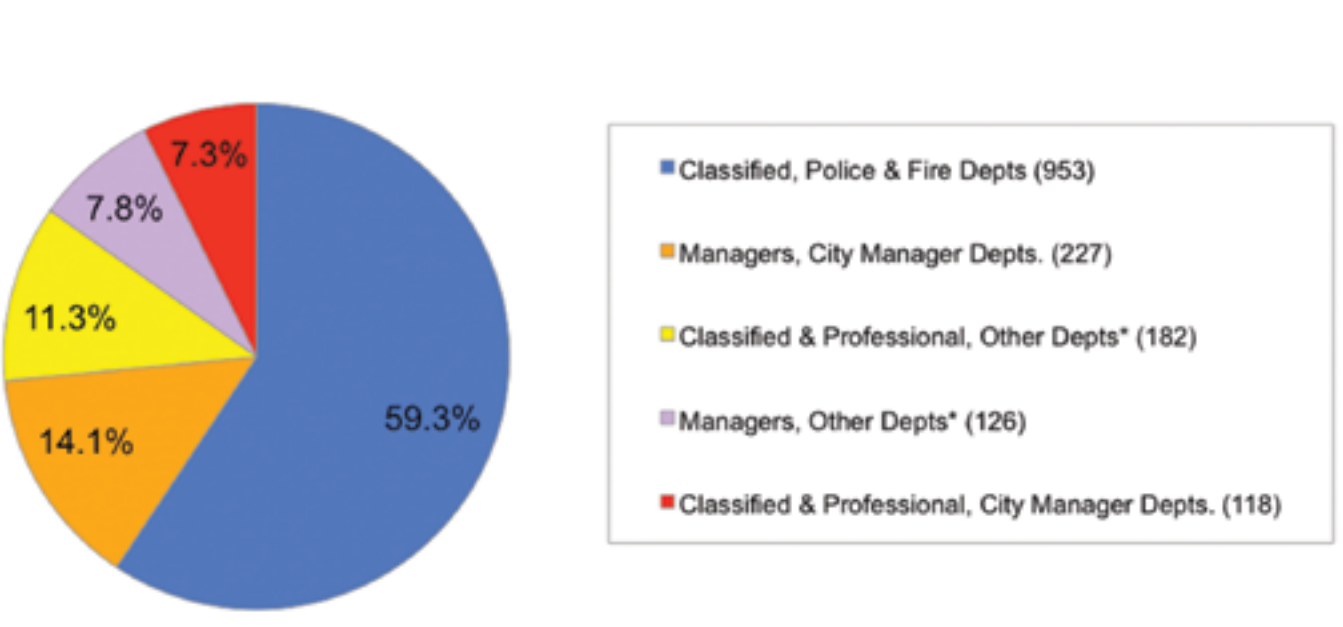
SALARIES \$90,000 TO \$99,999 August 2019



- Classified Staff: Police Officer through Lieutenant, Firefighter through Battalion Chief.
- Management Staff: City Manager Departments, including Police, Fire, and DP&EC
- Management Staff: Elected/Appointed Departments, and Harbor and Water Departments.
- Classified & Professional Staff: Elected/Appointed Departments, and Harbor and Water Departments.
- Classified & Professional Staff: City Manager Departments, excluding Police and Fire Departments.

Source: City of Long Beach

SALARIES \$100,000 & HIGHER August 2019



- Classified Staff: Police Officer through Lieutenant, Firefighter through Battalion Chief.
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- Classified & Professional Staff: City Manager Departments, excluding Police and Fire Departments.

Source: City of Long Beach

(Continued from Page 6)

all city funds on pensions, \$91.3 million of which is budgeted in the General Fund. General Fund pension costs increased by \$6.8 million from FY 2019 to FY 2020, according to the budget.

Although challenges remain, the City of Long Beach has done more, and did so sooner, to tackle pension reform than many other California cities. In 2006, then-Mayor Bob Foster convinced the city council and union groups to implement changes to pension payment formulas. This included the creation of a second tier for new hires that changed the percentage used in determining an employees' pension payment obligation and raised the age at which pension benefits would begin. According to the Fiscal Year 2020 budget, the city's pension reform efforts are saving the city about \$14 million per year.

For the first time in six years, the city's total unfunded liabilities decreased in the Fiscal Year 2020 budget compared to the prior year. In Fiscal Year 2019, total unfunded liabilities amounted to about \$1.5 billion, and in Fiscal Year 2020 they

are estimated at about \$1.4 billion. As outlined in the Fiscal Year 2020 budget proposal, the city is on track to pay off its unfunded pension liability in about 30 years, according to estimates by CalPERS, the California Public Employees' Retirement System.

Union Membership

After the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 2018 that unions cannot require members to pay dues, the city's union groups saw a sharp drop-off in paying members, but the decline now appears to have sta-

bilized. Between July 2017 to July 2018, the percentage of members paying union dues decreased from 88.5% to 65%. Between July 2018 and August 2019, however, the percentage of dues paying members slightly increased to about 67%.

About 53% of members of the largest city employee union, the International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers, pay dues. This union has the smallest share of dues-paying members compared to other employee groups, although this percentage remained about the same from 2018 to 2019.

A Note On \$200,000 Club Salary Listings:

- Salary amounts were derived by multiplying the employee's hourly rate as of August 1, 2019 by 2,088 hours
- Salary amounts for Long Beach police and Fire Department employees include skill pay but do not include overtime
- All employees now pay the full employee share of pension costs (9% for police and fire, 8% for all others) ■

Long Beach Unfunded Liability Comparison – Six-Year Period

	(\$ in Millions)					
	FY 20	FY 19	% Change	FY 18	FY 17	FY 16
Pensions	\$1,056	\$1,186	-10.96%	\$897	\$723	\$834
Sick Leave	\$139	\$135	2.96%	\$130	\$130	\$134
Retiree Health Subsidy	\$52	\$50	4.0%	\$43	\$43	\$143
Workers' Compensation	\$163	\$156	4.49%	\$114	\$114	\$111
Total Unfunded Liabilities	\$1,410	\$1,528	-7.72%	\$1,185	\$1,010	\$1,222

Source: City of Long Beach. According to the city: "Unfunded liabilities are costs for services already delivered, but the cost has not yet been paid for in full and are not yet funded. . . . With the recent changes to the CalPERS investment policies, the City will be on track to pay off the unfunded pension liability in approximately 30 years through increased contributions."

\$100,000-Plus Club Members By Department

Department	Full-Time Employees	Club Members	% Club Members
Fire	483	335	69.4%
Police	1,114	654	58.7%
City Auditor	15	10	66.7%
Law	64	30	46.9%
Technology & Innovation	123	48	39.0%
Harbor	495	191	38.6%
Human Resources	41	15	36.6%
City Manager	45	15	33.3%
City Clerk	13	4	30.8%
Financial Management	123	33	26.8%
City Prosecutor	35	9	25.7%
Water	227	58	25.6%
Development Services	165	40	24.2%
Civil Service	16	3	18.8%
Economic Development	62	11	17.7%
Airport	97	16	16.5%
Energy Resources	202	29	14.4%
Public Works	494	47	9.5%
Parks, Recreation & Marine	196	18	9.2%
Health & Human Services	299	25	8.4%
Legislative (Mayor & City Council)	41	3	7.3%
Library Services	75	5	6.7%
Disaster Preparedness	80	4	5.0%
Totals	4,505	1,606	35.6%

Source: City of Long Beach. *As of August 1, 2019.

Long Beach City Staff Salaries Reach Grand Proportions

Proposed Budget Includes \$8.2 Million In Salary And Fringe Benefit Increases; 43 Employees At \$100,000

BY GEORGE ECONOMIDES PUBLISHER

When City Manager Jim Hankla received a 12% salary increase to \$174,480 a little more than a year ago, it raised eyebrows but didn't upset too many people. After all, the position of city manager of Long Beach is one that oversees a staff of more than 5,000 people, that is responsible for the operation of a harbor, airport, water and gas department, and tends to a city-run health department – one of only three in the state.

Inside This Issue: The City Budget

- City Positions With \$80,000-Plus Base Salary And The % Increase
- Jack & Jill And Their "Line-Item Veto" Of The Long Beach City Budget
- City Council Expenses Going Up \$200,000; District Costs Vary Greatly
- Comparison Of Salary & Fringe Benefit Costs By City Department

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BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
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It's not an easy task. Few cities in the country have so much diversity within their local government – and so much responsibility for their top staff person. A private sector position with similar responsibilities would pay at least two to three times what the city manager is paid. But what Hankla's pay raise did do is set the stage for salary increases – big ones – for department heads and senior managers. And these increases (see charts at the end of this article) are taking place when the city is struggling with its finances, unless you don't think a \$32.1 million General Fund deficit is struggling?

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Port Staff Working To Reduce Risks Associated With On-Dock Rail Project

■ By DENNY CRISTALES
Staff Writer

After the Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners approved two contracts in early July to help facilitate program management and design for the Pier B On-Dock Rail Support Facility, work is underway to mitigate risks associated with the project, according to a Port of Long Beach official.

The Pier B On-Dock Rail Support Facility project is intended to expand and enhance the existing Pier B rail facility, which is bordered by Anaheim Street and the 710 Freeway. The current facility serves as a component of the port’s rail network and as a storage and staging area for trains. Last September, the harbor commission approved the project’s \$870 million budget.

Sean Gamette, managing director of engineering services for the Port of Long Beach, said the project will reduce environmental impacts to the community, enable the port to transfer cargo more efficiently and reconfigure existing cargo tracks while adding additional ones to the site.

To complete the future 171-acre facility, port staff separated the project into phases. By 2021, port staff aim to mitigate all potential risks associated with the project that may delay its schedule and increase costs. Gamette said some of these risks include utility and oilfield relocation. Staff will also work with two firms to complete preliminary designs within two years in an effort to reduce project escalation costs. Gamette dubbed this part of the project the “program level design phase.”

In 2024, work on the first phase of rail improvements at Pier B – including completing rail property acquisition, finalizing street and utility design work, and renewing contracts with design and program management teams – will be completed. Operations for arrival, departure and storage tracks are set for completion during this time, as well.

Gamette said the completion of Phase 2 and Phase 3 rail improvements are projected for 2030 and 2032, respectively. The second phase will feature additional cargo tracks. The entire facility will be completed in the third phase.

At its July 8 meeting, the harbor commission approved two separate contracts with construction and engineering firms to assist with the goals of the program level design phase. Hill International, Inc. will work on program management, design review, risk management and permitting, among other duties. HDR Engineering, Inc. will focus on utility analysis, facility design and program planning.

Hill International, Inc. has a five-year, \$17.5 million contract with the Port of Long Beach, while HDR Engineering, Inc. has a five-year, \$38.75 million contract. In addition to the contracts, port staff will solicit an additional \$21 million worth of resources from the firms to assist with the project, Gamette said. “This is a project that will be managed by harbor department staff, but we will have additional resources from both of these consulting firms that are brought in to work alongside our staff and provide quite a bit of extra horsepower,” he said.

When these contracts were awarded on July 8, documentation presented to the harbor commission indicated that the cost to complete design work in this phase was \$21 million greater than originally anticipated. However, staff feel that the additional funds will help mitigate future risks associated with the project, resulting in cost savings. Thus, the overall budget of \$870 million remains unchanged at this time.

Potential risks that could impact the project’s cost and schedule include: utility and oil field relocation efforts; existing conditions, such as potential contamination in soil; and business relocation.

Some businesses in Westside Long Beach are in the direct path of the Pier B On-Dock Rail Support Facility project, including LAN Logistics, an import and export company. Others, like custom sign manufacturer Superior Electrical Advertising, are located directly next to the project.

John Donaldson is the owner of LAN Logistics, which is located at 1520 W. 11th St. Since his business falls under the direct path of the project, he said he has taken a proactive approach to contact port staff to determine what can be done to save his business. “We’ve had that communication back and forth but nothing specific,” Donaldson said, adding that time will tell how the port staff will proceed in communicating with affected businesses.

Stan Janocha, chief operating officer of Superior Electrical, said the new rail tracks will essentially be in the company’s backyard. The proximity of the on-dock rail facility has Janocha concerned about his company’s future. “You know, we’re not happy with it. We don’t know if we’re going to be able to exist,” he said. Superior Electrical is located at 1700 W. Anaheim St.

To fulfill the expansion of the on-dock facility, project officials have proposed eliminating the existing railroad crossing at the intersection of 9th Street and Pico Avenue. Moreover, implementing additional tracks, rail car storage and staging will require additional

land to the north of the existing Pier B rail facility – which could be as far as 12th Street, according to a project fact sheet. Gamette said the two consulting firms will help determine precise geographical boundaries for the project.

One of the components of the project also includes removing the ramps that connect 9th Street and the Shoemaker Bridge, a change that Janocha said will greatly impede the Westside’s ability to access Downtown Long Beach. “That’s going to be a big deal,” he said. “That’s going to affect all the businesses here.” Janocha said communication with port staff has been minimal.

Gamette said port staff will work to contact business owners to find a separate solution for each entity. “There are good businesses that are working in this area,” he said. “We plan to work alongside those businesses to try and [sort] out a relocation plan.”

Part of the communication process will involve quarterly updates about the project. The first of these quarterly updates will come in the form of a community meeting on Wednesday, September 4, at 11 a.m. at the Long Beach Multi-Service Center, 1301 W. 12th St. Harbor Commission President Bonnie Lowenthal said staff will also update the board about the project’s progress.

Lowenthal told the Business Journal that a major benefit of the Pier B On-Dock Rail Support Facility project is the implementation of 10,000-foot trains, each of which will eliminate the need for 750 truck trips, per a project fact sheet. Lowenthal said the project also supports the mission of the port’s Clean Air Action Plan to improve air quality in the region. “The rail yard will improve the quality of health in the community and the neighborhood,” she said. ■

City Manager West Departing Position Sept. 20



City Manager Patrick West, who has worked for the City of Long Beach for 14 years and in his current position since 2007, recently announced that he is retiring from municipal government on September 20 to pursue work in the private sector. As a national search for a replacement gets underway, Assistant City Manager Tom Modica will take West’s place on an interim basis. West told the Business Journal that his decision was bittersweet. “I’m happy and sad at the same time. But it’s just a really good time for me to make an exit and allow for new leadership in the city,” he said. “I am going to hang my shingle up as a management consultant, and if it works, it works. And if it doesn’t, it doesn’t. I am going to give it a try.” West said that he and his wife plan to do some traveling. In the meantime, he said with a chuckle, “I

want to make sure everyone knows I’m not in my office working up business contacts.” As he prepares to depart his longtime position, West reflected upon the city’s achievements with pride. “We’ve got \$3.5 billion of private investment happening throughout the city. The key thing that I’m excited about is it’s not just in the downtown. That investment is occurring in every single corner of our 52 square mile city,” he said. He highlighted improvements to the Long Beach Airport as well as livability initiatives such as improved water quality, new sports fields and the beach walking path as some of the projects he is most proud of. “There are so many things like that to think about and talk about. But it has been a long time.” – By Samantha Mehlinger, Editor (Photograph courtesy of the City of Long Beach) ■

Stormwater Tax

(Continued from Page 1)

posed to property value. According to a county fact sheet, an impermeable area is defined as a site covered by hardscape-like materials, such as structures, asphalt and concrete.

Officials will calculate a property’s impermeable area based on the county’s land-cover survey which is derived from data from various digital resources, such as aerial imagery from the United States Department of Agriculture’s National Agriculture Imagery Program.

Matt Frary, civil engineer with the Los Angeles County Flood Control District and an expert on the program, said the tax will charge residents 2.5 cents per square foot of impermeable area. Los Angeles County officials developed a tax calculator to help determine how much a specific property might be charged. The calculator can be found at bit.ly/2Ay3Trz.

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved an ordinance creating implementation guidelines and procedures for the parcel tax at its August 6 meeting. Frary said the tax is expected to roll out in October.

The annual revenue from the tax is expected to be up to \$285 million, Frary said. The funds will be distributed as follows: 50% for regional projects that seek to benefit the community; 40% for cities “as a local return” to benefit the jurisdiction where the tax is collected; and 10% will be allocated for county educational programs, technical assistance, job training, Los Angeles County Flood Control District projects and program administration.

As part of the Safe Clean Water Program, municipalities in the county will each have the opportunity to propose regional project ideas for the program to benefit the community. Governance committees were established to review ideas and facilitate the process. The committees include: a regional oversight committee, comprised of experts representing the focus areas of the program; nine watershed area steering committees, comprised of members from municipalities, agencies and the community; and a scoring committee, comprised of experts representing the program focus areas.

Frary explained that the watershed area steering committees will convene to consider project concepts. The public will be able to provide input on the discussions. The steering committees will identify what concepts are feasible and will then pass them along to the scoring committee for review. The scoring committee determines a project’s validity based on criteria that are aligned with the Safe Clean Water Program’s goals. The scoring committee will then send its project “score” back to the steering committees for review.

The steering committees will then consider the scoring committee’s comments, make revisions accordingly and then forward the proposal to the regional oversight committee for another review. Final consideration for project implementation will go to the county board of supervisors, according to Frary.

He clarified that the above process falls under the program’s 50% regional project budget. About 40% of the budget is distributed directly to cities for them to independently create and manage their own projects. “The City of Long Beach [projects, for instance,] do not go to the watershed area steering



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committees,” Frary said, explaining that the county wanted to provide municipalities the freedom to develop their own stormwater plans. He said the steering committees were organized to focus on county projects.

“There is some flexibility built in there, but then there’s still the accountability, through reporting and audits,” he added. “And the regional oversight committee does still have a small role with all the municipalities to help make sure the goals of the program are being met.”

Frary said revenue from the tax will first be available sometime in spring 2020, at which time funding will be allocated to the various municipalities, or cities. He added that a call for projects, or a request of programs, is projected to begin sometime in the fall.

The stormwater tax has a 30-year re-evaluation clause that will determine the necessity of the program, according to Frary. But throughout that three-decade period, program leaders will host periodic updates to evaluate the distribution of funds and program’s effectiveness.

Frary clarified that the \$285 million is the maximum projected revenue from the tax and does not factor in qualifying credit exemptions, reductions and appeals. There are various tax relief components to the program. For example, low-income senior residents, who are a minimum age of 62 and own a property, may qualify for an exemption. The program’s ordinance provides opportunities for tax credits up to 100% for qualifying properties, a credit-trading appeals process and an income-based tax-reduction program.

Michael Lewis, chairman of the Measure W working group with the Los Angeles County Business Federation (BizFed), said the organization played a role in adding some of the tax relief components to the implementation ordinance. Lewis said the county added a number of provisions, including the opportunity for property owners to get a reduction in tax if they are already performing some type of stormwater capture.

Another recommendation was to create a credit-trading program, which would encourage property owners to cooperate with each other in creating joint projects that would benefit the community. “Although the county hasn’t put that framework in place yet, it is a provision of the measure that we thought was important,” he said. “I think that’s a way for them to get some projects built that might not otherwise get built and without having to do a tax at all.”

By mid-September, the tax exemp-



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Fact-Finding Panel Recommends Pay Raises, End To ‘Constant Negotiations’ With City Union

■ By **ALENA MASCHKE**
Senior Writer

The City of Long Beach has returned to the negotiating table with its youngest labor union, the Association of Long Beach Employees (ALBE). The union split off from the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers in 2016 and has

since been unable to reach a labor agreement with the city. In June, representatives from the union and the city convened for a series of fact-finding sessions to review several issues at the core of the negotiations. The fact-finding panel consisted of ALBE’s representative, Ralph Royds, the city’s representative, Dana Anderson, and an impartial chairperson chosen through a process of

elimination that gave both sides equal rights to eliminate candidates from a list of potential appointees.

A recent report by David Miller, the impartial chairperson of the fact-finding panel, largely supported the union’s demands for equity pay raises, one of the main points of contention in previous negotiations. Citing “healthy reserves” in the city’s General Fund, wages paid by agencies in the region and the most recent Consumer Price Index increase of 3.1%, Miller recommended a 4% wage increase across the board, effective October 1, 2019. For the following years, Miller recommended across-the-board wage increases of 2% in 2020, 1% in April 2021 and another 1% in October 2021, followed by another 2% increase effective April 2022.

Water utility mechanics, whose wages had been front-and-center throughout the previous negotiations and the subsequent fact-finding process, would receive additional pay increases of 10% each in October 2019 and October 2020. “Based on a department study it was determined that Water Utility Mechanic I, II and II [positions] are substantially below their counterparts in other jurisdictions,” Miller wrote in his report. He also noted that in previous negotia-

tions with ALBE, the city had offered a 20% increase for workers in this classification over a contract period of two years, which was later reduced to a 10% raise for a one-year agreement.

“The panel recognizes that ALBE has established a need for catchup; the panel also recognizes that the city has expressed legitimate concerns for maintaining a balanced budget,” Miller said of his recommendation.

Wendell Phillips, the union’s general counsel and representative in the fact-finding process, declined to comment on the recommendations put forward in the report. City of Long Beach Labor Relations Manager Dana Anderson also declined to comment, citing ongoing negotiations with the union. However, in her response to the fact-finding report, Anderson opposed the panel’s recommendations on several items, including some of the recommended wage increases.

Anderson expressed the city’s support for a wage increase among water utility mechanics, but insisted that the city could not agree to anything longer than a one-year contract. “In spite of the salary survey data underlying the recommended 10% net increase, the city bases its position on data outlining its own fiscal outlook and condition,” Anderson wrote, citing fiscal challenges expected in upcoming years, including rising pension and general personnel costs. “Any economic increases that drive personnel costs higher will impact the city’s ability to maintain current services.”

The contract term and opportunities for additional negotiations after a contract has been signed have been major points of contention between the two parties. While ALBE is seeking a three-year contract, the city has repeatedly opposed a contract term of more than one year. In his report, Miller recommended a zipper-clause, which would prevent both sides from further bargaining once an agreement has been signed.

“The panel urges the parties to find a better way than constant negotiations,” Miller stated in the report. “There have been enough negotiations.” Since 2016, the two parties have been negotiating without ever reaching an agreement, resulting in the imposition of terms by the city council in 2017.

Anderson disagreed. “I recognize the panel’s interest in advancing labor peace and certainty over the next three years,” her response read. “However, given the status of the city’s financial condition starting in FY 21, it would not be prudent for the city to agree to a term beyond September 30, 2020.” Further, Anderson disagreed with the panel’s assessment that the two parties found themselves in “constant negotiations” and argued that ALBE representatives hadn’t expressed any concerns over the length of the negotiations during the fact-finding process.

“The panel’s conclusion also suggests that frequent negotiations are counterproductive or corrosive to labor relations,” Anderson wrote in her response. “I disagree.” ■

City Council Orders Study On Economic Impact Of Port Automation



Long Beach Container Terminal has been largely automated since 2017. Active contracts signed by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the Pacific Maritime Association in 2008 recognize that some level of automation at the San Pedro ports is inevitable. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

■ By **ALENA MASCHKE**
Senior Writer

The debate around automation at California ports has come to the shores of Long Beach. The Long Beach City Council recently approved a recommendation by 9th District Councilmember Rex Richardson to conduct a study assessing the economic impact of automation at the Port of Long Beach. The item received unanimous approval from Richardson’s seven fellow councilmembers. The study will be produced by the city manager’s office in collaboration with the harbor department, and is due to be presented to the city council within 120 days.

“As this automation conversation is advancing, we want to make sure that we fully understand what the implications are to our local Long Beach economy,” Richardson told the Business Journal. “Long Beach is a working-class town. It’s always been a working-class town, from the naval base to the port,” he added. “One in five jobs in our city is connected to the port, so if there’s a perceived threat to jobs and economic activity, we need to understand it.”

The issue of automation has received increased attention in the region in recent months. At the Port of Los Angeles, a permit application seeking to add charging stations for automated equipment to the APM Terminal sparked an outcry by local unions. The decision by the Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners to approve the permit was reviewed by the Los Angeles City Council, but a final decision by the harbor commission in early July upheld the initial approval.

While the permit was eventually approved, the process resulted in a height-

ened focus on automation at the San Pedro Bay ports, which has been met with political action by local representatives. Upon request by Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn, the L.A. County Board of Supervisors ordered a study on the impact of automation at the Port of Los Angeles. The motion was approved by the board on June 25, and staff was directed to return with a report within 90 days. The Port of L.A. and the Port of Long Beach each currently feature one terminal that has undergone large-scale automation, the TraPac terminal in Los Angeles and Long Beach Container Terminal.

Mike Gipson, the Compton-based state assemblymember representing the 64th District, proposed a bill that – in its initial form – would have given the State Lands Commission the authority to approve or deny applications for automation projects at California ports. The bill has since been gutted and the delegation of authority to the commission was replaced by a directive to conduct a series of meetings “at or near California ports that operate on granted public trust lands to consider the impacts of automated technology at California’s ports.” The bill has been approved by the state assembly and is scheduled for a hearing in front of the senate appropriations committee on August 30.

When Richardson initially recommended a discussion on automation to the city council to take place on August 13, the proposed agenda item included a formal show of support for Gipson’s legislation, Assembly Bill (AB) 1321. The item was withdrawn and when it returned to the city council’s agenda the following week, any reference to AB 1321 had been removed.

“I want to place my focus, as chair

of the economic development committee [of the council], on the economic impact to our city. I think that’s what people are most concerned about,” Richardson said of his decision to remove any discussion on AB 1321 from the agenda. “The mayor has already taken a position there, so it really would have been symbolic.” In a July 9 letter to Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee Chair Henry Stern, Mayor Robert Garcia expressed his support for the bill, if it was amended to remove the State Lands Commission’s authority over future automation projects and instead maintained local harbor commissions jurisdiction.

“With 175 shipping lines connecting Long Beach to 217 seaports, the Port handles \$194 billion in trade annually, supporting hundreds of thousands of Southern California jobs, all under the direction of the Long Beach Harbor Commission,” Garcia wrote in his letter. “I am confident that the Port of Long Beach will continue to be one of the primary economic drivers and job generators of our regional economy, and that AB 1321 if amended to maintain the Long Beach Harbor Commission’s jurisdiction, will provide tools to leverage new technologies to support trade and our local workforce.”

In similar letters to Stern, the Pacific Merchant Shipping Association, the Pacific Maritime Association and the California Chamber of Commerce had expressed their concerns about the bill’s initial direc-

tive. The case-by-case approval process through the State Lands Commission, they argued, would impede California ports’ ability to compete globally and to meet ambitious goals for emissions reduction and energy efficiency set by the state.

It’s important for the port to remain competitive, Richardson noted, but the successes need to be felt by local residents. “A city can’t be prosperous unless individuals are connected to our economic prosperity and they also are prosperous,” Richardson said. “We love to see a thriving port that’s breaking records in terms of cargo [volume], setting emissions standards, those are things that we always measure when it comes to the port. But we need to also make sure that we’re measuring [success by] the local jobs that we are providing.”

Following the city council’s vote to order a study on the economic impact of automation, Port of Long Beach Executive Director Mario Cordero issued the following statement: “The city council has considered the matter and directed staff to develop a report on the issue. We stand ready to assist and facilitate that process in any way that we can. In the meantime, we remain focused on day-to-day operational excellence, as we are committed to making the port an even stronger economic engine for the city, state and the U.S.”

City staff are expected to present the results of their study to the city council by December 18, 2019. ■



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Yamaha Kodiak 450 EPS 4WD ATV's Qty. of 10	ITB FS19-118	08/30/2019
Animal Foster Care Coordinator	RFP PR19-103	09/05/2019
Bond Underwriters and Revolving Line of Credit Providers	RFQ FM19-108	09/09/2019
Cat Cages	ITB PR19-113	09/10/2019
Engineering Services for Sewer Lift Station Force Main Assessment	RFP (SC-0343)	09/11/2019
As-Needed Information Tech. Professional Svcs.	RFP TI19-027	09/17/2019
State Legislative Representation Services	RFP CM19-101	09/26/2019
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****

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Vice Mayor Proposes Incentive Program For Controversial Home Surveillance Devices

■ By **ALENA MASCHKE**
Senior Writer

With their sleek design, Ring LLC’s video-recording doorbells barely stand out. But anyone keeping an eye out for the flat, black and silver devices will notice them guarding home entrances in residential neighborhoods across the country. On its website and social media platforms, the Santa Monica-based and Amazon-owned tech company proudly displays footage recorded by its cameras. In these videos, package thieves are startled as their prospective victims’ voices blare from the small Ring devices, catching them in the act. They depict a potential burglar running away into the night after realizing he’s been caught on camera.

In recent months, the company has tested a new strategy in its pursuit of America’s front porches: partnerships with local police departments and municipalities. The Long Beach Police Department (LBPd) recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that formalized police access to the company’s Neighbors app, which allows users to share information on crimes and suspicious behavior, as well as any corresponding security footage, with others in their neighborhood.

A second partnership, this one between the City of Long Beach and Ring LLC, would create an incentive program for purchasing the company’s devices. Such a partnership was proposed to the city council by Vice Mayor Dee Andrews in mid-July, and a specific proposal is currently being drafted by city staff.

If city staff follow Andrews’ recommendation, the program will offer video-recording doorbells at a discounted price to “residences in low-income communities, residences where an increase in mail theft is noted and residences willing to partner with the current Ring Neighbors Portal MOU.” The difference between the full price of the device and the discounted price offered to qualifying residences would likely be split 50-50 between Ring LLC and the city, according to communications between Ring LLC and the LBPd obtained through a public records request. In his recommendation, Andrews suggested that the city’s payment could be covered by council district priority funds from council districts interested in participating.

The vice mayor and 6th District councilmember said he first learned about the possibility of a partnership between the city and the tech company when a constituent posted about it on Facebook. According to Andrews, realtor and Wrigley resident Karen Edwards had heard about the company’s partnership with Temple City, a small municipality located just south of Pasadena. Why didn’t Long Beach have such a program, Edwards reportedly asked on the social media platform.

Andrews said he ears and began drafting a recommendation to his fellow

councilmembers. “I would like to have hundreds of eyes in the community that would help deter some of the stuff that [the district is] going through and help prevent crime,” Andrews told the Business Journal. The feedback has been positive, Andrews noted. “Our residents have been very, very supportive of this.”

But Ring’s expanding network of local partnerships has raised concerns among civil rights advocates. Mohammad Tajsar, a staff attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California, and his team have reviewed dozens of agreements between the company and local law enforcement agencies and municipalities. “We’ve been tracking a lot of this and our general, basic conclusion – without being hyperbolic – is that these partnerships are really an unmitigated disaster for the civil rights of community members across the country,” Tajsar said.

Tajsar noted concerns with the way partnerships between Ring and public agencies are formed as well as the content of the underlying agreements signed by both sides. “It’s unfortunate, because a lot of these partnerships have been struck without real public scrutiny,” he said. “And I think if we scrutinized them a little bit more, we’d all be really concerned with what exactly this means.” The agreement between the LBPd and Ring was not shared with the public before it was signed on August 9. A proposed agreement for an incentive program is still being drafted.

“What [these agreements] allow is an undemocratic expansion of a city’s surveillance technology in a way that enables a private company to have a lot more access to a lot more information about peoples’ lives,” Tajsar explained. While residents who participate in incentive programs, like the one proposed by Andrews, choose to have their property surveilled, the area covered by the devices often extends beyond their property lines. “A lot of people can be scooped up in the purview of these cameras, whether or not these people decided to be subjected to them,” Tajsar added.

Ring LLC’s terms of service place all responsibility for complying with local restrictions on video and audio recording, as well as any applicable notice requirements that such recording is in progress, on the individual user. The user agreement also instructs owners of the devices to ensure that the camera’s view only covers their own property. Once recorded, Ring reserves the right to use any footage recorded by its devices for any purpose, including commercials and social media posts. Some agreements for incentive programs reviewed by Tajsar and his team also assigned police the right to access footage collected by devices purchased through the program, he noted, without requiring additional consent from their owner.

Andrews said he disagreed that the cameras violated anyone’s right to pri-

vacancy. “We have a right to privacy in our homes, but not in public,” he said. “Cameras of all types are in operation in public [spaces] throughout the city.” The police department argued a similar point in support of its collaboration with Ring, which allows officers to request footage that may be of use in an investigation through the company’s Neighbors portal. “Officers are already out there knocking on doors, asking homeowners, businesses, people in the vicinity of a certain crime for video footage,” Shauna Dandoy, a public information officer with the Long Beach Police Department, told the Business Journal. “There isn’t necessarily a cost to privacy, because it’s something that’s already happening,” she added.

LBPd Lt. Joseph Gaynor said his investigations team stands to benefit greatly from the additional evidence the cameras could provide. “What we find with all our crimes is: video evidence is fantastic,” Gaynor said. “The ability to have Ring assist in acquiring footage that citizens have approved to be given to us saves time from an investigative standpoint.”

Andrews hopes that more cameras in his district will reduce crime, especially package theft, an issue Ring has placed front-and-center in its promotional campaigns. “I think this is going to be a great idea to deter some of those crimes that we’re having in our area,” Andrews said. “It would really be like putting more policemen on the ground.”

Convention Center Operator To Sign Labor Peace Agreement With Unite Here Local 11

■ By **ALENA MASCHKE**
Senior Writer

In an 8-0 vote on Tuesday, August 20, the Long Beach City Council unanimously approved a one-year extension to the city’s current contract with SMG, the operator of the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center. The amendment, which extends SMG’s contract until 2023, came with two conditions: the operator agreed to enter into a labor peace agreement with the Unite Here Local 11 labor union, and to negotiate in good faith, should workers decide to unionize.

SMG already has labor agreements with a number of unions, including the Teamsters and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. After the labor peace agreement has been signed, workers active in the center’s food and beverage operations will be asked to cast their card-check vote on union membership. In a card-check vote, workers who want to be represented by a union cast a signed authorization form or “card.” If a majority of

Tajsar, in turn, pointed to a significant difference between Ring’s devices and additional police officers: public accountability. “The more you have an entrenchment of the private sector in a fundamentally public enterprise – like policing – the less likely it is that the public will be able to hold them accountable,” Tajsar said. “And that is a dangerous trend we should all be concerned about.”

While city agencies, including those in charge of law enforcement, are subject to public records laws, there’s no law requiring Ring to share its internal practices with the public. “The more people have these devices, the more the movements of people will be stored in databases that Amazon collects and is conducting algorithmic analysis on. Do people want that?” Tajsar asked. “I’m not sure they do,” he contended.

According to Andrews, there will still be some time to hash out the details of the incentive program he proposed. The councilmember noted that staff is unlikely to come back to the city council with a report until after a new city manager has been hired, once current City Manager Patrick West leaves the office in September. “Everything’s kind of at a standstill right now,” he noted. “Once we’re through this transition with the city manager, I think we’re going to be able to come up with a very good situation here.” ■

workers within a bargaining unit vote for union representation, their group will be represented by the union going forward.

Unite Here Local 11, represents over 30,000 workers employed in hotels, restaurants, airports, sports arenas, and convention centers throughout Southern California and Arizona, according to the union’s website. In Long Beach, the union represents hotel workers at the Hyatt Regency Long Beach and the Hotel Maya, among others.

Assistant City Manager Tom Modica noted that a labor peace agreement between the union and SMG was beneficial for the city, given that large conventions were “interested in coming to the city but have questions about the unionization of certain operations.” Making labor peace a requirement for the contract extension served to “protect the city’s interest from any type of work stoppage,” Modica explained.

Mayor Robert Garcia also expressed his support. “I think this is a win-win for everyone,” Garcia said. ■

Port Staff Mulling Two Options For Gerald Desmond Bridge Demolition



While the Port of Long Beach is moving full steam ahead with the Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project, officials are concurrently developing methods to demolish the old bridge. Duane Kenagy, capital program executive with the port, said there are two options: To demolish the old bridge in the reverse sequence in which it was built, or to lower segments of it onto a barge to be disassembled offsite. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

■ By **DENNY CRISTALES**
Staff Writer

The Port of Long Beach is expecting to fulfill the main goal of its Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project in April 2020, when the new bridge is scheduled to open to traffic. While the finishing touches on the new bridge over the port continue, plans for the demolition of the old structure are also in the works, according to Duane Kenagy, capital programs executive with the Port of Long Beach.

On August 12, the Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners approved a baseline project budget of \$62,008,000 for the demolition of the Gerald Desmond Bridge. The budget includes \$9,096,000 for design work, \$34,642,000 for construction, \$9,670,000 for construction management services and \$8,600,000 in contingency funds. Kenagy told the Business Journal that these funds are part of the Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project’s \$1.467 billion budget.

T.Y. Lin International, an infrastructure services firm, is finalizing the design work for the demolition. T.Y. Lin officials are proposing two options for demolition: disassembling the bridge in the opposite sequence in which it was built in the late 1960s, or lowering segments of the bridge

onto a barge and transporting it to a place where it can be safely demolished. “Both methods have their advantages and disadvantages,” Kenagy said. “It likely will depend on factors like impacts to navigation or how long we would have to close the channel.” Kenagy said a demolition contractor will determine the cost assessment for both options.

The reverse method of disassembling the bridge would require workers to build a supporting structure to prevent the bridge from collapsing in an unplanned manner during the demolition process, Kenagy said. The barge method would likely require a portion of the bridge to be transported to one of the port’s steel recycling centers. Kenagy said alternative methods may be possible, but none have been identified.

Kenagy expects a contract for the demolition to be awarded in fall 2020. Demolition of the main span of the bridge is expected to be done by summer 2021, and the full demolition would be complete by spring 2022. He said the timeline is dictated by a permit from the U.S. Coast Guard, which requires the Gerald Desmond’s demolition to be completed within two years of the new bridge opening. This permit was required to develop the new bridge.



Duane Kenagy, capital program executive with the Port of Long Beach, told the Business Journal that the demolition of the old Gerald Desmond Bridge must be completed two years after the opening of the new bridge, per a U.S. Coast Guard Permit. The new bridge is projected to open to traffic in April 2020. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

The U.S. Coast Guard’s intent in requiring a two-year demolition window is to limit navigational problems. Kenagy explained that both the new and old bridges span the main channel into the port’s inner harbor area. “When [there are] pieces of steel or other heavy objects that are supported by cranes and not firmly bolted into place, there’s concern about those dropping onto a vessel that would pass underneath,” he said. “So, when we’re doing that kind of lifting activity, we actually temporarily close the channel for safety reasons. . . . We coordinate our construction operations to make sure that we’re not interfering unnecessarily with vessel navigation through the channel.”

The demolition project is expected to take 18 months, according to Kenagy. “We’ll be well within that [two-year] window,” he said.

He added that some challenges during the demolition process will need to be addressed. Some of these include: reducing the exposure of lead to the atmosphere, since the old bridge was painted with lead-based primers; limiting the aforementioned navigation through the main channel; avoiding damage to the new bridge, since the two structures are in close proximity; and limiting the nesting of birds, specifically falcons that already occupy

the old bridge.

Matthew Arms, acting director of environmental planning with the Port of Long Beach, said a pair of peregrine falcons have been nesting under the existing Gerald Desmond Bridge since at least 2012. “Normally, they would not want to nest in such a noisy or disruptive area, so that makes them a little bit unusual,” he said. “They have stayed in this one nest year-round for many years, and that’s unusual. Typically, after the eggs hatch and the babies are out of the nest, they leave and come back to the same spot year after year. But these falcons have held up there under the bridge all year long. They’re a unique pair.”

Port staff hired Carl Thelander – principal of BioResources Consultants, an Ojai-based environmental firm – to monitor the falcons and to determine if the construction of the new bridge was disturbing their habitat.

Now that the falcons’ home is set to be demolished, Arms said a plan is being put in place by Thelander, with close consultation from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, to build a new nesting area for the falcons on the new bridge. “Those conversations are . . . happening to figure out what the transition plan for those falcons will be,” he said. ■



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Construction is underway on the 566,000-square-foot Los Angeles Premium Outlets, located off the 405 Freeway at the Avalon Boulevard exit in Carson. (Rendering courtesy of the City of Carson)

■ By BRANDON RICHARDSON
Senior Writer

Carson Breaks Ground On Massive Outlet Mall

Officials from the Carson Reclamation Authority (CRA), the City of Carson and the state government celebrated the early stages of site work for the Los Angeles Premium Outlets, an upscale outlet center off the 405 Freeway at Avalon Boulevard, on August 14.

“This landfill closed in 1968. For about the first 10 years, not a whole lot happened. But from 1978 on, there’s been one group after another . . . that have made a run at it,” Carson City Manager John Raymond told the Business Journal. “There have been different developers talking about an outlet mall going back maybe 20 years. This plan being proposed goes back to probably 2013.”

The project, a joint venture by developers Macerich of Santa Monica, and Simon Property Group of Indianapolis, spans 566,000 square feet, including 2,500 linear feet of frontage along the 405 Freeway in Carson, to be built in two phases. Current plans include shops and restaurants elevated above street level, with ground-level parking below. The developers are aiming for a fall 2021 opening. No tenants have been announced at

this time.

The land is owned by the CRA, a city-operated agency created to hold the title of 157 acres of landfill that are available for development. Macerich and Simon had the option to purchase the land from the CRA but opted for a ground lease instead. Details of the lease are still being negotiated, but Raymond said the lease period will extend for about 50 years with long-term extension options. The lease agreement is expected to be finalized in the next month or two.

“We are so pleased to be a part of this innovative new chapter for upscale outlet shopping in Los Angeles,” Mark Silvestri, executive vice president of corporate real estate and COO of development for Simon Property Group, said in a statement. “We, along with our partners at Macerich, are excited for the future of this center and its surrounding cities and communities.”

As the property owner, the city is on the hook for \$40 million worth of environmental ground improvements, including grading, and the installation of a landfill gas system and a special liner to mitigate fumes given off by the decomposing landfill. Former redevelopment bonds and an environmental trust cover the city’s costs. The city is also handling the installation of concrete piles and the pouring of the nearly 900,000-square-

foot slab, which is being paid for by the developer to the tune of \$55 million.

Developing structures over a landfill is tricky, Raymond explained. Since April, the city has been driving 14-inch-square piles 20 to 25 feet into the ground below the landfill to act as a base for the future structure so that it does not sink as the landfill subsides over time. Some piles are as long as 100 feet, depending on the depth of the landfill. Raymond said all piles should be in place by mid-September and the city will deliver the completed slab, ready for development, in the spring of next year.

The site has been scouted three or four times by the National Football League, most recently for the new Los Angeles Rams football stadium, which ultimately ended up in Inglewood, Raymond said. “It’s been described as the largest undeveloped parcel on a freeway in Southern California,” he added. “[The site’s] history of un-success becomes a burden on the community. It’s been kind of an albatross around the neck of Carson and to turn it into something that is going to be . . . glamorous and be a super-regional draw – we couldn’t have asked for a better project.”

New Affordable Housing Approved For Central Long Beach

The Long Beach City Council unanimously (7-0) approved a mixed-use development consisting of 88 affordable units and medical office space during its August 13 meeting. Fifth District Councilmember Stacy Mungo was absent. Located at 1500 E. Anaheim St., the five-story development by BRIDGE Housing includes 18,136 square feet of medical clinic space and 1,100 square feet of commercial office space. The project also includes a three-story, 156-stall parking garage, “with a partial fourth-floor outdoor terrace,” according to city documents. During the meeting, Mayor Robert Garcia said BRIDGE is “delivering a quality project. I think the children’s clinic partnership is fantastic. The community support is critical and you’re doing exactly what we need. This community does need housing that is affordable and accessible, particularly to people who are vulnerable and are struggling across our city.” A groundbreaking is expected in late 2020, according to city staff.

Planning Commission Approves Dave & Buster’s For Towne Center

During its August 22 meeting, the Long Beach Planning Commission unanimously approved a proposal to demolish 29,667 square feet of building area at the Long Beach Towne Center to construct a 41,394-square-foot Dave & Buster’s location. The restaurant and arcade would replace the food court and several existing retail spaces, as well as much of the outdoor dining area. “The proposed project would result in a total net increase of 13,281 square feet of building area to the existing commercial shopping center,” according to city documents. The project also provides “opportunity for a future business in the newly developed 1,554 square foot tenant space located at the northeasterly side of the project site,” currently part of the outdoor dining area. The Dave & Buster’s location would include 16,906 square feet of arcade and prize floor area, two bars totaling nearly 5,000 square feet, 2,377 square feet for dining, a 4,675-square-foot kitchen, 2,213 square feet of private event space and 2,085 square feet of office space. The proposal requires two conditional-use permits, one to allow an amusement arcade and another for on-site alcohol sales. Under the city’s municipal code, pinball machines are classified as a way of gambling; however, the city is in the process of reclassifying pinball as a game of skill, which would allow Dave & Buster’s to include such games in its arcade.

Bryant Rubber Corp. Relocating Headquarters To Long Beach

Commercial real estate services company Cushman & Wakefield recently announced that Bryant Rubber Corp., a manufacturing company, is relocating its corporate headquarters to Long Beach with a 10-year lease. Located at 1580 W. Carson St., the newly renovated 43,787-square-foot facility also will serve as the company’s U.S. manufacturing and North American research and development (R&D) center.

“This new Long Beach space is a high image facility in the prestigious Long Beach Business Center and the surrounding submarket environment will showcase the company as a world class manufacturer,” Jeffrey Morgan, a Cushman executive



The Long Beach Planning Commission approved plans to demolish portions of the Long Beach Towne Center, including the food court, to make way for a Dave & Buster’s arcade and restaurant. (Rendering courtesy of the City of Long Beach)

director at the company’s El Segundo office who represented Bryant Rubber, stated. “Rexford Industrial recently completed an exceptional remodeling process to the subject property prior to our arrival as a prospect. The excellent condition, ready-to-move-in, was a major deciding factor for Bryant Rubber.”

The facility includes nearly 28,400 square feet of warehouse space and nearly 16,400 square feet of modern office space. Bryant Rubber plans to take up occupancy of the office space during the fourth quarter of this year, with manufacturing and R&D to begin during the first quarter of 2020. Founded in 1971, the company

is currently headquartered in Harbor City. Marc Bonando of Kidder Matthews represented Rexford in the deal.

Planning Commission Approves Condo Development

The Long Beach Planning Commission during its August 22 meeting approved a proposal to develop four condominium units at 4122 E. Mendez St., a 9,789-square-foot vacant lot on the northeast corner of Pacific Coast Highway and Termino Avenue. Located next door to the Villa Pacifica condo community, the proposal includes two three-story buildings with garages on the ground floor and

unit sizes ranging from 1,266 square feet to 1,438 square feet.

West Long Beach Marijuana Operation Approved By Commission

The Long Beach Planning Commission approved the development of a two-story, 12,920-square-foot cannabis facility during its August 1 meeting. Located at 1360 W. Cowles St. on the Westside, the facility would be used for the cultivation, manufacturing, distribution and testing of marijuana and related products. The commission approved the proposal unanimously, with commissioners Josh LaFarga and Andy Perez absent.

300-Unit Luxury Complex Breaks Ground In Carson

Evolve South Bay, a 300-unit luxury apartment complex by MBK Rental Living, recently broke ground at 20330 S. Main St. in Carson. The 11.8-acre project includes one- and two-bedroom three-story stacked flats with top-floor lofts and private garages. Resident amenities include a state-of-the-art fitness center, a resort-style pool and spa, outdoor fitness equipment, a dog park, a business center and more. The project is being constructed by Snyder Langston and is expected to begin pre-leasing in early 2020. Evolve South Bay is part of the City of Carson redevelopment effort known as The Boulevards at South Bay, a 300-acre mixed-use

vision that includes retail, entertainment, hospitality and new housing.

Stepp Commercial Completes Three Multi-Million Multi-Family Sales

Long Beach-based Stepp Commercial has closed on three multi-family property sales totaling over \$8.3 million since mid-July. Principal Robert Stepp represented the seller, Long Beach Trading Company, in the nearly \$4.65 million sale of a 20-unit apartment complex located at 5075 Atlantic Ave. in North Long Beach. The buyer, a Los Angeles-based private investor, was represented by NAI Capital Vice President Mario Gandara. Stepp and Vice President Mark Witsken represented the seller, Palos Verdes-based 2121 LBB LLC, in the \$1.86 million sale of an 11-unit property at 2121 Long Beach Blvd. in the South Wrigley neighborhood. The buyer, Marina Del Rey-based BayWest Investments, was represented by Stepp Vice President Todd Hawke. Stepp and Travis Traweek of Stepp Commercial represented the seller, LB View, in the \$1.82 million sale of an eight-unit apartment property at 1746 E. 10th St. The buyer was a private Los Angeles investor. “Long Beach’s eastside has been an increasingly desirable residential location as it is walking distance to the popular 4th Street Retro Row,” Stepp said of the 10th Street sale, the most recent of the three transactions. ■

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The Long Beach City Council approved the development of an 88-unit affordable housing project at 1500 E. Anaheim Ave. in Central Long Beach. (Rendering courtesy of the City of Long Beach)

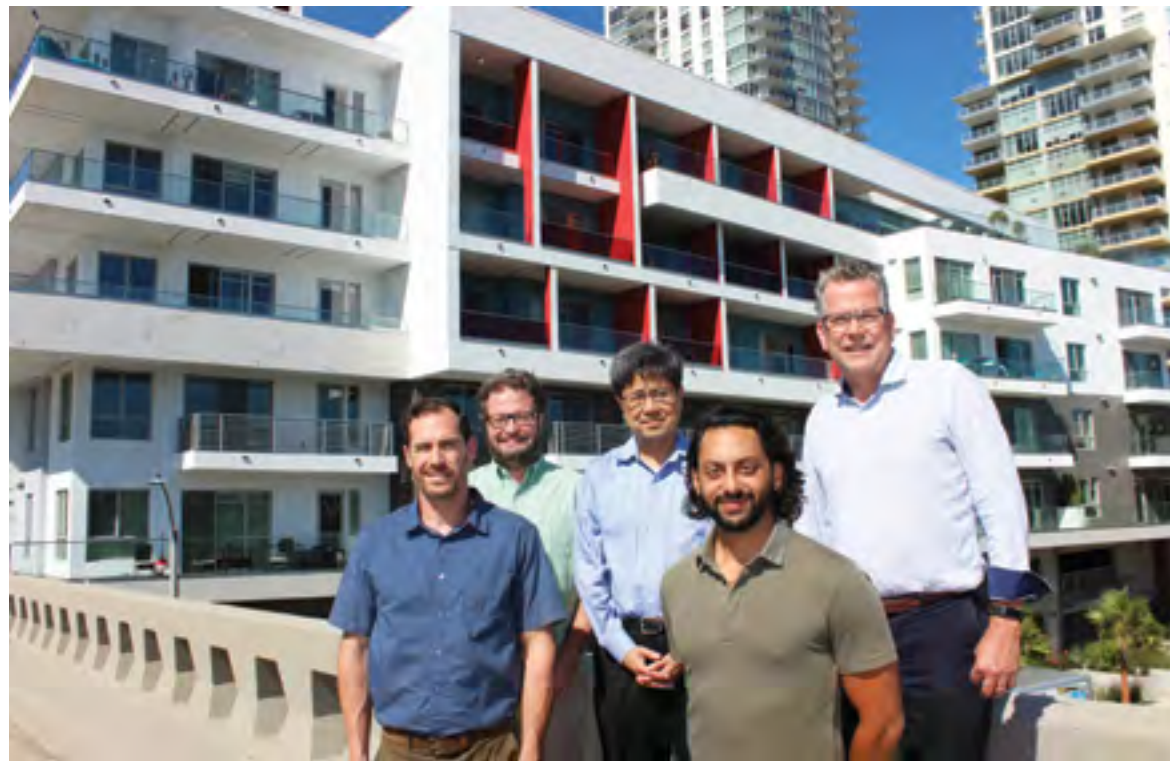
Bryant Rubber Corp. is relocating its headquarters, U.S. manufacturing and North American research and development operations from Harbor City to 1580 W. Carson St. in Long Beach later this year, commercial real estate services company Cushman & Wakefield recently announced. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

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Building A Better Long Beach: Creating A Downtown Live-Work-Play Campus



The 442 Residences, named for its address on West Ocean Boulevard, is a 94-unit multi-family development by Ensemble Real Estate Solutions & Investments. It opened in May. The building was designed by Studio T-Square 2 (STS2). Pictured from left: Christ Bystedt, director of architecture for STS2; Juan Vidal, project manager and building information modelling director for STS2; Henry Tong, design partner for STS2; Kevin Nemadoust, associate for Ensemble; and John Waldron, managing partner for STS2. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**
Senior Writer

With the opening of the 55% leased 442 Residences, Ensemble Real Estate Solutions & Investments is one step closer to completing its live-work-play urban campus in Downtown Long Beach. The housing development is an extension of the 15-story 444 W. Ocean Blvd. office building, John Waldron, managing partner at architecture firm Studio T-Square 2's Long Beach office, told the Business Journal.

"The last component of this campus will be the commercial building out front," Waldron said of the campus's third building, which fronts Ocean Boulevard. "When the construction office moves out and the current tenant moves out, it'll become more of a retail and restaurant space."

The first phase of the campus was the 2015 interior redesign and exterior re-branding of the office building at 444 W. Ocean Blvd., which is owned by Ensemble. The second phase, the 442 Residences, is a 94-unit, market-rate apartment building that began leasing in March and received its first residents in May. While the project is 55% leased, not all residents have moved into their units, according to Kevin Nemadoust, an associate for Ensemble.

Inspiration for the mid-century modern design of the 442 Residences evolved from Long Beach's architectural heritage, as well as the adjacent office buildings, Henry Tong, design partner at Studio T-Square 2's Long Beach office, explained. The five-story residential building is composed of studio, one- and two-bedroom units

ranging in size from 514 to 1,260 square feet. Monthly rents range from about \$2,000 to nearly \$3,700.

The primary amenity within the building is its roof deck, which overlooks the Pacific Ocean and Long Beach landmarks such as the Queen Mary. The floor of the deck is made to resemble and pay homage to the decks aboard the iconic ship, according to Tong. The space includes an outdoor movie screening area, a pizza oven and seating. Other amenities include a club room and fitness center adjoined to the roof deck, as well as a business office on the ground floor.

"Our amenities are not the biggest or the largest, but we've put a lot of effort into designing them thoughtfully and in a way that we could program [them] to really serve our residents," Nemadoust said.

"There is also lots of stuff going on around the development site, and that encourages people to walk around," Tong added. Residents have a short walk from 442 Residences to entertainment and dining at The Pike Outlets and Pine Avenue, as well as the Aquarium of the Pacific and Shoreline Drive restaurants. Nemadoust said work has already begun to create an outdoor "living room" space just outside the coffeehouse and cafe Aroma di Roma, which is located on the ground floor of the 444 office building. This is another amenity for residents in the 442 Residences, he said, noting the shop will soon have extended hours for people to enjoy coffee, beer and wine into the evening.

Ensemble has three other projects in Long Beach, including The Crest at 207 Seaside Way, a 112-unit mixed-use project also designed by Studio T-Square 2 slated to open later this year. Construction has not begun on Ensemble's 345-unit 3rd + Pacific or 141-unit Magnolia & Broadway projects, each tentatively named after the intersection at which they are located. Studio T-Square 2 also designed the 189-unit Inkwell mixed-use project by Raintree-Evergreen LLC at 127 E. Broadway and a 146-unit mixed-use development by MKP LLC at 201 Pacific Coast Hwy., neither of which have begun construction.

"One thing we like about Long Beach is it's one of the last affordable beach communities in all of California," Nemadoust said. "We feel like Long Beach itself is rare in the sense that it's urban yet also has aspects of suburban neighborhoods and also is right by the water. We don't really see that anywhere else. We value being a part of the growth and expansion [in Downtown Long Beach]." ■



The roof deck at the 442 Residences was made to resemble the decks of the Queen Mary, which can be seen from the outdoor community space. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

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Realty Views: Foreign Demand Impacting Housing Market

■ Perspective By **TERRY ROSS**

The influence of foreign buyers in the United States real estate markets – both commercial and residential – is nothing new and has been well documented over the years. Here in Southern California, because of our geographic location and many other attributes, we have been a magnet for buyers from outside our borders.

Now, with the home sales market becoming more challenging for sellers as buyers become more cautious – even with historically low levels of inventory – not much attention has been given to the impact that foreign buyers are having on our markets across the country.

According to recent statistics by the National Association of Realtors (NAR), participation by foreign buyers in our residential market dropped by a whopping 36% from April 2018 through March of this year. This was based on the number of purchases and the average price during that period. NAR said that foreigners purchased 266,800 homes valued at \$121 billion from March 2017

to March 2018, compared to only 183,100 properties purchased at a value of \$77.9 billion from April 2018 to March 2019. The median price paid by foreigners also dropped from \$290,400 to \$259,600 from April 2018 to March 2019.

For the seventh year in a row, the Chinese were the top purchasers of U.S. homes, followed by buyers from Canada, India, the United Kingdom and Mexico. The number of homes bought by Chinese and Canadian nationals was very close, but the pricier homes purchased by Chinese buyers increased their total dollar volume by more than \$1 billion over the Canadians. Before 2015, Canadians had the lead in sales volume, but the Chinese extended the lead in 2018 before pulling back between April 2018 and March 2019.

"A confluence of many factors – slower economic growth abroad, tighter capital controls in China, a stronger U.S. dollar and a low inventory of homes for sale – contributed to the pullback of foreign buyers," noted Lawrence Yun, NAR's chief economist, in an interview with CNBC. "However, the magnitude

of the decline is quite striking, implying less confidence in owning a property in the U.S."

The reasons for the pullback are several, and are up for debate. Many blame the current political climate, the trade wars and rising tariffs that have scared off Chinese buyers. Others point to a loss of confidence in the U.S. market and fears regarding immigration policy. Inquiries about U.S. homes on a leading Chinese website, Juwai.com, were down over 27% from last year.

Chinese government policy is also likely to be one of the reasons for the reduced activity, since that government has tightened regulations on cash moving out of the country for foreign purchases. Also, economic growth in China slid from 6.9% in 2017 to 6.3% this year, and is being cited as another factor in this trend. Chinese buyers had the largest percentage drop in foreign U.S. home purchases in this latest survey.

NAR also believes that both the lack of inventory and the escalation of prices over the past few years have influenced foreign home buying in this country,

perhaps scaring off buyers.

The foreign buyers in the study are classified as those living both within and outside the U.S., 60% of which are recent immigrants and foreigners who live here for work, school, etc.

California is second to Florida when it comes to foreign homebuyers, with 12% of the total, followed by Texas, Arizona and New Jersey. A third of the Chinese home purchases in this country are in California. The Inland Empire, where prices are more moderate than along the coast, has become a popular area for many foreign purchasers.

Most of the speculation concerning the fall-off of foreign homebuyers centers around the pure investment side of purchasing homes. The changing view may be that residential homes are not as rewarding a money-making vehicle as they were just a couple of years ago.

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

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Female Entrepreneurs Driving Sustainability

(Continued from Page 1)

complying with a number of requirements set by the California Green Business Network. Of the 32 green businesses currently certified in Long Beach, 15 are led by women and three have a male-female team at their helm.

Fine Feathers Kombucha co-founder Jodine Penev West said she and her partner, Jay Penev, also used their personal experience to inform their sustainable business practices. While living in the Pacific Northwest, Penev West remembers she became more educated on the issue of sustainability, an awareness that still informs their business decisions today.

“My husband and I met when we were both working up in Portland, Oregon, and that’s just one of those places where you learn a lot more about sustainability and how to incorporate that into your life and your business,” she explained. “So when we moved down here and started our business, it was a no-brainer that we would run it as sustainably as possible.”

Fine Feathers Kombucha, a kombucha brewery in Central Long Beach, is on the city’s list of green certified businesses, but Penev West said their commitment goes beyond the requirements set forth by the program. “It’s something that we’re constantly thinking about,” she noted. From their level of production to their distribution network, everything is designed to leave the smallest environmental footprint possible, Penev West explained.

“We don’t overproduce, that’s one [way]. So we just meet our demands, we’re not sitting on a bunch of products and wasting a bunch of resources,” she said. In addition, Penev West noted, the company doesn’t have a far-reaching distribution network. “We try to stay as local as possible and work with distribution companies that are like-minded,” she added.

Measured by the number of companies seeking certification through the city’s green business program, interest in sustainable practices is high in Long Beach, according to Courtney Chatter-

son, Long Beach coordinator for the California Green Business Network and communications specialist for the Long Beach Office of Sustainability. “It’s been really great to see that so many businesses in Long Beach care about this program and care about the environment,” Chatterson said.

In addition to businesses like Darrell’s Bring Your Own Long Beach and Penev West’s Fine Feathers Kombucha, which were founded with sustainability in mind, many businesses on the city’s list of green-certified companies have adapted their practices to become more environmentally friendly. California’s high standards for sustainability, from waste management to building codes, have helped move the process along.

“Any time a business is setting up its new space, they’re going to have to meet more rigorous standards for energy and water efficiency,” Chatterson explained. “That makes it easier to certify new businesses. Older ones might have to do some retrofits,” she noted. As businesses adopt greener practices, whether it’s to comply with state regulations, to attract environmentally conscious clients or out of a sense of corporate responsibility, there’s a ripple effect as their suppliers are compelled to do the same.

“Some of the [certification requirements], like asking businesses to purchase recycled-content paper, are potentially market changing,” Chatterson said. “Because more and more businesses are asking for those kinds of products and the price keeps coming down, more options become available.”

Celia Brennan, owner of the green-certified Seven Hair Studio in Carroll Park, said when she began working her way down the city’s checklist, she discovered wealth or eco-friendly product lines that weren’t available when she started her business in 2012. “It’s getting easier, because more companies are realizing there’s a need for things like that,” Brennan said.

And it’s not just LED light bulbs and recycled toilet paper. Brennan has furnished her salon with new water-efficient shower heads and a tap water filtration



Celia Brennan’s Seven Hair Studio on 4th Street became certified through the city’s green business program in May 2019. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

system to avoid waste created by water coolers. Plus, she’s using bamboo-based liners in her shampoo bowls to reduce the amount of harmful chemicals washed down the drain. “Our salon is servicing so many people per week that I feel like it’s making a difference and it’s a good place for us to talk to other people and hopefully try to influence them or inspire them,” Brennan pointed out.

By becoming part of the city’s green business network, companies can become ambassadors of sustainable practices, spreading the awareness among their customers and fellow entrepreneurs, Chatterson explained. “Each business that we certify becomes a sustainability champion,” she said. “I think the business community has a lot to contribute, especially small and medium-sized businesses, who make up a huge part of our economy.”

Most of the women leading sustainable businesses in Long Beach said the changes they had to make to reduce their impact on the environment were minor. “It really wasn’t that much more of an effort. It was just a little bit more documenting and being intentional about the choices you’re making,” Daniella Carter, founder and principal of Long Beach design firm Pretty Smart, told the Business Journal. “It’s something that’s just part of what we do and, in my opinion, part of being a good [corporate] citizen.”

Carter said incorporating greener business practices hasn’t come with any notable financial costs, but even if it did, the marketing value of being recognized as a green business and the long-term cost savings of sustainable technology do their part to balance the scale. “It’s a small price to pay,” she concluded.

Why have women taken such a prominent role in promoting sustainability in Long Beach’s business community and beyond? “I’m not sure, but I love it!” Chatterson said. Studies have found that women are still more likely to be in charge of purchasing household items, groceries and other packaged products that make up a large portion of household waste

production. The packaging industry accounts for approximately 40% of global plastic production, and 20% of globally produced plastic ends up in households in the form of consumer products, according to a literature review on plastics, gender and the environment sponsored by the non-governmental organization Women Engaged for a Common Future.

Both Darrell and Local Harvest Certified Farmers Market Director Lee Ostendorf noted that women and those who identify as female are also prominent drivers of sustainability in their role as consumers. “It’s important to them who they buy their food from [and] how to prepare it, and some of them are even learning how to grow things,” Ostendorf said about her majority-female customer base. Reducing the amount of packaging they use is important to her clientele as well. “Most people bring their own bags; most people won’t accept anything packaged,” she noted.

But there’s still plenty of work to be done, Chatterson noted. “There’s a lot of education that needs to happen, because people might be aware of certain aspects of sustainability and their environmental impact and not others,” she said. To further promote sustainable practices, Darrell said, it’s important for business owners and private citizens to engage with their local leaders and advocate for sustainably-minded policies.

“I think it’s really important to get involved in policy change, to get involved in your local government somehow,” Darrell said. In addition, she noted, local governments as well as the private sector should advertise the positive impact sustainable practices can have for a company’s success and the tools available to get them there. “I think a lot of businesses are willing to make those changes, if we can put forward some of the advantages in having a sustainable business model,” Chatterson said. “I think that just having those tools available can really make a big difference.” ■



Daniella Carter, founder and principal of the architecture and design studio Pretty Smart Design said her company now offers bike locks and repairs to employees to encourage emissions-free commutes. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

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Women Entrepreneurs Gain Traction In Coworking Spaces

■ By DENNY CRISTALES
Staff Writer

Starting a business can be a difficult endeavor, but a group of local women entrepreneurs are leveraging the support from coworking spaces to expand their companies and get them off the ground. Coworking facilities provide shared office spaces, at a cost, for freelancers and entrepreneurs. These spaces often provide amenities, such as Wi-Fi or general office resources.

Long Beach women entrepreneurs, some of whom have used coworking spaces for years, told the Business Journal that these office settings have played a critical role in promoting their brands. Some examples include having access to a network of professionals, operating inside an affordable office space and collaborating with fellow coworking entrepreneurs.

Work Evolution Laboratories, 235 E. Broadway

As a licensed independent agent of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veronica Lira founded the nonprofit Alternatives for Vets in November 2015 to deliver legal and mental health services to local veterans. “Our nonprofit specializes in providing education and information,” she said. “We created a model by which we assist the veteran, or their family members, applying for Department of Veterans Affairs benefits.” Lira said the nonprofit provides pro bono legal services for veterans, as well as free talk therapy for clients experiencing anxiety or depression. The sessions are supervised by a licensed social worker.

Previously operating at a public facility in Lakewood, Alternatives for Vets relocated to Work Evolution Laboratories in June 2017. Lira said the main benefit of the coworking space is being able to network and benefit from other professionals who are operating their businesses at the same facility. For instance, a business at Work Evolution Laboratories specializing in online design assisted in developing the website for Alternatives for Vets. “Having accessibility to other professionals saves time,” she said.

Megan Papageorge is owner of Sweet Peach Planning, a wedding and event planning business. She has used Work Evolution Laboratories’ coworking spaces since 2015. Living blocks away from the site, Papageorge walks to work every day to run her wedding business.

Sweet Peach Planning offers a full-service wedding package, which includes coordinating ceremonies and receptions and providing a list of vendors. As her business has grown, Papageorge said she has moved to different and bigger coworking spaces within Work Evolution to accommodate her expansion. “It’s a nice balance where you can be collaborative in a social way and a business way,” she said.

The next step in Sweet Peach Planning’s growth is to finalize the launch of Peachprint, a yearlong subscription box for brides that will include beauty and

wellness products. “We believe that you should not just enjoy the one day of your wedding, but the year leading up to it,” she said. Papageorge aims to debut the box by the end of this year.

WeWork, 100 W. Broadway

Lisa Mae Brunson founded Wonder Women Tech in 2015. Located at WeWork in Downtown Long Beach, Wonder Women Tech is a nonprofit organization that seeks to educate, network and inspire women to pursue the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM). Wonder Women Tech hosts workshops and events on a global scale, including Manaus, Brazil, Washington, D.C. and London. The organization hosts an annual convention at the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center, which takes place this year from November 7 to November 9.

Brunson, who is a Long Beach resident, said the organization first started in her living room with a group of five individuals. After two years of working from home, Brunson said she learned about WeWork Long Beach in 2017. WeWork has multiple coworking locations in the world, including New York, Melbourne and Tokyo. Eventually, Wonder Women Tech leased a coworking space at WeWork.

“Being . . . in a coworking environment has really helped us to expand our network to collaborate and to have bartering . . . and partnership opportunities with other companies that have been inside the WeWork ecosystem locally, nationally and globally,” she said. “That’s been one of the greatest benefits for us here in Long Beach.”

Boasting a master’s degree in public health and 20 decades of consulting experience, Lara Vu launched Alfabet Soup Consulting with her husband, Brett Dickstein, in April 2017. After working with entities like WebMD and UNICEF, Vu said she had a desire to start her own consulting firm. With the advent of Alfabet Soup Consulting, Vu and Dickstein offer various clients advisory services, which includes helping potential entrepreneurs start a small business and providing organizational development to nonprofit organizations.

After running the day-to-day operations of Alfabet Soup Consulting from home for three months, Vu said she quickly decided to find an office space. “It drove me crazy [working from home], mostly because I was very much used to working in an office,” she said. Vu and Dickstein selected WeWork for their office location. “Having this coworking space really helped me to get out of the house and focus better, Vu added. “I needed some privacy, and I was really able to establish myself here.”

In addition to her consulting work, Vu is in the preliminary stages of publicly launching Mila’s Keeper, which is a consumer products business that focuses on women and breastfeeding. She developed

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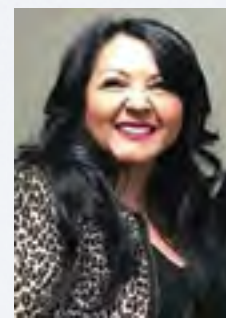
Veronica Lira, founder of the nonprofit Alternatives for Vets, said she is able to network with other professionals operating their businesses at Work Evolution Laboratories, a coworking space located at 235 E. Broadway. She moved into the offices in June 2017. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)



Lisa Mae Brunson founded Wonder Women Tech in 2015. Located at the WeWork offices at 100 W. Broadway, Wonder Women Tech is a nonprofit organization that seeks to educate, network and inspire women to pursue the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, arts and math. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

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The women and men of California Resources Corporation (CRC) are proud to champion women in the workforce. Employees at CRC created a Women’s Interest Network to help women excel and reach their career goals. CRC also conducts business with community groups and local businesses who are either women-owned or led by trailblazing women. For example, CRC is proud to partner with Sandy Cajas of the Regional Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (RHCC). RHCC is a Long Beach-based organization which aims to promote local Hispanic-owned businesses in Southern California and help build a vibrant and prosperous business community.



“The Regional Hispanic Chamber of Commerce appreciates CRC’s support to host our annual Energy Forum. Energy is a critical issue in California and residents should understand the costs and impacts energy policies have on the business community. It is partners like CRC that allow our organization to continue to educate and engage local business owners and policymakers.”

- Sandy Cajas, President, Regional Hispanic Chamber of Commerce



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Lara Vu operates two businesses, Alfabet Soup Consulting and Mila's Keeper, at the WeWork coworking offices at 100 W. Broadway. After three months of working from home, Vu said she relocated to WeWork in 2017 to manage her consulting firm more efficiently. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)



Nancy Woo created Imaginaria Visionary Services last November to provide consulting services for clients who wish to expand on their creative ideas. Woo uses the shared office spaces at coworking facility Ironfire, 4195 N. Viking Wy., to meet with clients. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

(Continued from Page 22)

the Mila's Keeper concept in March 2018 and is outsourcing work for a prototype device that keeps breastmilk cold in a portable apparatus.

Vu said she wanted to create a simple device for on-the-go, breastfeeding moms to keep their milk cold for their children. "If you look in the market, there are a zillion little devices to help keep your beer cold," she said. "And yet, for breast milk – there's probably no liquid more important – there is not enough out there to make sure the milk stays cool." Vu, who is a mom, said a prototype device is expected to launch later this year.

Ironfire, 4195 N. Viking Wy.

Nancy Woo has been a freelance writer for the past eight years. She created Imaginaria Visionary Services last November to provide what she calls "visionary consulting" for those seeking to bring their creative ideas to life. Ironfire provides a coworking space for Woo to offer Imaginaria's services, which include coaching, organizational development and marketing consulting.

Woo said Ironfire's private meeting spaces help her convene with clients. She uses a general, shared office space at the facility to handle work for her business.

"I definitely have an artistic and cre-

ative motivation to help people in our Long Beach community," Woo said. "Ironfire has been so completely transformative for me. As a writer, I have been working from home, and it has been hit or miss. . . . This has allowed me to see myself more as a business instead of just an individual working here and there on different projects."

Josh Rencher, CEO and founder of Ironfire, said the coworking facility has unreserved seating and common spaces for all of its members. Rencher said Ironfire's facility is 2,100 square feet in size.

Stephanie Terronez is co-founder of Cow Hugger, an online boutique that

sells vegan apparel. When Terronez and her partner, Patrick, met in college, they both bonded over their love of animals. Committed to doing their part in treating animals ethically, the couple made the decision to go vegan in 2004.

"We all collectively have enormous power to make positive changes in the world," she said. "And it all starts with compassion and the idea that we should be aware of the effect we are having on all other living beings. That is what is behind Cow Hugger."

The concept of Cow Hugger began in 2014, but the website did not launch until 2016. Terronez began working at Ironfire in late 2018. She said she needed a location to manage her website, as opposed to doing work from home. Terronez said Ironfire is a comfortable and welcoming space that allows her to concentrate on her job. "Everybody is open and ready to answer questions for fellow coworkers," she said.

CommonGrounds Workplace, 145 W. Broadway

Corrie Dolman said her passion for architecture began when she was eight years old. As a child, she told her family she wanted to build and create things when she was older. "I actually really like the hands-on side of architecture," she said. "I like that it's very artistic, but it's also very technical. Every project brings new challenges to keep you on your toes." She founded Dolman Architecture in 2015. As a licensed architect in the state, Dolman said that she and her team have assisted in crafting interior designs in places like Santa Ana, Northridge, Westminster and Long Beach.

Dolman said she chose to operate her architecture firm at CommonGrounds over other coworking spaces in the area because of the "more personalized" feel of the facility. "I didn't want it to be too corporate, and I felt like CommonGrounds reflected my personal design taste," she said. Dolman said the site allowed her to have a professional office space, as opposed to running her business from home.

Working in a field primarily dominated by men, she advises other women pursuing similar career paths to maintain discipline and a competitive spirit. "As long as you have the dedication and drive, you can get anything done," she said. "I think it's funny, because my husband is actually a teacher, which is a very female-dominated role. . . . "We can't let another person's personal ideals prevent us from doing what we love."

Hannah Peaslee, who also operates out of CommonGrounds, founded her business management firm, HP & Co. LLC, earlier this year. Peaslee said her firm focuses on strategic financial planning for clients. "I am kind of the puppet master behind the scenes," she said. "Whether our clients are making a life decision, or they want to invest or grow their wealth, we want to make sure they're making the best and most well-informed decisions. We want to make sure they have professionals on their team who are helping them achieve their goals."

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Hannah Peaslee founded her business management firm, HP & Co. LLC, earlier this year. A month after launching her business, she moved into CommonGrounds coworking space, 145 W. Broadway, after months of searching for an accommodating environment for her work. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

(Continued from Page 24)

A Long Beach resident with more than a decade of experience in business finances and management, Peaslee said she began searching for office spaces around the same time she started her business. When she found CommonGrounds and settled on an agreement for a space, she said the employees were accommodating. She also said the interior design of CommonGrounds facility also helped her achieve a level of professionalism that she was looking for.

“In terms of the aesthetics of how my brand is put out there, I actually feel like CommonGrounds helped me achieve that [professionalism],” she said. “If I had a client come to CommonGrounds, we could have the board room. We have somebody providing coffee. It’s a certain level of service that my clientele are used to. This space actually allowed me to develop my brand even further.”

Peaslee said CommonGrounds’ resources, such as reception services, mail sorting and distribution and office equipment, have provided many cost benefits in starting her business. “If I had chosen to go with a free-standing office space, I would not have had any of these things,” she said. “By joining a coworking space, I was able to launch my business as an efficient, well-functioning office from day one.” ■

From Stargazing To Disney Tunes: Personalized Entertainment Is Trending At Weddings

■ By **ALENA MASCHKE**
Senior Writer

Imagine a street filled with the smell of cotton candy, the melodious sound of a barrel organ floating by, as a sparkling Ferris wheel slowly spins against a pastel-colored California sunset. This scene, complete with other familiar elements of a traditional street carnival, was among the most extravagant weddings Marni Farmer, owner of Long Beach-based So Smitten Special Events, has had the opportunity to plan so far. “The sky’s the limit,” Farmer said, with a laugh. “If someone wants a 40-foot Ferris wheel at their wedding, we can definitely make it happen.”

While not every couple has the resources necessary to pull off this level of opulence for their special day, specialized entertainment has become a common feature of many wedding celebrations. The ideal entertainment, Farmer explained, completes the celebration, rather than interrupts it, and offers a “unique, memorable, one-of-a-kind experience that we might not get somewhere else.”

To create this one-of-a-kind experience, couples are drawing inspiration from

movies, social media and the internet, more broadly. Growing up in Tennessee, Brittany Chandler, owner and lead performer of The Dancing Fire Entertainment, said it was uncommon to see special entertainment or performances at weddings, but times have changed. “The internet has really helped people realize that they can [now] have anything they want as entertainment at their wedding,” Chandler told the Business Journal.

In California, she noted, there’s a long-standing tradition of entertainment as part of a couple’s special day. Especially among Mexican and Mexican American families, musical and dance performances are a cherished custom. “Mariachi are a standard at Mexican American weddings, and that got everything started,” Chandler said. Today, companies like The Dancing Fire Entertainment have performers with expertise in a variety of cultural and modern dances, as well as acrobats and even dancing robots ready to go.

“The cool thing about having dancers is that usually, at the end of the show, we get people on the dance floor. That interactive element is really important,” Chandler explained. “The dancers help facilitate the par-



Tarot card and palm readers have emerged as an entertainment trend for weddings – and other events – in recent years, according to Dan D’Sa, vice president of catering company Grand Food & Beverage. (Photograph by Michael Farmer, f/8 Studios)

ty by doing that, and it really helps break the ice.” In recent years, she noted, it’s become more popular for the bride and groom to be involved in the performances. Whether they choose to be part of the performance or not, Chandler said, “it’s the bride and groom who are really the show. That’s why we try to incorporate them as much as possible, because

it’s their day and we’re just there to add a memorable moment.”

As for mariachi, things have mostly remained traditional, said Rodrigo Rodríguez Diaz, who represents the Long Beach-based Mariachi Romanza. But, he noted, as cross-cultural couples become more common, his group has made an effort to

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Many couples draw inspiration for their wedding entertainment from movies or TV shows, The Dancing Fire Entertainment's Brittany Chandler told the Business Journal. "That sparks the idea," Chandler said. (Photograph courtesy of The Dancing Fire Entertainment)

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incorporate music from other cultures, like traditional Armenian and Jewish songs. "We understand that we live in a cosmopolitan city, so we have to be flexible," Diaz explained.

Still, a majority of the group's bookings come from couples looking to represent their Mexican heritage, he noted. "To my understanding, this comes from the history that California was once part of Mexico, so there are still people here who have those roots," Diaz said. "Frequently, they don't know the name of the song [and] they don't know the lyrics, but once we start playing, they recognize it and they go flying through their memories."

With the help of technology, Mariachi Romanza even made an appearance at a wedding halfway around the globe. The bride, originally from California, requested a performance for her wedding, in Poland. Using video conferencing software, the band was able to fulfill her request and bring a little bit of California to Eastern Europe, something that would have been unthinkable just a few decades ago. "Things like that happen and they're fun," Diaz said.

International weddings have become increasingly common, Megan Papageorge, CEO of event planning company Sweet Peach Planning, told the Business Journal. With friends and family members flying in from across the world, many couples decide to focus more on spending time with their loved ones, scaling down the number of en-

tertainment options on their big day, Papageorge noted. "As much as people like being entertained, it's actually a trend right now to just enjoy the moment and be present," she said.

Harpists and classical musicians remain a popular option for both ceremonies and receptions, said Brian Noel, who has worked as a harpist for over 30 years. "Just seeing a harp at an event makes it memorable and the sound of it is just so beautiful and charming that I think it really sets the event apart," Noel explained. "When people leave the ceremony, they may not remember what kind of flowers were used, but they'll definitely remember seeing the harp up at the front, with the couple." Classical music is still the most common choice for ceremonies, while some couples request Disney tunes and pop songs for the reception, Noel noted.

Couples looking for an experience that is literally out-of-this world can give astronomer Craig Bobchin a call. Bobchin's company, Astronomy 4 You, provides high-quality telescopes as well as knowledgeable astronomers to help couples and their guests dive into the night sky. "For example, you can show them a constellation or a star, something that is occurring that night, that time of the year," Bobchin explained. The experience is guaranteed to be memorable, he pointed out. "Looking up and seeing Saturn's rings or the Orion nebula in the winter, or the Pleiades – all those stars that look like diamonds on velvet, is something that you won't soon forget," Bobchin said.

Whether it's dancing robots, star-gazing or traditional musical entertainers, couples are increasingly choosing entertainment options that reflect their own interests, heritage or personality, Papageorge pointed out. "It's very intentional, they're choosing one or two things to highlight," she said. "Couples are choosing entertainment that's representative of who they are." ■



Block off an entire street for a carnival-themed wedding is sure to create a memorable experience for the bride and groom, according to wedding planner Marni Farmer. (Photograph by Michael Farmer, f/8 Studios)

Catering Trends Lend To Interactive Dining At Weddings

■ By DENNY CRISTALES
Staff Writer

Gone are the days of traditional wedding cakes and roundtable meals; representatives of local wedding catering businesses indicated that wedding couples are favoring more interactive and exotic fares for their special day.

Jeanette Finley, catering sales manager of Premier Catering Company, the official catering company for the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center and the Aquarium of the Pacific, told the Business Journal that couples this year have been favoring food stations or multiple small menu samplings. "People are trying to do something different, whether it be like donuts or an ice cream cart," Finley said. "I think a lot of couples are just trying to be different and non-traditional." Some of these stations include bite-sized desserts or appetizers.

In addition to these stations, wedding receptions are seeing more family-style

dinners, said Sofia Riley, president of TGIS Catering Services, located at 2950 N. Airport Ln. As opposed to individual meals during the reception, guests grab samplings of various foods. "I think people want more variety," she said. "I think people want it to be more engaging. They don't want it to be where you set the chicken dinner on your plate and every-one kind of sits at their table. They want people to socialize. They want people to be more interactive."

Dana Buchanan, owner of Primal Alchemy Catering, located at 19 39th Pl., referred to this trend as "experiential dining." She said most couples have caught on that traditional wedding receptions aren't as engaging. When guests instead are required to be on the move or share their food, it forces interaction. "Today's couples want their guests to have fun with food and incorporate the wedding food into the experience of the wedding reception," she said. "They want to 'play' with

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Tamera Schulz, senior catering manager with the Aquarium of the Pacific, said wedding couples are using their cultural backgrounds as a way to influence their reception menus. For instance, one dish may be inspired by a couple's Hispanic or Hawaiian background. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

(Continued from Page 29)

their food [and] have it be interactional, delicious and memorable.”

Syndi Croad is owner of Moondance Catering. The business has three kitchens located throughout Los Angeles and Orange counties. Croad said food stations have evolved into a type of decor at weddings. Over the past few years, donut or champagne walls have been popular, she said. “A guest can come in and just pick up a glass off the wall,” she said. “Walls are in right now; I don’t know what it is. It can be a hot pretzel wall or a donut wall. . . Every client is uniquely different.”

Tamera Schulz, senior catering manager with the Aquarium of the Pacific, said part of that engagement also involves leveraging social media. Most couples are getting their ideas from platforms such as Instagram or Pinterest. “We’re more exposed to other cultures,” she said. “People are more aware of things that they have not had before. . . They want to experiment with their wedding menu.”

Cultural backgrounds also play a role in the reception, Schulz said. Instead of focusing on the typical steak, fish or chicken, couples are now requesting a “fusion inspired” menu that blends both of their heritages. One dish may be inspired by a couple’s Hispanic or Hawaiian background, for instance. “They also

may utilize their appetizers as a way to get experimental with their food choices so that they aren’t committing their whole dinner to do something with, say, curry,” Schulz said. “That’s a good way to bring in different cultures.”

A social awareness of dietary trends also plays a big factor in wedding food catering, said Riley, who named vegan and keto diets as one of the more popular requests. “The really popular things are the Impossible and Beyond Food [brands],” she added, referencing popular products that use plant-based ingredients to mimic meat-based foods, such as burgers.

Schulz said gluten-free requests are quite common, as well. The demand has been so high for the specialty diet, Schulz indicated that the Aquarium’s catering chef made the choice to make the menu 90% gluten-free. “And then we also offer specialty plates that cover multiple dietary concerns,” she said.

Riley said couples are either one of two ways: very budget conscious or willing to spend whatever it takes to have a good time. “It’s interesting, because people are saying that our middle-class is kind of fading a little bit,” she said. “I don’t know if there’s any correlation there, but people are either going all out or they’re just a little more budget conscious. It’s rarely in between.” ■



During a recent wedding reception in Palm Springs, Primal Alchemy Catering provided family-style dishes, according to Dana Buchanan, founder of the company. (Photo courtesy of Primal Alchemy Catering)

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The City As Your Backdrop: Popular Long Beach Spots For Wedding Photos



In August 2018, Michael Farmer, owner of f/8 Studios in California Heights, photographed Long Beach couple Kady and Asad during an engagement shoot throughout the city. The couple visited their favorite bars in Long Beach, including the Auld Dubliner, 71 S. Pine Ave., pictured here. (Photo by Michael Farmer, f/8 Studios Long Beach)

■ By **DENNY CRISTALES**
Staff Writer

An important aspect of weddings is photography — engagement photos are used to announce a couple's nuptials and convey a sense of their identity as a couple to future wedding guests, while onsite ceremony and reception photos capture memories to last a lifetime — which is why local wedding photographers stressed the importance of selecting the right location and photographer for photoshoots.

Molly Ann is the owner of Huntington Beach-based Luminaire Images. She photographs weddings in Long Beach a few times a year, often at venues such as the Long Beach Museum of Art and The Loft at 230 Pine Ave.

In 2015, Ann photographed a wedding at The Loft. The couple, Samantha and Michelle, traveled inside a party bus hours before the ceremony with their bridesmaids to take pictures at various Long Beach sites, including Harvey Milk Promenade Park.

Ann said the distinction between an indoor venue like The Loft and an outdoor one like the lawn at the Long Beach Museum of Art is the lighting. The Loft is more of an urban, rustic venue in comparison to the museum's coastal, outdoor aesthetic, according to Ann. While a darker room like The Loft may be more difficult to work in, Ann said the mark of a professional photographer is to excel in any setting.

"I know that one of the features of a really good wedding photographer is being experienced and knowledgeable and versatile enough to be able to work with extreme differing environments for weddings and lighting situations," she said.

Ron Nelson, executive director of the Long Beach Museum of Art, said that the museum is usually booked for weddings on Fridays and Saturdays during the summertime. Museum bookings through Sep-

tember 2020 show this trend will continue in the future. "When you look down the beach from here, then you look up toward downtown, and then you look south from here — it's a really long beach," he said. "And that's who we are — Long Beach. People see that, and I think people are just sort of memorized by how beautiful it is." Nelson was married at the museum in 2015.

Located right on the coast, the Hotel Maya is a popular venue for couples looking for a unique location, said Lisa Duncan, director of catering and convention services at the hotel. Spread out over 14 acres, hotel guests have access to a private dock, fire pits, a hookah lounge and a manmade beach — the largest of its kind in the city, according to Duncan.

"We hear all the time from photographers that they love that you can move 10 feet in either direction and you have a completely different backdrop," she said.

Dan D'Sa, vice president of The Grand Long Beach Event Center, said the site is hosting a wedding "about every weekend." He said the venue has updated its aesthetic to create a tropical atmosphere, including banana plants, bamboo and a waterfall fountain. Many couples have taken pictures in front of the fountain, which was specifically created to serve as a backdrop for ceremony photos.

When it comes to engagement shoots, D'Sa noted that couples are straying away from the typical beachy backdrop setting. "People are getting edgier," he said. "They're doing things in more industrial areas. . . . There have been some grittier shots behind chain-link fences and using black and white filters to get more of a vintage feel. It's really neat."

Jeanette Schelin is director of the Earl Burns Miller Japanese Garden, located on Earl Warren Drive at California State University, Long Beach. She noted that weddings are popular at the site, but she said wedding proposal shoots are now



In 2015, Molly Ann, the owner of the Huntington Beach-based Luminaire Images, photographed a wedding at The Loft, 230 Pine Ave. The couple, Samantha and Michelle, traveled inside a party bus hours before the ceremony with their bridesmaids to take pictures at various Long Beach sites, including Harvey Milk Promenade Park. (Photo by Luminaire Images)

quite common, too. "People call us and say they want to do a proposal in the garden," she said. "A guy can walk in with his gal and make it seem like he's just showing her this pretty little garden. But then he gets in and pops the question, she accepts and then all the friends run out and they get surrounded."

Erick Dell'aquila, owner of Wedding Photography LA & OC, said there are

a number of places in Downtown Long Beach, specifically where the ocean is visible, that are popular for couples. Dell'aquila specified areas such as the Rainbow Lagoon Park, the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center and the Queen Mary. "You want to capture the beauty of Long Beach, but you have to know your stuff," he said.

Michael Farmer, owner of f/8 Studios



The Long Beach Airport makes for a unique backdrop for wedding photos. Last year, local residents Rachel and Jeff got married at The Modern Event Venue, located at 2801 E. Spring St., which overlooks the airfield. (Photo by Michael Farmer, f/8 Studios Long Beach)

in California Heights, said the key to capturing excellent photos, whether it be in an engagement shoot or during a ceremony, is to reflect the personality of the couple.

Last August, a Long Beach couple, Asad and Kady, requested an engagement shoot from f/8 Studios. The couple told Farmer their favorite pastime was visiting pubs throughout the city. "So, we decid-

ed to do an engagement shoot pub crawl," he said. The itinerary included the Pike Bar, Joe Jost's, the Auld Dubliner and more. "Those pictures reflected that client," Farmer said. "What I think people are looking for on the photography end is definitely more of a catered touch to [showcase] who they are." ■

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(Continued from Page 1)

senior-level male executives are much more hesitant to mentor female junior colleagues than they are male junior colleagues. In fact, compared to responses in 2018, men in senior positions are now 12 times more likely to hesitate to have one-on-one meetings with junior women they work with, nine times more likely to hesitate to travel with a junior female colleague for work, and six times more likely to hesitate to have work dinners with female junior workers.

As an explanation for the disparity in how they approach junior level women and men, 36% of male respondents said they “were nervous about how it would look.”

Extreme versions of this anxiety have played out in the national news in recent months, with more attention paid to politicians invoking the so-called “Billy Graham Rule.” Famed Christian minister and personality Billy Graham very publicly had a rule that he would not meet alone with any women other than his wife to avoid suspicions about his integrity or intentions.

The rule gained renewed attention in the public sphere when Mike Pence, who adheres to it, became vice president of the United States. It again made the news this July when conservative politician Robert Foster, who was then running for governor in Mississippi, refused to allow a female journalist to shadow him unless another man was present.

In early August, a sheriff’s deputy in North Carolina filed a federal lawsuit after he was fired for refusing to train a female recruit. He alleges that his firing amounts to

religious discrimination, because as a devout Christian, he practices the Billy Graham Rule.

When this rule, and the anxieties that lead to it, take hold in the workplace, women lose out.

Despite advancements in economic circumstances for women, there are still far more men in senior-level positions in many industries, meaning that there are already far fewer options for senior level women to mentor junior women or those starting their own ventures.

“Looking at the levels of women in executive leadership positions, unfortunately the percentage is lower than male executives,” Nina Roque, executive director of the National Women’s Business Council (NWBC), told the Business Journal. “While we have seen that increase in recent years, women entrepreneurs are relying on mentorship at the executive level from both men and women.” The NWBC is a nonpartisan federal advisory body to the president, Congress, and the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Roque said she read the Lean In-SurveyMonkey survey. “I think it is very unfortunate that male managers feel that way. I can understand why, but I think those male managers taking the opportunity and the time to meet with mentees – whether it’s in the government or the private sector – is really key to that specific woman’s journey to the executive level or to starting her own business,” she told the Business Journal. “It’s really unfortunate, and I hope that we can all as a society work past that.”

So what is it, exactly, that we need to work past? Well, the title of that survey points to the source of growing male anxiety about working with women; it’s called, “How #MeToo has impacted mentorship for women.”

Jacqueline Tan, president of the Women’s Business Council of the Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, alluded to the issue in an interview about women and mentorship. Tan is the business development director for the American Heart Association in this region, and is also an entrepreneur, having founded an event planning company in 2012. “I obviously understand the climate and I understand the hesitation,” she said when asked about the survey’s findings. “I can see why they would feel that way from a risk standpoint. . . . I think everyone needs to be careful and professional, and we’ll be OK.”

Tan pointed out that her mentors have been crucial to her career success, and that many were men. “I was blessed with having a lot of really great mentors in my life that opened a lot of doors for me and also gave me the confidence to be able to start my own business,” she reflected.

Tan suggested that women join industry or business associations, which can open the doors to mentorship opportunities. “Joining different associations really helped my career,” she said.

Mentorship is an important stepping-stone in advancing one’s career. It is crucial that we do not let fear prevent a talent pool of the more than 1.3 million Millennial women entrepreneurs (that’s NWBC’s estimate) in

America from accessing equal opportunities. As we see so many famous men come under scrutiny for misconduct and abuses of power thanks to the #MeToo movement, it makes sense that men might be feeling nervous. But shutting women out and not granting them the same opportunities as their male colleagues is sexist, period. It is inequitable, it is wrong, and it prevents our society from evolving in a positive direction.

If you feel you need to protect yourself from the risk of unjust accusations of impropriety, you can certainly change how you deal with your employees – but you must make the same changes in dealing with your male colleagues. Keep your door open during solo meetings or meet in a public place. Travel in groups of three or more. Implement reasonable policies that make your workplace safer for everyone, not just yourself – and be sure you do, in fact, apply them to everyone.

And for young women out there looking to start a business or move up in their careers, both Tan and Robbie Motter, global coordinator for the National Association of Female Executives, emphasized that women should try to overcome any hesitation. “One of the barriers is they don’t want to let people know they need help,” Motter said. “They don’t realize that having the right mentor . . . can [help them] achieve their mission or goals so much faster.” Motter noted that her organization holds monthly meetings in cities across the U.S. to help women entrepreneurs connect.

Women are just as talented and capable as men. They deserve to be lifted up. ■

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