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## 2ND & PCH Is Open For Business



The long-awaited 2ND & PCH retail center celebrated its grand opening on October 24. Pictured from left during the ribbon cutting ceremony are Barret Bradley, development associate with CenterCal; Fred Bruning, CEO for CenterCal; 2ND & PCH General Manager Samantha Lopez; 3rd District Councilmember Suzie Price; Mayor Robert Garcia; Jean Paul Wardy, president of CenterCal; Long Beach Development Services Director Linda Tatum; Raymond Lin, property owner; Randy Gordon, president of the Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce; and Maureen Gitto, vice president of brand experience for CenterCal. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**  
Senior Writer

The highly anticipated 2ND & PCH retail center celebrated its grand opening with city officials, developers and hundreds of residents in attendance on October 24. As of November 1, 19 stores have opened their doors, and dozens more are to follow. The more than 215,000-square-foot proj-

ect in Southeast Long Beach comes after two decades of tenacious efforts by property owner Raymond Lin and city staff, who went through three other development pitches before 2ND & PCH was ultimately approved.

"It's like a dream coming true," Lin told the Business Journal. "You wish for something and work toward that vision for so long and so hard,

and 20-some years later it finally happened . . . bigger and better than I could [have] ever asked for. I'm very grateful."

Lin purchased the lease for the SeaPort Marina Hotel, the former structure on the site, in the early 1990s, followed by the land purchase in 1998. From then on, Lin worked with the city and developers on plans to demolish the run-

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## Legislation Could Lower Drug Prices, But At What Cost?

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**  
Editor

A proposal by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to lower prescription drug costs by allow-

ing the government to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies is expected to come to a vote by the House of Representatives in coming days. Meanwhile, a separate plan to accomplish

the same end, but by different means, has been introduced to the Senate by Republican Chuck Grassley, who serves as finance committee chairman. Grassley's

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## SCE Halts Toyota's Plans For Fuel Cell Power Plant In Long Beach

■ By **ALENA MASCHKE**  
Senior Writer

Japanese car manufacturer Toyota is planning to bring a fuel cell power plant to its Port of Long Beach facility, making it the company's first fully renewable operation, according to Craig Scott, director of the Advanced Technologies Group for Toyota Motor North America. For the project to come to fruition, Toyota and its partner in developing the plant, FuelCell Energy, need buy-in from the local utility, Southern California Edison (SCE). But SCE has refused.

Toyota's operations at the Port of Long Beach process approximately 400,000 vehicles every year, with cars produced in Japan coming ashore to be purchased by U.S. consumers and those produced in Baja California and Kentucky boarding ships destined for countries around the globe. "That port facility is our largest port facility outside of Japan," Scott told the Business Journal. "It's a very important part of our business."

Together with the Connecticut-based technology firm FuelCell Energy, the car manufacturer is planning to add a hydrogen fuel cell power plant to its 130-acre facility at the port. The plant would produce energy, hydrogen and water from directed biogas, part of which would be used to power local operations, fuel a new fleet of hydrogen trucks and rinse off vehicles at the on-site car wash.

But despite receiving its stamp of approval from the Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners in August 2018, work on

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### Colorectal Cancer Risk On The Rise Among Millennials

■ By Editor **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**

Research by the American Cancer Society published in 2017 found that people born in the 1990s (I.E., Millennials) are developing colon and rectal cancers at increasing rates. According to the study, Millennials born around 1990 are two times more likely to develop colon cancer and four times more likely to develop rectal cancer compared to

young adults in the 1950s, a period of time when risk was the lowest.

The research, which was published in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute, found that rates of colon and rectal cancers (often lumped together with the phrase "colorectal cancer") have been

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# PortSide: Keeping Up With The Port Of Long Beach



■ By **ALENA MASCHKE**  
Senior Writer

Standing in front of Pier G at the Port of Long Beach, Senior Civil Engineer and Program Manager Sailendra Bandatmakur is visibly proud of what his team has been able to accomplish. After joining the port as a traffic engineer in 2001, Bandatmakur switched to the program management division in 2005, where he's now working on his second project involving the 246-acre pier. The current Pier G and J Double Track Access Project is a \$25 million project to remove a bottleneck between Piers G and J and add 1,500 feet of storage track. "For a civil engineer, it's a dream to work on these kinds of mega-projects," Bandatmakur

said. In addition to the Pier G railway expansion project, he is also involved in the development of the Mark Bixby Bike and Walk Path, which will run across the new Gerald Desmond Bridge, connecting Downtown Long Beach with the port. "No day is a dull day in the port. Every day we're solving some issues, working on challenging projects," Bandatmakur said. His colleagues, he noted, make even the trickiest issues seem solvable. It's not just the opportunity to work on unique million-dollar projects that excites him, he explained; it's seeing his work come to fruition in the real world. He reflected, "It is so fulfilling for me that when I bring my daughter [to the port], I can show her: I worked on these projects." ■

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# Climathon Tackles Economic, Climate Solutions For Global Issues



California State University, Long Beach's (CSULB) Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (IIE) hosted this year's Climathon event, a 24-hour challenge to solve global issues such as food scarcity, at the Duncan Anderson Gallery on October 25. Pictured, from left: Alvaro Monge, CSULB computer science professor; Wade Martin, professor of economics and director of the IIE; Chris Wacker, CEO of Laserfiche; Wesley Woelfel, associate professor with the CSULB Department of Design; Linda Nguyen, vice president of community relations at the Wells Fargo Foundation; and Lauren Dragicevich, IIE administrator. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

■ By DENNY CRISTALES  
Staff Writer

If there were only 24 hours to develop a solution to one of the world's biggest economic issues, could it be done? The participants of the global, 24-hour Climathon faced that challenge head-on on October 25.

The Climathon takes place simultaneously in cities around the world to attract innovators, entrepreneurs, students and professionals to create solutions for global climate challenges, according to Wade Martin, professor of economics and director of the Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (IIE) at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB). The Climathon is inspired by hackathons, collaborative events in which programmers complete

certain tasks over a short period of time.

A total of 122 cities hosted a Climathon this year, Martin said, noting that Long Beach is only one of four cities in the United States that participated. The IIE, in partnership with the Long Beach Economic Development Department, has hosted the event for three years. "[The economic development department] believes in the event's innovative and entrepreneurial approach to addressing climate issues," Martin said.

The Long Beach Climathon, hosted at the university's Duncan Anderson Gallery, finds solutions to help meet the objectives of the city's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, a framework for creating or updating policies and programs aimed at reducing negative environmental impacts, Martin said.

Every year, participants have to address a different global issue presented by Climathon organizers. The topic this year covered food insecurity, food sourcing and food waste. Citing the California Association of Food Banks, the IIE noted that the number of Californians facing food insecurity is 4.6 million. On average, one out of every eight Californians do not know where their next meal will come from. "When you source food locally, that creates more jobs," Martin said. "Limiting food waste creates a healthier community with better quality food. From a food insecurity perspective, [solving that issue means] less mental stress and a better capacity to work more effectively."

Climathon sponsors included the Wells Fargo Foundation and local software company Laserfiche. Linda Nguyen, vice pres-

ident of community relations at the Wells Fargo Foundation, said this year's event sought unique solutions for this worldwide food problem. "It's a global issue, but when we localize it, we are able to address it better and find solutions that really have an impact on the community here in Long Beach," Nguyen said.

Chris Wacker, CEO of Laserfiche, said nutritious food promotes strong education and intelligence for the global population. He emphasized the importance of maintaining good health and alertness in the wake of a changing job market. "We are moving into the age of automation," he said. "That's the future: machine learning and artificial intelligence. And to [create] that, you really have to be intelligent and mentally alert."

One Climathon group proposed developing an aggregate score that measures a food's environmental impact. The higher the score, the more environmentally sound the item is. "The score would be generated from the entire supply chain of how you got that food into your shopping cart or at the restaurant," Alvaro Monge, CSULB computer science professor, said. "It takes into account everything. The example was if I was going to go shop for certain produce, the score at Trader Joe's is an 82, but that score at another store is 75. That number is easy to understand."

Martin highlighted a proposal that put a twist on potlucks. "This is called a 'pop-luck,'" he said. "You would organize a pop-up for a potluck dinner. Whenever there's spare food, you could promote it on an app or the web. Food-insecure people could show up and get a meal."

Lauren Dragicevich, IIE administrator, said participants have the option to engage with the institute to develop a business plan for their proposals. "We will offer you free resources, networking opportunities [and] classes to . . . get this going," she said. "Because of our relationship with the city, sometimes those ideas could get implemented. And that does create jobs."

Wesley Woelfel, associate professor with the CSULB Department of Design, said all participants were eager to put in overnight work to craft their ideas; the 24-hour event meant many groups stayed on campus overnight. "[It was] a perfect space for mindfulness, collaboration and critical thinking on the subject matter," he said. ■



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# Economic Gap Exists Between Long Beach Latinos And Other Ethnicities, Report Shows

■ By DENNY CRISTALES  
Staff Writer

Despite representing nearly half of Long Beach's population and serving as major contributors to the local economy, residents who identify as Latino face various socioeconomic achievement gaps compared to other ethnicities in the city, according to a recent economic report.

During the Long Beach Latino Economic Summit on Friday, October 18, the California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) Department of Economics, Centro CHA – a nonprofit social service agency for Hispanics and Latinos – and the City of Long Beach presented the second iteration of the Long Beach Latino Economic Report. The updated report, which was presented at CSULB, illustrates how the local Latino population compares to other ethnicities in key areas such as employment, income and education. The first report was introduced last year at the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center.

In attendance at this year's summit were State Sen. Lena Gonzalez, Herlinda Chico of Los Angeles County 4th District Supervisor Janice Hahn's office, Long Beach Community College District Board of Trustees President Vivian Malauulu and other elected officials. Partners who helped develop the report were also present, including representatives from Centro CHA, the Port of Long Beach, the Long Beach Economic Development Department and others.

The report illustrates that achievement gaps exist between the Latino population and other ethnicities in Long Beach, said Seiji Steimetz, professor and chair of CSULB's Office of Economic Research. He presented the report's findings alongside Centro CHA's Megan Anaya, who is a research intern at the nonprofit.

In sharing these findings with the community, the hope is to stimulate conversation between the general public and policymakers to help address disparities, Steimetz told the Business Journal. "That ongoing conversation

can then be a guidepost for what policy areas need to be addressed," he said. "When the general public participates at that summit, [what they say] is guaranteed to be heard [by] policymakers in the city."

The report relies upon various data sources, including the most recent information from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) and the ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS). The ACS is an annual nationwide survey that collects data about jobs and occupations, education, rental housing and more. The PUMS focuses on information about individual people and housing units. It is publicly available for a variety of uses, such as for independent research.

Inaccessibility to digital resources, higher education, housing and health care are among the biggest challenges faced by Latinos in Long Beach, according to the Long Beach Latino Economic Report.

As of 2017, there were 202,761 Latinos living in Long Beach, encompassing 43.2% of the city's population,

the report shows. The Latino population grew steadily in Long Beach over the prior five years, although there was a dip of 3.1% in 2017. The overall U.S. citizenship rate for Latinos in Long Beach is 80%, and 33.4% of the Latino population is foreign-born.

Steimetz referred to Latinos as "an underserved minority population" as well as a "dominant force in the city," noting that the Latino community is an important part of Long Beach's economic engine.

Employment data from the report shows that the Long Beach Latino population leads other ethnicities in labor force participation. According to the report, 102,209 Long Beach Latinos participate in the civilian labor force, which represents 41.4% of all working residents in the city. Labor force participation among Long Beach Latinos is 70%, compared to 63% among all other Long Beach working-age residents.

More Long Beach Latinos are employed in manufacturing and industrial

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## TAXES PAID BY LONG BEACH HOUSEHOLDS (2017)

	Federal, State, & Local Taxes	% of Long Beach Household Taxes
Latino Immigrant Households	\$349 million	16%
All Latino Households	\$807 million	36%
All Households	\$2.2 billion	100%

Latino households contribute **36%** of all Federal, State, & Local tax revenues generated by Long Beach households.

**16%** of all Long Beach household tax revenues are generated by Latino Immigrant households.

Latino households contribute 36% of all federal, state and local tax revenues generated by Long Beach households, according to the Long Beach Latino Economic Report. The study was conducted by the California State University, Long Beach Department of Economics, Centro CHA and other city partners. (Image courtesy of California State University, Long Beach)

(Continued from Page 5)

related job fields than those who have careers in management or business. Anaya presented that 19% of the city's Latino population works in the production, transportation and material moving sectors, compared to 9% of other Long Beach residents. In contrast, 23% of employed Latinos work in the management, business, science and arts sectors, compared to 48% of all other residents.

Employed Long Beach Latinos have an economic impact of \$34.3 billion, which represents 38.1% of Long Beach's total economic impact in Los Angeles and Orange counties, according to the report. Of those working Latinos, 46,000 are immigrants. The Long Beach Latino immigrant population generates an annual economic impact of \$13.7 billion.

Latino households contribute 36% of all federal, state and local tax revenues generated by Long Beach households, according to the report.

Anaya said that Latino renters spend 43.8% of their income on housing, compared to 40.1% for all other ethnicities. A larger share of Long Beach Latinos, 67.1%, are renters. Comparatively, 55.7% of all other ethnicities combined are renters.

The socioeconomic gaps between local Latinos and other groups become more apparent when household and family incomes come into play, Anaya said. According to the U.S. Census, a family consists of two or more people all related by birth, marriage or adoption residing in the same housing unit. A household, on the other hand, consists of all people who are in a home, regardless of their relationships to one another. A household may consist of a person living alone or multiple unrelated individuals or families living together, according to the U.S. Census.

The median household income for Long Beach Latinos is \$51,646, which is 14.7% lower than the city's overall median household income of \$60,557, Anaya said. The median family income among Long Beach Latinos is \$52,200, compared to \$80,000 among all other Long Beach families – a 34.8% family

income gap.

Jessica Quintana, executive director of Centro CHA, told the Business Journal that these figures confirm that Latinos are economically lagging behind other ethnicities in the city. "It's so important we educate our community constituents, our leaders, our residents on this data," she said. Quintana believes this disparity exists because there's a lack of opportunities for the Latino population. "If they don't have access to good paying jobs, that's just really going to tell the future of how well these families and their children are going to do economically in this city."

The report indicates that 6,865 Long Beach Latino families live in poverty. Anaya said this figure represents 16.4% of all Long Beach Latino families, compared to 9.8% of all other ethnic families in the city.

When it comes to health insurance coverage, 23,289 of Long Beach Latinos are uninsured. Roughly 16.3% of Long Beach Latinos between the ages of 18 and 64 are uninsured, compared to 5.6% of all other Long Beach residents in that age group. However, the report indicated that the number of Long Beach Latinos who are uninsured has declined by 17.3 percentage points in the past five years.

### Education Gaps

The disparities in income could perhaps be attributed to the education level of local Latinos, Steimetz said. Out of all Long Beach Latinos over the age of 25, 11% have earned a bachelor's degree, compared to 26% of other ethnicities in the city, the report shows. About 38% of Long Beach Latinos have less than a high school education, compared to 10% of all other ethnicities, according to the report.

Steimetz said that 43,000 of Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) students identify as Latino, which accounts for 56% of the district's student population. He said the silver lining is that the LBUSD Latino high school graduation rate has increased by 5 percentage points over the last five years, but the demograph-

ic still has the lowest graduation rate compared to other ethnicities – an 82% graduation rate versus 89%.

"There's a gap that doesn't close," Steimetz said. "Even though the Latino LBUSD high-school graduation rates are rising, the gap between their performance and all others' persists."

Digital access is one of the more significant educational gaps that exists between Long Beach Latinos and other ethnicities, according to Steimetz. The biggest disparity is with desktop and laptop ownership, with 27% of Latino households lacking access to these devices, compared to 17.4% of all other households.

Steimetz illustrated this divide by using his child's classroom experience as an example. Teachers often use the classroom communication application ClassDojo as a way to provide progress reports to parents about their children. During the summit, Steimetz presented one of these messages from his child's teacher. "If your child does not have access to a computer or does not have access to the internet . . . it is each individual's responsibility to complete the assignments at a local school or at a local library," he read, before emphasizing that this digital disadvantage puts students at a higher risk of failing school. Most parents do not have time to transport their children to and from the library, Steimetz noted.

Despite a gap in technology ownership, the disparity in internet access is not as profound, although it's still there, Steimetz said. In regard to the internet, 12.9% of Long Beach Latino households do not have access, compared to 11.1% of all other households. "If a student does not have access to technology, that's going to affect their ability to learn," Quintana said. "They won't be able to access information in a quick manner."

### Moving Forward

Anaya emphasized the importance in educating the community about the Latino population's standing in Long Beach. She said the report has the potential to motivate city leaders in taking action to resolve this problem.

"This report is a chance to show that this gap is real," Anaya told the Business Journal. "It's not just someone saying that it exists, but the numbers are supporting that. You can't refute when you see a trend over the last decade that it's [not] a systematic issue. We created this digestible format of [information] in hopes . . . of bringing these issues to light and motivating policymakers and the community to get together in a collaborative way and addressing what can be done."

During the summit, attendees were encouraged to periodically discuss the presented information with their groups at each table. Event organizers provided at least 20 minutes for each table to develop any policy recommendations or proposed solutions on resolving some of the issues presented in the report. Juan Benitez, executive director of CSULB's Center for Community Engagement, compiled these recommendations into a list, which will later be evaluated more thoroughly, he told the Business Journal.

Citing the various education and economic disparities, some groups suggested launching a public education campaign for the city's Latino population. This effort would focus on areas such as health care access, voter education and homeownership.

Economic inclusion policies were also proposed, including suggestions to put a moratorium on significant rent increases, create more affordable housing and establish a comprehensive workforce development plan. In terms of digital access, one group recommended free citywide internet access for working families and students.

"We want this entire process to serve as a mechanism . . . not just for our [Latino] communities, but for all communities in Long Beach that are experiencing the impacts in housing, in the environment, in education and in economic development," Benitez said during the summit.

The full Long Beach Latino Economic Report is available at the CSULB Department of Economics' website at [cla.csulb.edu/departments/economics](http://cla.csulb.edu/departments/economics). ■

# Smart Cities: Civic Evolution Or Tech Dystopia?

■ By **ALENA MASCHKE**  
Senior Writer

Your smartphone allows you to check your e-mails, listen to your workout playlist and, lest we forget, make the occasional call. Forgot to turn off the lights in your smart home? Don't worry, there's an app for that. As the world of smart devices continues to grow, local governments and private companies alike have begun to wonder: how can our cities become "smarter?"

As of recently, Long Beach has become one of the many municipalities to join a smart city movement that has picked up steam in recent years. On October 22, the Long Beach City Council approved a request by Mayor Robert Garcia to kick off the development of a smart city initiative, asking the Office of the City Manager to report back by the end of April 2020.

So what exactly makes a city "smart?" According to tech marketing company TechTarget, "a smart city is a municipality that uses information and communication technologies (ICT) to increase operational efficiency, share information with the public and improve both the quality of government services and citizen welfare."

In his letter to the city council, Gar-

cia wrote that "through a smart city strategic initiative, Long Beach will develop a more coordinated approach to propose, design, and pilot smart city solutions that address existing City challenges." Further, the letter stated, "this approach will prioritize improving residents' quality of life through both technological and non-technological solutions while also protecting residents' privacy and digital rights."

What exactly the use of information technology for the public good will look like is still heavily debated. Proponents of the smart city movement have touted its potential to identify opportunities for public-private collaboration, combat inequities in digital access and increase civic engagement. Skeptics have characterized talk of smart cities as a mere marketing ploy at best and a roadmap to a tech surveillance state at worst.

In his book, "The Smart Enough City: Putting Technology in Its Place to Reclaim Our Urban Future," Harvard doctoral candidate Ben Green warns of the adverse effects and unintended consequences that can accompany the use of advanced information technology in a municipal setting. Green's work in applied mathematics focuses on algorithmic fairness, municipal governments and the

criminal justice system, and he is currently completing fellowships at New York University's AI Now Institute and the university's Technology Law and Policy Clinic.

Green uses examples such as the LinkNYC network of free Wi-Fi stations across New York City and predictive policing as examples of the perils of technologies under the smart city umbrella. The LinkNYC network is operated by Sidewalk Labs, a subsidiary of Google parent company Alphabet, and made profitable through the sale of data that users share with the individual Wi-Fi stations. Predictive policing software, which relies on data indicating where police have observed and prosecuted crimes in the past, poses the risk of perpetuating racial bias by over-policing communities of color, Green argues.

"We are promised that the benefits of these technologies – and the 'smart cities' they help create – will be tremendous," he writes. Instead, he argues, "the smart city threatens to be a place where self-driving cars have the run of downtowns and force out pedestrians, where civic engagement is limited to requesting services through an app, where police use algorithms to justify and perpetuate racist practices, and where governments and companies

surveil public space to control behavior."

Despite such criticism, the concept has caught on. The 2016 Smart Cities Survey, prepared by the United States Conference of Mayors and London-based research firm IHS Markit, counted nearly 800 smart city projects in the 54 U.S. cities surveyed.

Raj Pannu, co-founder of Smart Cities NYC, the country's largest conference on the topic by its own account, acknowledged concerns over data privacy, corporate use of citizens' personal data and potential government surveillance. Asked what the ideal smart city looks like, Pannu first outlined what it isn't.

"It's not a place where data and information flow is the dominant theme. It's not a place where every transaction is logged, every human movement is catalogued as a piece of data, a techno-surveillance state," he explained. "I don't think that's what a smart city is." Instead, he argued, smart city initiatives should explore the needs of the community and bring local government up to speed on the newest technologies, allowing staff and elected officials to make informed decisions about the partnerships they enter into in their pursuit of public tech solutions.

"Cities need to become more digital-

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## CITY OF LONG BEACH

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STI Firearms and Magazines	ITB PD19-128	11/14/2019
Low Flow Diversion Sites Monitoring & Maint. Svcs	RFQ PW19-136	11/20/2019
On-Call Professional Engineering & Inspection Svcs	RFQ ER19-138	12/12/2019
Queensway Bay Landscape Services	RFP PR19-122	12/17/2019
Engineering Construction Mgmt. Svcs for Various Development Projects at LB Airport	RFQ AP19-132	12/17/2019
Construction Materials Testing/Inspection Services For Various Development Projects at LB Airport	RFQ AP19-133	01/07/2020

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Digital totems set up along two major bike paths in Long Beach collect data on the amount of cyclists and pedestrians using the paths. The data can be used to inform decisions for future mobility projects, Long Beach Smart Cities Program Lead Ryan Kurtzman explained. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

(Continued from Page 7)

ly engaged and there needs to be more expertise. They need to up their game,” Pannu noted. By facing technological challenges head-on and educating themselves on solutions, cities can become equal partners to technology companies in providing residents with the products and services they desire, he explained.

The alternative, Pannu pointed out, is a public sphere dominated by tech companies and start-ups seeking to disrupt existing infrastructure in favor of new technologies and services, often with unintended or undesirable consequences for the community. “We, as a society, have tried to undermine the basic institutions that have been very helpful to us. We’ve reached a crisis point where disruption is now becoming very destructive,” he explained, citing the suicides of several New York City taxicab drivers, whose city-issued medallions lost value due to the arrival of ridesharing apps, as an example. Here’s where smart city initiatives come into play. “It’s really about substituting collaboration for disruption, as a way for society to move forward,” Pannu said.

One example of Long Beach’s preceding forays into smart city territory is the city’s e-scooter program. Kicked off as a pilot program in August 2018, the city worked with vendors of the suddenly omnipresent scooters to usher in the new technology, while incorporating concerns about the impact their improper use could have on pedestrians. In May, the

city council approved a permanent ordinance on e-scooters, limiting the number of scooters to be deployed in the city and erecting a digital fence that automatically slows down and eventually stops the devices in zones where scooters are prohibited.

The city plans to continue on this cautious path toward tech innovation, Ryan Kurtzman, smart cities project lead for the City of Long Beach, told the Business Journal. “The last thing we want to do is implement different technologies or pilot projects based exclusively on a fear of missing out or trying to get the next big technology into Long Beach, not really thinking about what need it actually meets,” he explained.

The Long Beach Technology and Innovation Commission will be highly involved in any formal smart city initiative, Kurtzman noted. “We’ll be working with that commission to develop data privacy guidelines that really articulate some of the big concerns and initiatives that we want to keep in mind as we’re thinking about these technologies,” he said, pointing to the use of facial recognition technologies or the sale of user data as examples.

In addition to some of the public tech that has come online in Long Beach in recent years, including public Wi-Fi, self-dimming LED streetlights and counting poles along two of the cities bike paths, the city has been working behind the scenes to become more efficient

and accessible through digitization and automation.

Long Beach-based software developer Laserfiche has assisted the city in improving both its public-facing digital presence and its behind-the-scenes technology. “As cities like Long Beach are required to reduce program development times, continuously improve services and comply with strict regulations without significantly increasing spending, the innovative use of technology becomes ever-more important,” Brigitte Meiselman, solutions manager at Laserfiche, told the Business Journal.

For example, the move into the new city hall called attention to the need for digitization of city records, Meiselman pointed out. “That was really the catalyst behind this larger project that we just started at the beginning of this calendar year,” she explained. Since the beginning of the year, Laserfiche has been working with several city departments to digitize records, automate internal processes and create digital platforms for residents to access public data and submit requests.

“A lot of these are digital initiatives that are, at first, in the background. But what the implementation of these technologies really does is identify relationships between departments, between [government] practices, between the city and its constituents, that maybe aren’t always easily identifiable,” Meiselman explained. “The development of these standardized digital processes will help every depart-

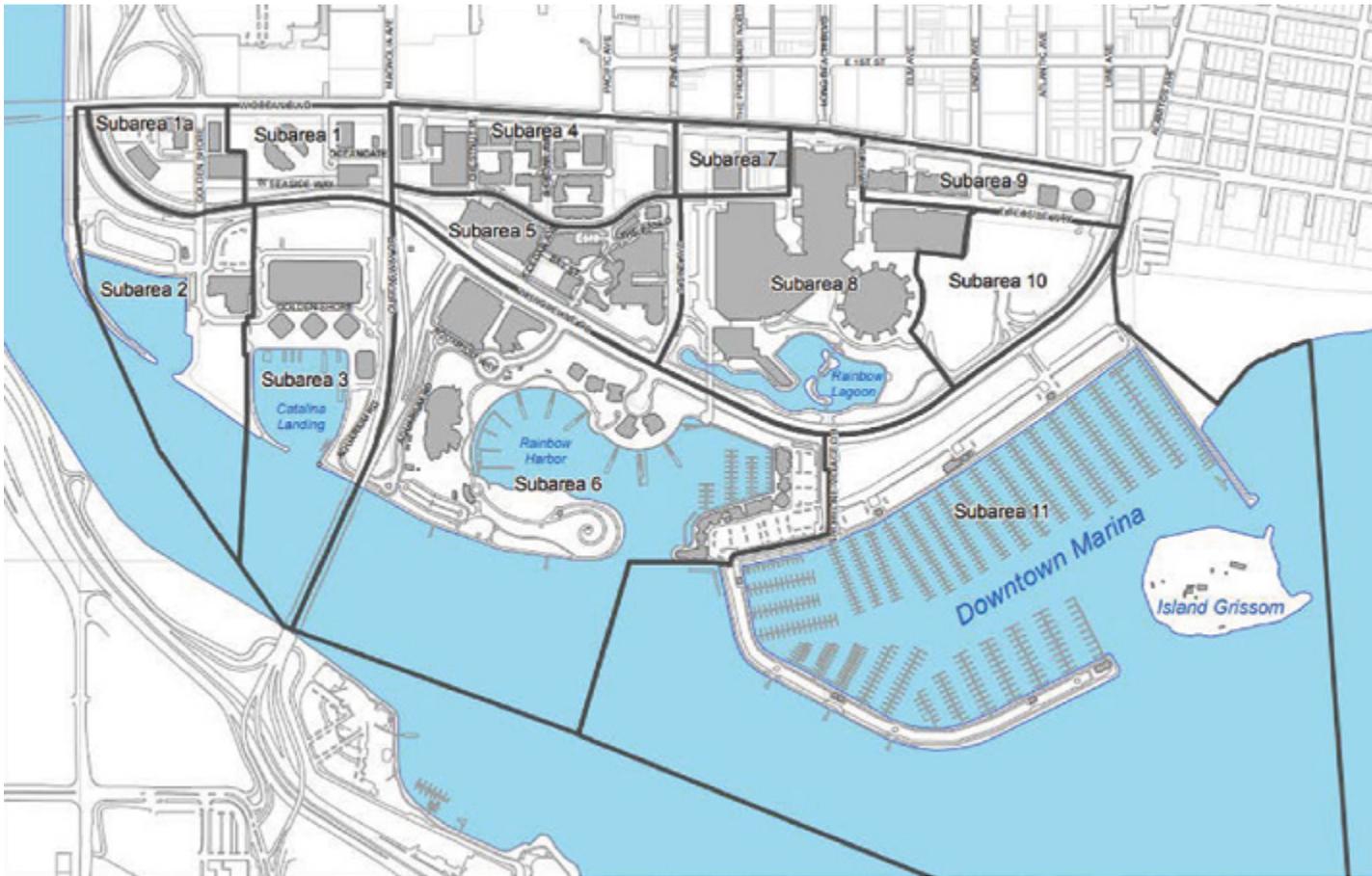
ment become more efficient.”

Public-facing products to be developed as part of the project include an platform making restaurants’ health inspection records readily available online, a digital request form for police ride-alongs, a revamped application system for civic employment opportunities and a digital request form designed to make the reservation of spaces in public facilities, such as the new Billy Jean King Main Library, more convenient.

But despite the focus on technology, smart city initiatives can and should include much more than just products and services, Pannu pointed out. “It’s not about technologies, it’s about people,” he said. “My idea of a smart city would be that it enriches people’s lives and [does] not limit them.” This, he argued, can be achieved by making smart policies, not just smart technology, part of the equation.

Kurtzman agrees. “Smart cities are not just about the public right of way, infrastructure and the built environment, it’s also about being smart as a city, as a city hall, and making things easier and faster for city staff to receive efficiencies in how we operate,” he said. “A lot of these projects are empowering folks across the city to be more civically involved and engaged, and give them the tools and resources they need to participate and thrive within the systems that we’ve created in the city.” ■

# City Council Initiates Downtown Shoreline Visioning Process



The Downtown Shoreline Planned Development District (PD-6) will be the focus of a visioning process to lay the foundation for an upcoming revitalization plan. (Image courtesy of the City of Long Beach)

■ By **DENNY CRISTALES**  
Staff Writer

The Long Beach City Council unanimously approved a visioning process to revitalize the downtown shoreline area on October 22, citing more opportunities for downtown development and a strong interest in the area due to the city's participation in the 2028 Summer Olympics.

This visioning effort is designed to provide the framework for a Downtown Shoreline Specific Plan, which will examine how resources could be used to enhance the Downtown Shoreline Planned Development District (PD-6). The area includes Rainbow Harbor, Rainbow Lagoon, Catalina Landing, the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center, a marina and more. "Updating our plans around the city has been a priority," Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia said during the council meeting. "PD-6 is a critical piece of our infrastructure, of our economy and our area."

In her presentation to the Long Beach City Council, Linda Tatum, director of Long Beach Development Services, said the visioning process would be led by development services staff with support from the city's economic development team.

The Downtown Shoreline Visioning Process is expected to take 18 months, beginning in January 2020, Tatum said. Before the process begins, city staff must create a project outline and present it to the Long Beach City Council some time in December. Upon approval, a consultant for the visioning process – who will guide and work

with city staff – will be selected in January. Working groups will form in March, according to Tatum.

Long Beach Development Services will use \$150,000 appropriated by the city council in the Tidelands Operations Fund Group, previously known as the Tidelands Operating Fund, and \$100,000 in economic development funds from the same budget for the visioning process, according to Rick de la Torre, development services community information officer.

The City of Long Beach first adopted PD-6 in the 1980s, per Tatum's presentation. Garcia first announced plans for this visioning process during his presentation at the 2018 Building a Better Long Beach event, which is sponsored by the Business Journal.

A similar process was conducted for the Downtown Plan (PD-30) when it was adopted by the city council in January 2012. City officials said the Downtown Plan has served as a catalyst in the area's ongoing development and revitalization.

Tatum attributed that plan's success to the visioning process that was conducted prior to its implementation. Communicating with residents and stakeholders allowed for a smooth process, she added.

"We look forward to engaging the community, resident groups, business groups, property owners [and] waterfront interests to make sure that we establish some kind of consensus about how we can best invest in that area and capitalize and have a [Downtown Shoreline Specific Plan] in place by the time 2028 rolls around [for] the Olympics here in Long Beach," Tatum said.

Area stakeholders expressed their approval of revitalizing the Downtown Long Beach shoreline. Jerry Schubel, president and CEO of the Aquarium of the Pacific, called PD-6 the city's "most valuable real estate" and noted that some of it still remains to be developed. In terms of how the city could best attract tourism and business, Schubel said it starts with the ocean.

"We have this wonderful city on an urban ocean, where lots of people make diverse uses and intense uses of the ocean," he said. "It's really important to the city's future. You have to look at water-dependent uses first. . . . I think with that as a filter, it helps you narrow what's the best long-term use. You also have to look at it through the filter of sea-level rise and what that's going to do to our waterfront areas."

Schubel believes the Aquarium of

the Pacific will be a major component of the area's revitalization. Touting the Aquarium as the city's largest attraction, Schubel said the facility is averaging about 1.7 million visitors per year. "It has become a cultural hub for Downtown Long Beach," he said. "And as the population of the downtown area grows, those larger numbers of people will be looking for things to do in the evening."

Debra Fixen, property manager of Shoreline Village, said she and her team are encouraged by the city's approach to examining the future of the area. "The downtown has had many changes since the zoning was established," she said. "We have increased the residential community [and] increased tourism, and we are a more vibrant business community. So, it stands to reason that the waterfront 'as is' does not reflect the current highest and best use."

Fixen said property along the waterfront holds a tremendous value for the community and should be properly maximized for the best financial return and interests of residents and business owners. In order to accomplish this, Fixen said the city needs to look how the area's program spaces, such as Rainbow Lagoon and the Elephant Lot, are being used, noting how these spaces in the district are vacant most of year. The Elephant Lot is a 13-acre parking lot at the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center.

In response to how the city could best use its resources to improve PD-6, Charlie Beirne, general manager of the convention center, said it was too early to say. However, he emphasized the importance of involving all stakeholders and community members in the visioning process to garner all perspectives about the site's future. "I am certainly behind the city's visioning process here," he said. "And anything we can assist with or work with the city for economic development for the benefit of the community, we're all for 100%." ■

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# Toyota Hydrogen Plant Stalled

(Continued from Page 1)

the 2.3-megawatt plant has been halted. The reason? The plant would produce far more power than necessary for Toyota's local operations, which FuelCell plans to sell to the local utility, SCE, as a way of recovering its investment in the facility. But SCE is clutching its coin purse.

FuelCell, a publicly traded company that reported total revenue of \$89.4 million in 2018, produces, installs, operates and maintains megawatt-scale fuel cell systems, serving utilities as well as industrial and large municipal power users. In California, FuelCell stands to benefit from a program designed to increase the portion of renewable energy in the state's power mix. The Bioenergy Market Adjusting Tariff (BioMAT) is a feed-in tariff program, which allows eligible plants to sell power to one of the state's three investor-owned utilities at a fixed price that's significantly higher than that of power produced from non-renewable sources. And that's where the issue lies.

SCE would have to accept the new plant into its BioMAT program to ensure its profitability. The utility has refused to do so, according to a May 22 letter sent to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) by Doug Murtha, Toyota North America's group vice president of strategy and planning. "While this project is critical to Toyota's and California's clean energy goals and has garnered wide-ranging support, its future is now in imminent jeopardy given what Toyota understands has been SCE's unwillingness to date to confirm the project's eligibility under the BioMAT program

despite clear precedent," Murtha wrote in the letter.

SCE spokesperson Robert Laffoon Villegas said he couldn't comment on the Toyota project specifically, but told the Business Journal that SCE's concerns focus on the type of fuel used to power the plant, which is commonly referred to as directed biogas.

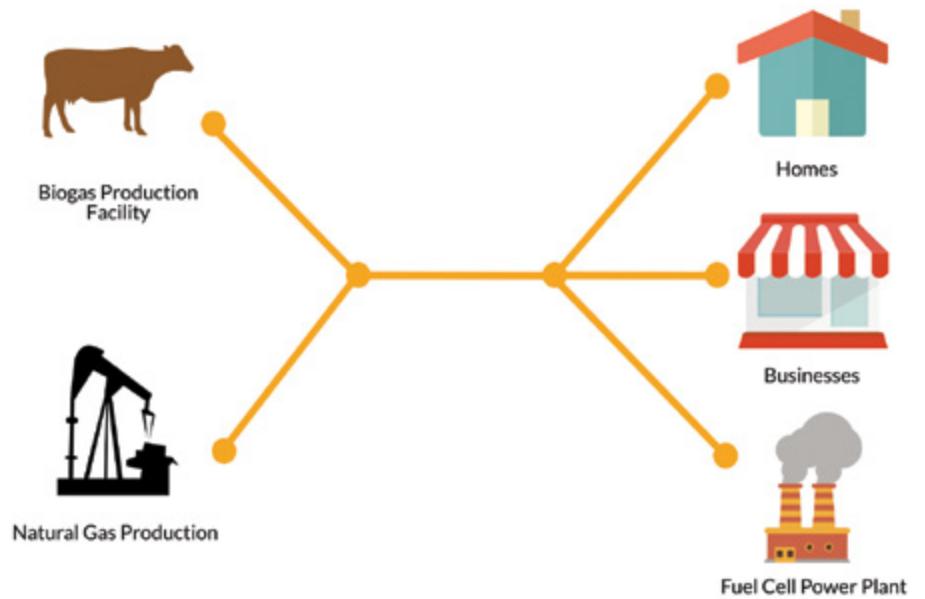
Biogas is produced from biomass, commonly collected from agriculture or sanitation. In urban and suburban environments, sanitation districts' wastewater treatment facilities often supply the biomass necessary to produce fuel. In rural areas, dairy farms are a common source.

Directed biogas describes the procurement of biogas from an off-site facility, which is then pumped into the general gas pipeline, where it mixes with traditional natural gas. While FuelCell's plant wouldn't be using the exact molecules pumped into the pipeline by its biogas supplier, the project would increase the portion of renewable gas in the pipeline system, FuelCell and its partner Toyota argue. "Because the plant would be purchasing renewable [directed biogas] it would be offsetting any carbon emissions that would occur otherwise," Scott explained.

Scott also noted that in a port setting, on-site production of gas from biomass isn't feasible, hence the project's reliance on directed biogas. "There are not a lot of great other options," Scott said. "Other technologies require either a lot more space or they are further upstream in the development stage."

California's three investor-owned utilities (IOUs) – Pacific Gas and Electric, SCE and San Diego Gas and Electric – oppose the inclusion of plants using directed biogas in the incentive program.

## Directed Biogas



The term "directed biogas" describes the purchase of biogas from a remote production facility, which is then fed into the general gas pipeline accessed by end users, such as the hydrogen fuel cell plant currently in development at the Port of Long Beach. (Infographic by Alena Maschke)

SCE argues that the use of directed biogas isn't "consistent with the intent of the BioMAT program," and therefore shouldn't qualify for the higher pricing afforded to producers in the program. "SCE is continuously contracting with generators to help ensure sufficient clean generation resources; however, SCE also considers the cost its customers are paying for those contracts," Laffoon Villegas told the Business Journal. "SCE can procure additional renewable resources at prices significantly lower than BioMAT prices."

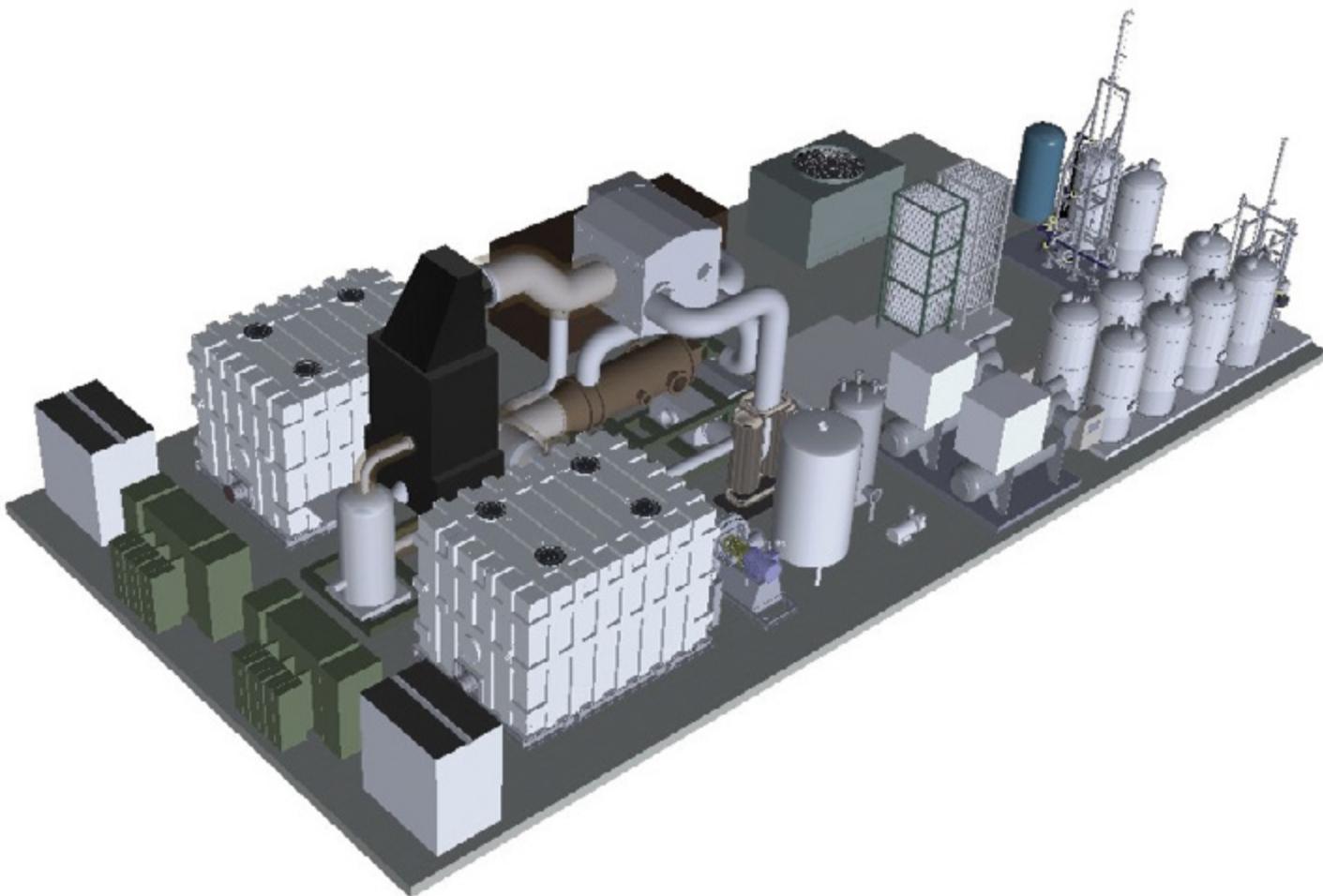
But reducing carbon emissions from power generation isn't the only environmental benefit the plant stands to create, its developers argue. For Toyota, the

main appeal of the project comes from its ability to create hydrogen, which the company plans to use in zero-emission trucks and consumer vehicles. In April, Toyota and truck manufacturer Kenworth announced plans to bring 10 hydrogen-fueled trucks to the San Pedro ports, a project that has received financial support in the form of \$41 million in cap-and-trade dollars from the California Air Resources Board.

The impact of hydrogen production at FuelCell's plant would go beyond the 10 initial trucks the project is set to produce, Scott argued. "Developing solutions for renewable hydrogen pathways – especially 100% renewable hydrogen pathways – is very important to us," he noted. "Hydrogen has the unique opportunity to be scalable and this was one way to demonstrate the scalability of it." As a result, the success of the project would encourage the replacement of high-emission diesel trucks with hydrogen-powered trucks on a larger scale, he explained.

The Port of Long Beach has expressed its support for the project. In a letter to SCE, the port's acting director of environmental planning, Matthew Arms, detailed the benefits of the project to the port and surrounding communities, offering to meet with SCE representatives on the issue. So far, Arms told the Business Journal, no meeting has taken place. "I really hope that they can come to some agreeable terms," Arms said. "We see it as a great step forward and as a partner in the port, a port tenant, taking on a great project that could benefit the environment and the community."

Currently, the two sides await clarification on the eligibility of directed biogas for the BioMAT program. If the CPUC sides with the investor-owned utilities, plans for the fuel cell power plant would likely be scrapped. "If Edison is ultimately successful in rejecting the project, then there would be no plant built by [FuelCell] on site," Scott said. "I don't think it would be economically competitive for them to do so." ■



The power plant currently in development for Toyota's Port of Long Beach facility would produce power, water and hydrogen using directed biogas. (Rendering courtesy of FuelCell Energy)

# Golf Simulation Bar Coming To Downtown Long Beach



Birdies n Brews is an upcoming golf simulation bar that aims to offer an authentic golfing experience for people of all skills levels, according to Andrew Esparza, president of the establishment at 90 E. 4th St. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

■ By **DENNY CRISTALES**  
Staff Writer

An upcoming Downtown Long Beach bar aims to combine golfing with beer drinking to create an experience that can be enjoyed with friends and family.

Andrew Esparza is president of Birdies n Brews, an upcoming golf simulation bar at 90 E. 4th St. in The Streets shopping center. Esparza is a first-time business owner who conceptualized the idea with his wife, Jasmine, after a visit to Lake Tahoe last November.

During that time, snowy weather

closed down one of the golf courses in Lake Tahoe. Since patrons could not play on the course, a golf simulation game was setup at the course's clubhouse for customers to use. Mesmerized by the simulator's authentic facsimile of the golfing experience, Esparza was inspired to do more research on the technology. If one simulator could draw a crowd of patrons, then an entire concept built around the software could generate good business, Esparza thought. "I'm a huge fan of golf, so I just wanted to create something that's almost a golf lounge," he said.

The Esparzas researched different

software companies to implement the golf simulators, ultimately settling on the Detroit-based company Optishot.

Birdies n Brews will feature two separate areas, each outfitted with a golf simulator displayed on a 12-foot projection screen, Esparza said. Patrons will use real golf clubs to swing and virtually play golf at various courses around the world. "There will be a three-camera system directly above where you will be hitting the golf ball, and those three cameras track the golf ball and the golf club head," he said. "It gives 98% or 99% accurate details as far as where that ball is going to go, how far it's going to go and how hard it's hit. It's just like playing at a real golf course, but you're inside."

The bar will only serve beer and snacks, but he did indicate that the food selection was something he would flesh out before opening his bar. Esparza added that patrons will be allowed to bring in outside food from nearby eateries such as Wingstop.

Esparza said he filed for a license to serve beer months ago and hopes to get approval within a few weeks. During this time, he is completing a tenant improvement process, which requires inspectors to observe the building to ensure the site meets safety standards.

The hours are tentatively set for Sunday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m., and Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. The price to use the simulation is a work in progress, but Esparza said he wants to make the experience cheaper than a traditional

golf course, perhaps about \$40 an hour.

Catherine Morris, a partner in William Morris Commercial who served as the real estate broker for Birdies n Brews, said the bar will complement the various tenants at The Streets shopping center. "Birdies n Brews is the perfect use toward our goal and will help to create the symbiosis of activity we're trying to achieve," Morris said. Morris handles much of the retail leasing at The Streets.

Austin Metoyer, economic development and policy manager for the Downtown Long Beach Alliance, noted that the golf simulation experience will provide a unique form of entertainment for locals. "We believe Birdies n Brews will be a great way for downtown workers and residents to relieve some stress with a cold beer and simulation games of golf," he said.

Although emphasizing the authentic golf experience and beer service at Birdies n Brews, Esparza said the business is tailored to be a family-friendly experience for all skill levels. He added that Downtown Long Beach is an appropriate place to launch this business concept.

"We chose this location because that's just an ever-growing area," Esparza said. "We wanted to be in Long Beach. It has a good mixture of people and business, so we hope to appeal to all different types. . . . We're really excited, and we think we're going to succeed in this." ■

## Fire Engine 17 Up And Running After Seven-Year Hiatus



Fire Engine 17 in Long Beach's 4th District has been restored to service thanks to funding from Measure A sales tax revenues and a grant from FEMA. The Long Beach City Council approved the restoration as part of its budgeting process for Fiscal Year 2020. The engine, located at Station 17, 2241 Argonne Ave., has been out of service due to lack of funding since 2012. Restoring the engine will increase emergency response times, according to the City of Long Beach. Mayor Robert Garcia, 4th District Councilmember Daryl Supernaw, Fire Chief Xavier Espino, Long Beach firefighters and community members gathered at the station on October 21 to celebrate the return of the fire engine. Due to the fire engine's restoration, the station's paramedic unit, Paramedic Rescue 17, is being relocated to 6340 Atherton St., which is also in the 4th District. In a prepared statement, Garcia said, "The restoration of Engine 17 has been a top priority and a commitment we made to the community. . . . I'm thrilled to see this engine back in the station, and look forward to it contributing to improved response times throughout Long Beach." Pictured at left, firefighters celebrated the restoration of Fire Engine 17 on October 21. At right, Long Beach firefighters are pictured in front of the same station in April, 1951, the month it first opened. (Photographs courtesy of the City of Long Beach)

# Experts Say Prevention Is Key To Combat Rising Senior Homelessness In Long Beach



Pictured from left, Kathy Fountain and Ed Robinson are two previously homeless seniors who have found support at the Long Beach Rescue Mission, led by Chaplain and Executive Director Robert Probst. Robinson now serves as a chaplain and case manager at the mission. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

■ By **ALENA MASCHKE**  
Senior Writer

When Karen Angone received a notice in early October that the monthly rent on the mobile home plot where she and her 87-year-old mother live would increase by \$355 effective January 1, she was shocked. Angone and her neighbors at the Belmont Shores Mobile Estates own their mobile homes, but not the land they stand on, making them at once homeowners and tenants vulnerable to sudden rent increases. “We can’t just give a 30-day notice and leave, because we’ve purchased our homes,” Angone explained.

Instead, she’s part of a group of residents that decided to fight for themselves and their neighbors to remain in their homes. “There are neighbors who can’t fight for themselves. They can’t afford this, and they’re worried about [becoming] homeless,” Angone said. “They’re scared.” The group has taken the issue to the Long Beach City Council, which has asked the Office of the City Attorney to draft a rent stabilization ordinance for mobile homeowners by November 19, 2019, as a result.

But the complicated bind residents of the Belmont Shores Mobile Estates and

other mobile home parks find themselves in is just one piece of the puzzle that is senior homelessness in Southern California. In Long Beach, the number of homeless seniors, those 62 and older, has grown 20% over the past four years, according to the city’s biennial Point-in-Time count of homeless persons. Experts across the board, from city staff to faith-based and legal services organizations, have pointed to the increased cost of housing in the region as the main culprit.

“The senior population in Long Beach is definitely a vulnerable population in our housing crisis, because they tend to be on a fixed income, and housing prices continue to soar,” Susanne Browne, senior attorney with the Los Angeles Legal Aid Foundation (LAFLA) told the Business Journal.

Working on the issue of housing in Long Beach, Browne said she welcomes the tenant protections passed by the city council as well as the state government this year, as measures to protect renters, including seniors, from becoming displaced.

Browne said to ensure that senior renters are able to take advantage of the protections they are afforded by the new state and local laws, they need advocates.

In Los Angeles, the Housing + Community Investment Department has dedicated staff to investigate alleged violations of the city’s rent stabilization ordinance. Long Beach, which does not have a rent control ordinance but does have one dedicated to tenant relocation assistance, should do the same, Browne suggested. “It would just go a long way to make those rights more meaningful,” she said.

In addition to legal advocacy, institutions such as the City of Long Beach’s Multi-Service Center, which connects homeless residents with various resources and services across the city are key, LAFLA homeless protection expert Javier Beltran added. “Having that component is extremely important,” Beltran said. “We can’t do what they do.”

Shannon Parker, a homeless services officer with the City of Long Beach who works at the center, echoed concerns over the increased cost of housing and the impact it has on seniors’ lives. “Many of them are on a fixed income and they cannot keep up with the cost of housing,” Parker said. “We’re definitely concerned about the growing risk amongst folks that are seniors.”

Some cities, Parker pointed out, have started pilot programs to prevent seniors

from becoming homeless in the first place, by offering what is commonly referred to as shallow subsidies. Under such programs, cities pay senior residents a subsidy – between \$200 and \$660 per month in the case of Santa Monica – to help with rent payments. “The idea behind that is: it’s much cheaper and much kinder to keep those seniors in their housing,” Parker said.

Many seniors who visit the center struggle to afford housing after losing a spouse, suddenly reliant on only one income to pay for their monthly expenses, Parker noted. Robert Probst, chaplain and executive director of the Long Beach Rescue Mission, echoed this observation. “That’s a hard one, because it’s almost like a double deal,” he said. “You become widowed, you’re lonely, you’re heartbroken, your income breaks in half and you can’t afford housing.”

Participants in the mission’s one-year program, which is primarily designed to help those struggling with chronic homelessness, are examples of a different demographic contributing to the rising number of homeless seniors: they’ve aged into seniority while living on the street. “They may have very similar needs but the way you go about approaching them can be

very different,” Parker explained.

Kathy Fountain, a current participant in the mission’s one-year program for women, praised the staff at the multi-service center for their assistance. Fountain, who by her own account has been in and out of homelessness for the past 43 years, joined the program in March, after staff at the multi-service center directed her to the Rescue Mission. “I didn’t think there was a way out for a person like me,” Fountain said. Today, Fountain still struggles with feelings of guilt and depression, but the program has given her a path forward, she explained. “It’s been the most hurtful, horrible, wonderful, miraculous, loving experience,” Fountain said. “I consider it a blessing to have walked through these doors.”

While seniors at risk of homelessness may see relief with tenant protections and rental subsidies, those who have spent years on the street often need mental health treatment and assisted, very low-income housing to escape homelessness for good, several experts interviewed by the Business Journal noted. “This demographic has not been successful, traditionally, in our economic model,” Parker said.

Without enough working years on the books to qualify for the full social security benefits available to seniors, many of these clients only receive supplemental security income (SSI), which was capped at \$771 for individual recipients in 2019.

“That is something we see a lot: seniors coming in who don’t have any savings and are receiving the lowest amount that [social security] can offer,” Parker noted. Unable to afford housing on their minimal income, these seniors have to rely on affordable housing units and federally-funded housing vouchers to keep a roof over their heads. The funding local housing agencies receive for the voucher program is limited, often leading to long wait times for applicants.

Together with affordable housing developer Century Housing, the city is currently in the process of building a new facility to house 121 homeless and low-income seniors. The Beacon is expected to open its doors at the turn of the year, according to Parker, and will receive tenants through the city’s coordinated entry system, which draws from a database of clients experiencing homelessness in the city.

According to the most recent count in 2019, there are nearly 600 homeless seniors, aged 55 and older, in Long Beach. To get a handle on the issue of senior homelessness, Probst said, the work needs to begin before seniors end up on the street, including an expansion of care facilities and affordable housing. “Right now, the city, the state and our country are focusing on homelessness, but we really need to focus on homeless prevention,” he said. ■

## Local General Contractor Celebrates 25 Years Of Business



Over the last 25 years, Jereme James’ general contracting business, Builder Boy, has completed thousands of projects ranging from painting a single room to remodeling entire homes. Located on the Long Beach-Signal Hill border, the business specializes in upscale residential remodels. Originally founded as Paint Boy with James employing two painters, the company has since grown to 23 full-time experienced technicians with various specialties. “There’s something very special about this city and the people in it. We’ve enjoyed working in the historical districts as much as we’ve enjoyed working on the new developments downtown,” said James, who is pictured at a current project in Long Beach’s Belmont Heights neighborhood. “During our 25 years of business, we’ve seen this city undergo a tremendous amount of change, but somehow manage to honor and uphold the history, culture and charm. Builder Boy has, and will always be, part of Long Beach.” (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

## MICHAEL LEVY GALLERY

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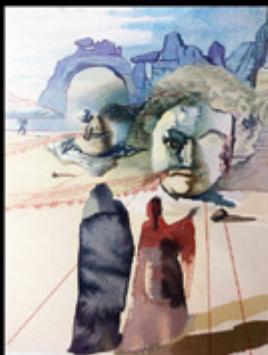
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(Continued from Page 1)

down hotel and redevelop the site. Previous plans included residential, retail and/or hotel components, but all faced an onslaught of pushback from the surrounding community.

“A lot of people don’t like change. But I feel that if you don’t change, you’re actually going backward,” Lin said. “It was frustrating at times, but I couldn’t give up this dream.”

Ultimately, Lin teamed up with developer CenterCal Properties to create the vision for 2ND & PCH. CenterCal President Jean Paul Wardy told the Business Journal that hundreds of smiling faces during the grand opening celebration were a sign that his company’s work over the last several years was a success.

“We heard a lot of really great comments and people [were] really excited about being able to come and spend time here with their families,” Wardy said. “For the spaces that are left – it’s only a couple very strategic spaces – we’re really focused on finding the right operator. We’re being very particular about those final tenants.”

As of November 1, AT&T, Athleta, Boba Guys, Border Grill BBQ, Free People, gorjana, HSBC, Johnny Was, Linne’s Boutique, lululemon, Pacha Mamas, Nike By Long Beach, Sephora, The Shade Store, TSG Wealth Management, Tuesday’s Sweet Shoppe, Warby Parker and Whole Foods have



Crowds of residents attended the grand opening celebration for 2ND & PCH. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

opened for business. To date, around 40 retail, restaurant and service tenants have been announced, and will open their doors in the coming months as individual store build-outs are com-

pleted. Once fully leased, the retail center will have at least 65 tenants. Construction on all common areas is completed.

“We’re a small mom-and-pop candy store and we definitely had an interest in expanding, but didn’t know exactly how we wanted to do it because we didn’t want to lose that neighborhood feel,” Tuesday’s co-owner Michael Roiff, whose shop has over 160 types of candy, said. “So far we love being in Long Beach. [CenterCal] encouraged us to be us and not to just morph into some sort of corporate giant to fit into this kind of center.”

Susan Feniger and Mary Sue Miliken, long-time business partners in the restaurant industry, have opened not one, but two fast-casual food concepts at 2ND & PCH, with a third on the way. Border Grill BBQ and Pacha Mamas are already serving up dishes out of two small kiosk spots in one of the center’s common areas, and the pair’s desert concept, Twist, will be opening soon.

“We were trying to think what would fit near the marina with outdoor seating. We knew they were going to be small spaces, so we felt like it would be really great to do three concepts that complemented each other,” Feniger said. “I lived in Belmont Shore when I first moved to L.A., because I thought Belmont Shore was Los Angeles,” she added with a laugh. “I loved it; it was so fabulous.”

sweet and savory empanadas, patacones, arepas, cubanos, layered bowls, craft beers on tap, Latin wines, house-made sangria and organic sodas. “This restaurant has been in the works for years,” Endie Widjaja, owner of Plancha, stated in a press release. “We had our team solidified, menu conceptualized, and marketing strategy buttoned-up – all we were waiting for was the perfect spot to debut our first location. Long Beach is the middle ground between Orange County and Los Angeles, and [with] this opening under our belts, we plan to expand the concept throughout Southern California and beyond.” Earlier this month, seafood fast-casual restaurant Wahoo’s Fish Taco also opened its doors at LBX. According to property management, only six out of 61 spaces are vacant at the retail center, including a small pop-up space inside The Hangar and the large retail space formerly occupied by Orchard Supply Hardware. Some of the vacant space may be combined or divided depending on future tenants, the property management team noted.

## \$80 Million OC Portfolio Purchased By Long Beach Firm

Long Beach-based office investment firm Harbor Associates acquired a two-property Class A Orange County office portfolio totaling more than 365,000 square feet for approximately \$80 million, the company announced last week. The purchase includes the 10-story, 195,000-square-foot Anaheim City Centre in Downtown Anaheim and the six-story, 173,000-square-foot Crown Cabot in Laguna Niguel.

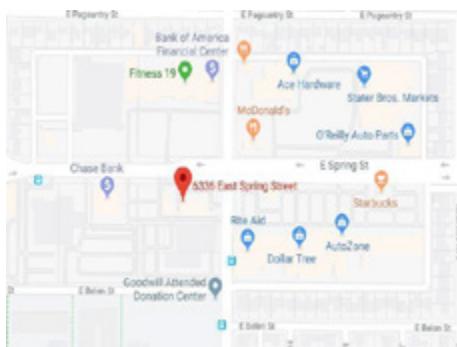
“While both submarkets are very different, they each represent an opportunity to provide high-quality of-

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### LBX Adds More Eateries

Latin-American-inspired fast-casual eatery Plancha Latin Kitchen celebrated the grand opening of its first location on October 30 at the Long Beach Exchange (LBX) retail center. The menu curated by Consulting Chef Katie Sutton includes items such as

office environments where few opportunities for the same currently exist,” Harbor Associates Principal Rich McEvoy stated. “The projects are also well located to serve the needs of office tenants, in their respective communities of Northwest and South O.C., who are searching for space in close proximity to well-populated neighborhoods rich with employee talent.”

Harbor will begin renovations immediately, including lobby enhancements, building exterior work, new signage, move-in ready suites, electric vehicle charging stations, LED lighting retrofits, and restroom and corridor updates. The acquisition comes on the heels of the firm’s recent purchase of the three-building, 211,000-square-foot Create Tustin campus near Interstate 5 and Jamboree Road for \$72.5 million.

Over the last five years, Harbor has acquired 25 assets in Southern California totaling 2.75 million square feet. The firm has a goal of purchasing \$250 million worth of additional assets over the next 12 months.

**Private Long Beach Investor Buys \$5 Million Belmont Shore Property**

Hanley Investment Group Real Estate Advisors, a Corona Del Mar-based real estate brokerage and advisory firm that specializes in retail property sales, announced the sale of a two-story, Spanish Colonial Revival architec-

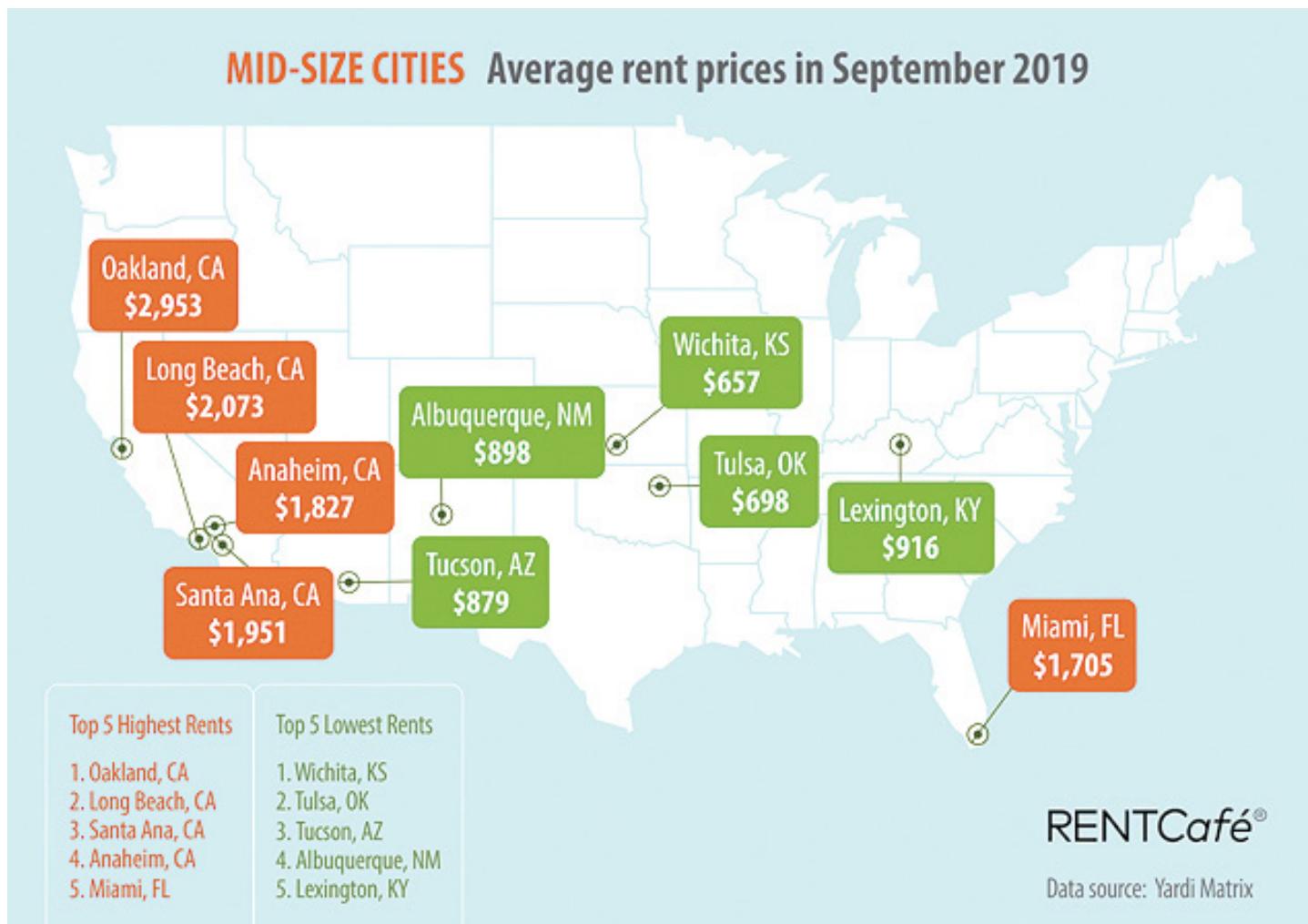
ture-style building in Belmont Shore for \$5 million.

“We generated multiple competitive offers within two weeks of mar-

keting this property,” Hanley Executive Vice President Kevin Fryman stated. “We identified a local buyer who understood how valuable the loca-

tion was and was comfortable with the challenges associated with this beautiful building’s historic designation and

(Please Continue to Page 16)



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As of November 1, 19 tenants have opened for business at the 2ND & PCH retail center, with dozens more to follow. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

(Continued from Page 15)

the restrictions of the property.”

Located at 5354 E. 2nd St. on a 0.3-acre site, the nearly 9,000-square-foot building is 100% leased, according to Hanley Investment Group. Arthritis National Research Foundation, Jonnum Media, The Flynn Group and FEA Consulting are the current tenants. Citibank has a lease agreement through fall 2021 for 5,900 square feet on the ground floor but has vacated the space, allowing the new owner to re-lease the space to a new tenant.

“Many investors were attracted to

the value-add opportunity of re-leasing the ground floor while receiving a stable cash flow,” Hanley Executive Vice President Carlos Lopez stated.

Fryman, Lopez and President Ed Hanley represented the seller, a private investor from Jackson, Wyoming. Nathan Houthouser, senior vice president of CBRE’s Newport Beach office, represented the buyer, a private investor from Long Beach.

The sale included 20 dedicated parking spaces on the property, which is adjacent to a 16-space public parking lot. Built in 1952, the property is

one of the few Belmont Shore commercial buildings that has retained its original architectural appearance, according to Hanley Investment Group.

### Commission To Vote On Planned Industrial Development

The Long Beach Planning Commission is voting on November 7 on a site plan review and local coastal development permit for the construction of two concrete tilt-up industrial buildings with surface parking at 300 Studebaker Rd. The 6.69-acre project site in Southeast Long Beach is

currently vacant except for existing concrete pipeline infrastructure and asphalt roadways along the northern and eastern borders, according to a staff report. Approved plans include a 91,700-square-foot building and a 47,500-square-foot building, as well as 168 surface parking spaces. Plans also include 43 optional parking spaces to accommodate any future change of use. Combined, the buildings will total 118,200 square feet of industrial space, suitable for light manufacturing, warehousing, assembly and distribution, and 21,000 square feet of



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office area. The project also includes 1.81 acres of open space across Studebaker Road on two parcels divided by Loynes Drive, which meets city regulations that require 30% on-site open space. Single-family residences are located across the Cerritos Channel, 400 feet west of the project's open space and 630 feet from the development site, according to the staff report. The development site was previously occupied by Loynes Tank Farm, which consisted of two aboveground storage tanks filled with heavy fuel oil. The tanks were removed in 2010.

**Long Beach Has Second-Highest Rents Among Mid-Sized U.S. Cities**

Long Beach has the second-highest average rent prices for residential units of any mid-sized city nationwide, according to a new study by RENTCafé, utilizing data from apartment information service Yardi Matrix. The average asking rent for all unit sizes in Long Beach is \$2,073, second only to Oakland, where it is \$2,953. The other top five most expensive mid-sized cities are Santa Ana at \$1,951, Anaheim at \$1,827 and Miami, Florida at \$1,705. The five mid-sized cities with the lowest rents were Wichita, Kansas; Tulsa, Oklahoma; Tucson, Arizona; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Lexington, Kentucky. The average rental rates in these cities range from \$657



Long Beach-based Harbor Associates recently purchased a two-building, \$80 million Orange County office portfolio, including the 10-story Anaheim City Centre property. (Photograph courtesy of Harbor Associates)

to \$916. According to the report, the national average rent decreased for the first time since February 2017, down

0.1%, or \$1, from August to September. In Southern California, none of the 95 largest cities had rent decreases year-

over-year, and only Pasadena remained flat with an average rent of \$2,553. ■

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# Building A Better Long Beach: The Pacific Promises ‘Sophisticated’ Living Downtown

By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**  
Senior Writer

The Pacific in Downtown Long Beach has a more “sophisticated and timeless” design than Sares-Regis Group’s two other multi-family projects underway in Long Beach, according to David Powers, the company’s senior vice president of residential development. Whereas the other projects – The Linden and The Alamitos – utilize bright colors and edgier design features to mesh with the East Village Arts District’s creative and artistic vibe, Powers explained that The Pacific has a different target audience.

“We think there’s going to be more of a market for people who work in corporate offices here and who want something not quite as brash and loud,” Powers said. “The interiors at The Linden [are] really loud with a lot of movement in the wallpaper, the art is very Pop-y – a bit of a younger, funkier feel. Here, it’s just more sophisticated.”

The Pacific consists of 163 units in a seven-story building at 230 W. 3rd St. in Downtown Long Beach, one block from the new Billie Jean King Main Library. The



Preleasing is underway at The Pacific, a 163-unit apartment building in Downtown Long Beach, with the first tenants expected to be moved in by the end of the year, according to David Powers, senior vice president of residential development for Sares-Regis Group. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

project features studio, one- and two-bedroom residences and 17 of the units are designated as affordable. Some one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments include a loft space to maximize square footage. Studio

apartments have an average square footage of 745 square feet. One-bedroom apartments range from 683 to 996 square feet, with rents ranging from \$2,300 to \$3,500. Two-bedroom units range from 1,008 to 1,478 square feet, with rents from \$3,400 to \$4,900.

“All the way around we have . . . lofty, two-story stoop units [apartments with direct street access]. In the very back facing the AMLI project, we’ve got two-story, two-bedroom townhomes,” Powers said, explaining that ground floor units have front doors that exit directly onto the street. AMLI Park Broadway is a 222-unit apartment building south of The Pacific. “So it’s really residential going all the way around instead of any kind of commercial, which is a little bit different. We think that’s going to help activate the street, liven up things – and some people like having that direct access out onto the sidewalk.”

The Pacific offers numerous amenities for residents, including a fitness center on the ground floor. A deck area on the third floor will feature a pool and spa, as well

as a clubhouse, a party cabana, an outdoor kitchen and seating. The deck faces the AMLI residential development to the south, so a green wall made out of hedges, as well as TVs, will be added to give The Pacific’s residents a backdrop other than the adjacent apartment building, not to mention more privacy when lounging poolside. A rooftop deck is also featured, which Powers said will likely be completed after residents have moved in. The roof deck will have an indoor and outdoor clubhouse with TVs, a kitchen and games.

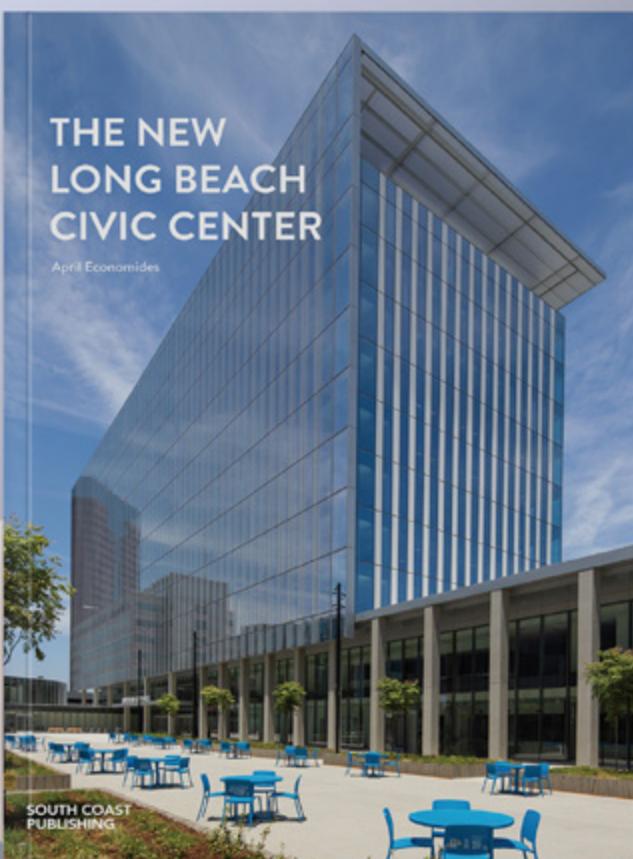
Prior to the development of The Pacific and AMLI projects, community members voiced concerns about constructing mid-rise buildings across from the First Congregational Church of Long Beach. Powers explained that to be “respectful” of the historic site, the west end of The Pacific is not as tall as the rest of the building and that the design features are not as dramatic as on the east end.

Preleasing is underway for The Pacific and the first tenants are expected to be moved in by the end of the year once the project is completed, Powers noted. With The Linden already 95% occupied, Powers said he expects similar trends at The Pacific. He anticipates the project to be fully leased by fall 2020 and, due to Long Beach’s central location to both Los Angeles and Orange county markets, he expects it to be attractive to couples who commute to both areas. The Alamitos, the company’s third Long Beach project, is expected to be completed during the first quarter of 2020, a month or two after The Pacific.

“[Long Beach] has a downtown, urban area right next to the beach, which is very unique. It’s a great town that has gotten overlooked in the past and I think everybody’s starting to notice,” Powers said regarding company’s decision to develop three residential projects simultaneously in the downtown area. “The city has done a great job making it a very walkable and pedestrian-friendly. It’s changing rapidly for the better and it’s proven itself.” ■

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# Realty Views: Decline In Home Remodeling Forecast

■ Perspective by **TERRY ROSS**

Harvard University and its Joint Center for Housing Studies recently published its latest annual forecast predicting how much will be spent over the next year by homeowners in remodeling and repairs – and for the first time in a decade, the analysis anticipates that spending for home renovation will be down.

In its Leading Indicator of Remodeling Activity, the Harvard center sees the recent trend of 5-7% growth in recent years slowing down in 2019 and predicts an outright decline in 2020, which would be the first since 2010.

The reasons for this, especially related to residential real estate sales volume and values, seem to be part speculation and part fact in an economy that appears to have conflicting indicators. While signs of consumer spending and job growth are healthy, slow wage growth and a lack of affordable housing appear to be constricting the economy.

The National Association of Realtors (NAR) just reported that sales of previously owned homes were down 2.2% in September from the previous

month, even though prices have been inching up. But as home sellers and agents will tell you, in today's market it is much harder to sell a home at asking price than it was a year ago. Usually remodeling activity is a good indicator of the health of the housing market and consumer confidence, so a drop in spending on remodeling could be an indicator of a slowing trend in home sales.

Home sellers will often spend on home improvements before a sale, but over the past few years, the “fix and flip” mentality of many of the buyers have clouded statistics on how many homeowners are actually investing in their properties to live in for the long-term, rather than flipping them for a quick profit.

Younger buyers in today's housing market are looking for a home they can move into without having to make repairs, even repainting, providing a ready audience for the flippers who have entered the market having watched it done on cable TV or attending a seminar promoting this concept. As with most hyped-up trends, what happens in real life differs from the dream, and many flippers are disap-

pointed when the anticipated profit doesn't materialize.

Homeowners who plan to remain in their residences for a while also invest in remodeling, usually as values are increasing. They can pull money out of the equity in their home to pay for the improvements.

Abbe Will, the associate project director for Harvard's Remodeling Futures Program, noted that the data used for their study was sourced from a number of economic indicators compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau, including the sales of existing homes, housing starts, residential remodeling permits and the amount of building materials sold.

Will told the Wall Street Journal that a slowdown in this market segment could be worrisome. “We have some reason to believe this may be a turning point in the cycle for home remodeling, but it could be a hiccup,” she said. Low borrowing costs “could help keep the market chugging along for a little more and maybe these declines won't turn into a negative.”

Interest rates, which are still low compared to historical standards, appear to be on course to stay low or even

go lower since the Federal Reserve backed off planned rate hikes.

Home improvement retailers such as Lowe's and Home Depot don't appear to be feeling any of the impact in the home remodeling reduction, as their stocks are at all-time highs this year.

While we are still seeing a lot of speculators buying homes with the aim to fix and resell for a profit, no one appears to have statistics on how much of the remodeling market is made up of this category. There is a possibility that the fix and flip segment of the market could be waning as the upward price boom stalls, making this strategy riskier for speculators.

It's impossible to tell – without distinguishing between speculators and homeowners – if this is a key factor in the decline of remodeling expenditures or rather just a normal softening of the market after a decade of recovery.

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

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# Lower Drug Prices, But At What Cost?

(Continued from Page 1)

plan would involve government review of drug pricing and support for generic alternatives.

Pelosi's bill has made it through three committees and is now up for a vote on the House Floor. As of press time on October 31, Grassley's bill had advanced through one committee in the Senate.

While some health care organizations, like the American Hospital Association, have come out in support of Pelosi's plan, it has been met with resistance from business interests. Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, an advocacy group representing many major drug companies, opposes both Pelosi's and Grassley's proposals. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce opposes Pelosi's bill, the Lower Drug Costs Now Act (HR 3), based in part on initial findings by the Congressional Budget Office that it would result in eight to 15 fewer new drugs being brought to market over the next decade, thereby stifling innovation.

In a letter to congress, the U.S.

Chamber argued that the bill was really an attempt to create government price setting measures for drugs, rather than a means to enable price negotiations. The chamber pointed out that pharmaceutical innovation in European countries diminished after government price controls were put in place in 1986. "Today, Europe trails the U.S. in research investment by nearly 40%, and Europeans have access to fewer treatments than Americans overall," the chamber letter claimed.

The CBO's analysis estimated that HR 3 would result in hefty government savings: the report found federal direct spending on Medicare would be reduced by \$345 billion between 2023 and 2029. The CBO estimated that the bill would cost the pharmaceutical industry between \$0.5 trillion and \$1 trillion over the next decade.

HR 3 would enable the Centers for Medicaid & Medicare Services (CMS) to negotiate drug prices for the most expensive medicines directly with pharmaceutical companies, with both Medicare/Medicaid patients and privately insured citizens benefiting from resulting price reductions. Current law prohibits CMS from such negotiations.

HR 3 specifically directs CMS to negotiate prices for insulin and "at least 25 single source, brand name drugs that do not have generic competition and that are among the 125 drugs that account for the greatest national spending or the 125 drugs that account for the greatest

spending under the Medicare prescription drug benefit and Medicare Advantage," according to the bill's summary.

In order to prevent drug companies from "ripping off Americans" by charging less for the same drugs in other countries, as phrased on Pelosi's webpage dedicated to the bill, HR 3 requires that the negotiated maximum prices for these medications must not exceed 120% of the average cost in Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom. If that information is not available, such as when a drug has not been introduced in those markets, the drug may not exceed 85% of the average manufacturer price in the U.S.

Grassley's bill, the Prescription Drug Relief Act of 2019 (S 102), is not as far-reaching. It would require the Department of Health and Human Services to review, at least annually, excessive pricing of brand name drugs, and to review prices upon petition. Drugs found to be excessively priced would have their government-granted exclusivity rights voided (i.e., protection against generic competition), and non-exclusive licenses for the drug would be issued. Additionally, reviews for applications of corresponding generic drugs or similar products would be expedited. Excessive pricing would be defined as exceeding the median price of the drug in Canada, the U.K., Germany, France and Japan.

The Congressional Budget Office found that S 102 would save Medicare

\$85 billion between 2019 and 2029. Beneficiaries would save \$27 billion in out-of-pocket costs during the same period, per the CBO.

While organizations that represent pharmaceutical business interests tend to take issue with these legislative proposals, there are many health care and labor organizations, nonprofits and companies that support HR 3 and S 102, including: the American Society of Hospital Pharmacists; the American Federations of State, County and Municipal Employees; the American Association of Retired Persons and others.

Sharon Jhavar, chief pharmacy officer for SCAN Health Plan, a Long Beach-based nonprofit provider of Medicare Advantage Plans, told the Business Journal that HR 3 would have a beneficial impact. "There are several proposals out about reforming Part D [the drug coverage element of Medicare] and instituting a maximum out of pocket – particularly, Nancy Pelosi's proposed Lower Drug Costs Now Act," she stated. "Title 3 [of the bill] . . . would provide seniors with more predictable and maximum out of pocket costs on prescription medications in a given year, which would be better compared to the coverage gap, or donut hole, some seniors face today."

Jhavar noted that HR 3 would establish an out of pocket maximum of \$2,000 for Medicare beneficiaries, and eliminate the coverage gap under Part

(Please Continue to Page 22)



Two bills making their way through Congress intend to address the high cost of prescription drugs by giving the federal government increased oversight over pricing. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

# Breaking New Ground in Children's Health Care

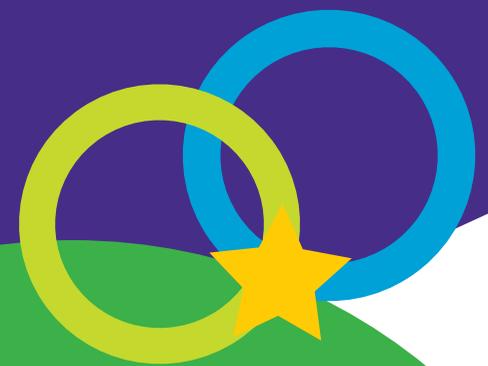
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- Rudolph J. and Daphne A. Munzer Foundation Education Center
- Douglas W. Jackson M.D. & Sandra Jackson Developmental Therapy Gym
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(Continued from Page 20)

D. “If signed into legislation, there will be a positive impact for the senior community as their yearly out-of-pocket expenses for drugs will be capped,” she said. “By setting a limit of out-of-pocket costs, seniors are provided transparency into how much they will spend in one year, as well as their copays – if that is how their plan is set up – resulting in the ability to plan finances accordingly for a population that is largely on a fixed income.”

Rep. Alan Lowenthal, who represents Long Beach and parts of West-

ern Orange County in the House, supports both bills, but prefers HR 3. Asked if the HR 3 is the best way forward to addressing rising prescription drug costs, Lowenthal answered affirmatively. “Absolutely, once passed, HR 3 will be the most important health care legislation to come out of the House in nearly a decade and is a critical step toward lowering drug costs and providing relief for the many Americans who currently struggle to pay for their medication,” he said in a response e-mailed to the Business Journal.

“By allowing Medicare to nego-

tiate the cost of the most expensive drugs, place an out of pocket cap, and implement an excise tax on companies who refuse to negotiate, the costs of prescription medications will go down not only for those on Medicare but for all Americans,” Lowenthal continued. “There are things that can be done to strengthen H.R. 3 and much more that can be done to help bring down prescription drug and health care costs, but this is a great start.”

Lowenthal noted that Americans pay more for prescription drugs than other advanced, industrialized nations. “Most of these same drugs are available for much less in other advanced industrialized countries . . . and the drug manufacturers still make a profit in these countries. The difference is that these countries have structures in place, structures similar to that of HR 3, that don’t allow companies to take advantage of patients,” he said.

Asked how he would weigh the CBO’s risk estimate that eight to 15 fewer new drugs would be brought to market when it comes time for a House vote, Lowenthal stated that this represents just 2.5% of the overall number of new drugs entering the market. He also pointed to the CBO’s analysis, which noted that the Food and Drug Administration approves an average of 30 new drugs annually, suggesting that about 300 new drugs would be introduced over the course of the next decade.

Lowenthal continued, “The pharmaceutical industry spends far more on marketing and advertising than they do on research and development and they will continue to have a wide profit margin if HR 3 is enacted. I don’t see much cost there. The cost to everyday people and struggling families if HR 3 is not enacted is that they will continue to have to choose whether or not they will be able to afford drugs they need.”

Lowenthal pointed out that he often hears from constituents about the cost burdens of health care. “No one should have to opt out of necessary prescription drugs they need and deserve because they can’t afford it,” he said.

Regarding Grassley’s bill, Lowenthal said he was supportive of its out-of-pocket limit and penalties to firms that increase drug costs above the rate of inflation. “However,” he stipulated, “the whole effort falls far shorter than HR 3 and would have a less meaningful impact on the overall cost of drugs.”

HR 3 was being jockeyed around Congress in the final days of October, as progressives reportedly sought support for floor amendments that Pelosi reportedly did not agree with. As reported by The Hill and various other national publications, progressive Democrats were seeking to increase the minimum number of drugs to be negotiated. As of press time, the bill had not come to the floor for a vote. ■



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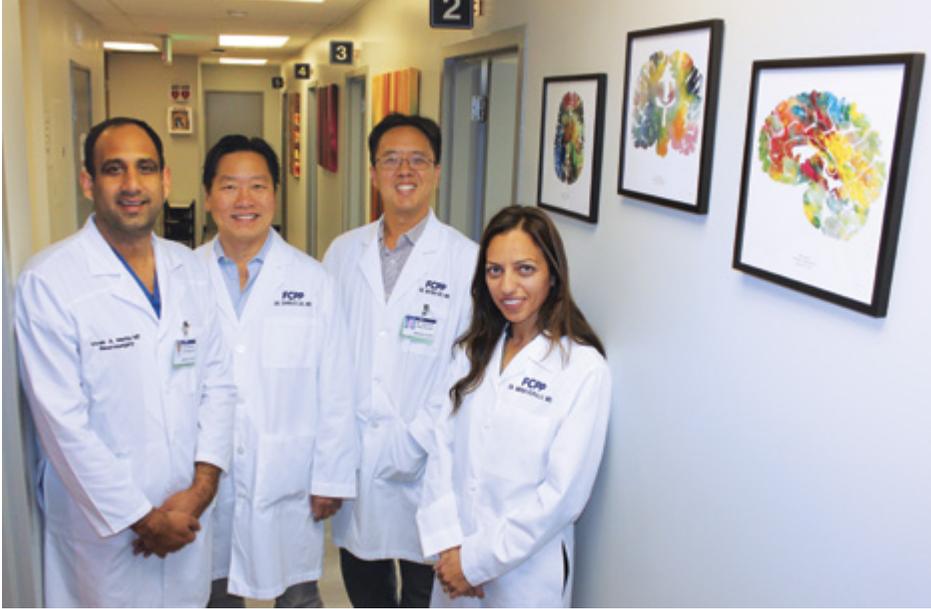
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# Local Hospital Hires Neurosurgery Team



Lakewood Regional Medical Center recently hired seven neurosurgeons as part of the hospital's efforts to expand its neuro and stroke treatment capabilities. Pictured from left are neurosurgeons Dr. Vivek Mehta, Dr. Charles Liu and Dr. Bryan Oh, and family medicine and primary care physician Dr. Mirna Rizkalla. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**  
Senior Writer

Lakewood Regional Medical Center, a 172-bed community hospital on the Lakewood-Long Beach border, recently hired seven neurosurgeons with varying specialties to broaden its care to better serve Artesia, Bellflower, Cerritos, Downey, Lakewood, Long Beach and Paramount – a service area with more than 850,000 people.

“The number of neurosurgeons . . . in the area is kind of limited. So a lot of patients have been leaving the area for care because of availability,” Lakewood Regional CEO John Grah said. “Bringing together [this] group allows us to have multiple specialists that may not normally exist in a smaller community hospital and helps us meet the needs of patients.”

The new 1,521-square-foot clinic, housed in previously vacant office space, is located at 3650 E. South St., Lakewood, and includes five patient rooms, a waiting area, a reception desk and an office. The seven neurosurgeons include: Dr. Brian Lee, who specializes in movement disorders, Parkinson's and epilepsy; Dr. Bryan Oh, lumbar spinal stenosis, cervical spinal stenosis and cervical radiculopathy; Dr. Charles Liu, epilepsy, brain tumors and meningioma; Dr. Darrin Lee, trigeminal neuralgia, Parkinson's and essential tremors; Dr. Jonathan Russin, aneurysms, and brain and spinal arteriovenous malformations; Dr. Joseph Chen, brain tumors, pituitary tumors and spinal tumors; and Dr. Vivek Mehta, brain tumors, brain trauma and hydrocephalus. The space also serves as the office for family medicine and primary care physician Dr. Mirna Rizkalla.

“The community is fantastic. It's great to be in a community where I feel I can make a contribution to the wellbeing of

patients . . . by bringing a full breadth of neurosurgical expert care . . . to our general service area,” Oh said. “Neurosurgery is a very specialized field. It's very rare in a smaller community [hospital] in the United States to actually have a group that provides a full spectrum of care.”

Oh went to medical school at Stanford University and completed his residency and fellowship at the University of Southern California. Previously he has worked at Fountain Valley and Anaheim regional hospitals.

An acute-care facility, other Lakewood Regional services include a primary stroke center, heart care, 24-hour emergency care with online check-in, bloodless medical care and surgery, and a MedPost urgent care facility located directly across the street from the hospital. The hiring of seven neurosurgeons is part of Lakewood Regional's plan to expand neuro and stroke capabilities, according to hospital staff.

The hospital is weeks away from becoming certified in thrombectomy, a procedure to remove a clot from a blood vessel. This recognition means the hospital will be certified as a comprehensive stroke center by The Joint Commission, an independent nonprofit that accredits and certifies health care organizations nationwide, allowing the Los Angeles County Emergency Medical Services to transport stroke patients to Lakewood Regional.

“It's more convenient for the patients – they only have to go to one office, and get to know one hospital and one set of folks,” Grah said of the expanded services. “Lab tests don't get redone, X-rays don't get redone just because they're seeing a different doctor with a different specialty in different practice. So it really does make the care much more efficient.” ■

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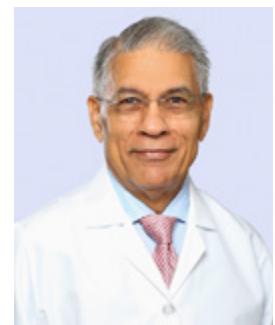
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# Preventing Flu In The Workplace Starts With Taking Precautions, Experts Say



Local medical experts recommend the influenza vaccine to avoid illness this flu season. This precautionary measure also protects others from catching the virus, according to Dr. Chester Choi, academic chair of medicine at Dignity Health St. Mary Medical Center. Pictured, from left: Laura Sandoval, medical assistant at Dignity Health St. Mary Medical Center; Choi; and Teresa Ceja, a patient. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

■ By **DENNY CRISTALES**  
Staff Writer

The upcoming holiday season of laughter and joy can quickly turn into one of coughing and sneezing if individuals do not exercise good caution in preventing the spread of influenza, according to local medical experts. In the workplace, where employees are in constant contact with each other, experts emphasize proper hygiene and the importance of the flu vaccine.

Dr. David Michalik, infectious disease specialist at MemorialCare Long Beach Medical Center and Miller Children's & Women's Hospital Long Beach, told the Business Journal that the flu season's potency reaches its climax between Decem-

ber and February. As of October, there was one flu-related death this season in Los Angeles County, Michalik said.

This flu season is expected to be moderate, but it's all dependent on different strains of the virus, according to Dr. Chester Choi, the academic chair of medicine at Dignity Health St. Mary Medical Center. The flu can be unpredictable, and Choi advised taking the appropriate measures to protect oneself and others from getting sick.

Choi emphasized the importance of the flu vaccine, citing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's data from last year on the vaccine's 40-60% efficacy in preventing the illness. Most people dismiss the flu vaccine as unnecessary, he noted.

"Nothing is 100%, but 50% efficacy is an awful good thing," Choi said. "You have to think of it in terms of not only protecting your health. . . . Even if you may be immune to a particular strain of influenza, you can put all your coworkers and people you come in contact with – your customers, guests and others – at risk of getting sick. When you're talking about flu in the workplace, that's a big concern."

Michalik agreed, noting that most individuals assume they will never get sick or that facing the flu head on will simply enhance their immune system for future iterations of the virus. However, such behavior is an unnecessary health risk, he said. "We as health care providers definitely emphasize getting the

flu shot, and that's for anybody six months of age or older," he noted.

The disease also spreads through subtle forms of contact, Michalik said, highlighting how most people subconsciously touch areas of their face. "Make sure you avoid touching your nose, mouth or eyes with your fingers or hands," he said. "Often-times, we're also coughing or sneezing into hands, and then we take that hand and touch a lot of things in the workplace, such as telephones, door handles, staplers, et cetera. We've essentially just passed a virus onto that surface for the next person to come along and touch, as well."

When coughing or sneezing, always try to keep a tissue handy, Michalik advised. An alternative is to cover the impending cough or sneeze

with the inside of one's arm. "Sneezing can lead to drops of particles appearing several feet away from an individual," he said. "So, you want to avoid the spray of infectious particles as much as possible. If you do sneeze into your hands, wash them right away." Choi also advised washing hands after using the restroom and wearing a protective mask if needed, as it reduces the distribution of germs.

Good nutrition, proper rest and moderate physical activity are excellent ways to prevent illness, Choi said. "Those who are in general good health, even if they do get influenza, it tends to be a minor case of it," he said. "If you're someone who has lung disease or asthma, all of these things can be worse with influenza. You have to be sure to take the measures to control your basic underlying diseases."

Local software company Laserfiche, located at 3545 Long Beach Blvd., conducts a health fair every September for its employees, according to Laura Victoria, senior director of human resources at Laserfiche.

As a prevention measure, the company's annual health fair inten-

tionally takes place months before the flu season begins, Victoria said. During the event, employees receive flu shots, blood-pressure tests, cancer screenings and more – all a courtesy of the health insurance offered through the company.

Hand sanitizers are located around the Laserfiche offices to promote good hygiene, Victoria added. "We also encourage our employees to go home when they are sick, because it doesn't make any sense to have them here spreading any illnesses," she said. "Our managers know to send sick employees home so they can rest and get better."

Laserfiche promotes a healthy environment for its employees, Victoria said. Resources include complimentary yoga classes, sports clubs like tennis and basketball, a co-pay for local YMCA memberships and more. The company also caters free lunches, with fruits and vegetables, every workday, she added.

"I think the culture here helps keep employees healthy, so they're not overly stressed and working long hours," Victoria said. "There's a work-life balance component to staying healthy, as well."

Amira Mulcahy, the head of hu-

man resources at engineering consulting firm P2S, Inc., located at 5000 E. Spring St., said the company provides a variety of amenities, such as healthy snacks and an onsite fitness center, to ensure employees are taken care of. For instance, the company offers optional biometric screenings, which are used to gather statistical analysis such as height and weight. This service is offered to full-time employees to assess their well-being, Mulcahy said. "[It's a] useful starting point in addressing any health concerns and improving overall health," she said.

P2S also has a safety team that works to prevent accidents by addressing employee concerns about health and safety. "They carry out inspections and solve safety and health issues that may arise in the office," she said.

In addition to outfitting the office with hand sanitizers and maintaining cleanliness, Mulcahy said the company has an employee assistance program that offers counseling and advice. "Life is stressful, and sometimes the constant challenges can become overwhelming, which can take a toll on mental and physical health."

Molina Healthcare also educates its employees about mindful habits to prevent illness, such as receiving the flu vaccine or getting tips from its wellness application, Elevate, according to Danielle Smith, communications specialist with Molina Healthcare.

Choi advised employees to be honest with their supervisors if it seems like they may have the flu. "If your work is not essential at that point in time, maybe your employer needs to understand that productivity may be improved by actually keeping that sick person at home," he said.

Michalik agreed, adding how most employees strive to avoid taking time off in fear of wasting sick days or putting extra work on a fellow coworker. "One of the main things to emphasize to minimize flu in the workplace is that if you are sick, stay at home," he said. "There are a variety of symptoms for the flu – fever, coughing, fatigue, a sore throat, body aches, nausea or vomiting. If any of those symptoms arise, the best advice I can give is . . . to just stay at home until the symptoms are gone. You need to be mindful of yourself and others." ■

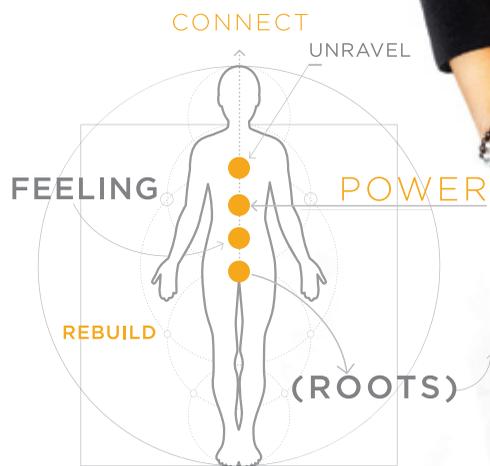


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# HealthWise: Understanding Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and Your Lungs

■ By **MAGED TANIOS, M.D.**  
Pulmonologist and chief of staff,  
MemorialCare Long Beach Medical Center

When you breathe air into your lungs, oxygen is absorbed into the blood. This oxygen is then carried in the blood throughout the body to help it function. For people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), getting air in and out of the lungs is difficult.

There are two main forms of COPD: chronic bronchitis and emphysema. With COPD, the airways in the lungs become inflamed and thicken, and the tissue where oxygen is exchanged is destroyed. The flow of air in and out of the lungs decreases. When that happens, less oxygen gets into the body's tissues.

The main risk factor for COPD is smoking. Other risk factors include:

- Occupational exposure to dusts

and chemicals

- Long-term exposure to chemical fumes, vapors and dusts
- Exposure to fumes from burning fuel
- Age
- Genetics

## Treating COPD Means Treating The Whole Body

Once the lungs are damaged, they cannot regenerate. Because lung func-

tion affects overall health, COPD is treated as a systemic disease, meaning addressing the entire body, rather than a single organ.

In addition to medications to keep the lungs clear of mucus and decrease inflammation, one of the first lines of defense is to quit smoking.

Smoking breaks down the lining in the lungs and causes inflammation. Smoking in any form can damage the lungs, including vape, hookah and marijuana. Vaping presents new and different lung issues that are equally damaging, and in some cases, even more severe.

In addition to smoking cessation, it's important for people with COPD to exercise and get adequate nutrition. Exercise helps blood circulate and helps the heart send oxygen to the body. It also strengthens the respiratory muscles, which can make breathing easier.

Overtime, COPD can lead to weight loss. When inflammation of the lungs becomes severe, the lung volume expands. This reduces the amount of space between the lungs and stomach, which can push the organs together when eating and cause discomfort. People with COPD should eat a diet with the right balance of nutrients, so they can maintain a healthy body mass index.

## Identifying COPD

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that 16 million Americans have COPD, and millions more are undiagnosed.

While COPD is incurable, with proper treatment, people can live healthy lives. But diagnosis must come first. Talk to your doctor if you recognize any of the signs:

- Decreased exercise capacity
- Coughing with mucus
- Chest pain or a feeling of heaviness
- Shortness of breath with activities that may not have caused shortness of breath in the past

## High Risk For Lung Cancer

Because COPD and lung cancer share causes, people with COPD have a higher chance of developing lung cancer. There is now a screening that uses a low-dose CT scan to detect lung cancer early, at the most curable stage.

A lung cancer screening is recommended if you:

- Are between 55 and 77-years-old.
- Are currently a smoker or have quit within the past 15 years.
- Have smoked at least a pack of cigarettes a day for 30 years (or the equivalent).

If you have a history of smoking or COPD, talk to your doctor to see if a lung cancer screening is right for you. ■

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# Care To Give? Experts Say Research Is Key When Donating To Charitable Organizations



Michelle Byerly, executive director of The Nonprofit Partnership, and Marcelle Epley, president and CEO of the Long Beach Community Foundation, are part of a close-knit community of philanthropic organizations in Long Beach. That community, Byerly noted, serves as its own protection against charity fraud. “I think if someone were to come into this region and try to do something like that, they would be found out pretty quickly,” she said. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

■ By **ALENA MASCHKE**  
Senior Writer

As wildfires rage across the state, many California residents may feel compelled to donate to local charities and fund-drives to help their fellow Californians affected by the destructive fires. But the California Attorney General’s office and charity experts warn that emergency situations and natural disasters also attract fraudulent and dishonest actors, ready to cash in on the charitable impulses of benevolent donors.

Whether it’s during the holidays or to lend a helping hand in an emergency, many Californians like to give. In 2018, charitable giving in the state totaled \$8.6 billion, according to the California Foundation Stats, which are compiled annually by the nonprofit Foundation Center. To make sure their money is put to good use, donors have several options to check whether the receiving organization is legitimate and turns dollars into real-life results.

Community foundations were among the first organizations dedicated to protecting donors’ interests, while helping to drive funds toward

charitable causes. According to the Long Beach Community Foundation, the first community foundation in the U.S. was started in Cleveland in 1914, leading to the establishment of over 800 such organizations across the country today.

“They started as a kind of community chest, where people didn’t necessarily trust the banking system at the time and wanted to find a way to help people in the community by giving [money] to a trusted source, where individuals and companies could pool their funds together and make an impact that way,” Marcelle Epley, president and CEO of the Long Beach Community Foundation, explained.

Since its naissance in 1996, the foundation has assisted donors in guiding their funds toward trustworthy organizations established to do good in the community. Today, it manages approximately \$54 million in funds, according to Epley. “We mainly work with financial advisors, trust attorneys and other professional advisors to help their clients find a way to fund charities that are most meaningful to them,” Epley explained. Among the services offered by the foundation are donor-advised funds, which allow

donors to place a certain amount of money in a charitable fund to be dispersed over time and receive tax benefits in return.

While there are various ways to give, Epley cautioned donors to make an informed choice in their giving. While online fundraising platforms like GoFundMe have become increasingly popular, Epley noted that donations to individuals and their campaigns on such platforms don’t usually qualify for tax write-offs in the way traditional charitable donations do. “It is not a charitable fund, and if people are using their contribution as a tax write-off, it could get them into trouble with the IRS down the line,” Epley explained.

Daniel Borochoff, president of CharityWatch, a Chicago-based nonprofit formerly known as the American Institute of Philanthropy, said that a trend away from itemization following recent changes in the tax code may make write-offs less relevant. But Borochoff also expressed concerns about individualized crowdfunding and fundraising platforms like GoFundMe, namely with regards to their processes for weeding out bad actors.

According to the for-profit fund-

raising platform’s website, GoFundMe mainly relies on complaints to identify fraudulent campaigns. On its website, the company lists examples of valid complaints, such as lying or presenting misleading information about the campaign organizer’s identity, their relationship to the ultimate recipient of the funds, or posting misleading statements in their campaign description. “We rely on the GoFundMe community to let us know if there is suspicion that a campaign organizer is involved in any of [these] examples of fraud,” the website notes.

Relying on community reports to identify fraudulent or misleading practices doesn’t work in a charitable setting, Borochoff pointed out, especially given the temporary nature of the campaigns in question. “When you give something to a charity, it’s not like buying a product or service where you get something back,” he explained. This makes it hard for donors to verify how their money is being used. There are no legal requirements to report the use of funds donated to a personal fundraising campaign, but organizers who misrepresent the purpose of their campaign could face criminal charges.

Pooling information on the use of funds by nonprofits and charitable organizations is one of the major services provided by charity watchdogs such as GuideStar and CharityWatch. “A big role we have is motivating donors to pay attention and realize they can accomplish a lot more with their giving if they do some research,” Borochoff explained. “People need confidence, and if they know there’s a tough watchdog like CharityWatch out there, they’re going to be more willing to give.”

Michelle Byerly, executive director of The Nonprofit Partnership, also stressed the importance of researching charitable organizations before making a donation and, if possible, getting involved directly. “As much as possible, we want people in the community to be involved in nonprofits on boards or volunteering,” Byerly said. That way, she argued, potential donors can see the impact a nonprofit makes in the community firsthand and even provide oversight.

Alternatively, Byerly said, those interested in donating should review nonprofits’ impact reports and Form 990 tax returns online or call the organization they plan to donate to. “At all of the nonprofits, there are amazing people doing the work who are happy to talk to you about what they’re doing,” she pointed out. ■

# Long Beach Gives: Campaign Earnings Help Fund Nonprofit Missions, Projects



Micaela Salatino is project director of the Long Beach Time Exchange, a community organization that uses “time credits” to trade goods and services around the city. The Long Beach Gives campaign provided the organization financial relief after potentially facing closure, she said. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

■ **By DENNY CRISTALES**  
Staff Writer

Community members rallied in September to raise nearly \$1 million for more than 75 nonprofit organizations in the city on Long Beach Gives Day, according to Julie Meenan, executive director of the Josephine S. Gumbiner Foundation. Amid the campaign’s success, Meenan also highlighted potential improvements for a possible sequel to the crowdfunding effort.

Long Beach Gives was a 24-hour online fundraising campaign that provided local nonprofit organizations an opportunity to raise funds and engage with the community. The campaign was held on September 19, dubbed “Long Beach Gives Day.”

The philanthropic nonprofit Josephine S. Gumbiner Foundation, whose mission is to enrich the lives of women and children in Long Beach, spearheaded the campaign alongside other partners such as The Nonprofit Partnership, Long Beach Community Foundation and Fundraise; the latter provided the online plat-

form for the campaign.

Meenan said she conducted a feasibility study on the implementation of a crowdfunding campaign in Long Beach in 2016, when she was pursuing a master’s degree in social work at California State University, Long Beach. She drew inspiration from similar campaigns, such as an initiative in Monterey County, in developing a model to execute this effort locally.

After years of planning, including establishing a steering committee to organize the details of the campaign, the Josephine S. Gumbiner Foundation and partners settled on September 19 as Long Beach Gives Day, Meenan said. The partners raised \$120,000 from grants and sponsorships to cover the cost of launching the campaign and other services, she noted.

Local nonprofits created their own online profiles for their Long Beach Gives campaign page. Representatives from each organization then participated in workshops to learn more about using the webpage and social media tools to promote the campaign.

All told, Long Beach Gives raised \$822,605, with \$418,183 in online donations and \$404,422 in offline donations, Meenan said.

Long Beach Gives’ top earner was Rising Tide, an academic-centered organization located at the Marguerite Kiefer Education Center at 607 E. 3rd St. Rising Tide earned more than double its \$25,000 goal: a total of \$52,748 in donations. “We felt blown away,” Adele Langworthy, executive director of Rising Tide, said. “It was like, ‘Are we really looking at it right?’ We found it very encouraging for what we’re doing.”

Rising Tide offers local students free programming, including homework assistance, tutoring, food and other resources, Langworthy said. The staff consists of high school students, young adults and parents who have an interest in education. The organization aims to maintain a 4:1 ratio of students and staff, she added. Over the years, Langworthy realized a ratio of four students and one staff member led to more positive student outcomes. “[The students] improve and thrive,” she said. “And our staff is solid. They give

back to the community.”

The donations will be used to fund staff positions, Langworthy said, adding how community contributions are going to directly benefit Rising Tide’s mission to assist the region’s youth. “The funds from the community are really going back to the community,” she said. “We do our best work with kids in order to empower them. . . . We’re giving them hope and showing them that someone believes in them.”

Donations derived from the Long Beach Gives campaign also provided financial relief to one organization that was facing closure. The Long Beach Time Exchange, 425 Atlantic Ave., is a community organization that uses “time credits” to trade goods and services to residents and entities around the community, according to Micaela Salatino, project director of the organization. “It was about finding an alternative to money,” she said of the organization’s creation. “By participating in a time banking system, you create communities. Once you do an exchange with someone, it’s different than just paying them money.”

Various community partners are members of the Long Beach Time Exchange's network, Salatino said. By providing a service within this network, the time credits are "banked" and can then be exchanged for another service within that community.

However, the organization's funds have been dwindling for the past couple of years, Salatino said. The Long Beach Time Exchange's main source of funding came from the Building Healthy Communities Initiative, a 10-year, \$1 billion community plan by The California Endowment established in 2010 to transform 14 state communities plagued by health inequities into thriving neighborhoods. Long Beach was one of those communities.

Salatino said the Long Beach Time Exchange has relied on the initiative since 2012 to fulfill its mission. "And now it's ending," she said. "We've known that this was going to happen. We have been preparing for this for the last couple of years. . . . We have been applying to a lot of corporate and foundation grants, and we just haven't had any luck."

Enter Long Beach Gives. When Salatino learned about the campaign, she jumped on the chance to participate. The organization garnered \$5,062.30 from the community, slightly past its set \$5,000 fundraising goal.

With this new funding revenue, Salatino said the organization has a new breath of life. Although still facing closure sometime next summer if a new revenue stream isn't established, the Long Beach Gives donations bought the organization more time. "Long Beach Gives has helped kick us forward to keep investing in our resources, fundraising and other services," she said. "Having participated in Long Beach Gives has given us a lot of tools. We have never done a social media fundraising campaign, and now with the tools that we got from Long Beach Gives . . . we're going to prepare another social media fundraising campaign for Giving Tuesday on December 3 and future ones."

The nonprofit Long Beach Organic, 5115 Marina Pacifica Dr., received \$6,056.75 in donations, just above its \$6,000 goal. Long Beach Organic participated in the campaign to raise funds for

an eighth garden it is planning to open at 914 Redondo Ave. on an undisclosed date, according to Joseph Corso, garden director for the nonprofit.

The garden project's estimated cost is \$10,000. The combination of a separate fundraiser for the project in the summer and the Long Beach Gives campaign has allowed the nonprofit to gather all the resources it needs, Corso said. "It's great to be able to start a garden with all the budget raised already," he said. "You seldom have that opportunity."

Meenan said the biggest win for Long Beach Gives was that it provided an opportunity for organizations to strengthen their capacity to promote themselves through social media. Many organizations used social media for the first time in order to publicize the campaign, Meenan noted. "That will last them going forward in all the work that they do," she said. "They have those tools and those assets now. I think that's probably the greatest impact, aside from earning these unrestricted dollars."

Although Meenan was satisfied with the campaign's results, she did add that condensing the entire fundraiser into 24 hours was a stressful process. Meenan also emphasized that, although teaching social media to participating organizations was beneficial, it was a time consuming and difficult endeavor.

Currently, the foundation is conducting an evaluation survey that will be completed in a few weeks to learn more about what worked with Long Beach Gives, Meenan said. She said it's likely the event will happen again next year, but a few more improvements need to happen beforehand.

"In the future, I think we really need to get the buy-in from the business community early on to have a broader reach and get them to sign on as sponsors and funders," she said. "It was a very hard concept to understand in year one. And the nonprofits who . . . took that leap and signed on didn't exactly know what they were getting into. It required a lot of their time and attention. . . . And then we need to reach out to the residential community, as well." Meenan noted that engaging a marketing expert would also be useful going forward. ■

# Philanthropy News In Brief

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**  
Editor

## Nonprofit Launches Fundraising Campaign Benefiting The Queen Mary

Queen Mary International (QMI), a nonprofit dedicated to the preservation and restoration of the Queen Mary, launched a new fundraising campaign on October 31 called Project Royal Rivets. The date was chosen because it marks 52 years since the ship set sail from Southampton to its home in Long Beach, according to QMI. Donations will be allocated to the City of Long Beach and earmarked for use on specific restoration projects annually outlined by the city. Donations may be made via the organization's website, [qmi.care/donate.html](http://qmi.care/donate.html). The fundraiser was announced after a series of reports by local media outlets regarding urgent, unfunded repairs required to keep the ship in shape.

## Philanthropic Organization Relaunches As Jewish Long Beach

Jewish Long Beach, a new philanthropic nonprofit dedicated to providing resources and opportunities to advance Jewish life and organizations through Long Beach and West Orange Counties, is launching on November 6. The organization is the result of a merger between the Jewish Federation and the Jewish Community Foundation of Long Beach and West Orange County. According to an announcement from the organization, its initiatives include grantmaking to other nonprofits to assist communities in need, programs to advance leadership and service among the Jewish community in Long Beach, advocacy to fight anti-Semitism and injustice, and other programs. Jewish Long Beach operates the Alpert Jewish Community Center, Jewish Family and Children's Services of Long Beach and West Orange County, the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Jewish Long Beach Campus and other agencies. Visit [jewishlongbeach.org](http://jewishlongbeach.org) for more information.

## Rotary Club Raises Funds For Childhood Literacy

The Rotary Club of Long Beach recently raised more than \$58,000 for its Reading By 9 program, which is dedicated to increasing the number of Long Beach students able to read at their grade level by the age of nine. Raised at an annual luncheon benefiting the program, the funds will go toward books and e-books for Long Beach Unified School District libraries, grants for innovative literacy projects, and other local youth literacy-oriented efforts. Reading By 9 is part of a larger effort founded by the Los Angeles Times, Scholastic Books and Rotary Clubs in 1999. Since that time, the Long Beach club has contributed more than \$735,000 and more than 265,000 books for local children. Mollie Beck, president of the Rotary Club of Long Beach, reflected, "The donations raised this year will place thousands of new books into the hands of young readers, whether to read in their classrooms or take home to keep."

## Billie Jean King To Serve As Co-Chair For Library Campaign

The Long Beach Public Library Foundation announced this month that tennis legend and activist Billie Jean King will serve as honorary co-chair of the foundation's New Main Campaign alongside Mayor Robert Garcia. The campaign is a fundraiser for the new Billie Jean King Main Library and will support programs, technology and various enhancements at the facility, according to the foundation. The New Main Campaign has raised \$2.1 million as of October 18. The funds will allow patrons to have access to a multitude of resources, including laptops, library kiosks, printers and more. The campaign will continue through the end of the library's first full year of service. The Billie Jean King Main Library opened on September 21. ■



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(Continued from Page 1)

steadily increasing among adults younger than 50 since the mid-1980s. In addition to Millennials – those aged 22 to 38 – the generation preceding them, Gen X, was also found to be at higher risk of developing colorectal cancers. Conversely, incidences of colorectal cancers have dropped among the nation's older citizens.

So, why are Millennials at a higher risk for colorectal cancer, a disease that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends first screening for at age 50? According to oncologist Dr. Milan Sheth, who is affiliated with MemorialCare Long Beach Medical Center, the answer could lie in significant lifestyle and cultural shifts that took place over the course of the last century.

"We used to be a culture that was very much active in lifestyle. We were eating freshly made foods that were grown on organic farms, or even just homegrown foods," Sheth said. "All that changed in the latter part of the last century where they became sort of the couch potato generation: watching TV, not as active anymore, dependent on our cars for transportation, and eating more processed foods and fast foods."

Sheth believes the shift to a more sedentary existence has contributed to what he considers another major factor in increasing colorectal cancer rates among young adults: the obesity epidemic.

According to an annual report on obesity rates compiled by the Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, in 2000, 13.9% of children aged two

to 19 were obese, while 18.5% of adults were obese. In 2016, those rates jumped to 30.5% and 39.6%, respectively. According to the report, there are significant ethnic disparities in obesity rates, with Black and Latino Americans having higher rates of obesity than Whites and Asians.

"Certainly smoking, obesity and sedentary lifestyle in general has been shown to be a causative factor in colon cancer. But to what severity, to what magnitude, none of that has really been elucidated," Sheth said.

The American Cancer Society's research found that young adults diagnosed with colorectal cancer were more likely than older adults to be diagnosed with a late stage of the disease. According to Sheth, this is in part due to a perception that younger adults are not likely to develop the disease.

"These are patients who are just not tuned in to the fact that they could have colon cancer. . . and therefore they do not get the attention that they need from a patient perspective," Sheth said. "Similarly, from a physician standpoint, if a younger patient comes to the office and says, 'I have X, Y and Z symptoms,' they too may not think [it's] colon cancer because they are also not primed into thinking that these younger patients are at risk of getting colon cancer," he explained. As a result, he said, by the time such patients are screened for colorectal cancer, years could have gone by as the disease progressed unchecked.

Individuals with a family history of colorectal cancer are at higher risk of developing it themselves, according to Sheth.

Signs and symptoms of the disease include: bleeding from the gastrointestinal tract, "typically manifested by either having dark colored stools or stools with bright red blood," Sheth said; unintentional weight loss; nausea or vomiting; abdominal bloating; and changes in bowel habits. Of the latter, Sheth explained, "Patients may have several days of feeling really constipated and that will alternate with several days of having diarrhea."

The good news is that colorectal cancer is "extremely treatable," according to Sheth. In the early stage of colorectal cancer, when it is localized to the colon or rectum, the five-year survival rate is 90%, according to the American Cancer Society. That rate decreases to 71% if the cancer has spread to nearby structures or lymph nodes, and drops precipitously to 14% if the cancer has spread to distant parts of the body such as the liver or lungs – illustrating why it's crucial to catch the cancer early.

Most people equate screening for colon cancer with a colonoscopy, a procedure in which a flexible tube containing a tiny video camera is inserted via the rectum to inspect the colon for abnormalities. Preparation for the procedure involves switching to a liquid diet the day prior, and can also include taking a laxative or an enema. During the procedure, a physician may also use instruments to remove small abnormalities such as polyps – tiny growths that may be precancerous.

Young individuals who may not think they are at risk for the disease may avoid this

screening procedure due to its discomfort, Sheth said. But there are other ways to screen for colon cancer, including testing fecal matter for blood or cancer cells, he emphasized.

"Once a patient is found to have colon cancer, the first step then is to understand how advanced the disease may or may not be," Sheth said. "That is done by obtaining a CAT scan to see what the status of the liver, lungs and bones look like. . . . As long as there is no evidence of distant disease, that patient would then be taken to surgery to have the cancer removed." If the cancer has spread, treatment would likely include chemotherapy and removing tumors or nodules, he noted.

Sheth estimated that 10-15% of his patients with colorectal cancer are young adults. While the American Cancer Society has recommended beginning colorectal cancer screenings at age 45 due to its research, Sheth recommends beginning at age 40 if there is a family history of the disease, and as early as 20 if there is evidence of a related genetic syndrome. He believes there needs to be a widespread campaign on multiple platforms to inform the public about the risk for colorectal cancer.

"Also, I think that people need to really understand and realize that this is happening because of these culturally related risk factors," Sheth emphasized. "Trying to adopt a less sedentary lifestyle, trying to practice healthier habits with better foods and less smoking and less alcohol and things like that is also something that the public needs to be made aware of." ■

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