

## In This Issue



**Southwest is now the dominant airline at LGB**  
(Page 18)



**Restaurants mobilize amid more restrictions**  
(Page 14)



**5 Downtown stories to watch for in 2021**  
(Page 15)



**Containers near airport will soon be gone**  
(Page 21)

# What comes after the worst year ever?

We talked with several business leaders and academics about 2020, and their hopes for what comes next



Late-night patrons visit a stretch of Pine Avenue closed off to traffic between First Street and Broadway. Photo by Cheantay Jensen.

■ By **TIM GROBATY**  
Columnist

Remember the other years? And how, when each troubled one finally and mercifully sputtered to its end, we sang and drank champagne and danced happily on its grave with the promise that the following year would be better.

Yeah, we did that when 2019 died, too. Surely 2020 would be better than worldwide terrorism, climate change gathering steam, “bomb cyclone” blizzards, hurricanes, typhoons, bombings, riots and, farther down below the fold, a little item about how a coronavirus was discovered in Wuhan, China. It’s how COVID got its “19” designation.

So, no, surely 2020 turned out to be the worst one yet for many millions of people. If nothing else, it’s unified the world in a hatred for a year expressed in every language.

But let’s scroll back the focus and just look at Long Beach, a city that relies heavily on dining and conventions. As COVID increased wildly, indoor dining disappeared in restaurants, many of which took to creative ways to offer outdoor dining with the construction of parklets. Bars were shuttered and remained dark until many of them looped their way back into a limited business by teaming with nearby restaurants and food trucks, enabling them to serve alcohol, though, again, only outdoors.

The city’s once robust convention business? Over and out for virtually all of COVID’s reign of terror, and along with the loss in convention business came the loss of hotel bookings and the city’s hotels went either dim or dark and scrambling for innovative ways to at least lure some people to their properties by such methods as showing outdoor poolside movies.

Businesses, too, were shut down unless they were deemed essential. Eventually, some reopened with a limited number of customers allowed inside at any one time.

And all of these businesses weathered—or didn’t—see-sawing health ordinances, much to merchants’ anger and confusion.

The city’s financial management director John Gross has estimated that Long Beach’s budget could be hit with shortfalls of more than \$27 million a year through 2024. Unemployment numbers have exploded and the economy, obviously, has been pummeled.

There’s little doubt that the business losses and overall financial fallout will affect the city for several years, even if COVID were to disappear today or in the next few weeks or months.

And all of this is to say nothing of the city’s 277 deaths and

roughly 17,000 reported cases as of early December.

Depressing? That’s not even the word for it.

Hopeless? That’s a different story. This is Long Beach, namesake of (if not its epicenter) the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake, after which we sifted through the rubble, dusted ourselves off and got to work rebuilding the city.

Can Long Beach survive and rebound again? COVID isn’t an earthquake. The 1933 event struck hard and fast and then went away, leaving the city to do its rebuilding without the interference of further calamity. COVID isn’t as easy to work through as it becomes increasingly perilous and rebuffs much of humanity’s efforts to rebuild the damage it’s already done. Ignoring the disease in order to bring things back to normal certainly isn’t a good strategy. The issue every country, every

(Please Continue to Page 2)





## Long Beach Business Journal

Vol. XXXIII No. 11 • December 2020

### PUBLISHER

David Sommers

### MANAGING EDITOR

Melissa Evans

### ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

Andrea Estrada

### DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Dennis Dean

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EDITOR

Stephanie Rivera

### SENIOR REPORTER & PHOTOGRAPHER

Brandon Richardson

### SENIOR REPORTER

Alena Maschke

### GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Springwave Studios

### PUBLISHER EMERITUS

George Economides



Follow us  
@LongBeachBusinessJournal



Follow us @LBBizJourn



Follow us @LBBusinessJournal

The Long Beach Business Journal is a publication of Pacific Community Media. The journal premiered in 1987 as the Long Beach Airport Business Journal. The Business Journal is published every other Tuesday, except between Dec. 25 and mid-January. Distribution is approximately 22,000. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is strictly prohibited unless otherwise stated. Opinions expressed by perspective writers and guest columnists are not necessarily the views of the Long Beach Business Journal.

### ADVERTISING/EDITORIAL DEADLINES

Ads: Tuesday prior to publication.  
Press releases: two weeks prior to publication. E-mail press releases to editor@lbbj.com. The editorial calendar is available at lbbusinessjournal.com.

### LONG BEACH BUSINESS JOURNAL

211 E. Ocean Blvd., Ste. 400  
Long Beach, CA 90802  
News tips: (562) 655-7678  
Advertising: (562) 912-0161  
Editorial: editor@lbbj.com  
Advertising: info@lbbj.com

### SUBSCRIPTIONS:

To subscribe, please call (562)912-0161 or visit lbbusinessjournal.com/subscribe

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



## MONDAY MORNING COFFEE and BIZBRIEF

Sign up at [lbbusinessjournal.com](http://lbbusinessjournal.com) for **MONDAY MORNING COFFEE** and **BIZBRIEF**, FREE email subscriptions about issues, events and meetings for the week. Monday Morning Coffee is sent out at 6 a.m., and BizBrief is news of the day, sent out periodically around 4 p.m. weekdays as needed.

(Continued from Page 2)

state, every city is asking is how or if we can manage to carry on much longer, how bad has COVID hurt us in 2020, and what does the future hold.

We talked to several key people who continue to work to, at a minimum, keep the city or their business afloat. Among them there are varying degrees of optimism and hope. There is an undeniable willingness and spirit to get Long Beach and its residents back on their civic feet again.

### Kraig Kojian, president and CEO of the Downtown Long Beach Alliance:

To overstate the obvious, 2020 was an unbelievably rough year for everyone and for the ages, but economically speaking, it was especially tough on small businesses and their employees. The local business community has done an incredible job of adapting and pivoting to meet the many challenges thrown their way, but there are breaking points for everyone. Unfortunately we see the collateral damage every day.

Going into 2021, if the pandemic and restrictive health protocols limiting business operations continue, we may start to see a new personal strain that becomes too much for most. It's more important than ever that we lean heavily on health and safety practices and immediately work to create more direct financial assistance resources for businesses.

For the first time in decades, we saw a year of tremendous social movement and demand for change in the way our society and public institutions view and approach race and equity. That has also made its mark on Downtown, and I trust and expect that our community will take the lessons learned this year and move forward with momentum into 2021.

What will 2021 look like in Downtown Long Beach? I doubt that we'll get back to large events or gatherings, but I hope that by the summer months, when hopefully a good portion of our community is vaccinated, life will return to a closer sense of normalcy and folks can get back to interacting at local businesses and in public places.

### Steve Goodling, president and CEO of the Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau:

With the shut-down in March our convention customers realized they had to go virtual instead of in-person, and as we're allowed to gather once again in the future, they want the opportunity to go hybrid with both in-person attendance and people logging on from their homes or offices.

So, between the convention center and the CVB, we decided to create a new department, Director of Creative Initiative, because of the technology of interactivity, chat, polling and everything else. We were able to look at several platforms and bring them all into our portfolio. So as we're permitted to gather in the future customers will want to go hybrid with the opportunity to log on or attend in person.

We've polled convention planners and more than 50% want to do something like this, so the clock is reset and people are looking forward to being able to do this. And because of the work we've done with technology, we're at the forefront of these kinds of conventions. We've gotten national recognition in trade publications, and competitors have been trying to understand how we did it. It's caused quite a buzz in the industry. We're the first convention center in the U.S. to be able to activate its entire campus for interactivity.

For 2021, I'm optimistic that we'll see light at the end of the tunnel because of the vaccine, because we've learned a new trade that'll put us right in the forefront. We've managed to save 35% of our conventions for future years. We're very optimistic. All we need is a vaccine.

### Dede Rossi, executive director of the Belmont Shore Business Association:

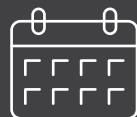
I'm not optimistic. You want to be the one to say, "Hey it'll be great." But I don't feel like that person right now.

We rely a lot on special events like the car show, the Christmas Parade, the Stroll and Savor evenings. They help us raise money to do more things for our businesses, and losing them in 2020 has really cut back our finances. We haven't

## Register For

# Winter 2021 Session

**LB** LONG BEACH CITY COLLEGE



**Winter Session**  
Jan. 4 – Feb. 6



**More than 50 subjects**  
taught online!



**Complete a class**  
in just 5 weeks!

For more information about **Winter 2021 Session** classes go to:

**LBCC.edu**



had the budget to even pay people. I don't think we lost many businesses to COVID; we lost some to retirement and maybe the COVID caused that. I don't know what the future will hold; we'll probably lose a few places but I hope we don't.

Losing outdoor dining hurts the restaurants for sure. People come to Belmont Shore to eat, and with new parklets there was a new energy on the street, a lit parklet here and there, and now that it's going to be dark we don't know what it's going to be like.

So I'm a little worried about bringing people down at all, there's no place to come and sit and relax and have a meal. Now most people are having food delivered.

I'm hoping in 2021 we can have something in the spring, a street festival. I was thinking it'd be fun to have to do something after Mother's Day, close the street, have a festival, like a Beach Streets. I've got it in my mind but we just have to wait.

It's just crazy. I feel terrible just watching people go through this. I was at Nick's today and we tipped our wait person like 35 bucks. The hard part is all this happening right before the holidays.

Then you hear about people wanting to fight it and open things up. The bottom line is COVID is a thing: It's bad.

Our problem is Orange County is right next door. They still have outdoor dining. I won't go to Orange County. People think this is not really happening and they say they'll go to Orange County to eat. They say, "I'll do what I want." They're still my friends, I just don't want to listen to it. I respect people wearing masks. We should've done all this a long time ago.

Everyone in city government is trying their best, but it's just hard. It's COVID.

I'm optimistic, really. I have to be, but I'm not today.

### **Blair Cohn, executive director of the Bixby Knolls Business Improvement Association:**

What keeps me up is wondering is this how it's going to be? I have a 5-year-old daughter and she has to wear a mask. When I was her age we all just went wild. We were free, had holes in our pants, shoes all scuffed up.

We knew this thing was coming, just wash your hands and you'll be alright. In late March early April, I walked to Lola's at Cartagena and Atlantic. No cars around, and all you heard was a street sign squeaking in the wind. And I thought this is surreal. This is the "Twilight Zone."

But we've managed. I would sit and obsess about how are we going to keep the community engaged with us, what are we gonna do?

We moved everything online and continued with content. We had been having jazz bands play, and restaurants provided food, and we had some night-time activity. Now, every Saturday we put out links to a cool jazz performance



Dede Rossi has been a leader in the Belmont Shore business community for over a decade. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

or film clips. We've continued walking; it's been almost 13 years with the Bixby Knolls Strollers. We have virtual First Fridays through emails of local performers. In late March I said well, shoot, we can't stop First Fridays, so we contacted the trolley company. and we had an Easter Bunny and drove down every street and took First Fridays to the people. We did it again at Halloween and we have a holiday one that we're working on. So we've changed but not limited our activity. We sent out daily emails to the community saying here's what's open, here's what you can do, so we haven't slowed down one bit.

There has been angst and anxiety that's led to civil unrest and a heated political environment, and what I call dodging the raindrops—things we can't control, so we counter with negativity. I tell people the sun is up and you live in a great part of town, let's acknowledge that and keep our little hamlet thriving.

As for 2021: Gosh. We lost people in 2020, we put our beloved Annie the bulldog down two weeks ago. I don't know, man, let's have a vaccine or two, let's get it to people, let's plummet the numbers, get back to positivity, get rid of the anger, let's have civility from leadership, Washington. Gotta be hopeful. You have to be. I just try to be optimistic about 2021 because I choose to be.

### **Jeremy Harris, president and CEO of the Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce:**

A lot of what we do involves big events, and obviously we can't do that anymore, so we have to ask, what do those big events look like? Can we ever return to gathering? Is the hybrid model

going to be the future? Will events be in person with a hundred people watching on their computers? The silver lining is the future is here now instead of the future.

I think next summer is a really good-looking possibility to get back to more of a normal situation. On the negative side the virus has decimated an economy that was clicking on all cylinders at the beginning of the year. Stores were open, and new ones were opening in population centers like Downtown. Hospitality was great, hotels were on record pace, then COVID came and everything went backward. This year makes 2008 look like a blip. We had a relatively good couple of months in summer when we saw numbers come down a bit and you saw commerce starting to come back, and now we're back to seeing a record spike, people losing jobs, or being furloughed.

If there's a silver lining, it's forced us to innovate quickly. Gone are the days of in-person networking, but realizing that's important, we launched Good Afternoon Long Beach virtually and have come up with more innovative virtual programming when we would've had breakfasts, ribbon-cutting and other events in person.

We're working remotely through the end of the year. We decided that in September when we saw numbers going up, and they'll probably remain at home longer. We'll have to see when the appropriate time is to bring them back, and then it will be a hybrid of working in the office and working at home.

The restaurants are obviously hurting, and they're closed for indoor and outdoor dining at least until Dec. 20, but I think you and I know it's going

to be longer. I think you're going to see more restaurants close and those that survive, we'll look at how they did it, but you won't see the same number of restaurants that people are used to seeing.

How Downtown will recuperate depends a lot on what happens to office space Downtown. If you're a restaurant depending on getting consumers from the lunch crowd, it'll take longer. If condos and housing increases in Downtown, the restaurants will be alright if the residents patronize them.

I'm still bullish on Downtown remaining a place of excited growth. If Long Beach is going to step out of the shadow of LA, the Downtown hub is where things will happen and it will spread into the rest of the city, Bixby Knolls and Uptown.

### **Chris Wacker, CEO of Laserfiche, headquartered in Long Beach:**

Our entire company, with about 450 people worldwide and about 320 in Long Beach, is working remotely. We began doing that about a week before the lockdown in March. We're fortunate to be in a position of providing what the world needs right now, which is to work remotely, and since very few people go into office, we're surviving.

I feel this pandemic has caused a lot of organizations to use the technology developed over the past 12 years, such as working remotely, and using Zoom, Webex, Microsoft Teams and others. By using those technologies there will be a great savings from a lack of physical presence required for meetings. We're experiencing great savings. We

(Please Continue to Page 4)





Luis and Brenda Navarro. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

(Continued from Page 3)

were negotiating with the city of Santa Clara back when COVID started and we were sending a team of six to meet with their team, then that meeting was cancelled and rescheduled as virtual, so there was no transportation, no time out of office, no per diem. We set up the meeting, did it in an hour and moved on. It was a huge savings for us. Will we ever have a physical meeting, of course, but there are a lot of times we can do it virtually and so the savings will be great. That we will continue.

We're building a 102,000 square-foot headquarters on Long Beach Boulevard and we were anticipating keeping some people in our old building and moving others into the new one, but now we don't need all that space, because we'll have people working remotely indefinitely. People can be trusted, you don't have to sit on top of them, you can judge them by the quality of their work instead of time spent in the office. It's a great thing for management in any company. I feel the staff is working at least as hard and probably much harder than when they were in the office.

Other businesses, I feel for them and I encourage all people who are benefiting to assist those businesses that are suffering.

I'm hearing very promising news on the vaccine front. I wasn't expecting one so quickly. Just based on reports from Moderna, J&J, AstraZeneca and Pfizer, I'm quite encouraged and I expect we'll have a vaccine in 2021. That will stabilize the economy and get people to travel, patronize restaurants and bars, and I hope they continue to be washing their hands, wearing masks, and maintaining social distance. Those things really help. Handshakes? I don't do those anymore.

## **Becky Blair president and principal of Coldwell Banker Commercial BLAIR WESTMAC:**

I think all of us are not doing as well because of the virus. It's true of every

business in the city, some are more upsetting than others, like restaurants. The restrictions, the curfew, the closures will cause businesses to not only be upset, but some will have to close their doors. I think the city government is doing the best they can, but it's difficult.

I think the commercial real estate market has been hurt not only by COVID, but by technology; people are finding they can do as much at home as in the office.

Commercial real estate, especially retail, is not doing well. But right now residential real estate is doing very well, so we'll probably see some action, especially in buildings under \$10 million, because there are a lot of business owners, especially doctors, who are looking to buy instead of continuing to lease.

Based on what we've seen in the past, if we didn't have the virus, we'd see an uptick in business, but because of the virus, I can't make a guess on what'll happen.

## **Seiji Steimetz, Professor & Chair of Economics at California State University, Long Beach:**

Economically what describes Long Beach is we started with some of the lowest unemployment numbers in history, then with COVID we saw an unprecedented increase in unemployment. Since then we've seen a gradual and cautious recovery, and then, we've had this new setback.

The effect will depend on the length of this new ordinance. The closest we have in comparison to what that would do is in late June early July when bars were ordered closed and inside dining was prohibited. In the worst week, in mid-July, unemployment claims went up 60% in Long Beach.

Part of the story is about adaptability—how quickly can restaurants pivot to take-out and delivery. It affects a lot of people and a lot of jobs. In Long

Beach, almost 12% of wage employees are in accommodations and food services, the second largest sector in the city next to health.

In 2021, if we can manage to all wear masks, stay distant, we're definitely on a track to improvement. A gradual and cautious one. Of all the jobs lost in the county, the percentage we've gotten back right now is about 30%. Over 700,000 jobs disappeared in two months. From April to now about 200,000 jobs have come back in the county. We won't know those figures in Long Beach until next year.

We are clearly on the path to recovery, not as fast as people might hope for. The question is can we control the pandemic to the point where we can open up more broadly. If we can beat it by the middle of next year, the employment levels could come back, but all bets are off if we can't beat it. Suppose in the middle of 2021 we get back to where we were. We'd be celebrating zero economic growth for a year and a half.

In a normal year, if the economy grew by 1% it would be very bad economic news.

Wear a mask, live through these health orders. Or we could fall back into the hole.

If I had a magic wand to fix the economy, for me it would be to wave it and make people listen to health experts.

## **Dr. Mauricio Heilbron, surgeon and vice chief of staff at St. Mary Medical Center:**

The good science is we know it's spiraling out of control. We know in many areas that opening restaurants and bars, the numbers spike and when you close the restaurants and bars the numbers go down.

To protect the community we have to do things to keep the public safe.

We do know that in restaurants by definition people spend a certain amount of time with their mouths open, and not to be indelicate, burping and

belching.

There is science that dining outdoors with proper distance is safer, but I haven't seen that proper distance in most of the outdoor dining.

I think the rush to get back to normal may have doomed us to a holiday disaster — and this is before Thanksgiving.

The question is how bad is it going to get, and that's not a good question to have to ask.

I don't think we can do it in a way that would make it feasible for restaurants. No one would open a business that would be limited to 25% occupancy. You need a business model where you can make it with limited outdoor dining and a large amount of take-out. COVID is forcing us to do things we're not happy doing.

I'm worried about the holidays. What if recent numbers aren't a spike, but a plateau. Spike indicates a peak, this might not be a peak yet.

The timing literally could not be worse, between winter, the flu, the holidays.

The time is gonna come when history will show that it's been spread through intentional willful ignorance. It's not political, it's ignorance. People don't believe in COVID until they get it and then they're converts, but in the meantime they've been passing the virus along.

## **Tom Modica, Long Beach city manager:**

We're managing through some pretty weird, strange times. I think 2020 is the most amazing of years, no other has been as challenging, with issues of systemic racism, the George Floyd protests, and of course the pandemic. At the same time we're trying to manage all of that and doing things we haven't done before, like rental assistance, tenant harassment and directing payments to businesses through the CARES Act and staying on the path of our strategic plans, all while we're trying to preserve hospital capacity to save lives.

Some departments are almost completely working remotely—probably about 70% of our employees.

I think we'll see the impact for a while, due to furloughs which are a huge sacrifice to our workers in the city who are on furlough through October, which is a 10% pay cut. That saves us money, but it also results in 10% fewer hours of our workforce and a cut in services offered to residents.

The financial impact will last for years. Right now we're looking at a \$30 million shortfall in our budget for 2021, and it will likely be similar for several years. We're in that space where you spend what you need to save lives and then ask for assistance.

I think this was a turning point in global culture as well. Things are going to have to change in our culture in terms of where and how we work, and how we continue to follow health rules. I don't think the vaccine is going to



be available to everyone in 2021, then there's the matter of how many people will take it. So COVID is likely going to be part of our lives for a while. I think remote work will be part of the lasting impact, it has worked, our employees are still very productive. Right now we're telling employees to work remotely at least till January, but it will probably go longer than that.

#### **Luis Navarro, restaurateur (Lola's, Social List, Portuguese Bend):**

Obviously, 2020 was, in my personal experience, the worst ever. We opened Lola's in 2008 when the recession hit, but that was different, it was strictly a financial hit on our population. With this one, people are having a hard time grasping. There's a virus running rampant and the government is trying to stomp the fire out.

In 2008, you could say it's the owner's fault by not offering specials or discounts to drum up business, but here we're being mandated to close, that's the biggest disconnect. We haven't been able to wrap our arms around what's going on. It's tough when you're ordered to close.

I understand what's going on and I think most people do. You have to respect the virus, it's Russian roulette if you don't. But it's hard to see Orange County and Pasadena open during Thanksgiving and having their customers on two-hour wait lists all weekend and over here we're dead in the water.

The general consensus among everyone in the industry is there's a strong possibility that the three-week closure is initial, and I think it's done that way so people don't freak out. A lot of us are seeing things still surging and we're probably going to shut down through the new year and that'll be the final blow.

The first time we were closed there were restaurants and bars that were able to stay sort of open through PPP money, but this time you're exposed and once you start digging into your reserve money and wonder how far you can sink down this hole. We're going on 13 years, you work your butt off and are able to create an emergency fund and at what point is it too much. I think that's what people are asking, when to hit eject and let it go.

But I think people are going to be very optimistic, a lot of us are banking on the vaccine to start rolling out in the next few weeks. Hopefully by summer, people will start feeling comfortable and spending and jumping on a plane and flying to Europe. I think the hope is we'll have a great rebound, with the new president. I guess the hope is that we're able to have that springback, get that comfort back that we've become accustomed to as Americans. That's what people are longing for.

But if things stay locked down for too much longer, Lola's can make it, Portuguese Bend cannot, and Social List would be coming in and crashing and burning by the skin of its teeth. ■

## County improves protections for whistle-blowing employees calling out coronavirus violations

■ By **SEBASTIAN ECHEVERRY**  
Staff Reporter

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors has passed an ordinance to protect employees against retaliation for reporting COVID-19 health violations at their workplaces. Complaints about workplace violations have been increasing as the pandemic drags on.

The new protections build upon a previously adopted ordinance that encouraged employees to join health councils that monitor workplace compliance. Under the new law, employers cannot take action against employees for joining the health councils.

"It's an excellent step in the right direction," Kurt Peterson, co-president of the hotel union Unite Here Local 11, said.

The county approved these protections to encourage more employees to speak out if their places of work are not keeping up with health orders, especially as COVID-19 cases and deaths continue to rise. To enforce the protections, the county may fine businesses up to \$10,000 per violation as well as offer legal support for employees who say they were fired or reprimanded for calling out their employers.

"By encouraging workers to report public health violations without fear of retaliation, this ordinance promotes public health

and increases the effectiveness of public health requirements," a memo to the board of supervisors read. "It is specifically needed because the COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread, causing further illness and death that fall disproportionately in low-income communities and communities of color."

As infections increase, the number of health code violation complaints has also increased.

Peterson said his union has filed approximately 50 health code complaints with the county's department of public health. He said there has also been an increase in workers wanting to speak out against their employers for health code violations but being afraid they will lose their jobs.

The Department of Labor's Office of Inspector General reported in August that there was an increase in employees reporting health code violations since the start of the pandemic in March. In the report, the department found that OSHA, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, had failed to carry out investigations of COVID-19 health violations.

"We found the pandemic has significantly increased the number of whistleblower complaints OSHA has been receiving," the report read. "OSHA was challenged to complete investigations in a timely manner before the pandemic, and the potential exists

for even greater delays now."

The retaliation protections don't affect Long Beach or Pasadena because they have their own health departments to enforce the health orders.

Long Beach enforces local health orders via the city's Venue Task Force, which is made up of employees from code enforcement, health and human services and sometimes the police department.

The task force conducts unannounced inspections throughout the week, monitoring both weekday and weekend compliance, and responds to complaints. In some cases, the task force can issue administration citations or even a misdemeanor citation as warranted to reinforce compliance.

Long Beach spokeswoman Chelsey Finegan said an overwhelming majority of businesses have complied with the rules and are following all health and safety guidelines.

Those guidelines, though, are changing again.

LA County and Long Beach both issued new health orders recently in an effort to curtail the surging infections. As part of the health order, businesses would have to stop outdoor dining, a move that was met with furious backlash by small business owners who say the restriction would be the final nail in the coffin for some. ■





# LBUSD bids goodbye to longtime board members Meyer, Williams

■ By **MIKE GUARDASBACIO**  
Staff Reporter

At the Nov. 18 Long Beach Unified School District Board of Education meeting, the board bid farewell to longtime members Jon Meyer and Felton Williams, who are leaving the board after more than 33 years of combined service.

As they finish out their terms, Meyer and Williams are among the departing “old guard” of LBUSD lifers that includes recently retired Superintendent Chris Steinhauser, who stepped down over the summer after nearly two decades in the head job.

The challenges for the new guard, including superintendent Jill Baker and the board’s incoming members, were on display even as they bid farewell to Meyer and Williams—it was a virtual sendoff because of COVID-19.

“I know it’s time to say farewell

but how do you say farewell to 16 years?” said Williams, who is currently the president of the African-American Cultural Center in Long Beach and who plans to remain involved in that effort.

Williams said he had lung cancer surgery in December of 2016 and wasn’t sure about whether to run for one last term. Eventually he decided to, partially out of a desire to finish the run with Steinhauser and Meyer.

“My focus was shaped by what I experienced in the ‘50s and ‘60s and a very vivid understanding of inequity,” said Williams, who shared earlier this year shared the story of his brother’s death in police custody. “For me, it’s always been about advocating for fairness. None of that changed when I became a member of the board and none of that will change as I depart the board. Why should anyone be treated differently?”

In a resolution read by board member Megan Kerr praising Williams, she noted his work to improve access to Advanced Placement classes to non-magnet students, and to increase the district’s ethnic studies offerings in its curriculum.

Board President Diana Craighead read the resolution honoring Meyer, who had three terms as board president and who spent 42 years as a teacher and coach at several schools in the LBUSD, including Lakewood, Millikan, Poly, and Avalon. Meyer’s son, Scott, is currently the head football coach at Lakewood and the family is a Wilson High institution, having put four generations through the school’s halls. The Wilson athletic stadium is named after Cliff Meyer, Jon’s father.

Craighead lamented the digital nature of the board’s farewell.

“What we’re missing by being online is we don’t get to shake your hand or express that emotion personally,” she said.

Meyer said he never considered his life’s work in education to be work at all.

“I have nothing but thanks,” he said. “I’m very proud of this board, of Jill and Chris and their staff. Everything in my experience from being a student to a teacher and principal and board member has been very selfish in that so many people have given to me. I just deeply appreciate everything.”

Long Beach City Prosecutor Doug Haubert joined the meeting to virtually pay tribute to both men, but particularly Williams.

“A lot of people don’t know the impact that Dr. Williams has made on the criminal justice system in Long Beach through my office,” he said, noting Williams’ work in gang intervention and truancy reduction programs, but also opening Haubert’s eyes to the racial divide. “He’s shared his experiences growing up in South-



Jon Meyer



Felton Williams

ern California as a Black man. The amount of learning I’ve done the last 10 years would not be possible without his support.”

Meyer said he’s already taken his successor, Doug Otto, to meet with the principals of all the schools in his area. Williams said he plans to do the same with his successor, Erik Miller. ■

## Lou & Mike’s closes its doors for good, owner blames coronavirus



Lou & Mike’s restaurant in East Long Beach. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.

■ By **ALENA MASCHKE**  
Senior Reporter

After several challenging months of restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic, neighborhood diner Lou & Mike’s in East Long Beach closed on Nov. 25.

Owner Mike Balchin didn’t mince words when it came to the reason for the restaurant’s closure.

“My pockets are only so deep,” he said. “The neighbors, they like the place, but there’s only so much we can do.”

A business owner—he’s a former owner of River’s End Cafe in Seal Beach—real estate contractor

and lifetime honorary member of the Long Beach Police Officers Association’s executive team, Balchin has deep roots in the community. Giving up Lou & Mike’s, which opened its doors in February 2018, hasn’t been an easy decision. Balchin said he even sold his home in Naples to help support the restaurant, but it wasn’t enough.

“I’d like to stay but I can’t do it,” he added.

Now, Balchin is hoping to find a buyer to take over the space, equipment and—ideally—his crew.

“I’ve got a team ready to go,” he said. ■

**NAPLES  
RIB  
COMPANY**

**WE HAVE YOUR HOLIDAY  
CATERING SOLVED!**

**WE HAVE NUMEROUS CATERING MENUS  
INCLUDING INDIVIDUAL BOXED MEALS  
PRICING TO FIT ANY BUDGET!**

**WE HAVE DELIVERY OPTIONS WITH SAFETY MEASURES TO  
KEEP YOUR STAFF AND HOLIDAY GATHERINGS IN A FESTIVE MOOD ALL SEASON LONG**



**VISIT [WWW.RIBCOMPANY.COM/CATERING](http://WWW.RIBCOMPANY.COM/CATERING)  
(562) 439-RIBS 5800 EAST 2ND STREET, LONG BEACH**



# McCarty's Jewelry to close after 88 years in Belmont Shore



People wait outside McCarty's Jewelry in Belmont Shore to take advantage of its going-out-of-business sale, with some items discounted up to 70%. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**  
Senior Reporter

For nearly nine decades, McCarty's Jewelry has served the Belmont Shore community, a historic run set to end some time before the end of the year.

"I've been here since 1982," owner Page Henley said. "It's a difficult thing to do, but it's time to not work six days a week."

While Henley's ownership began 38 years ago, the Belmont Shore jewelry store first opened for business 88 years ago in 1932. McCarty's is tied for title of the neighborhood's oldest business with Belmont Shore Barbershop, which was also established in '32.

Now in his 70s, Henley said the business has actually been doing well this year, all things considered, noting the closure has nothing to do with the pandemic. But with a twin sister already enjoying retirement and a son he'd like to spend more time with, he said it is just time to hang up his loupe.

While he would like to retire sooner rather than later, Henley said his retirement fund is tied up in the store's inventory. So the doors will remain open with items on sale—

with discounts up to 70%—until most or all inventory is gone, which could be through as late as Dec. 24, Henley said.

Despite the shock of the closure announcement, Henley said the community has been extremely supportive. Throughout the day, lines form out the door, as customers wait—socially distanced—to take advantage of the sale.

"I am saddened to see this Belmont Shore institution closing," said 3rd District Councilwoman Suzie Price. "I will miss the greeter they have posted outside the store, the friendly and consistent service they provide and their endless contributions to local nonprofits throughout the city."

Security guard Jim Gorsuch has spent a decade waving to and greeting passersby and customers outside McCarty's and has become as much a staple of Belmont Shore as the jewelry store itself.

Henley doesn't like to be contributing to the seemingly endless string of business closures in Belmont Shore. He said Amazon is largely to blame for the neighborhood's lack of longstanding privately owned shops and restaurants.

But not all hope is lost for the legacy

business. Henley said he has made it a priority to try to sell the store to a new owner but noted that nothing formal is currently underway.

"It's been an honor to be in a position

where I've been involved with so many people's lives," Henley said. "I'm appreciative for all the relationships I've been able to form. It's really hard to step away from that." ■



Page Henley, owner of McCarty's Jewelry since 1982, chats with customers during the store's going-out-of-business sale. Photo by Brandon Richardson.



# After 44 years, Belmont Shore coffee roaster gets a fresh name and image



Customers wait for their coffee under the new Sheldrake Coffee Roasting signage in Belmont Shore. Photo by Cheantay Jensen.

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**  
Senior Reporter

New signage for Sheldrake Coffee Roasting has gone up, replacing the Polly's logo that has graced the Belmont Shore coffeehouse for more than four decades.

In 1963, Mike Sheldrake began working at a Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise. The owners of the chicken joint went on to open the first Polly's Pies Restaurant and Bakery, bringing Sheldrake along.

"At the time, they were getting their coffee from The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf. When that relationship dissolved, they wanted to control their coffee from bean to cup," Sheldrake said. "Since I was the resident coffee fanatic, they assigned me to research and open a specialty coffee store."

Polly's Gourmet Coffee opened its doors in 1976 with Sheldrake at the helm, operating the business for the Polly's owners until 1989 when he bought them out. For the last 31 years, Sheldrake said people have continued to associate his coffee roasting operation as an arm of the local pie empire and not the independent coffeehouse it is (though, he still sells his fresh coffee to Polly's when the restaurants aren't shut down by global pandemics).

The brand change was announced Oct. 1 but has been implemented in stages to slowly phase out the Polly's name, Sheldrake explained. First a small sign went up in the window, then coffee cup sleeves were updated and now the new signage adorns the facade.

The new logo has the feel of a historic company, even older than the 44-year-old coffee roaster. The black and white image of a man beside coffee-roasting equipment filled with beans—an image Sheldrake had

created back in 2012—is meant to convey that roasting is a craft done by artisans, Sheldrake said.

Aside from alleviating the brand confusion and ensuring people did not assume they sell pies, Sheldrake said the original name did not highlight the focal point of the business: roasting.

"A lot of people did not know we roast," Sheldrake said. "There are a lot of sophisticated coffee drinkers out there that know how important it is to have freshly roasted coffee."

Since the name change, retail sales are up 10-15% over last October and November. While retail sales have improved, wholesale

business remains down around 90% due to business closures. During a normal month, between 10,000 and 11,000 pounds of coffee would be roasted on site—about 60 tons of coffee annually. However, during the pandemic, production has been cut to 2,000-2,500 pounds per month, Sheldrake said.

Despite the past, present and future challenges of this year and the next—with COVID-19 cases spiking locally and across the country—Sheldrake said he has never been concerned about whether or not his business would endure.

"I'm sure we're going to make it. I never doubted that at all," Sheldrake said. "I've been doing this a very long time. We've survived a whole lot and we're going to survive this."

As Polly's, and now Sheldrake's, the roasting business has always had a healthy dose of competition along Second Street: Starbucks, Peet's Coffee, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, Philz Coffee. Yet Sheldrake's business has continued to prosper, even after Peet's and Coffee Bean left the area, surviving four recessions and the Great Recession.

Sheldrake says one key to his success is the sourcing of coffee beans from around the world. He has visited Costa Rica to purchase Hacienda La Minita beans and Kona, Hawaii to purchase beans from Greenwell Farms, which was established in 1850. But a lot of his coffee is sourced through a broker in Davis that gives him access to brands he may not have otherwise, including Sheldrake's and customer favorite, Blue Mountain from Jamaica.

"Do everything you can to take care of your customers and don't worry about the competition," Sheldrake said. "Because you have no control over the competition." ■



The new logo for Sheldrake Coffee Roasting, formerly Polly's Gourmet Coffee, in Belmont Shore. Photo by Kate Karp.



## Long Beach's redistricting commission selects the final 6 to help redraw council district lines

■ By **CRYSTAL NIEBLA**  
Staff Reporter

With this year's census count nearing completion, members of the Long Beach's redistricting commission have selected the remaining four members and two alternates to serve on the commission, which is responsible for redrawing the city council district boundaries.

In October, the city's Ethics Commission randomly selected nine members, one from each council district, from a pool of 23 applicants, who were then tasked with filling the remaining six vacancies with candidates from that same pool.

In terms of demographic representation, the commission now includes a total of four White members, six Latinx members, two Black members, two Asian/Pacific Islander members and one mixed-race member.

The newly selected members and alternates include:

- Genna Beckenhaupt, Member
- Feliza Ortiz-Licon, Member
- Kelly Nhim, Member
- Zhelinrentice Scott, Member
- Josias Gonzalez, Alternate
- Melody Osuna, Alternate
- The previously selected council representatives include:
- Council District 1, Eric R. Oates
- Council District 2, Ryan Giffen
- Council District 3, Thomas J. Cooper
- Council District 4, Nicole Lopez
- Council District 5, Sharon Diggs-Jackson
- Council District 6, Alejandra Gutierrez
- Council District 7, Frank A. Gutierrez
- Council District 8, Marissa Martinez
- Council District 9, Sevely Sngunon

The commission is tentatively expected to hold its first meeting as a complete body by early January, pending the onboarding of the final members and alternates, according to city officials. ■

**Al Fresco Patio Dining**  
**Take Out**  
**No Contact Delivery**  
(upon request)  
**We Deliver Beer & Wine!**

**\$5 OFF** with purchase of **\$25 or more**

Expires 1/11/21

Order Online [BuonosPizza.com](http://BuonosPizza.com)

562.432.2211 250 W Ocean Blvd, LB

562.595.6138 401 W Willow St, LB

**OFFICES FOR LEASE**  
800 E OCEAN BLVD., LONG BEACH

### PROPERTY FEATURES:

- Historic Building located in Downtown Long Beach.
- High Ceilings
- Private Entry off of Ocean Blvd.
- Office/ Retail Uses will be Considered

Available Suites:

- ✓ Suite 102: Approx. 1,785 Sq. Ft.
- ✓ Suite 104: Approx. 1,625 Sq. Ft.

**LEASE RATE: \$2.00 PSF MG**

**ANTHONY GONZALEZ**  
D: (562) 296-1311  
[agonzalez@incocommercial.com](mailto:agonzalez@incocommercial.com)  
BRE Lic. 02052380

**JOHN RENDON**  
D: (562) 296-1314  
[jrendon@incocommercial.com](mailto:jrendon@incocommercial.com)  
BRE Lic. 01390904

6621 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Suite 280, Long Beach, CA 90803 | 562.498.3395 | **BRE#01359006**

This information contained herein was obtained from third parties, and has not been independently verified by real estate brokers. Buyers and tenants should have experts of their choice inspect the property and verify all information. Real Estate Brokers are not qualified to act as or select experts with respect to legal, tax, environmental, building construction, soil drainage or other such matters.

## CITY OF LONG BEACH BID OPPORTUNITIES

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>BID NUMBER</u>	<u>DUE DATE</u>
Grant Funding Application & Mgmt. Services	RFQ	12/09/2020
On-Call Gas Construction & Misc. Services	ITB ER20-071	12/10/2020
Furnish, Install, & Deliver One (1) Utility Bed	WD-03-21R	12/14/2020
Alamitos Tank No. 6 Rehabilitation Project	WD-09-19	12/16/2020
Engineering Services for Under Ocean Floor Seawater Intake Demolition	RFP (EO-3011)	12/17/2020
Citywide Fiber Optic Indoor Cabling	RFP TI21-008	12/23/2020
Investment Advisory & Mgmt. Services	RFP FM20-038	01/18/2021

**Bidder Registration**  
To receive notifications of bid opportunities, register with the City of Long Beach at [www.longbeach.gov/finance/business-info/purchasing-division/purchasing-division/](http://www.longbeach.gov/finance/business-info/purchasing-division/purchasing-division/) Additional details on upcoming bids and how to register can be found on the website.

## AUTO LIEN SALE AUCTION

3111 E. Willow Street  
Long Beach, CA 90806  
(562) 570-2828

Due to the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis, Public Auctions are Suspended Until Further Notice

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



Council passes ordinance that could penalize landlords for ‘bad faith’ harassment of tenants

■ By JASON RUIZ  
Staff Reporter

The Long Beach City Council approved a new ordinance in November intended to protect tenants from being harassed by landlords, but the council tweaked the law’s language to include a requirement in some sections that require landlords to act “in bad faith” before facing consequences.

It was a controversial move that property owners said would protect ethical landlords but something tenants groups warned would make it harder to seek justice for renters.

The new ordinance provides a legal avenue for tenants who feel they have been intimidated or retaliated against by landlords who do things like shut off utilities, fail to cash rent checks in a timely manner or withhold repairs as a means of forcing tenants out of their units.

Adding the requirement that landlords acted “in bad faith” was previously requested by Councilwoman Suzie Price, one of the members who originally voted against the ordinance in October. She argued it brought clarity to the rules. However, her suggestion faced opposition from community members because of the requirement it would create for tenants to prove the motivation of a potentially abusive landlord.

On Tuesday, the council struck a compromise by adding “in bad faith” only to certain sections of the ordinance dealing with landlords not carrying out timely repairs, providing tenants with false written information, failing to process rent payments and not attempting to communicate with tenants in the language they speak.

“In many of these, they already have elements of bad faith as requirements,” said Councilman Rex Richardson, who proposed the compromise. “I’m not sure how you can engage in abuse, intimidation or threats in good faith, so it’s already implied.”

In October, the council introduced the ordinance in a move to provide tenants with a new tool to defend against harassment from landlords after complaints about some property owners raising rents by hundreds of dollars, removing security doors and implementing other tactics to try to force tenants to leave even though they were legally protected by an eviction moratorium instituted during the pandemic.

The decision to bring the ordinance before the council came in a rare Monday-morning vote prior to Election Day. Several members of the council voted against it, saying there was too much ambiguity about what the ordinance would actually do, and if it would stand up legally.

Advocates for renters have also pointed to what they say is another flaw in the ordinance: The city would not enforce any of the provisions of it. Instead tenants would have to sue in civil court with landlords potentially being on the hook for fines of up to \$5,000 per violation.

While the council was discussing whether to add the “bad faith” requirement as well, Deputy City Attorney Rich Anthony said that similar clauses were included in ordinances in cities like Oakland and West Hollywood. He said it could protect landlords who are acting in good faith but who may have forgotten to cash a check or made a mistake in how they characterize the eviction moratorium when they inform their tenants about it.

When pressed, he conceded that the language would likely make proving landlord harassment more difficult, but he wasn’t sure how much more difficult the added language would make it for tenants to do so.

The addition was divisive. Members of the public took sides with renters and tenants-rights advocates calling for the council to shoot down the amendment, stating it would undermine the intent of the new ordinance.

“All of the language in this current ordinance is very clear, and we do not want, as residents here, to have it watered down or made difficult for the tenants to be able to exercise their right when they have to go to court,” said Leanna Noble, a renter in Downtown.

But landlords and industry representatives argued it would level the playing field.

Fred Sutton, senior vice president of public affairs for the California Apartment Association, said that the original ordinance was problematic and taken up with zero input from stakeholders. He said omitting the “bad faith” requirement would ensure that the ordinance remained flawed.

“Adding this small ‘faith’ clause ensures that housing providers do not fall victim to frivolous lawsuits or predatory dwelling tactics,” Sutton said, characterizing the amendment as “common sense” and “reasonable.”

Because the ordinance was presented as an urgency ordinance, it took effect immediately after the council’s vote. The ordinance was approved unanimously with only two members—Councilman Roberto Uranga and Councilwoman Mary Zendejas—opposing the addition of the amended language. ■

CATALINA ISLAND  
— Stay. Play. Explore. —



With so many beautiful hotels and up to 30 departures daily aboard Catalina Express, there’s no reason to stay just a day. Spend a night or two as you play and explore more of your SoCal local Island Paradise.

Packages Starting at  
**\$83**  
BOAT & HOTEL PACKAGES



Book your overnight escape today at [CatalinaPackage.com](https://CatalinaPackage.com)

Hosts who rent homes on sites like Airbnb no longer have to be present during guests’ stay

■ By KELLY PUENTE  
Staff Reporter

Residents hoping to rent their homes for the short term through sites like Airbnb will now have more leeway under a new city law that will allow for unhosted short-term rentals.

Previously, homeowners were only allowed to rent their space to short-term guests if they remained on the property as a host throughout the guest’s stay.

In mid-November, the Long Beach City Council voted unanimously to change the law to allow for unhosted rentals, which will allow the city to tax and better regulate the industry, officials said.

Councilwoman Jeannine Pearce, who represents the 2nd District, said many people were renting through Airbnb and other vacation rental sites illegally.

“The city hasn’t had any ability to hold accountable the bad operators in our town,” she said. “For too long we’ve done this in a Wild West way.”

The final vote comes after years of debate on how to regulate the growing number of short-term rentals in the city. The city will now allow up to 800 unhosted units a year.

The plan, however, hasn’t been popular with some residents worried about noise and quality of life issues, and hotel workers concerned about the impact to the hospitality industry.

Audrey Luna, who lives in an apartment complex in the Rose Park neighborhood, was one of many residents who spoke to the council about concerns over impacted parking, noisy parties and people holding large gatherings despite health orders in the COVID-19 pandemic.

“There have been several large gatherings and parties with noise after the 10 p.m. curfew,” she said. “Some are not following the COVID sanitation protocol. Garbage has increased and has caused a rodent infestation. I really hope this ban is not lifted.”

Alex Bland, a spokesperson for Airbnb, said the company has enacted mandatory enhanced cleaning protocols during the pandemic.

With more regulation, council members said the city is now able to crack down on hosts who don’t adhere to rules including guest occupancy limits and noise curfews. Penalties could include fines of up to \$1,000.

In one change, Councilwoman Suzie Price asked that the city allow for residents to petition if they do not want a vacation rental in their neighborhood. Price also asked that the hosts be limited to two rentals. ■



# Forced to close patios and parklets, restaurants revive mini-markets



Brian Lara places freshly baked loaves of bread in a basket while working at Michael's Downtown Italian Kitchen after converting the restaurant to a market after forced closures. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.

■ By **ALENA MASCHKE**  
Senior Reporter

After being forced to shut down all dine-in service through Dec. 20, some

Long Beach restaurants are once again using their indoor space to act as mini-markets. But unlike the restaurant-to-store conversions that happened during the first coronavirus closures in March, restaura-

teurs are now focusing on specialty items like fresh pasta and imported treats.

"We're really going to stick to what we do this time," said Carl Dene, owner of Michael's Downtown, reflecting on the les-

sons learned from the previous lockdown. That means soups and desserts packaged and ready to go, as well as fresh pasta and sauces so patrons can recreate their favorite dishes at home.

In March, the stay-at-home order hit so suddenly that many restaurants were left with an overstock of supplies, basic grocery items like eggs, milk and produce. To meet a spike in demand for toilet paper and other household goods, some used their supply chains to order those as well.

"We're not going to go as wild with the grocery stuff this time," Dene said. "It was nice and people bought it, but not as much."

Other restaurants are following a similar model. Russellbuck Kitchen and Beer Garden is offering German specialties from imported beers to chocolate Santas.

With outdoor dining closed once again, owner Bjoern Risse said he hopes the market will supplement the restaurant's take-out and delivery business.

"Especially with a German restaurant, people come to sit down and have a beer with friends," Risse said. "That's not very takeout-friendly."

While you can't quite take home the biergarten-feel, the sweets and treats lined up on wooden tables at Russellbuck's market may help amp up the Gemütlichkeit in a decidedly uncomfortable, un-festive year. ■

## LOCAL LONG BEACH PLUMBER

**FREE ESTIMATES**  
The Trusted Name In  
Southern California

**FAST 24 HOUR  
EMERGENCY  
SERVICE**

**60 MIN**

All Calls Answered  
By A Live Person  
24/7

**A-1 PERFORMANCE  
ROOTER & PLUMBING**

**FASTEST SERVICE GUARANTEE**

**30 Years Of Quality Service**  
Family Owned & Operated  
**Residential • Commercial**  
Special Pricing For Property Management  
& Apartment Owners

**Receive \$25 OFF**  
Mention This Ad \*\*

License # 896712  
Insured

**100%  
WORK  
GUARANTEED**

Open 24 Hours  
7 Days A Week

\*\*Not To Be Combined  
With Any Other Offer

Serving Long Beach • Belmont • Naples • Seal Beach  
Sunset Beach • Surfside • Dominguez • Signal Hill  
Bixby Knolls • Lakewood • North Long Beach

**562-420-6458**

[www.Fast24HrPlumber.com](http://www.Fast24HrPlumber.com)

**ALL GUARANTEES  
ARE IN WRITING**

- Sewer Line Repairs
- Line Locator/Leak Detection
- Copper Repipes
- Drain Cleaning
- Gas Line Installation & Repairs
- Garbage Disposals
- Toilets & Sinks
- Water Heaters Installed FAST
- Tankless Water Heaters
- Trenchless Sewer Line Replacement
- Hydro Jet Drain Cleaning

SENIORS  
DISCOUNT

MILEAGE  
DISCOUNT

VISA

## Long Beach

# ACE Hardware

**Ace Is The  
Helpful Place**

Downtown (East Village)

**Screen & Glass Shop**  
• Custom Made or Repaired Screens  
• Repair Broken Windows

**Lock & Key Shop**  
• Key Cutting • Chip Keys  
• Re-Keying Locks

**Full Plumbing Dept.**

**Paint Mixing**  
• Computerized Color Matching

**Special Orders**  
• We Can Order Anything

**Stainless**  
• Complete Fastener Section  
• Marine Supplies

Apartment Supplies      Commercial Accounts

**ACE** is the place  
Service • Price • Convenience = **ACE**

**Two locations  
to serve you!**

• 746 E. 4th St.  
562-432-2100

• 2720 E. Anaheim St.  
562-438-8983

**Free  
2 Keys Cut**  
single-sided

Long Beach  
Ace Hardware  
746 E. 4th St.

Anaheim  
Ace Hardware  
2720 E. Anaheim St.

One coupon per customer



# Downtown business association reflects, reassesses priorities after difficult year



A skateboarder rides past empty restaurant parklets along Pine Avenue in Downtown Long Beach after new LA County health orders forced restaurants to cease outdoor dining. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.

■ By **ALENA MASCHKE**  
Senior Reporter

In the last weeks of the year, the streets of Downtown Long Beach would normally be filled with office workers coming and going to their companies' holiday parties in the restaurants and bars along Pine Avenue.

This year, the streets of Downtown are empty. The Federal Bar, a popular venue for office holiday parties, has closed permanently. Parklets along Pine, set up to support outdoor dining, sit empty as well.

"Downtown, because of the density of hospitality, entertainment and restaurants—we felt it," said Craig Kojian, president and CEO of the Downtown Long Beach Alliance. Since the

beginning of the pandemic in March, 19 Downtown businesses have permanently closed their doors.

Bars and restaurants have been especially hard hit. "This is the time of year that this industry really flourishes," Kojian said.

While a survey on the state of Downtown businesses is still underway, Kojian said the district has focused on providing immediate assistance in the form of grant programs as well as safety and security services, following its most recent business assessment in April.

"We're asking businesses for a lot of information—and what they're hoping for is some relief," he said.

But relief can be hard to come by, especially as the business improvement district faces its own fiscal chal-

lenges.

In April, the district revised its budget from \$4.5 million to \$4 million to account for the loss of revenue from parking assessments and event sponsorships. For the upcoming fiscal year, the DLBA has budgeted \$4.3 million in expenses.

"We were very conservative going into the new fiscal year, at the same time we have to provide some level of service for our stakeholders," Kojian said. "We know what the standards are."

The Clean & Safe Teams, which include safety ambassadors tasked with de-escalating potential conflicts and directing homeless residents in need of services to the appropriate resources, have been a priority for the district. So has redirecting funds to local businesses wherever possible.

In collaboration with Farmers & Merchants Bank, the business district freed up \$30,000 in funding initially allocated to programming for women- and minority-owned businesses, to go directly to three qualifying businesses in the form of grants instead.

Now, the DLBA is hoping for more funding at the federal level to support its relief efforts.

"This is not going to be accomplished with nickels and dimes coming out of local government," Kojian said. Instead of being funneled through the county, Kojian said he hopes that another round of federal funds would go directly to the city of Long Beach.

Internally, the business district is getting ready for a reassessment of its strategic priorities and funding for the

next 10 years.

The first six months of that process will consist of community outreach in the form of surveys and focus groups to determine what Downtown businesses and residents want the district to prioritize in its services and advocacy, followed by a property base assessment that will determine the amount of funding available to the district in the years to come.

One issue Kojian is planning to prioritize in the organization's strategic planning is racial equity. When protests arising from the death of George Floyd made their way to Long Beach, many Downtown businesses were damaged in the looting that followed.

"What happened on May 31st was a total shock to our system," Kojian said. While the events of that night were traumatic for many businesses, Kojian said the protests also sparked some introspection on his end.

"I look at ourselves as a contributing factor to social injustice," he said, referencing the district's advocacy for market-rate housing in the Downtown area as an example.

To remedy any contributions his organization may have made to further social injustice in the city, Kojian said its upcoming strategic plan has to reflect the lessons learned from this summer of unrest.

"We want to have diversity, equity, inclusion and access as part of our strategic plan," he said. "Social injustice didn't happen overnight and it's not going to end overnight," he added. "This is an ongoing, everyday effort." ■

**VIEWS! VIEWS! VIEWS!**

**FABULOUS HARBOR PLACE TOWER**  
OCEAN AND CITY VIEWS

Harbor Place Tower On Ocean Blvd.  
In The Heart Of Downtown Long Beach.  
One And Two Bedroom Condos With  
City And Ocean Views Just A Short  
Distance To The Beach,  
Great Restaurants, Pine Avenue,  
The Pike, Shoreline Village,  
Convention Center And Many More  
City Attractions. Harbor Place Tower Is  
A 23 Story High Rise With Pool, Spa,  
Fitness Center And Sauna.

Barbara Irvine-Parker  
Realtor Associate  
DRE License #00613640  
(562) 208-9726  
barbarairvineparker4@msn.com

**COLDWELL BANKER**  
COASTAL ALLIANCE

Call Barbara For Private Showing



**STRONG**

**RESILIENT**

**COMMITTED**



**#WEAREDTLB**

**DowntownLongBeach.org**



**DOWNTOWN  
LONG BEACH  
ALLIANCE**



A fight to stay alive: New restaurant association gains clout amid pandemic



Michael Dene, one of the founding members of the Long Beach Restaurant Association, left, and Ciaran Gough, president of the association, at The 908 restaurant at Long Beach Exchange. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.

The mayor has held several private calls with members of the association, and has been sympathetic to their plight in public statements and with city resources—including federal CARES Act stimulus funds.

Still, the city has largely followed Los Angeles County in enacting restrictions on dining to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including a controversial ban on dine-in service after cases of the virus spiked dramatically in late November and into December.

From its founding until today, the association has also served as a support network that has been meeting on a bi-weekly basis.

“A little bit of tragedy brought us all together,” said Ciaran Gough, owner of The 908 restaurant and president of the association. “A lot of us were just wondering what to do.”

While some restaurant owners may have seen each other as competitors prior to the current crisis, the economic pressure of the recent months and the confusion around the various government support programs have been a uniting force, Gough said.

“There was actually comfort in us coming together,” he said.

Though they understand the pandemic is serious, Gough said some of the decisions just didn’t make sense.

“We just want to have a voice, have a seat at the table,” he said of the association.

One of the critical decisions they made was to hire lobbyist Alex Cherin from one of the most prestigious local public relations firms, Englander Knabe & Allen, to get their message out.

“We’ve all had to invest not just our time, we actually had to invest some money to get this off the ground, in what is the most financially challenging time we’ve all lived through,” Gough said.

But, he added, “the alternative is to have nothing.”

What might seem like a meteoric rise for the group has been long in the making, Gough said. “Like the duck going across the pond, those feet were moving underneath.”

In the long run, the association hopes to become more than just an advocacy group, pooling resources to gain more purchasing power, for example. There’s strength in numbers, Dene said, and by coming together as one, the various independent restaurants in Long Beach could negotiate better deals with suppliers and inform policy at city hall.

But for now, Dene said, the focus is on making it through this current crisis.

“We emphasize with each other, we take a lead from each other and we cry together,” he said. “Because at this time, the challenge really is just to stay alive.”

By ALENA MASCHKE
Senior Reporter

Big-name restaurateurs in Long Beach had tried for years to form a collective to advocate on behalf of local eateries.

But it took a pandemic, and restrictions on dining that threaten to put many restaurants out of business, for the effort to find success.

“It gave us the true impetus to go forward,” said Michael Dene, one of the founding members of the Long Beach Restaurant Association and whose restaurants include Micahel’s on Naples, Michael’s Downtown and Chianina Steakhouse. “Necessity is the thing that put us together.”

And success they’ve had: The association, formed only a few months ago in March, has managed to have a big impact in a short amount of time. Now with 120 members and counting, the group has hired a lobbyist, and managed to accomplish real results:

- After meetings with several city council members, the association succeeded in having their plight brought to the council in the form of a study session on Tuesday, Dec. 8.
- That same day, the council is also considering a \$5 million relief fund for restaurants, bars and breweries proposed by Mayor Robert Garcia.
- The city’s economic development and finances committee also recently discussed a potential relief program for restaurants.

Finding the Needle in the COVID the Haystack
WHAT WE SOLD:
MIXED USE PROPERTY
32% BELOW MARKET RENTS
MULTIPLE COVID SHORTPAYS
CENTENNIAL ADVISERS
ALL CASH EXCHANGE BUYER
LESS THAN 2 WEEKS ON MARKET
GENERATED 5 OFFERS
WHAT WE DID:



# 5 economic stories to look for in Long Beach in 2021



A man takes a morning walk with his dog past the front of the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.

■ By **DAVID SOMMERS**  
Publisher

It's an understatement to say that 2020 challenged Long Beach and the Downtown area in ways that no one saw coming.

Heading into 2021, the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic will likely linger for years. But other economic and development efforts remain on the horizon.

Here are a few things to watch for in

the coming year.

## 1. Development of the "elephant lot"

Two years ago, Mayor Robert Garcia announced the city's intentions to develop the 13-acre surface parking lot adjacent to the Long Beach Arena. The space, unofficially known as the "elephant lot" from the days of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, is Long Beach's largest parcel of undeveloped coastal land.

Months later, in February 2019, details emerged that city leaders were in advanced discussions with the Los Angeles Angels for the baseball team to relocate from Anaheim to Long Beach and play in a new waterfront stadium anchoring the elephant lot site.

While the Angels ultimately opted to remain in Anaheim, Garcia later announced that a sweeping visioning process would still occur for the entire planned development district in the Downtown shoreline area, known as "PD-6," including the elephant lot.

Development of the elephant lot, which is roughly the size of 10 football fields, would have construction complexities and limitations of building on in-fill land reclaimed from the ocean, along with a high water table under the site, but it remains an economically-lucrative, highly-sought-after waterfront site for potential developers.

Earlier this year, in the months leading up to the pandemic shutdowns in March, the city was preparing a request for proposals for development of the elephant lot, with notable developers like Tim Leiweke's Oak View Group among those actively interested in the site and pursuing details from city leaders.

The city's FRP plans were ultimately delayed by the focus on the pandemic re-

sponse, but nevertheless, development of the elephant lot will ultimately happen, likely sooner rather than later—serving as an economic boom and potential tax revenue boost for the city.

## 2. Planning for the 2028 Olympics

While 2028 may still be years away but with the Summer Olympics returning to Los Angeles and multiple events planned to be hosted along the Long Beach waterfront, the harbor and in the Convention Center, now is the time to figure out the economics of how the city will pay for the improvements needed for its part in the games.

In February 2018 the City Council identified "8 by 28" projects as priorities for the Olympics. Some projects are privately funded, including a new Convention Center hotel; other projects are funded by transit sales taxes to improve the A Line (formerly Blue Line) and passenger fees for improvements at Long Beach Airport.

But the majority of Olympic-related projects remain unfunded, with no plan having yet emerged on how to pay for completion. A city projection of the need ranges from a low of \$75.5 million to as much as \$85.5 million for Olympic im-

(Please Continue to Page 16)

# When emergencies can't wait.

Let's face it: No one wants to go to the ER. But if you need emergency medical care, it's reassuring to know that St. Mary Medical Center is taking every precaution to keep you safe. And with our online arrival system, our emergency care team will be alerted that you're on your way. So you can spend less time in our ER—and more time at home. See available arrival times at [DignityHealth.org/ER](https://DignityHealth.org/ER).

**Hello humankindness®**

 **Dignity Health®**  
St. Mary Medical Center







Island Grissom is one of four oil islands off the coast of Long Beach. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.

(Continued from Page 15)

provements to the Belmont/Veterans Pier, the Belmont Pool, new lifeguard towers and the Long Beach Arena.

That amount of money won't materialize overnight.

Historically, Olympics have a way of swinging toward financial extremes, from billion dollar boondoggles burdening host cities for generations, to streamlined financial successes, kicking off residuals into community investments years later, like the last time Los Angeles hosted the games in 1984.

Hopefully Long Beach's involvement in the Olympics eight years from now is later regarded as an economic triumph, like the '84 games, rather than an economic tragedy.

### 3. Investing in the Long Beach Convention Center and the tourism/hospitality sector

With long stretches of docks and towering cranes, the Port of Long Beach is the centerpiece of the local logistics and goods movement that drives a significant portion of the city's economy.

But the other major local economic driver is the hospitality and tourism industry—which Beacon Economics found last year to have a \$1.8 billion economic impact in the city, supporting 18,652 jobs, 15,000 of which are supported by direct visitor spending.

At the center of that local industry and the cornerstone of its economic success is the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center campus.

The Convention Center has benefited from approximately \$65 million in public-facing renovations and ongoing improvements over the past decade to create industry-pioneering new event spaces and flexible solutions for convention guests and visitors, but behind the scenes, a longer-term problem lurks outside public view.

A looming facility assessment study led by the city's public works team will soon be wrapped up, likely revealing tens of millions of dollars in deferred maintenance, systems and machinery long-past lifespans, and urgent issues in back hall-

ways and equipment rooms, out of public view, which will need to be addressed to keep the building functional, modernized, and a centerpiece of a major local economic sector.

Also on the near horizon is the expiration and renewal of the Convention Center's operating agreement—long-held by a successful operator, ASM Global, which until last year was known as SGM.

Passage of Measure B by voters earlier this year increased the city's hotel transient-occupancy tax by 1% to, in part, potentially provide funds to support the costs of improving and maintaining the Convention Center, but the limited funds expected to be raised annually by Measure B would only cover a small portion of the enormous costs to fully modernize the campus.

### 4. The city's relationship with and reliance on oil

Nearly 100 years ago, California granted the tidelands in and around Long Beach to oversee as trustee. In the 1930s, oil was discovered under the city in the Wilmington Oil Field. Fast forward across the decades and the field now kicks off around nine million barrels of oil annually, across 2,000 active producing and injection wells.

The oil revenue flowing into the city budget over the years, into the legendary Tidelands Fund, and to a lesser extent, the Uplands Fund, has financed every conceivable type of civic effort—from beach operations, to the Convention Center, to playgrounds. It backstops the bonds used to improve the Queen Mary, the Aquarium and its expansion, and scores of other major capital projects in the Tidelands area.

A five-year planning report presented to the City Council in 2015 outlined 35 different Tidelands-funded projects across the city, in various stages of planning or construction priority. That same plan included a list of even more Tidelands projects not yet fully funded or in need of significant future funding—totaling \$137 million at that time—for everything from the Belmont Pool to repairing the next phase of seawalls in Naples to new lifeguard towers.

The problem noted in 2015 and still a

problem today is the volatile nature of oil prices, combined with the slowly declining amount of oil being produced locally. Oil production in the area will come to an end someday. It's inevitable. And in the meantime, the city has to set aside funds for the slowdown in production, for land subsidence costs and for future abandonment costs. When the oil eventually stops following, the city won't be able to simply walk away. There will be significant costs to safeguard the environment and shutdown operations.

Meanwhile, voters in a sense just doubled down on our oil reliance in the November election, passing Measure US, which increases the city's general tax on business licenses for oil production to 30 cents per barrel, with the revenue being pledged to address problems in areas of the city that have lacked community and youth programs and have been hit hard by the impacts of climate change.

An impartial analysis by the city attorney's office estimates that the tax could generate approximately \$1.6 million in new revenue for the city's general fund.

The city already has a special tax of 33 cents per barrel that, since 2007, has

provided millions of dollars each year for police, fire and other public safety needs. That earlier measure, Proposition H, was approved by 70% of voters.

No matter how oil revenue is used or how oil production is taxed, it's inevitable this financial stream will continue to slow and will eventually end. Fewer dollars will be available from this lucrative source to pay for many of the things that make Long Beach what it is.

The time to consider our economic future without oil needs to start today.

### 5. Meaningful, sweeping economic recovery from COVID

Heading into 2021, perhaps no greater, more urgent economic challenge is facing our city today than how we will recover from the damage caused locally by the ongoing COVID pandemic.

Thousands of Long Beach residents have lost their jobs. Dozens of businesses, local retailers and restaurants have closed. A looming eviction crisis is on the horizon and will impact countless local families.

And, as of this writing, 279 of our neighbors have died in the city from COVID.

The full scale and impact of the economic calamity facing our city and region heading into next year won't be fully known for some time, but the economic response and recovery can't wait until the pandemic ebbs.

Early signs of meaningful local action are starting to emerge. The city council's Economic Development and Finance Commission is discussing ways Long Beach could provide monetary support for small businesses affected by COVID-19 closures if additional federal funding becomes available.

Last week, Mayor Garcia and several councilmembers proposed a \$5 million "resiliency fund" to aid struggling restaurants, bars and breweries—again, contingent on more federal dollars flowing into local government.

The next cohort of City Council, set for their first meeting on Dec. 15, looks to take up a meaningful economic recovery plan conversation in coming weeks as well. ■



Adjacent to the convention center and often used for overflow parking and events, the elephant lot is the largest undeveloped parcel along Long Beach's coast. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.



# Employee ownership as a strategy for Long Beach's twin small business crises

## We need decisive action to preserve small businesses and jobs



■ Sponsored by **PROJECT EQUITY**

Small businesses in Long Beach are facing an unprecedented economic disruption due to COVID-19 pandemic. Many local business owners may be seeking a way out, potentially resulting in businesses being put up for sale with no clear buyers and some shutting down for good. Regrettably, many of the businesses that will close are viable companies that would have recovered post-crisis. They were simply victims of a global crisis that froze demand and stalled cash flow.

The COVID challenges are layered on top of an ownership succession crisis that was already unfolding, given that baby boomers (those born between 1946-1964) own nearly half of all businesses with employees in the Los Angeles metro area. Cities and regions need to understand the risk of the so-called "Silver Tsunami" as these business owners retire. The risk is that these legacy businesses will not be retained locally — either because they quietly close down, are sold to out of area buyers or simply

don't have a succession plan as the owner prepares for retirement.

For meaningful action to help strengthen Long Beach's small businesses during COVID and beyond, employee ownership should be lifted up within our economic response.

The city of Long Beach, with the support of Citi Community Development and Local Initiatives Support Corp (LISC LA), is taking a proactive approach to assist locally-owned businesses that are at risk by partnering with Project Equity to help them learn about the option of employee ownership succession. Long Beach is already the home of many successful employee-owned businesses and California has, by far, the highest number of employee-owned businesses of any state in the United States.

For businesses looking to increase employee engagement, or to create a succession plan, employee ownership can be a powerful tool. Employee-owned companies provide their employees with stable incomes and jobs. They also give employees the opportunity to build

wealth that increases alongside business growth. According to the National Center of Employee Ownership, employee-owned businesses have employees that make 53% higher incomes than those working in traditional businesses.

Project Equity performed an analysis for Long Beach to quantify the number of privately-held companies with employees that are 20 years or older — a good indication that they need succession planning — and the impact if these businesses are not retained. Companies that are 20 years old and over in the city of Long Beach:

- Represent over 2,500 of the city's businesses
- Employ an estimated 46,700 individuals
- Generate over \$12.3B in revenue

Craig Danley, and his business partner Richard Vance II opened Delta Pipeline, a well-respected Long Beach, California construction company in 1991. In 2017, they proudly integrated an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP)

and became 100% employee owned.

"Our culture really is about how to create ownership, how to create a culture of organization and community that revolves around relationships and people and how to inspire people to perform not for themselves but to perform for the organization as a whole," said Danley. "Being employee owned is about the people. The more you invest in people, the more likely you will succeed financially, spiritually and socially."

Employee ownership may be unfamiliar to many, but it increases employee engagement, which is so critical in this time of uncertainty. It keeps companies rooted in place, provides quality jobs and strengthens businesses for the long-term. It also offers a solution to the retiring business owner: there is a buyer right there under their nose — the very employees who helped to build the company.

Delta Pipeline is proof that employee-owned businesses are reliant and sustainable in the Long Beach community. ■

**Looking to  
sell your business?**  
We know a buyer: Your employees.



Employee ownership helps business owners create a flexible exit strategy and receive a fair sales price with tax advantages, while also taking care of the employees who helped build the business. You can sustain quality jobs, improve employee engagement, and strengthen your businesses. It's a win-win.

Project Equity is a nonprofit that helps business owners sell their businesses to their employees. Let us guide you through the sale, help you find the capital and make sure your employees successfully carry the torch forward. We can help. Contact us for a free business consultation.

**Project  
{Equity}**

in partnership with the  
city of Long Beach



Visit [project-equity.org](https://project-equity.org) or contact  
[project-equity.org/consultation](https://project-equity.org/consultation) to schedule a call.





# What's in store for Southwest, now the top carrier at LGB



A Southwest flight lands at Long Beach Airport. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**  
Senior Reporter

With JetBlue Airways' exit from Long Beach Airport, Southwest Airlines has stepped up as the airport's premier carrier. The easily recognizable red, yellow and blue aircraft eventually will be flying 34 of the airport's 53 allotted daily flight slots as it continues to expand service out of the domestic airfield.

Southwest is now flying 16 of its daily flight slots out of Long Beach due to the pandemic, but officials say they expect that will change.

"We do anticipate ... Southwest to increase those slot usages in 2021," said airport Director Cynthia Guidry. "It just depends on the impacts of COVID-19 and what happens over the next several months."

Last month, Southwest made its first new destination announcement: a daily flight from Long Beach to Honolulu beginning March 11. The new flight is the airline's only direct service to Hawaii in Greater Los Angeles and is direct competition with Hawaiian Airlines, which has been the sole provider of daily flights from Long Beach to Hawaii since June 2018.

The Long Beach flight was part of a broader schedule announcement of new and reinstated Southwest services across the country. While the airline has not yet announced additional Long Beach flights, its recent announcements indicate a focus on leisure destinations. Aside from the Honolulu flight, the carrier recently announced a flurry of new routes to

Mexico; Savannah, Georgia; and Sarasota, Florida, departing from several cities across the country.

With Long Beach's proximity to sunny shores, Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm, Six Flags Magic Mountain and a host of other tourist destinations locally and throughout Southern California, it is likely Southwest will expand service between Long Beach Airport and cities in the Midwest and the East Coast.

Among the airline's major connecting airports are Chicago Midway, Baltimore/Washington, Houston Hobby and Dallas Love Field—all markets currently without direct flights from Long Beach—in addition to Southwest's hubs in Denver, Oakland, Las Vegas and Phoenix, all of which are currently directly connected to Long Beach.

"With the slots in the oven, be assured we are spending this holiday season baking up some good things for our customers in the LA Basin who prefer the ease and convenience of the Long Beach Airport experience," a Southwest spokesperson said. "At play, of course, is the overall demand for travel, which is shaping our scheduling from coast to coast."

One indicator that Long Beach is well positioned for additional long-haul flights, particularly over nearby John Wayne Airport, is its runway length. While Boeing 737 class aircraft are generally able to land on runways between 5,000 and 5,500 feet long, they require longer runways—between 7,000 and 8,500 feet—to depart when at maximum takeoff weight.

Long Beach's longest runway is 10,000 feet, while John Wayne's is 5,701, making certain takeoffs potentially out of reach for hundreds of 737-800s in the Southwest fleet when the aircraft are loaded to their maximum takeoff weight.

The Southwest fleet is entirely made up of Boeing 737 series aircraft, with additional orders for nearly 300 more 737 MAX-type aircraft. The Boeing 737 MAX had been grounded since March 2019 pending an extensive Federal Aviation Administration investigation of two crashes less than five months apart that killed a combined 346 people. However, last month, the FAA announced the completion of its investigation and rescinded the order that grounded the aircraft.

Southwest first began Long Beach operations in 2016 with just four of the

airport's 53 daily flight slots. In April, flight slots abandoned by JetBlue were awarded to Southwest, putting the two air carriers on a level playing field in terms of flight slots at 17 each.

When JetBlue announced its departure from Long Beach in July, airport officials offered up the 17 soon-to-be-vacated slots to remaining airlines, including Hawaiian, Delta Air Lines and American Airlines. Ultimately, in the midst of the pandemic, Southwest was the only airline to take on more slots, requesting and being awarded all 17.

"Southwest, now being our dominant carrier, has really thought about their investment in Long Beach and what they want to offer to our community. And that's exciting," Guidry said. "It provides greater flexibility for our passengers by having more offerings out there." ■



Passengers board a Southwest flight at Long Beach Airport. Photo by Brandon Richardson.



# Completion pushed back for second phase of airport improvements

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**  
Senior Reporter

Construction is underway on the second phase of the Long Beach modernization program, but the ongoing pandemic has wreaked havoc on the completion schedule and a budget that has already been increased once prior to COVID-19.

The airport's Phase II Terminal Improvements include new checked baggage inspection and ticketing buildings, both of which are under construction. Other projects include baggage claim area improvements, historic terminal renovations, rental car customer service improvements, and a reimagined "meeter and greeter" plaza.

The entire six-project program was originally slated for completion in 2022 but airport staff had to reevaluate that timeline, pushing the schedule well into 2023.

"The decision to slow it down and resequence is because of our drop in revenue," Airport Director Cynthia Guidry said. "We really needed to ease our cash flow requirements to buy us time to see how the recovery goes and see how the travel demand bounces back."

The Transportation Security Administration provided 60%—\$10.9 million—of the cost for the baggage check building, which is furthest along in terms of construction with the foundation poured and steel beams erect. Underground work is being done for the new ticketing lobby.

In February, the Long Beach City Council approved a contract increase, bringing the total for the revised phase two program cost estimate to just over \$110.24 million, funded through customer facility charges, TSA, passenger facility charges, the Airport Fund Group and up to \$21 million in bond revenue. However, the bond issuance has been put on hold indefinitely due to the pandemic, according to staff, while additional budgetary increases are likely to come before project completion.

"Costs are expected to increase due to escalations of materials and labor," said airport spokesperson Kate Kuykendall. "Total program cost increases have yet to be finalized."

Phase two originally consisted of nine projects but the proposed rental car ready-return-lot, the ground transportation center and terminal roadway improvements were deferred due to the cost increase and are to be rebid separately by early 2022.



Construction of Long Beach Airport's Phase II Terminal Improvements is underway. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

rately by early 2022.

On the airfield, the municipal airport has several runway and taxiway projects underway funded through nearly \$40 million in grants from the Federal Aviation Administration's improvement funds. Long Beach Airport was one of the largest recipients of FAA grants in California this year.

The phase two program comes eight years after the completion of the \$100 million phase one program, which in-

cluded modern passenger concourses with local eateries, a new parking structure and improvements to the existing parking structure.

"We're going to reassess in early 2021 and we'll have to make a decision if we'll have to slow the schedule down again or make any other adjustments to phase two," Guidry said. "We're excited about phase two ... but at the same time we need to watch how things are going." ■

## PREMIERE TURNKEY SERVICE PROVIDER

### SAFETY • INTEGRITY • QUALITY • SUPERIOR SERVICE



800-4CRANE1 | [www.braggcrane.com](http://www.braggcrane.com)



# Long Beach Airport COVID-19 recovery expected to take up to 5 years



Only a handful of passengers wait to board a Southwest flight out of Long Beach Airport during the COVID-19 pandemic. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**  
Senior Reporter

Long Beach Airport has taken a massive financial hit due to the coronavirus pandemic, which caused passenger numbers to plummet, at one point down more than 95% over last year.

“At the beginning of the year, we had a positive outlook for the airport,” Airport Director Cynthia Guidry said. “We forecast some great numbers for the entire year. However, once the news of the pandemic hit, within a couple of weeks the decline in travel was sharp. It was significant.”

Both January and February pas-

senger figures were up by more than 10,000 over last year but in March, travel dipped to less than half of the same month in 2019. Passenger traffic through the municipal airport bottomed out in April, which saw 97% fewer travelers than April 2019.

As the months dragged on, passenger numbers slowly increased but, as of October, passenger traffic was still down more than 80%. Though 53 daily flights are allowed at the noise-controlled airport, only around 20 slots are being utilized.

“I got into the industry right before 9/11, which had, what we thought, was a significant impact on air travel,” Guidry said. “But that really pales in comparison to what happened this year.”

The airport’s fiscal year runs from Oct. 1 through Sept. 30. Fiscal year 2020 saw a 49% decrease in total passenger enplanements down to just under 905,000 from over 1.75 million. Such drastic declines in passenger numbers have had devastating effects on the airport’s bottom line.

In 2019, the airport enjoyed more than \$44 million in operating revenues, while shelling out just over \$34.77 million for expenditures. While the airport had about the same expenditures in 2020, operating revenue declined 31% to just over \$30 million for a shortfall of nearly \$4.38 million.

The hardest hit revenue stream was concession sales, which declined 47% year-over-year. JetBlue’s departure from the airport compounded the impacts of the pandemic on concession revenue.

With Hawaiian Airline’s single daily flight suspended due to the pandemic and JetBlue’s flights drastically reduced and then terminated altogether, the north concourse concessions—4th Street Vine, Sheldrake Coffee Roast-

ing, George’s Greek Cafe, Taco Beach Cantina and more—only opened sporadically this year.

The saving grace for the airport came in the form of \$18.4 million from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security, or CARES Act. While airport staff are participating in the city’s furlough program to cut down payroll expenses, no one has been laid off, which makes the CARES Act funds a grant that does not have to be repaid. The grant offset revenue losses by funding labor expenses in the second half of the 2020 fiscal year.

“We spent the bulk of the CARES funds last fiscal year and we’ll spend the balance in ’21,” Guidry said. “We’re looking at every single area of our services and seeing what we can cut, what we can shave. I certainly hope there is movement for additional [federal] funds next year. That will make a dramatic difference in what we can and cannot do.”


Vendors at the airport have also furloughed some employees and temporarily laid off others, Guidry said, noting that slowly they have been brought back on. Larger numbers are expected to return to work when Hawaiian resumes daily flights out of the north concourse later this month.

Despite the previous and possible future federal funds, Guidry said it will probably take around five years for the airport to fully recover from the pandemic. The forthcoming vaccine will help bolster the confidence of the general public to travel but passenger numbers are still expected to rise gradually.

“This is definitely the most significant change I’ve seen in the industry,” Guidry said. “But we have a certain vibe. We are still going to be the airport of choice, attractive to those who need to travel.” ■

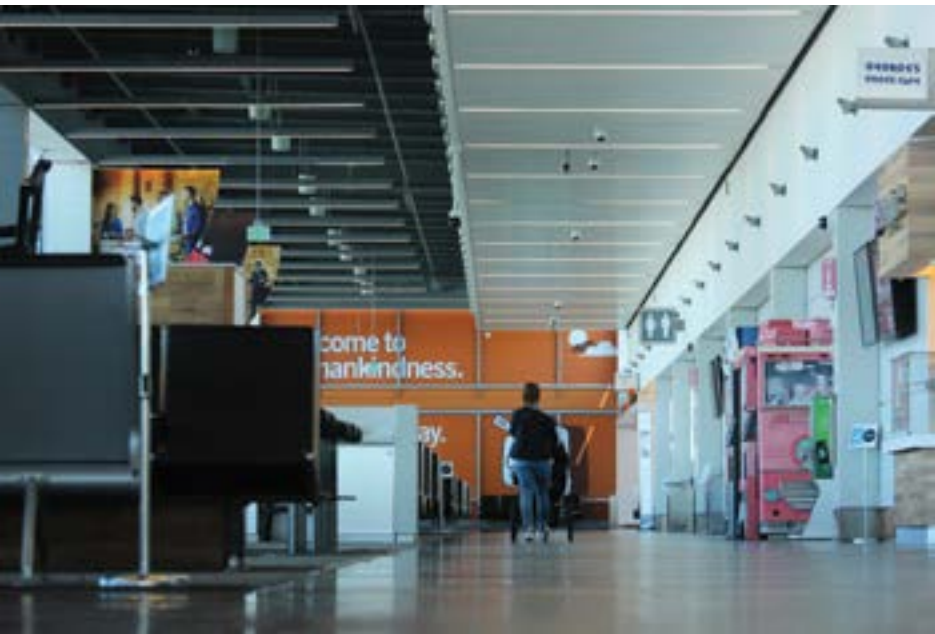


Long Beach Airport sets the standard for travel today and tomorrow. When you're ready, check out our nonstop destinations, and make your plans to travel well. Travel Long Beach.



long beach  
airport

where the going is easy lgb.org



A woman pushes a baby in a stroller through an otherwise empty north concourse at Long Beach Airport. Photo by Brandon Richardson.



# The end of airport-adjacent shipping container storage still weeks away



Hundreds of containers remain at the former Boeing C-17 site for temporary storage despite months-long efforts to have them removed. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**  
Senior Reporter

While hundreds of shipping containers remain at the former Boeing C-17 site along Cherry Avenue, temporary leaseholder ICM Companies has secured new temporary storage locations and has begun phasing out the controversial Long Beach operation.

A drayage provider with operations at the Port of Long Beach, ICM has procured two new sites at a cost of nearly \$2 million, according to spokesperson Alex Cherin.

Officials initially said the containers, and the truck traffic they bring, would be gone by Nov. 30.

“While I am disappointed in the length of time it’s taking to get containers out of our neighborhoods, I am pleased that our persistence resulted in locating suitable sites for this type of activity,” 7th District Councilman Roberto Uranga said in an email.

Located at the Fenix Marine Services terminal at the Port of Los Angeles and in the Inland Empire, the two new storage locations have already begun receiving inbound containers as well as existing containers from the former Boeing site. But staffing shortages at the ports have made moving containers to the new site a sluggish endeavor.

“The San Pedro Bay ports complex has been receiving an unusually high number of container ship calls,” Port of Long Beach Executive Director Mario Cordero said. “Segments of the supply chain are facing staffing challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Truck drivers and truck chassis are in short supply, Long Beach Development Services Director Oscar Orci added. But city staff has set a target of mid-December to have all remaining containers relocated, he said.

ICM first began the search for additional container storage in July, when port container traffic saw a drastic increase from previous months—setting and then breaking records multiple times. The

company linked up with Goodman, whose property is zoned for industrial use, and brought the six-month temporary lease agreement to the city for approval.

Because it is private property and the temporary use fell under the appropriate zoning, city staff was not required to seek city council approval or to seek community input.

But the usage proposed to the city is not what ultimately came to pass, Orci said. Originally, the agreement was described strictly as container storage. However, the operation was a far more active part of the supply chain, requiring continuous truck trips day and night.

“Everybody is frustrated, including staff,” Orci said. “We were trying to do a good thing to help out the port. [But this] is not what we had been agreeable to.”

Eventually, the city limited operating hours from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. but it was not enough to quell the irritation of nearby residents and their city council representatives.

The site is located in the 5th District on the border of the 7th to the west. Councilmembers Stacy Mungo of the 5th and Uranga both denounced the operation, citing the negative impacts on their communities, including air and noise pollution and traffic congestion.

In mid-October, Mungo said she wanted the operation moved immediately. At the time, City Manager Tom Modica guaranteed the transition would be completed by the end of November, if not sooner.

Mungo did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

The future of the former Boeing site is in the hands of city staff, which is actively working on the Globemaster Corridor Specific Plan. The effort will ultimately inform Goodman’s and other redevelopment along Cherry Avenue north of the 405 Freeway.

“I look forward to continuing our relationship with Goodman to develop the site to bring community benefits to the area,” Uranga said, “and enhance the economic growth of our city.” ■

<b>LARGE SPECIALTY</b> OR 3 TOPPINGS <b>\$14.99</b> EXPIRES 1-1-21 PROMO CODE: 14LBSBJ	<b>DOUBLE CHEESEBURGER</b> LARGE ORIGINAL CRUST PIZZA <b>\$12.00</b> EXPIRES 1-1-21 PROMO CODE: BURGER
<b>PAPADIA &amp; PEPSI</b> TRY ONE OF OUR PAPADIAS AND ADD A 20oz DRINK <b>\$7.49</b> EXPIRES 1-1-21 PROMO CODE: 7LBSBJ	<b>2 LARGE PIZZAS</b> CHOOSE YOUR 2 TOPPINGS ON 2 OF OUR LARGE CRUST PIZZAS <b>\$20.99</b> EXPIRES 1-1-21 PROMO CODE: 20LBSBJ
<b>ANY TWO SIDES</b> BREADSTICKS, GARLIC KNOTS, POPPERS, WINGS, COOKIE, BROWNIE, CINNAMON PULL-APARTS <b>\$11.98</b> EXPIRES 1-1-21 PROMO CODE: 11LBSBJ	<b>CREATE YOUR OWN OFFER!</b> ENJOY 25% OFF YOUR REGULAR MENU PRICE ORDER! <b>25% OFF</b> EXPIRES 1-1-21 PROMO CODE: 25LBSBJ



3910 Long Beach Blvd  
141 E. Willow Street  
4020 E 7th Street  
2836 N. Bellflower Blvd  
1957 E. 4th Street

(562) 427-5000  
(562) 424-6900  
(562) 621-1112  
(562) 938-7272  
(562) 495-7272

All beverage trademarks are registered trademarks of PepsiCo, Inc. Offer good for a limited time at participating U.S. Papa John's restaurants, photos may vary. Offer may require the purchase of multiple products. No triple toppings or extra cheese. Certain toppings may be excluded from special offer or require additional charge. Additional toppings extra. Not valid with any other coupons or discounts. Limited delivery area. Delivery rate may apply. Customer responsible for all applicable taxes. Papa John's International Inc. All rights reserved.



# Steep drop in air travel, incomplete data will keep Long Beach daily flights at 53

■ By JASON RUIZ  
Staff Reporter

A new noise budget analysis completed at Long Beach Airport has determined that no new flights will be allowed under the city’s noise ordinance despite an abnormally quiet year surrounding the airport.

The annual report is conducted by the city to see if the cumulative amount of noise generated by airline activity at Long Beach has either created room for additional future flights or if previously awarded supplemental flight slots need to be taken away to keep the city in compliance with its strict local noise ordinance.

A memo from the city’s airport director to the city manager released Dec. 1 said the city should not increase the amount of supplemental flight slots this year.

Since 2015, this process has resulted in 12 supplemental flights slots being added to the 41 minimum flights the airport can operate under that ordinance. However, this year’s report was complicated by the pandemic’s gutting of the airline industry with fewer people flying, leading airlines to scale back the number of flights offered nationwide.

The dip in flight activity and the full-



A Southwest plane flies past the Holiday Inn Long Beach Airport hotel as it makes its final approach to Long Beach Airport. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

ness of those flights both factored into the recommendation to not add additional supplemental flight slots for the next fiscal year. The airport is currently allowed to operate 53 daily flights but only averaged 29.6 flights per day through Sept. 30.

Last December the report resulted in three additional slots being offered to airlines operating out of Long Beach. The city has previously said that the phasing out of older, louder aircraft have allowed

for the additional slots to be created.

The incomplete picture presented in this year’s data led to the city’s consultant to advise against adding new flights, with an analyst saying in a letter to the city attorney’s office that the data was unreliable.

“This year is so discordant with previous years that it would be very risky to extrapolate the current data to a normal year,” said Vicent Mestre, an analyst from Mestre Greve Associates, which carried

out the noise analysis.

While flight activity is down, the composition of the airport could also factor in noise levels going forward. This year, Texas-based Southwest Airlines replaced JetBlue Airways as the airport’s main tenant after JetBlue announced it would no longer fly out of Long Beach and Southwest claimed all 17 slots previously occupied by JetBlue.

JetBlue is based in New York and routinely offered flights to the East Coast, something that has been uncommon thus far with Southwest. Mestre pointed out in his letter to the city that not only do the number of passengers affect the amount of noise created by a plane, but also the amount of fuel it’s carrying.

“A flight of 2,000 miles carries substantially more fuel than a flight of 250 miles,” he said.

As the prospect of a vaccine has raised hopes that life could largely return to normal at some point in 2021, it’s unclear how quickly airline traffic at Long Beach will return to its permitted daily flights of 53.

If any additional flights were to be added at Long Beach, it might not be until the next full year of airline traffic can be analyzed, which could likely be the fiscal year starting in October 2021. ■

## WHO IS STUDIO LBP?

- WEB DESIGN SERVICES
- SPONSORED SOCIAL MEDIA
- SPONSORED CONTENT
- TARGETED DIGITAL DISPLAY CAMPAIGNS
- PRINT AND DIGITAL DISPLAY ADVERTISING
- AUDIO AND VIDEO RECORDING STUDIO
- LIVE-STREAMED EVENTS

For more information and a customized marketing campaign proposal please connect with us at [lbpost.com/ads](http://lbpost.com/ads), 562-912-0161 or [ads@lbpost.com](mailto:ads@lbpost.com)

STUDIO LBP







LONG BEACH LIVE   
IT'S COMPLICATED. UNTIL IT'S NOT.



### Hybrid conventions made simple.

Here, it's not just what you can do at a single destination, it's about harnessing the latest interactive technologies to build a global community. Now, capture every choreographed moment. And instantly connect to the world. **Long Beach, California** – conventions made easy and affordable.

---

A new on-site executive position, **Director of Creative Initiatives**, will help turn your vision into a deeply immersive, eye-popping experience.

---

An experienced television producer and specially-trained team will guide you at every step of production to give you a dynamic, high-impact, interactive event.

---

Audience interaction technologies – live stream, interactive, on-demand capabilities and engagement strategies using live chat, social media integration, and remote interactivity.

---

An entire campus as a production-ready stage with infinite customization of scalable spaces, incredible décor and more lights and cameras than most studios.

---



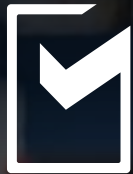
**LONG BEACH LIVE – HERE & ANYWHERE.**  
Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center Campus

LongBeachLive.tv    @VisitLB



# Help Us Build the Future

Interested in working with the Port of Long Beach? The Port's Small Business Enterprise and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise programs are here to help you do it. [polb.com/sbe](http://polb.com/sbe)



Port of  
**LONG BEACH**  
THE PORT OF CHOICE

