The Companies Building Long Beach

With expansive views overlooking The Pike Outlets and the Queen Mary, the new Oceanaire residences at 150 Ocean Blvd. were completed in June, according to Jeffrey Bleak, division manager of Zwick Construction Company. Touting Long Beach as a “hot bed” for new construction, Bleak said Oceanaire is another example of a development contributing to the “culture that Long Beach offers.” (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

A high frequency of residential, industrial and retail projects have cemented Long Beach as a city undergoing considerable development, according to local construction executives. While construction firms oversee and facilitate many of these projects, they often solicit the work of contracting firms, whether they specialize in design or physical building, to complete these citywide developments.

The Business Journal contacted general contractors and construction firms to learn about current and past Long Beach projects and the history of their companies.

Brandywine Homes

Based in Irvine at 16580 Aston St., Brandywine Homes was founded in 1994 by Jen Barisic with the purpose of building family developments in the region. The stricter standard, commonly referred to as the ABC Test, replaces the previously used Borello Test, which had been in use since a court ruling in 1989. In order to classify workers as independent contractors, who are not entitled to many of the rights and protections afforded to employees, the new ruling requires companies to prove that workers are A) free from “the control and direction of thehir- ing entity in connection with the performance of the work,” B) performing work that is “outside the usual course of the hiring entity’s business” and C) are “customarily engaged in an independently established trade, occupation, or business of the same nature as the work performed.”

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PortSide: Keeping Up With The Port Of Long Beach

By ALENA MASCHKE
Senior Writer

When Anthony Pelesasa applied for the Port of Long Beach's internship program in 2017, he did not expect to spend two years working for the port’s public relations office. As a senior at California State University, (CSU) Fullerton, Pelesasa applied with the expectation of a standard, three-month internship, but ended up staying with the port as a paid intern for two years. Once accepted, he quit his part-time job, and, after graduation, he dedicated himself fully to his work with the port. In the end, it was all worth it, Pelesasa noted. This year, at the end of his internship, he was hired to join the port full-time as a communications specialist.

“From not knowing what I wanted to do in high school, to being in this position at such a young age, it’s really awesome,” 23-year-old Pelesasa said. His position as an intern at the port helped ease the transition from college to professional life, he explained. One of his favorite projects so far: the launch event for the Maritime Center of Excellence at Long Beach City College (LBCC). “That was the first event that related to me on a special level,” Pelesasa, who transferred to CSU Fullerton from LBCC, said. Looking back at the first steps in his communications career, he said he wants others to know that there’s a pathway for following their passion, even if it may seem daunting at first. “I just want people to know that it’s possible,” he said.
Marvelous music that happens once in a blue moon.

It’s a season of drama, music, song and dance with the Long Beach Performing Arts.

Sept

Musick Angelica
Opening Night Virtuoso Strings
Beverly O’Neill Theater
Fri, Sept 27 | 8pm

Long Beach Symphony
Opening Night 85th Anniversary
Terrace Theater
Sat, Sept 28 | 8pm

Oct

LB Camerata Singers
Opening Night Gala
Terrace Theater
Thurs, Oct 10 | 6pm

Peace Project III:
Beyond the Golden Door
Beverly O’Neill Theater
Sun, Oct 13 | 4:30pm
Community Roundtable Discussion | 3pm

International City Theatre
Lady Day at Emerson’s Bar and Grill
Oct 16 – Nov 3
Previews Oct 16 – 17 | 8pm
Thu-Sat: 8pm | Sun: 2pm
Talkback w/cast Sun, Oct 27

Long Beach Symphony
Pops! An Evening with Lucia Micarelli
Terrace Theater
Sat, Oct 26 | 8pm

Check out Long Beach’s Terrace and Beverly O’Neill Theaters.
Host to the city’s premier theatrical groups — operatic, broadway, choral, plays, musicals and dance — this season is full of the finest and most exciting in the performing arts. Glittering chandeliers, continental style seating and the rich acoustics provide the ultimate theater experience and, with over 125 restaurants just steps away for dinner, drinks or dancing, it will be, dare we say, “a feast for the senses”.

Look for our 2019-2020 Schedule.
(562) 436-3636 | longbeachcc.com
Canadian Businesses Consider Expanding In Long Beach

Since the City of Long Beach and the MAPLE Business Council established a partnership last November to connect Canadian businesses to Long Beach, Chrilleks, a Toronto-based digital agency founded in 2011, has expanded to the city. Pictured, from left: Seyed Jalali, the city’s economic development officer; Stephen Armstrong, co-founder of MAPLE Business Council; and Chris Grubisa and Aleksandra Lason, co-founders of Chrilleks. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

By DENNY CRISTALES
Staff Writer

Since city officials promoted Long Beach as a prime destination for business growth in Vancouver earlier this year, multiple Canadian businesses have expressed interest in expanding their operations to Long Beach, according to Seyed Jalali, the city’s economic development officer.

During a Vancouver tech conference in late February, city staff delivered a 90-minute presentation detailing the status of technology innovation in Long Beach, the increase in citywide real estate developments and the economic influence of educational partners such as California State University, Long Beach and Long Beach City College.

The trip was one of many steps to strengthen Long Beach’s economic relationship with Canada, per the city’s partnership agreement with the MAPLE Business Council established last November. The council, based in Tustin, was founded in 2015. “Our mission is to promote cross-border investment trade and entrepreneurship between Canada and Southern California,” said Co-founder Stephen Armstrong.

“The genesis of the partnership goes back to the [Economic Development] Blueprint, which specifically called for ways to help expand outreach to the global market,” Jalali said of the city’s partnership with MAPLE.

Armstrong said February’s conference generated interest from some Canadian businesses, one of which was a startup tech company. After attending the conference, the firm’s CEO visited the Long Beach Regional Economic Forum in April at California State University, Long Beach to learn about the city’s small business programs. Currently, the CEO is still developing his business concept, Armstrong said.

In June, MAPLE representatives visited Toronto to brief area executives about their partnerships with Southern California entities, including the City of Long Beach.

As a result, Jalali said the city has received inquiries from Canadian companies, particularly financial and tech businesses. Currently, there is only one confirmed Canadian business that has expanded to Long Beach. “We are just hoping to open up the market,” he said. “We would love to have more of these businesses settle downtown or anywhere in the city. We just want to be a facilitator.”

The MAPLE Business Council serves as a “welcome mat” for Canadian business owners. Both American and Canadian companies looking to expand their operations across the border can consult MAPLE experts to learn about resources or potential challenges moving to another country.

Some entities have learned the challenges of moving to another country the hard way. Chrilleks, a Toronto digital agency founded in 2011 by Aleksandra Lason and Chris Grubisa, expanded to Los Angeles in 2016. Lason said the initial move to Downtown Los Angeles was hectic due to a lack of guidance. Eventually, they moved their business to Playa Vista and then Huntington Beach before settling on Long Beach at 320 Pine Ave. this April.

The couple learned about MAPLE a few months after moving to the city, and Lason said the council’s guidance has become a major factor in the company’s success. She said MAPLE’s consultations have allowed the couple to operate Chrilleks more effectively in the regional market, such as by using social media or learning about city resources for businesses.

“Since joining MAPLE and moving to Long Beach, our business has tripled,” she said. “It’s been a lot easier for us to find the right people with the right mentality to come work for us. I wish [MAPLE] came into our lives much sooner, because I think we already would have been at this point two years ago where our business stands now.”

As more businesses seek to make the move to Southern California, Armstrong said community members are welcome to attend MAPLE’s public quarterly meetings to learn about the council’s progress in its mission. More information is available at maplecouncil.org.

Jalali said efforts to expand Long Beach’s foreign presence will continue with the GetGlobal conference at the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center from November 5 to November 7. The summit will feature workshops and guest speakers that will inform entrepreneurs about strategies in global trade.

GetGlobal is an international team comprised of market professionals who work to promote American entrepreneurship globally. The organization hosts events annually to inform entrepreneurs about their options in global trade. More details can be found at 2019.getglobal.co.
State Legislators Pass Contested Bills

(Continued from Page 1) for classifying workers, but carve out exemptions for licensed professionals in certain industries, including insurance agents, certain health care workers, barbers and cosmetologists.

The California Chamber of Commerce (CalChamber) placed Assembly Bill 5 on its 2019 Job Killer List, and the bill has received pushback from a number of major players in the gig economy, such as Lyft, Uber and Doordash, who rely heavily on independent contractors. The bill is supported by the California Labor Federation and labor unions. On the day of its passage in the state assembly, a California Uber driver filed a proposed class action lawsuit against the company, invoking misclassification.

Rent Control And Tenant Protections

A bill seeking to place a temporary cap on rent increases, as well as set forth stricter rules for tenancy termination, is also awaiting Newsom’s signature after passing the state legislature on September 11. Assembly Bill (AB) 1482 would prohibit rent increases of more than 5% plus cost of living increases, or 10% of the lowest rent charged for the same unit in the preceding year–whichever is lower–until January 1, 2030.

The bill was also approved by the Governor to pass the bill. It was the second attempt at extending last call for alcohol sales, made it through the state senate following several amendments, but failed to pass the assembly. In its current version, the bill would have given 10 California cities, including Long Beach, Los Angeles and West Hollywood, the option of extending last call to 3 a.m. The bill’s co-author, Assemblymember Miguel Santiago, whose district includes Downtown Los Angeles, filed a motion to reconsider the bill when it failed to pass the assembly on September 14.

Arbitration Agreements

In another retuning legislative proposal, Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez has brought back a bill that would prevent employers from requiring prospective employees to sign arbitration agreements as a condition of employment. Assembly Bill 51 is Gonzalez’ second attempt to curb employment-related arbitration agreements, after last year’s bill was vetoed by then-Governor Jerry Brown. CalChamber included the bill on its 2019 Job Killer List. AB 51 passed both the state assembly and senate and is on its way to the governor’s desk.

Hotel And Consumer Products

A bill banning small plastic bottles of shampoo, body wash and other personal hygiene items commonly provided to hotel guests passed the state assembly on September 9 and has been forwarded to the governor for final approval. The bill is part of a larger effort by state legislators to reduce the amount of single-use plastics in circulation in California and promote re-usable or refillable options instead. Starting January 1, 2023, for hotels with 50 or more rooms, and a year later for hotels with 50 rooms or less, Assembly Bill 1162 would make the distribution of these small plastic bottles to hotel guests punishable through fines of up to $2,000 for repeated violations.

Another bill that passed the state legislature this month and is awaiting the governor’s signature would ban the import, production and possession with intent to sell any fur products in the state. Assembly Bill 44, which was authored by 43rd District Assemblymember Laura Friedman, carves out exemptions for taxidermy pieces, cowhides and several other products involving animal skin and hair. Used fur products are also exempt.

Charter School Reform

The end of this year’s legislative session also had some significant changes in store for California’s charter schools. Two bills, both co-authored by 70th District Assemblymember Patrick O’Donnell, passed the state legislature earlier this month.

Assembly Bill 1505 changes the process for authorizing or renewing a charter school application by allowing the governing board of the authorizing school district to consider how the charter school would impact the district and other schools in it. Assembly Bill 1507 would mandate charter schools to operate only within the geographic boundaries of the school district that authorized their application. Previously, a charter school could receive authorization in one school district and, once approved, set up shop in another.

The trucking industry stands to be greatly impacted by the new standards for worker classification set forth in Assembly Bill 5. While unions have rallied in support of the bill, some owner-operators and small trucking companies have expressed concerns that the new standards would make it harder for them to operate independently. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)
Long Beach Councilmember May Be Investigated For Potential Conflict Of Interest

By SAMANTHA MEHLINGER

Following a city attorney-commis- sioned independent review of Coun- cilmember Jeannine Pearce’s employment by an executive with Urban Commons – the company that owns the lease to the Queen Mary in her district – the Fair Po- litical Practices Commission (FPPC) con- firmed it had received a complaint regard- ing a potential conflict of interest and was weighing whether to investigate.

“I can confirm the FPPC Enforcement Division received a complaint regarding the councilmember on Monday [September 9],” FPPC Communications Director Jay Wierenga said via e-mail. “All com- plaints are taken under review to deter- mine whether or not to open an investi- gation . . . A review generally takes a few days to 14 days, although some can be by reg- ulation take longer. Complaints are either rejected or opened into investigation.”

If an investigation were to be opened, he stated, “This determination is made after an investigation . . . but generally speaking the majority are concluded with[in] a half year and up to a year. A small number, generally speaking, take longer than that. It all depends on each case.”

City Attorney Charles Parkin sent the FPPC a letter on September 12 indicating that his office is “fully prepared to coop- erate” with an investigation.

Although Pearce claims to have in- formed the city attorney’s office of her business relationship with Dan Zaharoni, chief development officer for Urban Com- mons, before it commenced in 2018, Par- kin told the Business Journal that he first heard of it in a May 30 article by the Long Beach Post.

“I know she said she asked our office, but we have no record of her ever asking for an opinion from my office. So she nev- er reached out to us,” Parkin wrote in an e-mail to the Business Journal. “We con- tacted her when we opened our review and she obtained her attorney and then we worked with her counsel.”

According to findings by Best Best & Krieger, an outside law firm hired by the city attorney’s office to look into the facts of the matter, Pearce received $11,222 in income from Zaharoni’s firm, DHS Verde LLC, in 2018. She did not disclose this income in her Form 700 for 2018.

“Further, Ms. Pearce failed to disclose the income from DHS Verde in her 2018 Annual Form 700, and there is a question whether that failure to disclose was inadvertent or deliberate,” the report stated.

Ultimately, the consultant found that, per the Political Reform Act, Pearce has a “prohibited and disqualifying financial interest in any governmental decision that has a reasonably foreseeable material fi- nancial effect on Mr. Zaharoni.” The re- port explained that while it is difficult to determine what impact on Zaharoni’s per- sonal finances any decisions related to the Queen Mary might have, it is likely that decisions affecting Urban Commons and the Queen Mary will have “a measurable financial benefit or loss on Mr. Zaharoni as an employee and Director of Develop- ment of Urban Commons Queenway.”

Pearce was found to have made at least one action as a councilmember that might have violated the Political Reform Act due to this conflict of interest. At a city council meeting on March 12, 2019, Pearce proposed an item requesting the city manager work with Urban Com- mons to determine the cost of a feasibility study pertaining to a gondola system that would connect Downtown Long Beach to the Queen Mary. According to Best Best & Krieger, this proposal was originally brought to the city by Zaharoni.

“At the time Ms. Pearce brought this matter to the city council, she spoke on it, moved for its approval and voted on it, she had financial interest in Mr. Zaharoni un- der the [Political Reform] Act . . . Thus, her actions and vote could have been in violation of the Act, and her vote would be a nullity or void,” the report stated.

In a September 6 memo to the mayor, city council, city manager and assistant city manager, Parkin stated that Pearce and her staff should not be contacted by the council or city staff regarding issues related to the cannabis industry, and that Pearce “may reduce her hours from voting on or seeking the influence voting on any council city council items affecting the cannabis industry.”

Following the issuance of the report, Pearce sent out a statement applauding the work of the city attorney’s office in addressing the matter and noting that she had cooperated fully with Parkin. “As is always the case with every elected official, I will continue to weigh potential conflict of interest issues on a case-by-case basis and will recuse myself when appropriate,” she stated.

When asked if she would like to com- ment further, her office sent the Business Journal a formal letter, addressed to Par- kin, from the Law Offices of Olson Ha- gel & Fishburn LLP. The letter argued that the Best Best & Krieger’s findings did not accurately consider Pearce’s fi- nancial interests, noting that the work she performed for Zaharoni’s companies was unrelated to Urban Commons or the Queen Mary. Further, the report stated, “Councilmember Pearce is not aware of any facts to indicate that Mr. Zaharoni stands to receive any financial benefit or detriment as a result of the city council deciding to authorize the feasibility study [for a gondola system] . . . nor was she aware of any such facts at the time of the governmental decision.”

In an e-mailed statement sent with the letter, Pearce said: “As stated in the attached letter from my counsel, the re- port released by the City Attorney’s office does not consider all the relevant facts, and therefore cannot conclude that a con- flict of interest violation in fact occurred. When concern was raised months ago, I asked the City Attorney for a meeting so we could address the concerns immedi- ately. I will continue to cooperate fully as I have already done with the City At- torney’s office should there be an inqui- ry from the FPPC. I look forward to the conclusion of this process and to continu- ing to serve as the Councilmember of the Second District.”

A spokesperson for Urban Commons said the company “was neither aware of nor familiar with discussions held be- tween Daniel Zaharoni and Long Beach Councilwoman Jeannine Pearce, and it was not privy to or associated with any payments made by Mr. Zaharoni to the councilwoman.”

Zaharoni’s Take

When sought for comment for this article, Zaharoni agreed to respond to a handful of questions via e-mail.

Regarding how Pearce came to work for entities controlled by Zaharoni, he said, “Councilmember Pearce and I had a great friendship for several years. Last year, we spoke about our interest in non- profit work. Following the conversation, we agreed that her experience and skill set would be an ideal match to help sup- port my vision for the From the Earth Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to empowering communities and seeking judicial reform. Because we share the same sentiments to give back to our communities, she was brought on as an independent contractor several months later to help establish the foundation.”

Asked whether he felt that Pearce should be precluded from voting on items related to the Queen Mary or Urban Com- mons, Zaharoni stated, “Councilmember Pearce should preclude herself from vot- ing on related items. To ensure best prac- tices and the interest of the community at large, Councilmember Pearce and I agreed she would not join the team if it violated any ethical obligations. To ensure this, she told me she sought out the expertise of the LB City Attorney, who con- firmed there would be no issue as there were no upcoming votes on related items. In the event of a potential future conflict, she noted she would excuse herself.

We were unaware that she voted on a related item – and if we had been made aware, my advisement to Councilmember Pearce would be to not vote.”

Zaharoni’s response indicated that, as Parkin stated, Pearce had said she con- tacted his office for advice before entering into business dealings with Zaharoni. But, again, Parkin maintains she never did.

Asked if Zaharoni himself, or even Urban Commons, had contacted the city attorney’s office regarding Pearce’s paid work for his businesses, he respond- ed: “At the time of hire, Councilwoman Pearce advised me that she spoke to the city attorney and that he had approved her to take the position. Neither the city attor- ney nor any other city staff contacted me to discuss the matters referenced by the recent city report which outlined Council- woman Pearce’s conduct. To my knowl- edge, the Long Beach City Attorney has not contacted any representative of Urban Commons.”

Lastly, asked whether he plans to em- ploy Pearce again in the future, Zaharoni stated, “We ended our relationship with Councilmember Pearce on August 10.”
Harbor Commission OK’s Transfer Of Long Beach Container Terminal Lease

By SAMANTHA MEHLINGER

The Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners on September 9 approved an agreement transferring the lease to operate Long Beach Container Terminal from Orient Overseas International Line (OOIL) to Macquarie Infrastructure Partners (MIP). MIP is acquiring Long Beach Container Terminal, the company that operates the terminal of the same name at the Port of Long Beach, as part of an agreement required by the United States government for COSCO Shipping Holdings to complete its acquisition of OOIL. The sale was first announced in 2018, and has been overseen by a board of trustees appointed by the federal Committee for Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS).

The terminal is located in the port’s Middle Harbor, and is undergoing a more than $1.5 billion renovation and expansion that will ultimately allow it to process more than three million twenty-foot equivalent units of containerized cargo annually.

In April 2018, the Wall Street Journal reported that CFIUS had raised concerns about COSCO’s takeover of Long Beach Container Terminal – the largest terminal in the nation’s second-largest port – due to COSCO’s status as a state-run entity in China. The committee required, via a national security agreement, that COSCO divest the asset in order to receive its blessing to acquire OOIL.

MIP made the winning bid, which was reportedly $1.78 billion according to Noel Hacegaba, deputy executive director of the port. MIP is a fund that operates within Macquarie Infrastructure and Real Assets, a subsidiary of Australia-based Macquarie Group Limited.

The Port of Long Beach was responsible for brokering the terms of the assignment and assumption of the terminal lease from OOIL to MIP, Hacegaba said.

“On many levels, and in many ways, this was not your run of the mill transaction,” Hacegaba said. “One of the many complexities of this process was the availability of information. Because this transaction was subject to terms of a national security agreement, we as a port authority were not privy to that, so we were getting our information secondhand,” he said, referring to the sale of the corporate entity Long Beach Container Terminal.

According to Hacegaba, the purchase of Long Beach Container Terminal by MIP is a first for the port. “Macquarie’s acquisition of LBCT represents a new ownership model at the Port of Long Beach. There are other examples of private infrastructure funds taking ownership interest in marine terminals, but not to this extent,” he said.

“You won’t find, to my knowledge, another terminal in the U.S. that is wholly owned by an infrastructure fund. This may signal a new paradigm for terminal ownership in Southern California and across the U.S. as investors look for alternative investments.”

From what Hacegaba understands, MIP intends to keep existing management of the terminal in place.

He concluded, “This is a terminal that continually is raising the bar, and we’re very confident that with Macquarie as the new owner this terminal will continue to raise the bar and will continue to perform at a world class level.”
First Cat Lounge Opens In Long Beach

Long Beach's first-ever cat lounge opened in August, and its owners plan to hold a special grand opening event on October 26. The Feline Good Social Club, located at 301 Atlantic Ave, in the East Village Arts District, is a cause-driven business that aims to give people a chance to commune with kittens, and felines a chance to be taken into a loving home.

Pam Leslie co-founded Feline Good with fellow cat-lovers Tamara Trujillo and Erica Johnson. Leslie, a lifetime Long Beach resident, has run the nonprofit cat rescue organization Long Beach Felines since 2008 and has 20 years of cat rescue experience. Long Beach Felines provides the cats housed in the Feline Good Social Club, and adoptions of these cats are facilitated by the nonprofit.

When Leslie began Long Beach Felines, she had to partner with pet stores to try to find adoptive homes for the cats rescued through her organization. “What that meant for me was that I had to partner with a pet store, and then I’d have to load the cats up and take them to the pet store to show them whenever I wanted to have an adoption event. That’s a lot of work, and I did that for about eight years,” she explained.

When the cat café craze began taking off in Asia, Leslie thought a similar idea in Long Beach could be stressful. “It’s a joy to do a business like this that benefits people who come in here.” For more information about Feline Good Social Club, visit felinegoodsocial-club.com.

To prepare, they enrolled in the Small Business Development Corporation’s new business training program, which lasted 10 weeks. “Anybody who is opening a new business should do that. We learned a lot and got a business plan together,” Leslie said.

Opening the doors of the lounge proved a challenge—as the first business of its kind in the city, permitting and licensing were complicated processes. Ultimately, Feline Good Social Club had to postpone its opening from April to August. “A year before we started, I started doing research on that. I contacted the planning [department],” Leslie recalled. “We spent quite a bit of time talking.” Leslie pursued registering the business as an administrative site use, as it didn’t fit any other category.

“The city was helpful as much as they could be, you know, because they are hampered by their own regulations and rules. And as a result of us going through this process, this type of business was rolled into the revision of the city codes,” Leslie recalled. “They’re trying to make things more business-friendly, more user-friendly as far as the codes go.”

Since opening in August, nine cats have been adopted from the Feline Good Social Club, a bright and airy space where visitors can pay $15 an hour to play and lounge with more than a dozen feline friends, all of whom are socialized, vaccinated, tested for health issues, and spayed or neutered. Cats at the Feline Good Social Club are able to stay there for life if they don’t find an adoptive home, Leslie noted.

“When people want to come here they currently don’t have to make reservations. They can just walk in. We have a self-described limit of 25 people per session,” Leslie said. “We do recommend reservations because we have special events here.” Special events include Monday yoga classes, private birthday parties and other gatherings.

Moving forward, Leslie hopes to appeal to the local business community, particularly those with operations in nearby office buildings, to utilize Feline Good Social Club for their employees. She noted that communing with cats is proven to have stress-reducing benefits. “It’s everything from bringing your blood pressure down to relaxation to calming your mind,” she said. “This repetitive petting motion, which cats love, helps people get grounded and calm down. That’s why it’s so important that we get the word out to office people. You know, offices can be stressful.”

Leslie added, “It’s a joy to do a business like this that benefits people who come in here.”

Long Beach Community Foundation Awards $100K In Grants To Local Nonprofits

The Long Beach Community Foundation (LBCF) awarded $100,000 in grants to nine local nonprofits on September 16. Recipients included Interval House, Conservation Corps of Long Beach, Long Beach Community Table, Christian Outreach in Action, the Children’s Dental Health Clinic, the Catalina Island Foundation, Long Beach Blast, Precious Lamb Preschool and the YMCA of Long Beach. Each organization received between $3,000 and $15,500, according to Stephanie Valencia, the YMCA’s operations director; Marquita Grenot-Scheyer, Long Beach Blast board president; Terrance Johnson, the Catalina Island Foundation’s business development director; and Gary Delong, LBCF board member.

Donations to the LBCF’s Community Impact Fund enable the foundation to fund programs related to housing and homelessness in Long Beach. Other issues addressed through the grants include food insecurity, education, poverty and children’s health.

40% of these grants came from the LBCF’s Community Impact Fund, which provides financial resources to local nonprofits dedicated to addressing issues specific to Long Beach. “We are proud to fund such worthy nonprofit organizations who are making a difference in our community,” LBCF Board Chair Gary DeLong said in a press release. “Wells Fargo’s recognition of our strategic grantmaking and strong reputation for impact in the community is the frosting on the cake. Partnerships like this enable us to stretch our philanthropic dollars further and ultimately have even greater positive change.” Donations to the LBCF Community Impact Fund may be made at longbeachcf.org/donate.
Police Officers And Firefighters Secure Labor Agreements, Many More To Follow

By ALENA MASCHKE
Senior Writer

"This is the season for labor negoti- ations in the City of Long Beach. Agreements between the city and 10 of its 12 employee unions are expiring at the end of September, and negotiations for new memoranda of understanding (MOU) are in full swing.

Two major unions, the Long Beach Police Officers Association (POA) and the Long Beach Firefighters Association (FFA) have reached a re- spective agreement with the city, while negotiations with the Association of Long Beach Employees (ALBE) and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) are still underway. Talks with the remaining eight unions are ex- pected to commence soon.

On Wednesday, September 18, the city announced that a tentative agree- ment with the FFA had been reached. The terms of the agreement will re- main confidential until it has been rat- ified through the voting process of the 400-member union. The POA’s labor agreement with the city was approved by the city council one day prior.

Per the new contract, members of the police union will receive a series of pay raises, plus a one-time bonus, in the upcoming years. Effective October 1, 2019, union members will receive a 4% wage increase, followed by a one- time payment of $2,000 on October 1, 2020. Recruits and non-career em- ployees will not receive this bonus. On October 1, 2021, members are sched- uled to receive a 3% wage increase, followed by a 2.5% increase effective April 1, 2022. The agreement expires on September 30, 2022. New skill pay was added for officers on the special weapons and tactics (SWAT) and dive teams, while new hires in certain in- vestigative and administrative posi- tions won’t receive skill pay currently awarded to incumbents in those posi- tions.

To reduce the city’s pension costs, which have driven its unfunded liabili- ties to a total of $3.1 billion, the union agreed to increase its members’ con- tribution to the pension fund. According to the new contract, members will be responsible for paying an additional 3% toward the city’s employer con- tributions to CalPERS.

The maximum amount of banked overtime for members will be in- creased from 80 hours to 120 hours by 2021, according to the new agree- ment. The union’s previous MOU had mandated a reduction of the maximum overtime hours banked by members from 140 to 80 hours in 2017. Over- time pay makes up a large portion of the total pay many officers, sergeants and lieutenants receive, in some cases accounting for half of their annual pay, according to data collected by the Ne- vada Policy Research Institute’s Trans- parent California database.

The union also secured new pa- rental leave privileges for its mem- bers. Full-time employees who have completed at least 6 months of service will be eligible for 30 days of parental leave. The parental leave policy applies to members of all genders who wel- come a new baby, complete an adop- tion or take in a foster child.

The MOU also eases requirements for training recruits. In an effort to free up more patrol personnel, the agreement states, recruits who have completed at least 10 months of supervi- sion training in the field will no longer need to complete their remaining training hours with a regular officer as a part- ner, rather than a field training officer, as previously required.

A paragraph detailing officers’ rights to inspect records requested by outside parties under the state’s new police transparency law has sparked some controversy. Senate Bill 1421, which was signed into law by then-Governor Jerry Brown in Sep- tember 2018, made disclosable certain departmental records – through public records requests – regarding individual officers in cases of alleged use of force or sustained claims of sexual assault or dishonesty.

Under the recently approved agree- ment between the police union and the City of Long Beach, the Long Beach Police Department will notify active employees when a request for records involving them has been received, a notice that will include: the date of the request, the requestor’s or requesting organization’s name, and the nature of the request.

The agreement allows officers an inspection period of five days before the records are released to the request- ing party. In a letter to the Long Beach City Council, the American Civil Lib- erties Union of Southern California said this provision likely violated the California Public Records Act, which requires agencies to disclose responsive records as soon as they’ve been identified, and prohibits them from de- lay or obstructing the inspection of those records.

"Importantly, the proposed [sec- tion] is not necessary to allow peace officers access to their own records," the ACLU’s director of police practic- es, Peter Bibring, stated in his letter to the council. "Officers certainly will have had access to any files related to sustained findings of dishonesty and sexual assault during the administra- tive proceeding [that resulted] in the finding and should be very familiar with their contents."

Further, Bibring argued, the provi- sion would allow officers enough time to file a lawsuit that could further de- lay or even prevent the release of the requested records. "Certainly, the pro- posed [section] is much broader than the requirement to simply allow offi- cers access to their own files," Bibring wrote. "Indeed, it seems designed to abet obstruction and delay of transpar- ency by the [Long Beach POA]."

POA President Jim Foster said the ACLU’s criticism missed the mark on a number of issues related to the pub- lic records provision of the new agree- ment. First, he noted that officers have long had the right to be informed about requests for departmental records about them and that the new agreement simply instituted a proactive notifica- tion system in place of the previous, request-based procedure.

Foster also argued that, as Bibring pointed out in his letter, officers with sustained misconduct allegations have access to records about themselves throughout the investigation, long be- fore they become disclosable to the public. If an officer sought to prevent these records from being released, Foster argued, they wouldn’t need the five-day inspection period to take the appropriate legal action.

Lastly, Foster said, officers whose deployment of force was found to be within department policy are not pre- sented with the department’s review of their actions. The five-day period, he argued, allows those officers to review the corresponding records for the first time before they are released. He also noted that this adds another layer of security to ensure that the department won’t accidentally release information that violates the officer’s privacy rights under laws such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountabil- ity Act (HIPAA).

“We have to remember that the rights afforded under the Public Re- cords Act are for everyone, to include the police officer,” Foster said. “An of- ficer has the right to ensure their rights aren’t being violated by the department or the city.”
Patrick West Bids Farewell To City Hall

By SAMANTHA MEHLINGER
Editor

You might think the top public executive in charge of one of the largest cities in California would be tacitly serious, as the weight of world – or at least, a sizable chunk of Los Angeles County – rests on his shoulders. But anyone who has met Long Beach City Manager Patrick West (who, as of September 20, is now the former city manager), knows him for his jovial demeanor. As stoically as he can rattle off budget numbers whilst enduring endless questions from city councilmembers into the wee hours, he is more often seen about town smiling and laughing with colleagues, community members, and, yes, even the local press.

“This is a fun job. You shouldn’t have these jobs if you’re not having fun,” he told the Business Journal during his last interview with us as city manager. West sat at his desk at the new Long Beach City Hall, the largest public development the city has seen in decades, and reminisced about his time leading the city – which, by the way, he had a spectacular view of both from his desk and from his personal bathroom, jestingly dubbed “the West Room.”

West first joined the City of Long Beach as executive director of its redevelopment agency in 2005, before being appointed city manager in 2007. Prior to that, he had worked for 25 years for the nearby City of Paramount. Highlights during his career in Long Beach include 13 consecutive balanced budgets, the development of a new civic center, a $3.5 billion development boom, and an increase in livability and mobility initiatives, among many others.

For West, the most fun aspect of his job as city manager revolved around his passion for improving livability and mobility for city residents. Under West’s purview, Long Beach has made strides in an effort to become the most bicycle-friendly city in America with an array of improvements citywide – protected bike lanes, roundabouts for safer maneuvering, and better bicycle infrastructure connecting North and Central Long Beach to the city’s beach. “Everybody should be able to ride their bike to school, to a park, to grocery shopping,” he said. “We have done so much with mobility. We’re going to be well placed as more density comes to the city. People will be able to be active and healthy, and be outdoors and stay out of their cars if they want to.”

As much as West has had fun in his position, he has also helped the city weather some tough times – he became city manager just before the Great Recession – and has also, despite pushback, succeeded in pushing improvements to the city that have ultimately been widely accepted by residents and visitors alike. Chief among them – the transformation of Long Beach Airport.

“I would say probably the most rewarding [accomplishment] was the Long Beach Airport,” West said, referring to the construction of a new concourse featuring a variety of local vendors. Prior to its completion in December 2012, travelers had to shuffle through portable trailers to get to their flights. “It was a long haul to get that project going. I just can’t be more pleased with how it turned out. We’re constantly ranked as one of the best airports in America,” West noted.

While any changes to the airport are typically received with some degree of controversy, particularly from residents who do not appreciate the noise it creates, West noted that the improvements are perhaps the most popular project undertaken during his tenure. “The folks who were suing us, they still don’t like airports. I’m going to make that clear. They still don’t like the noise over their homes,” West said, referring to a number of lawsuits levied against the city as it attempted to move forward with the project. “But they universally like what we did at the airport. Even though you may not like the noise over your house, you’re still going to use the airport because it’s so much more convenient. The airport itself just turned out beautifully and it’s a wonderful asset and a great place to be. We get so many accolades on the airport. It’s a huge asset for our community.”

While the airport improvements were the most popular initiative during West’s time as city manager, the update to the Land Use Element in 2018 was the most controversial, he said. The Land Use Element dictates requirements for land use and density, and is a required component of any city’s General Plan, per the state government. When allowances for increased density were proposed in various areas of the city during the planning process to update the Land Use Element, there were strong reactions – many negative – from residents during a series of highly-attended community meetings.

“We updated the Land Use Element to prepare ourselves for what’s going to happen in 20 or 30 years, when more people are going to be coming to the Southland and to Long Beach. We want to direct that growth,” West explained. “The community time and time again has told us the density is OK in the downtown, [but] to keep the density out of the rest of the city, except along the transit corridors with the Blue Line and in some corridors by shopping centers,” he added. This is ultimately how the document ended up.

West noted that adequately planning for growth is key to a city’s future. “If you look at some of the cities in crisis around the world today, they are cities that haven’t planned for density,” he said. “I am so proud of this city council and this mayor for not ignoring it, and going forward. At the end of the day, everyone did the right thing, and I think everyone is very proud of what we did. But it was a rocky road to get there, of course.”

Working With Three Mayors

Prior to being appointed city manager in 2007, West served for two years as the head of the city’s redevelopment agency. At the time, Beverly O’Neill was mayor. He has since served as city manager alongside two mayors – Mayor Bob Foster and Long Beach’s current mayor, Robert Garcia.

Asked to use a word to describe each of them, West started with O’Neill. “I worked very closely with her and [former City Manager] Jerry Miller for at least two years, and I am very close with her now still. I would call Beverly, in this community, ‘beloved,’” West said.

“I can’t go one word for Bob Foster. I’d have to say, ‘fiscally minded,’” because he was the financial guy,” West said. “It was great to have someone who was fiscally minded, because he led us through the Great Recession.”

Next up: Garcia. “Robert Garcia would have to be ‘consensus builder.’ He is the great communicator,” West said. “He has been listed as one of the top 10 social media mayors in America [because of] the way he uses social media for the city’s advantage.”

West added that the way Garcia communicates with city staff and all nine councilmembers has been helpful to him as the city manager. “Knowing that the mayor is going to collaborate and work with all nine councilmembers makes it so much easier for me and [Assistant City Manager] Tom Modica.”

Looking Forward

Now that he’s leaving his position to pursue consulting work in the private sector, who would West like to see step into his shoes? Perhaps it’s not a hard guess to make.

“Let me preface that by saying city managers don’t pick their successors. . . . That’s totally 100% up to the city council,” West qualified when asked the question. “That said, I think the entire city council knows that I would support [Assistant City Manager] Tom Modica.”

A national search is underway for a replacement, and, in the meantime, Modica is stepping in as acting city manager.

During West’s tenure, the city went through one of its most challenging times – the Great Recession. He is leaving at a much more prosperous time for Long Beach, when unemployment is low, and a surge of public and private investment continue citywide. Asked what advice he would give to his successor about navigating similar ups and downs, West said, “There are ups and downs and things to navigate every single day here, every single week . . . . You think you’re going to have a calm afternoon, and boom – no, you’re not.”

If there is an iceberg up ahead, West said, you don’t stay the course and go down with the ship. You turn. “Call an audible after you’ve communicated with the staff, the
community, the city council so that you can do the right thing,” he said, referring to a football play in which the quarterback calls out a new play to his teammates at the last second.

“Also, have faith in your staff. We have some of the best department heads on planet Earth,” West said. “I would recommend whoever succeeds me to just trust those folks. And when you hire, make sure you hire the best of the best, because the city deserves that.”

Strong communication skills are also key, he noted. “Communication is the biggest issue facing any city manager. How well can you communicate with your staff? How well can you communicate with the community? And how well can you communicate with the elected officials?”

Serving as the city manager of Long Beach has been rewarding and “a fantastic ride,” West reflected. “It’s so important that we communicate with the councilmembers and the community. And how well can you communicate with the councilmembers and the community?” West added.

Councillors, he noted, typically earn around $30,000 a year for their work, despite working up to 80 hours a week on top of a separate full-time job and family obligations. “The worst thing we could do is not communicate with them if there is a homelessness issue that just occurred or say a public safety issue, and the councilmember learns about that through a blog, from a neighbor, through the newspaper.”

As for West himself, he plans to continue being active in the Long Beach community. “This is where I hang out. This is where I swim. This is where I bike. This is where I paddle. This is where my wife and I dine. This is where we go shopping,” he said. “I cannot imagine me ever leaving the Long Beach area . . . . It’s one of the best cities in the world. It’s just a fascinating place to be.”

Asked if he wanted to add anything in closing, West said, “I am incredibly thankful and appreciative of the Long Beach community and all my city councilmembers and mayors I have worked with over the 12 years to give me this opportunity, to be a cog in the wheel, to take Long Beach to the next step.”

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The Aquarium of the Pacific in partnership with Halbert Hargrove is pleased to announce the Fall 2019 Aquatic Academy course Longevity: Changing the Narrative. People are living longer, healthier, more fulfilling lives. Learn the secrets and how to afford them from four outstanding scholars.

When: Wed, Oct 2; Thurs, Oct 10; Thurs, Oct 17; and Thurs, Oct 24, 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.
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.
Where: Aquarium of the Pacific, Pacific Visions Theater 100 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, CA 90802
RSVP: For reservations, contact Aquarium Guest Services, (562) 590-3100, ext. 0. For additional information, email Adina Metz at ametz@lbaop.org or visit aquariumofpacific.org/aquaticacademy
Advance reservations required.
New Partnership To Assist Underserved Women Entrepreneurs

Southern California-based East West Bank and microfinance nonprofit organization Grameen America recently announced a collaboration to assist low-income women entrepreneurs with access to capital and financial services through a new branch at 316 E. Anaheim St. in Long Beach's Cambodia Town. East West Bank donated $2 million to assist in the opening and operation of the branch, Grameen’s third in Los Angeles County. Additionally, East West Bank is providing $1.5 million in loan capital to assist Grameen members. “East West Bank’s investment in our program is instrumental to our expansion and will amplify our mission to serve low-income entrepreneurial women across the country,” Andrea Jung, president and CEO of Grameen, stated in a press release. “Financial inclusion can change the lives of women entrepreneurs, and our shared commitment to addressing economic barriers will prove invaluable to the communities we serve.” Grameen has invested over $1.24 billion to more than 120,000 women since being founded in Jackson Heights, Queens, in 2008. Picured at the September 19 Long Beach branch ribbon-cutting ceremony from left: Diana Martinez, Grameen; Jessica Osnyaa, Grameen; Marybel Lorenzo, Grameen Long Beach branch manager; Alethia Mendez, Grameen; Grameen President and CEO Andrea Jung; Grameen Founder and Nobel Prize recipient Muhammad Yunus; East West Bank President and CEO Dominic Ng; and Mindee Barham, Grameen. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

Kaiser Union Workers Plan October Strike

By DENNY CRISTALES
Staff Writer

Kaiser's latest bargaining proposal, according to Sean Wherley, SEIU-UHW spokesman. Adjei said the bargaining session featured discussion about the company's recent bargaining proposal that was presented to the coalition in late July and later publicly in an August press release. However, Kaiser and the CKPU have not had a formal bargaining session since July 11, a few weeks before the new proposal was presented.

The current proposal would provide annual pay increases, maintain employee benefits and create a program that would seek to reduce a national shortage of health care workers, according to Adjei. The proposal includes: annual wage increases of 3% each year through 2022 for employees in Northern and Southern California; $40 million for a workforce development fund to help train new hires; preserving an existing employee pension plan; and improving on an existing tuition reimbursement program for employees that would add $250 to their travel funds.

However, Wherley said the proposal does not address the union members’ main concerns, which are claims that Kaiser has not been transparent about the use of its profits, in particular when it comes to the distribution of adequate health care benefits and wages for employees. “It was an unproductive meeting,” he said of this month’s bargaining session. “Kaiser does not seem willing to work with the workers on addressing those concerns on ensuring safe staffing, building the workforce of the future, protecting good middle-class jobs and then restoring the labor-management partnership.”

In a statement, Bernard Tyson, chairman and CEO of Kaiser Permanente, criticized the CKPU and SEIU-UHW for being unreasonable in its requests during the bargaining session. “We are not in this situation because we do not have an attractive offer on the table; rather, it is because of the aggressive approach by the coalition and SEIU-UHW leadership demanding that they receive more than everyone else,” Tyson said. “We will continue to engage with the coalition, led by SEIU-UHW’s leadership, at the bargaining table, and I hope we will not have a strike on October 14.”

Wherley said the seven-day strike will include picket lines that will be set up at nationwide Kaiser Permanente hospitals, medical office buildings and other facilities in California, Colorado, Washington, Oregon, Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C. The strike will include Kaiser workers that are optometrists, clinical laboratory scientists and surgical technicians, among other positions. SEIU-UHW’s contract with Kaiser Permanente is set to expire at the end of September. As of press time, another bargaining session was scheduled for September 24, according to Wherley. Adjei said Kaiser executives will likely address the pending strike with union members during the planned meeting.

By BRANDON RICHARDSON
Senior Writer

After another unsuccessful bargaining session this month between Kaiser Permanente and the union members that comprise the Coalition of Kaiser Permanent Unions (CKPU), more than 80,000 workers are planning a seven-day nationwide strike starting October 14, a spokesman said.

Kaiser Permanente and the CKPU have been negotiating since April, according to Adjei, director of media relations at Kaiser Permanente Southern California. The contract talks pertain to staffing, the distribution of Kaiser’s funds, wages and health care offerings.

On September 16, Kaiser executives and CKPU union members, led by the Services Employees International Union – United Healthcare Workers West (SEIU-UHW), met in Downtown Los Angeles to discuss the pending strike. "It was a productive meeting," he said of this month’s bargaining session. “Kaiser does not seem willing to work with the workers on addressing those concerns on ensuring safe staffing, building the workforce of the future, protecting good middle-class jobs and then restoring the labor-management partnership.”

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Draft Drive-Through Guidelines Available For Public Review And Comment

Long Beach Development Services has released a draft of proposed drive-through facility design guidelines for public review and comment. The document consists of no less than 73 guidelines related to site planning, parking and circulation, building design, outdoor dining areas, landscaping and buffering, off-site improvements, mechanical equipment, servicing and utilities, and lighting.

The primary goal of the guidelines is to “ensure the health, safety and welfare of residents and visitors by promoting designs that can be beneficial to everyone, not just automobile users,” according to the document. The guidelines also aim to reduce negative impacts associated with drive-throughs, direct the development of such facilities to shopping centers and freeway-adjacent lots, enhance outdoor dining areas, locate drive-throughs away from schools and “encourage equitable distribution of healthy foods.”

While many current drive-through lanes are placed between the building and the street, the proposed site planning guidelines note that buildings should be placed close to oriented toward the street instead. Pedestrian and bicycle routes through the site should be separated from parking, driveways and drive-through lanes, the document adds. City staff included several diagrams demonstrating desired site plans for mid-block sites, buildings fronting a commercial center or mall, and multi-building sites. In general, it is noted that parking lots and drive-through lanes should be “located away from and out of sight of the public right-of-way.”

Additional guidelines specific to drive-through lanes include allowing for a minimum of four cars to queue behind the vehicle at the ordering menu and discouraging double-stacked drive-throughs, which are utilized at two local Chick-fil-A restaurants. Drive-through lanes should also be “defined by continuous planter or landscaped area” that are at least five feet wide, the document notes.

For the full guidelines, visit longbeach.gov and search “drive-through.” Comments may be submitted to Refugio Torres-Campos at refugio.torrescampos@longbeach.gov by September 25 or by calling 562-570-6571.

City Releases Draft Short-Term Rental Ordinance

Long Beach Development Services has released a draft short-term rental (STR) ordinance along with a notice of intent to adopt an initial study and negative declaration, meaning that staff has determined the proposal would have no discernable environmental impacts.

The draft ordinance outlines rules and regulations for operating an STR property within the City of Long Beach, which are currently not included in the city’s municipal code.
STRs must be an approved residential unit. Other structures or vehicles, such as RVs, boats or sheds, are prohibited. Additionally, un-hosted stays in a primary residence would be limited to 90 days per year, the number of guests would be limited to two people per bedroom, plus two, and the use of outdoor pools and spas would be prohibited between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m.

The ordinance also places responsibilities on hosting platforms like Airbnb, including working with the city to regulate unauthorized STRs advertised on their sites. Hosting platforms would also be required to provide the city monthly updates on their listings, including the STR registration number, name of the person responsible for each listing, and total price for each rental.

Per California Environmental Quality Act regulations, the negative declaration document along with the draft ordinance, will circulate publicly through October 15, one month from its release date. To view the documents, visit longbeach.gov/lbds/planning/environmental/reports.

Commission Approves 345-Unit Mixed-Use Development

The Long Beach Planning Commission unanimously approved of site plans for Ensemble Real Estate Investment’s Third + Pacific mixed-use development, which includes 345 residential units. Located at 131 W. 3rd St., the project consists of two buildings—a 23-story tower and an eight-story mid-rise building—on a 1.22-acre lot, which currently serves as a parking lot, and nearby 14,500 square feet of ground floor retail space. It is one of four recent Ensemble projects in Long Beach. The 442 Residences at 442 W. Ocean Blvd. is completed and more than 50% leased, Sonata Modern Flats is nearing completion at 207 Seaside Way and the 142-unit Magnolia and Broadway mixed-use project has been approved for development at 500 W. Broadway by the planning department and is awaiting entitlements.

Long Beach Is First L.A. County City To Receive Planning Grant

The California Department of Housing and Community Development awarded Long Beach a $625,000 grant, making it the first Los Angeles County city to receive funding from the state’s Senate Bill 2 Planning Grants Program, which is meant to support projects that increase housing stock and address homelessness.

“Creating more quality, affordable housing is one of the city’s top priorities,” Mayor Robert Garcia stated in a press release. “We have a responsibility to ensure that no one in our vibrant community is left behind and that means making housing options accessible to all. This grant will help us sustain those priorities.”

The majority of the funding is going towards a plan to rezone the Anaheim Street corridor from standalone commercial usage into mixed-use residential. This transition would create more housing in the area through market-rate and affordable hous-
for the 94,525-square-foot Building 15 and lease negotiations are underway for developer Sares-Regis Group. The project is expected to deliver “no more than 900 units from 2015 through 2019,” with half being delivered in 2016 alone. However, nearly 6,000 units are currently under construction or planned throughout Long Beach.

New Apartment Deliveries Declining Nationally

The number of new apartment deliveries is expected to decline for the third straight year, according to a new report released by RENTCafe utilizing Yardi Matrix market data. Construction on less than 300,000 new units is expected to be completed in 2019, down 8.2% from more than 326,000 last year and nearly 332,000 in 2017, a nine-year peak.

“Despite growing demand across the U.S., apartment construction started to face some challenges beginning with 2018,” according to the report. “High construction costs and a narrow pool of skilled labor are just a few of the factors hindering the development of new apartment units.”

The Los Angeles Metro area, including Long Beach and Anaheim, is expected to deliver 9,786 new apartment units in 2019, the seventh-highest amount among nationwide metro areas. However, despite its seventh-place ranking, this marks a 23% decrease in L.A.’s apartment deliveries compared to last year. According to a RENTCafe spokesperson, Long Beach has delivered “no more than 900 units from 2015 through 2019,” with half being delivered in 2016 alone. However, nearly 6,000 units are currently under construction or planned throughout Long Beach.

New Restaurant Appears In East Village Arts District

New awnings bearing the logo for a new eatery dubbed Burger Daddy have gone up at the former Linden Public location on the southwest corner of Linden Avenue and Broadway. Signs of interior construction can be seen at the site, which has sat vacant since October 2018. Neither the business owner nor leasing agent could be reached for further details.

Recent Transactions By Local Firms

The following is a list of recent commercial real estate transactions by the teams at Lee & Associates and Marcus & Millichap:

- Lee & Associates’ Jeff Coburn, Jordan Jacob O’Donnell, field representative to Senator Lena Gonzalez. (Photograph courtesy of Milana’s)

- Bogoyevac, Shane Young and Dan Lewin to “eat like a New Yorker.” The couple opened their first location, Milana’s New York Pizzeria, downtown in September 2010. Pictured from left at the ribbon cutting ceremony are Marisol Barajas, district director to Assemblymember Patrick O’Donnell; Cameron Fasci, manager of Milana’s New York Pizzeria; Ester Fasci; 4th District Councilmember Daryl Supernaw; Adriel Fasci; Daniel Brezenoff, senior advisor to Mayor Robert Garcia; and Jacob O’Donnell, field representative to Senator Lena Gonzalez. (Photograph courtesy of Milana’s)

- Allen Schreiber Todd Buchner Rocky Suares

- John Heckenkamp

- Blake Rivera

- Blake Rivera

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Building A Better Long Beach: Veteran And Senior Housing Project Nears Completion

The Beacon, a 160-unit affordable housing development for homeless and low-income seniors and veterans, is expected to be completed in late October and fully leased by the end of the year, according to Brian D’Andrea, senior vice president of housing for Century Housing, who is pictured at the project. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

By BRANDON RICHARDSON
Senior Writer

The two-phase affordable housing development known collectively as The Beacon is nearing completion, with the Beacon Place phase, a 39-unit building reserved for homeless veterans, complete and nearly 100% leased. “The Beacon Pointe portion, which is 121 permanent support homes for [homeless and low-income] seniors, is slated for completion in late October, and our expectation is that we’ll be fully leased by the end of the year,” Brian D’Andrea, senior vice president of housing for Century Housing, told the Business Journal. “We are primarily using the city’s coordinated entry system to manage the leasing process . . . to match the scarce resource that is a permanent supportive apartment with households that are most in need.”

Located on the southwest corner of Long Beach Boulevard and Anaheim Street directly across from a Metro Blue Line stop, Beacon Place consists of 30 one-bedroom units ranging in size from 579 to 697 square feet and nine two-bedroom units ranging from 937 to 1,026 square feet. Beacon Pointe includes 110 one-bedroom units ranging in size from 619 to 808 square feet and 11 two-bedroom units ranging from 998 to 1,083 square feet. Sixty-one units within Beacon Pointe are reserved for homeless seniors, while 59 units are reserved for low-income seniors. Each building has one on-site manager’s unit.

Aside from indoor community spaces within each building, a large courtyard connects the project on the third floor. The courtyard features garden areas, as well as an adjoining clubhouse and spa area. Beacon Place features a computer lab, and Beacon Pointe includes a fitness center, both of which are likely to be accessible to residents in both buildings. The ground floor includes about 6,200 square feet of retail space, which D’Andrea said is not yet leased. A key element of the project is providing residents with on-site case management services, through Mental Health America, Los Angeles, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. “It’s not just about putting someone into a beautiful new apartment home, but . . . having resources available to them to help them improve their lives,” D’Andrea said.

The Century Housing development broke ground in 2017, but its history dates back to the mid-2000s, D’Andrea explained. Originally, the site was meant to be the second phase of Meta Housing’s Long Beach Senior Arts Colony, an apartment complex adjacent to The Beacon, in which Century is a partner. However, when the Great Recession struck, those plans were abandoned. Century purchased the 1.5-acre site in December 2014, at which time they began the design process and identifying funding sources, D’Andrea said.

Assembling funds for affordable housing developments is often a multi-year process, D’Andrea noted. For The Beacon, seven funding sources were leveraged, along with capital investment from Century, to pay for the nearly $82 million project. The City of Long Beach, through the Long Beach Community Investment Company, contributed $12 million to the project, D’Andrea said. Other funding sources include the California Department of Housing and Community Development’s Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention Program, the Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco’s Affordable Housing Program, a Home Depot Foundation grant, a permanent construction loan from Wells Fargo Bank’s Community Reinvestment Corp., a 9% low-income housing tax credit through the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee, and deferred developer fees.

“The City of Long Beach has a wonderful system of care for our most vulnerable. This development is a great celebration of [the city’s] effort and all its resources coming together, getting people into a beautiful supportive home where they can lead a dignified life and become the best versions of themselves,” D’Andrea said. “In Long Beach we still have more than 1,800 persons experiencing homelessness on any given night. So a project like this that will provide 160 new supportive homes into our local . . . housing stock actually will make a difference.”

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Realty Views: Tougher Loan Requirements Set

Perspective by TERRY ROSS

Two federal government agencies appear to have made a pre-emptive move in the event of another housing downturn by tightening some of the mortgage requirements for two very popular programs.

The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and the Veterans Administration (VA) offer two of the lowest cost housing programs available with some of the best rates, easiest qualifying and highest loan-to-value (LTV) options in the marketplace – especially for cash-out refinances and owners looking to get funds for home improvements or other needs.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) oversees two federal government agencies that do the same for the no-down payment or other needs. In turn, they couldn’t sell to get out from under the debt.

It appears this time that the HUD agencies are not going to wait until something happens and are reacting to a slowing housing market. Perhaps they want extra insurance that borrowers are going to have more “skin the game” with a higher equity position in case home values decline.

For FHA cash-out mortgages, the new requirements are 20% equity – up 5% from the standard 15% of the last 10 years. For VA cash-out loans, after November 1 there will be no 100% cash-out mortgages and 90% will be the required equity to qualify.

Refinances and cash outs have been popular this year with the decline in mortgage rates, but according to an August 1 letter issued by HUD, this change is being instituted to get ahead of potential problems.

The letter stated: “FHA last adjusted the maximum LTV on cash-out refinances from 95% to 85% in 2009 in response to the weakening housing market. Prior to FHA’s reduction of LTV requirements and similar changes by other market participants during the market downturn, the share of cash-out refinances had rapidly increased as housing prices increased through the mid-2000s. Subsequent studies have shown that a significant increase in foreclosures may have been the result of a high number of cash-out refinances completed prior to the collapse of the housing market. As the housing market has improved, the market has continued to monitor the risk associated with cash-out refinances and recently one of the Government Sponsored Enterprises [the VA program run by Ginnie Mae] has instituted changes to address this credit risk.

FHA’s data is again showing that an increasing amount of cash-out refinance transactions are occurring. Notably, the total number of FHA endorsements with cash-out refinance mortgages has increased 250.47% . . in FY 2018. Consequently, FHA has concluded that this [most likely] would be a prudent measure in order to strengthen the equity position of cash-out refinances and reduce loss severities in the event of default, stay ahead of any potential future shift in the housing market and better support FHA’s mission of providing access to sustainable homeownership that builds equity.”

Although these moves in themselves will not prevent a housing downturn, they could help prevent a 30-50% drop in values, which occurred in the Great Recession. Another major benefit would be to help prevent a mass government bailout like we saw in 2008, when the underwater loans put a real strain on the nation’s lending infrastructure.

Right now, most economists are not seeing anything that catastrophic and are predicting only a stall in the upward pressure on pricing and sales. But it is significant that these two giant government agencies are monitoring the market and instituting needed changes.

Terry Ross, the broker-owner of TR Properties, will answer any questions about today’s real estate market. Email questions to Realty Views at terryross1@cs.com or call (949) 457-4922.
FOCUS ON THE ARTS

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Future of the Arts

(Continued from Page 1)

across the city, it’s important to ensure that cultural spaces are created and preserved, Suarez noted. In some cities, developers are incorporating permanent spaces for public art into new residential or commercial projects, an effort Suarez said she would like to see replicated in Long Beach. “It’s a great way to embrace the culture that’s there and make sure that the residents feel that their neighborhood remains intact, while also bringing in new artists,” Suarez said. “Even if real estate [values] rise, the arts and culture practices that are in that neighborhood will be secured if there’s a permanent space.”

Suarez said she feels encouraged by the interest both private businesses and city leadership have shown in working with the creative community, be it through public art, Percent for the Arts or other programs. On the city’s side, Suarez highlighted the Percent for the Arts program, which is entering its second year of funding through the city’s FY 2020 budget. The program, which was approved by the city council in December 2018, levies a 1% assessment on new capital projects with a cost of construction exceeding $100,000. A majority of revenues (60%) goes to the ACLB for the creation of public art and to fund small grants. The remaining 40% goes to local institutions, including the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra, International City Theatre and CSU Long Beach. "Residents don’t only want to eat something and drink good coffee, they also want to engage and have a neighborhood feeling," Suarez explained. "And that’s where art becomes really important."
FOCUS ON THE ARTS
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literacy and graduation rates increase when a child has access to arts education. In ad-
dition, we present over 20 performances, lectures, or readings each season that are
free and open to the public. These events not only provide an educational and cul-
tural benefit but also bring people to Long Beach – making our city a more vibrant
and diverse place to live, learn and grow.

Kelly Lucera
President
Long Beach Symphony
As a proud 32-year resident of this city, I greatly enjoy the varied arts and entertain-
ment options in our city, which create community, provoke interesting conversations,
promote reflection and foster creativity.

As the Symphony’s President, I believe it’s incumbent upon arts organizations to
serve and engage the broader community. Changing demographics require arts
organizations to maintain their relevance through innovative programming and solu-
tions . . . to address the sociological challenges inherent in a major urban city. The
Symphony’s music education programs serve over 200,000, or nearly half of this
city’s population, annually. We remain committed to removing barriers, engag-
ing, empowering, therapeutic, inspiring, mind-opening, a connection, a release and
a reflection of what a city values. The arts better everyone’s lives.

Art is not created in a vacuum; it takes a village, and an observer to finish the for-
mula. Everyone can play a part in sustaining a thriving arts scene here in Long Beach.
Not just the city at large, showing support and creating partnerships with artists and
organizations, but every single resident. Everyone can be an ambassador for their
favorite artist or arts organization by sup-
porting their work, and sharing their work
with friends and family.

Jennifer Rivera
Executive Director & CEO
Long Beach Opera
To me, the art scene is the beating
heart of a city and its community. The
arts, theatre specifically, can be entertain-
ing, empowering, therapeutic, inspiring,
art illuminates a remarkable resource
to address the sociological challenges
inherent in a major urban city. The
Symphony’s music education programs
serve over 200,000, or nearly half of this
city’s population, annually. We remain
committed to removing barriers, engag-
ing, empowering, therapeutic, inspir-
ing, mind-opening, a connection, a release and
a reflection of what a city values. The arts
better everyone’s lives.

Jennifer Rivera
Executive Director & CEO
Long Beach Opera
The arts scene in any city is a very im-
portant factor in the economic growth and
development of that city. Arts organiza-
tions not only provide jobs and important
cultural distinctions to the city in which
they reside, but they can also drive tourism
and bring positive attention to the city.

While Long Beach shares the popula-
tion size of cities like Atlanta, the budgets
for Long Beach’s arts organizations are far
down below many cities with comparable popu-
lations. However, Long Beach’s arts orga-
nizations continue to bring distinction and
attention to the city itself. Long Beach Op-
era demonstrated this fact when articles ap-
Yorker, The Washington Post, and the Los
Angles Times featuring our world pre-
miere opera this past June. From coast to
coast, people read the words “Long Beach”
and associated those words with artistic in-
novation.

In order to continue the growth of the
arts sector residents, businesses and the
government must work together to ensure
that there is adequate funding for these
institutions, and residents of Long Beach
must increase their patronage of and par-
ticipation in the amazing array of local arts
offerings. Residents should also be made
aware that a strong cultural footprint in-
creases any city’s worth and [should] be
encouraged to support their local arts orga-
nizations as a point of civic pride. I would
also advocate for strong support of arts
education in local schools, which allows
young people an access point to create fu-
ture artists lovers and supporters.
Beyond the Gallery: Nontraditional Art Displays In Long Beach

The Art of Bloom, an art experience located at the Edison Theatre, 213 E. Broadway, is intended to provide an interactive, virtual experience reminiscent of nature. Curated by interTrend Communications, the installation features a virtual reality floor and imitation flower petals and runs through September. interTrend President Julia Huang pictured. (Photography by Brandon Richardson)

■ BY DENNY CRISTALES
Staff Writer

Traditional art galleries and museums offer the public a chance to admire works from artists all over the world. Long Beach is no exception, with institutions like the Museum of Latin American Art and the Long Beach Museum of Art debuting a multitude of exhibitions each year. However, art can also be appreciated beyond the confines of a physical gallery. Some entities exhibit their local works in public settings, others promote interactivity through unique concepts, and some opt to merge art with education.

For instance, walking straight into a place filled with animal skulls and human remains sounds to many like the stuff made out of nightmares. But Jeremy Schott and Jeremy Cross have made a living for three years selling and showcasing these kinds of unique oddities, along with art, at The Dark Art Emporium in Downtown Long Beach, 256 Elm Ave. Founded in 2016, the emporium serves two purposes: to exhibit local artists’ work and to present weird, unusual items to the public, according to Schott.

Schott said he toured the world as a camera operator for heavy metal bands and pro wrestling organizations in the years prior to opening the emporium. Growing weary of wrestling organizations in the years prior to opening the emporium. Growing weary of the business, Schott opted to take a stab at opening an emporium. Growing weary of the business, Schott opted to take a stab at opening an emporium. Growing weary of the business, Schott opted to take a stab at opening an emporium. Growing weary of the business, Schott opted to take a stab at opening an emporium. Growing weary of the business, Schott opted to take a stab at opening an emporium.

Cross, an artist with more than a decade of experience, learned about the emporium months after it opened. Fueled by Schott’s exhibition concept, Cross expressed interest in collaborating with him to provide his own works for the emporium. Eventually, the duo worked so well together, Cross became involved in running the day-to-day operations. Cross said he “just want people to come in and feel something, whether you walk through the door and you look at the art and absolutely love it or absolutely hate it. . . . It needs to evoke something out of you, because that’s what good art does.”

The next show at The Dark Art Emporium is The Art of Bloom, an interactive exhibit utilizing blacklights to reveal hidden details in various paintings. The October 12 show will be presented by artist The Creep. For more information, visit darkartemporium.com.

Downtown is also the temporary home of The Art of Bloom pop-up exhibit. Concluding its showing at the end of September, The Art of Bloom is an installation at the Edison Theatre, 213 E. Broadway, that blends technology and nature to create a meditative experience. The display is curated by interTrend Communications, a creative agency that focuses on culture and emerging trends. The experience is curated by interTrend Communications, a creative agency that focuses on culture and emerging trends. The experience is curated by interTrend Communications, a creative agency that focuses on culture and emerging trends. The experience is curated by interTrend Communications, a creative agency that focuses on culture and emerging trends.

“We wanted it to not just be a gallery, but [a place] where people can interact and interface with the space itself,” Julia Huang, president of interTrend, said.

The exhibit is largely inspired by Japan’s cherry blossom season, a springtime occurrence when cherry blossom flowers bloom and their petals coat the country. To replicate a similar experience, the interTrend team solicited help from various partners. Daigo Doioku and Mika Tomoh, Japanese natives who work at interTrend, designed the installation to provide a virtual nature experience.

The Art of Bloom has two rooms, Huang said. When individuals enter the space and look up, they witness thousands of real flowers hanging from the ceiling. About six million paper petals float around the room to replicate the cherry blossom experience. As visitors roam the space, the floor itself activates and changes color in response to each individual’s body temperature. Binary, a Colorado-based tech company, provided the technological elements to create the interactive floor.

“There are real flowers, fake flower petals and a virtual floor,” Huang said. “It’s art and technology and nature all combined together. It’s called the symbiosis of nature. Even though it’s a small space, you really have this [sensory] overload if you’re open-minded about it.” Located inside the exhibit are candles and a fragrance developed by perfumer partner Yosh that are meant to enhance the experience, Huang said.

Adjacent to the first room is a virtual reality display that allows users to download a smartphone application to experience different textures and sensations, such as soil and wind. Taiwanese company Rumu assisted in providing the experience. From conception to implementation, the process of creating The Art of Bloom took one year, Huang said. For more details, visit theartofbloom.com.

As aforementioned, art is not limited to just a physical space. A global phenomenon turned local, POW! WOW! Long Beach has championed the implementation of public art citywide since summer 2015, according to Tokotah Ashcraft, regional director of the event. The annual POW! WOW! event is a weeklong festivity featuring public murals from global and local artists. Ashcraft, who has served in her role since summer 2017, said the event has been a positive force in Long Beach. “I think every year it gets better because the community supports us more and more,” she said.

POW! WOW! Long Beach, backed by citywide sponsors, solicits the work of these artists to paint murals in various locations, such as the sides of buildings and parking lot structures. Ashcraft’s duty as regional director is to scout potential talent for the event at local art shows or at other POW! WOW! events nationwide, including Washington, D.C., and Hawaii.

“We’re [also] so lucky with social media these days that you can go down the rabbit hole and find so many amazing artists,” she said. “We’re out there paying attention and making sure that we get people on board that are excited to paint and also totally understand that we are community-driven. We’re here to make everyone’s day brighter with public art.”

This past summer, 20 murals were commissioned citywide in various neighborhoods, including parts of downtown, Bishop Knolls and California Heights. The locations can be found at powowlongbeach.com. Although getting some business owners to offer up the sides of their buildings for a mural was a challenge in years past, Ashcraft said the event’s notoriety and success has made it an easier sales pitch.

In discussing the mural concept with artists, Ashcraft said the POW! WOW! team gives them creative freedom to express themselves, barring any obscene or negative messaging. “We leave the creative part to the artists, but we try to give them as much information as possible [about the location],” she said. “We try to touch all the way to North Long Beach [or] the west side [and] east side. We want to spread the love as much as we can.”

Efforts to beautify the city with public murals are not limited to just POW! WOW!, the Arts Council for Long Beach created the Cambodia Town Mural Project in 2017 as a one-year program to install eight murals along the one-mile corridor on Anaheim Street. Cynthia Lujan, programs manager for the Arts Council for Long Beach, said the organization put out a call for artists, similar to a request for proposals, to review different visual concepts for murals. “It was really important to work with artists that were from the area or visited that area often,” Lujan said. “In general, I think that it was a really strong project that was group-led and community-led.”

The project was funded through a large grant from the California Arts Council as well as community stakeholders. The Arts Council has partnered on other mural projects, including a conservation mural with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and 8th District Councilmember Al Austin and the Uptown Creative Corridor Project, led by 9th District Councilmember Rex Richardson. Lujan said the Arts Council is working to implement a future project for the 7th District.

Those who frequent Long Beach are also sure to have walked by a utility box or two decorated in artwork. In 2014, the Long Beach Redevelopment Agency initiated a five-year program to refresh citywide utility boxes by commissioning paintings by local}
Jessica Quintana is the executive director of Centro CHA, founded in 1992, which aims to improve the well-being of low-income Hispanic youth and families in Long Beach, including through arts programming. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

Jessica Quintana, executive director of Centro CHA, said part of the organization’s mission is to incorporate the arts into the nonprofit’s programming. She emphasized that “art is the vehicle” youth can use to express themselves, whether that is delivering a message of happiness, prosperity or adversity.

“We have art in every single room through the use of vinyl wrap, which is used to cover the box and allow easier removal of graffiti,” Walker said. More information is available at longbeach.gov.

Centro CHA is a nonprofit social service agency founded in 1992 that serves to improve the well-being of low-income Hispanic youth and families in Long Beach. The organization, located at 1633 Long Beach Blvd., offers a multitude of resources, such as workforce development training, immigration services and workshops that discuss topics like violence prevention.

Quintana said, “A lot of youth feel disconnected and need a place to plug into. This is where they can express themselves.”

“It’s important that we have community spaces and places where our young people can connect, such as places where they can do art,” Quintana said. “A lot of youth feel disconnected and need a place to plug into. This is where they can express themselves.”

Guided tours of the art are available at the nonprofit organization, where the public can also purchase the art on display. Visit centrocha.org for details.

Originally named MADE in Long Beach when it opened in November 2014, MADE by Millworks is a 12,000 square-foot space located at 240 Pine Ave. An art gallery-retail shop hybrid, the location sells only local brands, defined as those produced within 20 miles of the store, according to Heather Kern, executive director of the store.

The 4,500 square-foot shop itself is designed much like a warehouse, Kern said, emphasizing the site’s high ceiling. Patrons of the store can view the local art on display. Earlier this year, MADE by Millworks opened a beer and wine bar, Elinor, in the back of the store, where art is also exhibited.

MADE by Millworks hosts periodic art events featuring work from local artists. The displays run for about four to six weeks before rotating to the next showing. However, the current gallery is quite literally a “rotating exhibit.” Created by artist Lynn Azali, the “Rotating Canvas” gallery at MADE by Millworks has 15 interactive arts on display, where the public can rotate, touch and modify the art as they see fit. More information about the exhibit is available at madebymillworks.com.

Kern stressed the importance of promoting local art, as it allows the city to better reflect the creative people that inhabit it. As a longtime Long Beach resident, she added that the city’s arts culture is the most diverse it has been. “I remember there being a good surge of art in the ‘90s, and it seems like we’re coming back to that,” Kern said. “There are new galleries opening up – the Long Beach Museum of Art just opened their Downtown Long Beach location [and now we have] the addition of POW! WOW! every year. It’s just really exciting to see all the art coming in.”

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FOCUS ON THE ARTS

The Long Beach Museum of Art Downtown opened September 7 with its debut exhibition entitled “Collecting Long Beach, Seven Decades From The Permanent Collection.” The gallery highlights work from local artists throughout the museum’s nearly 70-year history. Pictured are Barbara Wilde, president of the museum’s board of trustees, and Ronald Nelson, executive director of the museum. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

By DENNY CRISTALES
Staff Writer

Nearly seven decades into its existence, the Long Beach Museum of Art (LBMA) expanded this month to downtown. After much anticipation from the community and museum officials, namely Executive Director Ronald Nelson, the renovated site at 356 E. 3rd St. opened September 7 to a crowd of more than 1,000 people, which included the general public and museum board and trustee members.

“Collecting Long Beach, Seven Decades From The Permanent Collection” is LBMA Downtown’s premiere exhibition, featuring works by local artists dated from 1950 onward. On display are ceramics, paintings and watercolors, according to Nelson. Some artists featured are Robert Adams, Sarah Arnold and William Lane, with respective contributions in watercolor, oil and acrylic works.

“We’re going to be 70 next year – and we look fabulous for 70, by the way,” Nelson said. “We have seven decades of Long Beach artists. A number of them are no longer with us, but a number of them are and were here [during the opening]. And it was really exciting to see that, because it’s just a wealth of inspiration and appreciation and history of Long Beach artists.”

The birth of LBMA Downtown is the result of a merger between LBMA and the nonprofit Art Exchange last year. The renovated site at 356 E. 3rd St. opened September 7 to a crowd of more than 1,000 people, which included the general public and museum board and trustee members.

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The museum has two floors. The downstairs spans 2,200 square feet, a wide gallery space with multiple works hung on the walls and displayed in the center of the room, Nelson said. The gallery features a 35-foot-high ceiling. The second-floor mezzanine, measuring 2,000 square feet, is currently used as an office space. Multiple sponsors helped make the creation of LBMA Downtown possible, said Nelson, who specifically highlighted Josephine Molina, president of the RuMBA Foundation of Long Beach, for her donation of $1 million to the museum.

Nelson expressed his excitement about providing a new space for artists to display their creativity. “I think that’s what this space does to people and to me,” he said. “I mean, when you walk in and see the size of that gallery and the size of the ceiling, it’s inspirational. There is so much that can be done within this space. We really want to connect deeply with the artists and their community here.”

One such artist is Narssos Martinez, one of 35 individuals featured in the debut exhibition. His art piece, “Friends in Freshness,” is a collage of portraits that are displayed on stacked and discarded produce boxes. These portraits represent farmers, specifically produce pickers, whom Martinez has personally met. Nelson said. “When he speaks of them, it’s . . . with reverence,” Nelson recalled. “He’ll say, ‘Oh, you can’t believe how much this woman can pick. She is the fastest picker anyone has ever known.'”

It’s artists like Martinez that makes Barbara Wilde, president of the LBMA Board of Trustees, proud to have assisted in opening the new museum space. “This is the fruition of everything that made me want to be on the board,” she said. “So, this was really important and exciting.”

Nelson said the LBMA solicits the work of artists through the Arts Council for Long Beach’s public registry of local artists and outreach from interested community members who wish to contribute their works.

Nelson said the entire exhibit is an excellent culmination of all the work the “unique artists” of Long Beach have produced over the years. “I think that [when] people . . . can engage with the artists and their work, it really cements that community relationship,” he said. “It’s great for the collector, it’s fabulous for the artist and it’s wonderful for the museum. I love that.”

“Collecting Long Beach, Seven Decades From The Permanent Collection” runs until November 3. For more information, visit lbma.org.

The Long Beach Museum of Art Downtown opened September 7 with its debut exhibition entitled “Collecting Long Beach, Seven Decades From The Permanent Collection.” The gallery highlights work from local artists throughout the museum’s nearly 70-year history. Pictured are Barbara Wilde, president of the museum’s board of trustees, and Ronald Nelson, executive director of the museum. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)
Building Long Beach

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optics, according to Melissa Reese, the firm's director of sales and marketing. The company has 30 employees.

In Long Beach, the firm developed the Riverdale community, a neighborhood of 131 single-family-detached homes that was completed in 2018 at 4747 Daisy Ave. "Brandywine specializes in infill communities, which means they develop underutilized pieces of land in existing communities," Reese said. “Most of the time, it is an asset of the neighborhood. It improves the neighborhood and increases the value of the home." She said the community sold all its homes as of this August.

Adjacent to the Riverdale community is David Molina Park, 4951 Oregon Ave. Reese said Brandywine developed the park as part of an agreement with the city to complement the neighborhood. “Of all the communities, I felt like Brandywine and that community had such a strong bond and contribution to one another,” she said. “It was one of my best experiences ever in developing a community.”

She said Brandywine Homes is working on various developments in Carson, although she indicated that the firm hopes to develop a future community again in Long Beach.

Clark Construction Group

Carlos Gonzalez, regional executive officer of Clark Construction Group in Irvine, said the firm has had a strong presence in the Southern California area since the 1980s. The company was founded in 1906 in Maryland and has multiple offices nationwide.

Among the most well-known of the firm’s projects in the city is the recently completed Pacific Visions wing at the Aquarium of the Pacific and the new Long Beach Civic Center. The major projects were completed consecutively in May and June of this year.

In late May, the Aquarium debuted Pacific Visions, a 29,000-square-foot facility that includes live animal exhibits, a new theater, art galleries and digital installations, according to Gonzalez. Successfully completing the civic center on June 29 at 411 Ocean Blvd., the $523 million project includes a new city hall, civic chambers, a Port of Long Beach headquarters and the Billie Jean King Main Library, he added.

“We have a professional but very positive relationship with the city,” Gonzalez said. “We think of [it] as a good professional, trusted partner, and we believe the city has a similar appreciation for the Clark Construction team.”

Gonzalez said the Irvine office, 18201 Von Karman Ave., governs the Southern California operations of the company and has 90 employees.

Next up for the Clark Construction Group team is to work on the upcoming expansion of California State University, Long Beach’s Steve and Nini Horn Center, which houses the college’s undergraduate advising center, computer center and university art museum. The construction start date is set for May 2020 and set for completion June 2021, according to Gonzalez.

Millie & Severson, Inc.

The main project Millie & Severson, Inc. is facilitating in the Long Beach area is software developer Laserfiche’s new corporate headquarters at 3545 Long Beach Blvd. According to John Grossman, senior vice president of Millie & Severson, the project is in the pre-construction phase and is set to begin construction within the next 30 days.

A groundbreaking ceremony for the new 102,000-square-foot corporate headquarters was hosted in July. According to Laserfiche, the site will be the first new office development along Long Beach Boulevard in Bisby Knolls for nearly three decades.

Millie & Severson, Inc. was founded in 1945. The firm’s headquarters is located at 3601 Serpentine Dr. in Los Alamitos, according to Lisa Gasdaglis, director of corporate marketing for the company.

The location has about 55 employees. “We’ve been building almost exclusively in California since that time,” she said. “We’ve been very active in the Long Beach area.” Millie & Severson’s past work includes various developments at Douglas Park and multiple renovations to MemorialCare Long Beach Medical Center, among many others.

“As a long-term Long Beach employer and builder, we’re certainly committed to building in Long Beach for our clients,” Gasdaglis said. “It’s driven, of course, by the market and the industry. We [expect to continue] building in Long Beach because we are a well-respected builder in Southern California.”

Norm Wilson & Sons, Inc.

Recently celebrating 37 years of operating in Long Beach, Norm Wilson & Sons, Inc. has helped build multiple Signal Hill and Long Beach projects, such as the Mercedes-Benz West Coast Campus, Douglas Park developments, Signal Hill Gateway and Mother’s Market. Owner Randy Wilson founded the
company, which he named after his father, in 1962 at 3400 E. Spring St. Of the 55 people the firm employs, 30 are Long Beach residents and at least 10 are members of Wilson’s family. He said the firm is licensed to build in Oregon and Arizona, although work is primarily conducted in Southern California. “I’ve lived here my whole life, [and] I think the city is doing a great job,” he said of the region. “I live right by the Long Beach Exchange . . . [and] everybody around couldn’t be more excited [about that space].”

One of the firm’s most significant projects is the Mercedes-Benz West Coast Campus, located at 3860 Lakewood Blvd. Wilson said his workers converted roughly 1,100,000 square feet of an existing airplane hangar into a vehicle preparation center for Mercedes-Benz. The center is one of three that Mercedes-Benz has nationwide and plays a significant role in the company’s inspection of vehicles on the West Coast, Wilson said. The project was completed in late 2015.

Located across the street from the Mercedes-Benz site is another Norm Wilson & Sons project: The Terminal, a four-building office development located in Douglas Park at 4265 E. Conant St. Wilson said the project was separated into two phases. It broke ground in 2016 and sold out earlier this year, according to developer Urban Development. Each office space ranges from 2,300 to 2,800 square feet.

Additionally, a distribution facility at 1901 W. Pacific Coast Hwy, for Nippon Express, a global logistics services company, will be completed this year.

Pulte Group, Inc.

Pulte Group, Inc., the nation’s third largest builder, was founded in Detroit in 1950. The company is the general contractor for the Dorado residential project in East Long Beach at 8055 Dorado Cir. The firm’s Southern California office in Mission Viejo houses 111 employees, according to Darren Warren, vice president of land at Pulte Group’s Southern California Division. On average, Warren said this division develops about 700 homes a year throughout the region.

The Dorado development is a community of 40 homes ranging from 2,465 to 2,900 square feet, for sale at an average price of $900,000. Dorado is Pulte Group’s first development in Long Beach, he said. “Grading and development started in January of 2018, with a grand opening of models in November of 2018,” Warren said. “The project is ongoing with about 25 left to sell. . . . We’ve wanted to operate in this strong Southern California market for some time now, and we are just pleased we found the right opportunity . . . to be able to offer one of our quality communities in a great location.”

Although there are no current plans to develop another project in Long Beach, Warren said Pulte Group hopes to continue its presence in the city.

SFI Joint Venture

SFI Joint Venture (SFI JV) is a collection of three general contractors that have united to work on the Port of Long Beach’s Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project, an effort to replace the old bridge and improve traffic flow and safety.

Shimmick Construction Company, FCC Construction and Impregilo S.P.A together make up SFI JV. “It’s a single-purpose venture just for this project,” said Robert Schraeder, SFI JV project manager and vice president of Shimmick Construction. “We put together a joint venture specifically to execute this job because it’s very large. We combined our technical skills, and now we have the resources to execute the work.” Shimmick Construction, located in Irvine, has been in business for 23 years.

Set for a spring 2020 completion date, the Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project is 90% done, according to Schraeder. Workers are finalizing cable work on the main portion of the bridge. When complete, the bridge will have three traffic lanes flowing in each direction, emergency lanes on the inner and outer shoulders to reduce traffic delays and accidents and a vertical clearance to allow larger vessels to pass through, according to the Port of Long Beach website.

The completion of the bridge represents an exciting time for Long Beach, Schraeder said. Of the 250 total workers onsite constructing the bridge, 52 are Long Beach residents, he added. “A lot of our guys are excited to be a part of the project,” he said. “They realize this is once-in-a-lifetime moment for them and their families, and they’re excited that they can tell their children and grandchildren that they built this bridge. . . . As far as infrastructure, it’s really the premiere infrastructure on the West Coast right now.”

Snyder Langston

The opening of the Long Beach Exchange retail center last year provided a much-needed boost to an underserved portion of the neighborhood, according to Richard Cavecche, senior vice president of operations with general contractor Snyder Langston.

Developer Burnham-Ward Properties selected Snyder Langston in late 2016 to execute the physical build of the Long Beach Exchange. During the pre-construction period, Cavecche said his team collaborated with DRA Architects to understand the specifics of the site’s layout. “We try to make sure that our teams have the requisite experience necessary to build a particular project and to understand what’s important to the client and the vernacular of each type of product, whether it’s residential or office or retail.”
he said. “They each have their own specific requirements.”

Snyder Langston has offices in Irvine, El Segundo and Pasadena. The corporate office, at 17962 Cowan in Irvine, has 50 employees, eight of whom are from Long Beach, Cavecche said. Nine management staff members oversaw the Long Beach Exchange project, but hundreds of onsite workers built the center.

Although there is pride in developing a center for a community, Cavecche said it is always a “bittersweet moment” to conclude a project like the Long Beach Exchange. “It’s always bittersweet, because you put your heart and soul into this project for two years, and then they open it up and nobody knows who you are,” he said. “You go from the most important person to just a member of the general public in literally a day – and that’s actually the way it should be. But it is a little bittersweet.”

This isn’t the first time Snyder Langston has constructed a retail project in Long Beach. The firm built the Pike at 95 S. Pine Ave. 15 years ago, according to Cavecche. “From what I understand, it has gone on to be quite successful,” he said. “I was there the other day, and I was very pleased to see everybody using the facilities. It’s always fun to see the public using a facility for what it’s designed for.”

WW Stephenson Co.

A decade in the making, the Port of Long Beach’s Middle Harbor Redevelopment Project aims to significantly reduce air pollution while expanding the terminal to hold more cargo, according to Mike Morrow, president of WW Stephenson Co.

According to the Port of Long Beach, construction on the terminal began in 2011. Morrow said the project is on pace to conclude in June 2020. The terminal will span 311 acres and have the capacity to process 3.3 million 20-foot equivalent units of containerized cargo.

The nearly $1.5 billion project is separated into phases, Morrow said. The first phase, which concluded in 2016, completed about 170 acres of the site, while the second phase features the expansion of the terminal’s on-dock rail yard.

WW Stephenson Co., located in Signal Hill at 1305 E. Burnett St., was founded in 1977 and provides general engineering and general building contractor services, Morrow said. “Our primary focus is working the port,” he said. “It’s just geographically desirable, and we’ve been doing it a long time.”

Zwick Construction Company

Jeffrey Bleak, division manager of Zwick Construction Company, said the firm just concluded work on the Oceanaire apartment development at 150 Ocean Blvd. in June. Oceanaire is a 450,000-square-foot development with 216 units. Bleak said the owner, Lennar Multifamily Communities, began leasing the space during the summer.

“The project has a unique design with a fountain located in the center courtyard,” he said. “It has great views over the top of The Pike looking toward the Queen Mary.”

Zwick Construction Company was founded in 1969, according to Bleak. The company has three division offices: two in Utah and one in Irvine at 101 Academy Dr. that governs the firm’s Southern California operations. Zwick’s Southern California division has 25 total staff members, but only about seven work primarily in the office. The other employees are out scoping various projects throughout the region.

Bleak highlighted Downtown Long Beach as a particularly active development market, commending the work of city officials to promote the area as a prime destination for real estate. “Long Beach is a hot bed right now for new development, which is great for the community, all the while keeping the developments unique to the history and culture that Long Beach offers,” Bleak said.

Millie & Severson, Inc. is set to begin construction of software developer Laserfiche’s new corporate headquarters at 3645 Long Beach Blvd. within the next 30 days, according to John Grossman, senior vice president of Millie & Severson. Pictured, from left: James Cochrun, project manager; Grossman; and Jeff Toles, superintendent. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

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or products that our generation has somehow “killed” or “canceled.” Sometimes the logic is quite sound. Other times, well, not so much. So, I thought for this go around of Millennial Pulse, I’d take a look at some of the latest buzz to give you, dear readers, a taste of what my age group is dealing with. (Look out Gen Z, it’ll be you, next).

Let’s start with Yahoo Finance’s piece, “These Wedding Traditions Are Being Killed Off By Millennials.” Oddly enough, I wrote a column on the same topic earlier this year. But while mine featured input from industry professionals, this listicle makes wild stabs in the dark without any source material or verification of facts. When I realized this, I thought, “Oh, how fun! I get to go on an editor’s rant decrying poor journalistic practices!” But scrolling down through the assessments—we don’t like veils, we don’t want to wear something blue or old, we are “tossing the bouquet toss, too” – we don’t want to wear something blue or old, we are “tossing the bouquet toss, too” – I couldn’t find anything earth-shattering, or, frankly, interesting enough, to get up my ire. Oh well. As Ariana Grande would say: next.


Moving on, some of you may have noticed last week’s trending Twitter topic: #MillennialRetirementPlans. Or more, accurately, how we supposedly don’t have any. Considering that many Millennials took a hit to their finances during the Great Recession – and a lot of research out there says many never fully recovered – this one isn’t too shocking.

Some of the top tweets by Millennials sharing their “retirement plans” included: “Finally earn enough experience to get an entry level job;” “Hope we don’t die in our chairs during a meeting that could have been an email;” and a healthy variety of sardonic jokes about climate change ending the world before we have to worry about it.

Following a delightfully GIF-filled barrage of Millennial tweeting on the topic, Forbes published a piece entitled, “Why Is #MillennialRetirementPlans Trending? Do Millennials Even Have Retirement Plans?” I’d hazard to guess that it depends on how debt-burdened a Millennial is, who they work for, and their personal financial savvy.

Unlike the deluge of think pieces out there about our generation, Forbes did some research to answer its own query. Per Forbes, a 2018 research paper by the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College found that by age 35, 37% of Millennial men and 38% of women were enrolled in employer-sponsored retirement plans. By comparison, about half of the prior generation, Generation X, had been enrolled in such plans at the same age.

It seems like half the stuff written about Millennials involves the depressing memory of the Great Recession, so let’s not end on a down note. Instead, let’s tackle The Huffington Post’s piece, “Why Millennials Are Suddenly So Obsessed With Houseplants.” I will preface this analysis by saying that I do not fall into this category, as I am convinced that my cat would try to eat them, but also because I suspect they would attract and harbor spiders, which is a nonstarter for me.

HuffPost interviewed an L.A. Millennial who owned not one, not 10, not 50, but an impressive 110 houseplants. Why? She was initially enticed by Instagram posts of plants, and hopped on the bandwagon. Now, she finds herself part of a burgeoning plant community. HuffPost didn’t get too much into what was implied—that our generation is overly influenced by social media. Honestly, I would not have argued if they had.

HuffPost did dig a little deeper though. Supposedly, the financial setbacks many Millennials faced early in their careers caused them to delay life milestones like marriage and having children. That much is easy enough to verify with data from a variety of sources, including the American Community Survey and Pew Research Center. The assertion that, to make up for these delays, we’re instead filling our lives with plants—well, maybe not.

But hey, if you don’t have a retirement plan yet, perhaps you can start by selling your fern collection.
The Long Beach renaissance is taking shape, one crane at a time. And while our physical growth is great for the economic future of our city, it can make your commute a little messy. Long Beach Transit knows how to navigate around sudden one-way streets, surprise road closures and traffic jams you wouldn’t want to be car-stuck in. As our city evolves, trust LBT to make sure your life stays on route through it all.

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Join Us for an Artist’s View

The Port of Long Beach presents our 7th Annual PHOTOPROGRAM, a partnership with the Arts Council for Long Beach. Local photographers captured striking images of the Port on a behind-the-scenes harbor tour and their best work is on display Oct. 4 - Nov. 1 in the Port of Long Beach Administration Building Lobby. More information at polb.com/photoprogram.