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A seagull flies past a COSCO container ship being loaded at the Long Beach Container Terminal Thursday, Feb. 3, 2022. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

SUPPLY CHAIN NEEDS 2022 TO BE A ‘YEAR OF TRANSFORMATION’

BY BRANDON RICHARDSON / Reporter

The only way to combat the ongoing supply chain crisis is through systemic overhaul of the industry, including leveraging new technology, growing the labor force and strengthening infrastructure, Port of Long Beach Executive Director Mario Cordero said earlier this month during his annual State of the Port address.

During the virtual event, Cordero and a host of others—including Mayor Robert Garcia, ILWU Local 13 President Ramon Ponce de Leon, Board of Harbor Commissioners President Steven Neal and more—praised dockworkers, truckers and others critical to the supply chain personnel. However, change is desperately needed, Cordero said.

“We continue to debate the same issues year after year, while the operational model remains status quo—never changing,” Cordero said. “The test is not in how many containers we move

but in how we transform and build a port that benefits everyone.”

“This needs to be a year of transformation,” Cordero added.

Increased partnerships among supply chain stakeholders, improved infrastructure, new technology and a larger and well-trained workforce are crucial to what Cordero said is the ultimate necessary change to the local industry: 24/7 operations. Cordero noted that the San Pedro Bay ports’ largest trade partner, China, already operates around the clock.

“There are 168 hours in a week and, for the most part, our terminals are open less than half of those hours,” Cordero said.

The ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles already have begun examining the transition to 24/7 operations. In Long Beach, Total Terminal International at Pier T expanded hours last year, but the model requires every level of the supply chain to participate, from terminals to transportation to warehouses. The Pier T

terminal still does not operate 24/7.

In recent months, a slew of elected and appointed officials have visited the San Pedro Bay ports, including Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, Gov. Gavin Newsom, and multiple senators. Officials toured the facilities to see the operations for themselves and to hear about the issues facing the supply chain.

“We have all heard so much about the supply chain backlog, but what is actually happening is that our dockworkers are moving more cargo than ever—and doing so during a pandemic,” Neal said. “We are building a bright future for the Port of Long Beach, the goods movement industry, and for the community.”

Last year, the port processed 9.38 million 20-foot equivalent units (the standard measure of a shipping container), marking a 15.7% increase from the 8.11 million TEUs moved in

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Before the supply chain crisis, there was a doomed trade war—and it’s still not over

BY BRANDON RICHARDSON / Reporter

In January 2020, after nearly two years of a tariff-laden trade war, then-President Donald Trump announced an agreement with Chinese President Xi Jinping. Trump described the deal as “historical” and “momentous.”

“It just doesn’t get any better than this,” Trump said as he signed the Phase One agreement, which included a commitment from China to spend an extra \$200 billion in the U.S. over two years.

Those two years have passed, and the numbers are in: China did not purchase any of the additional goods and services it had committed to under the agreement.

“Today the only undisputed ‘historical’ aspect of that agreement is its failure,” Chad Bown of the Peterson Institute for International Economics wrote earlier this month.

How we got here

For over 35 years, China has benefited from a trade imbalance with the United States, meaning the U.S. has imported more from the Asian superpower than are being exported there. In fact, the

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Long Beach Transit continues bumpy ride through pandemic

BY CHRISTIAN MAY-SUZUKI / Reporter

Long Beach Transit, like so many other agencies, was caught off-guard by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Before the public health crisis, the organization saw ridership growth—“some of the highest we’ve had in recent history,” LBT spokesperson Arantxa Chavarria said.

But within weeks of the coronavirus being identified in Long Beach, ridership was cut in half.

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A sea of people during the Trans-Pacific Maritime 2019 conference at the Long Beach Convention Center. Photo courtesy of Caught in the Moment Photography.

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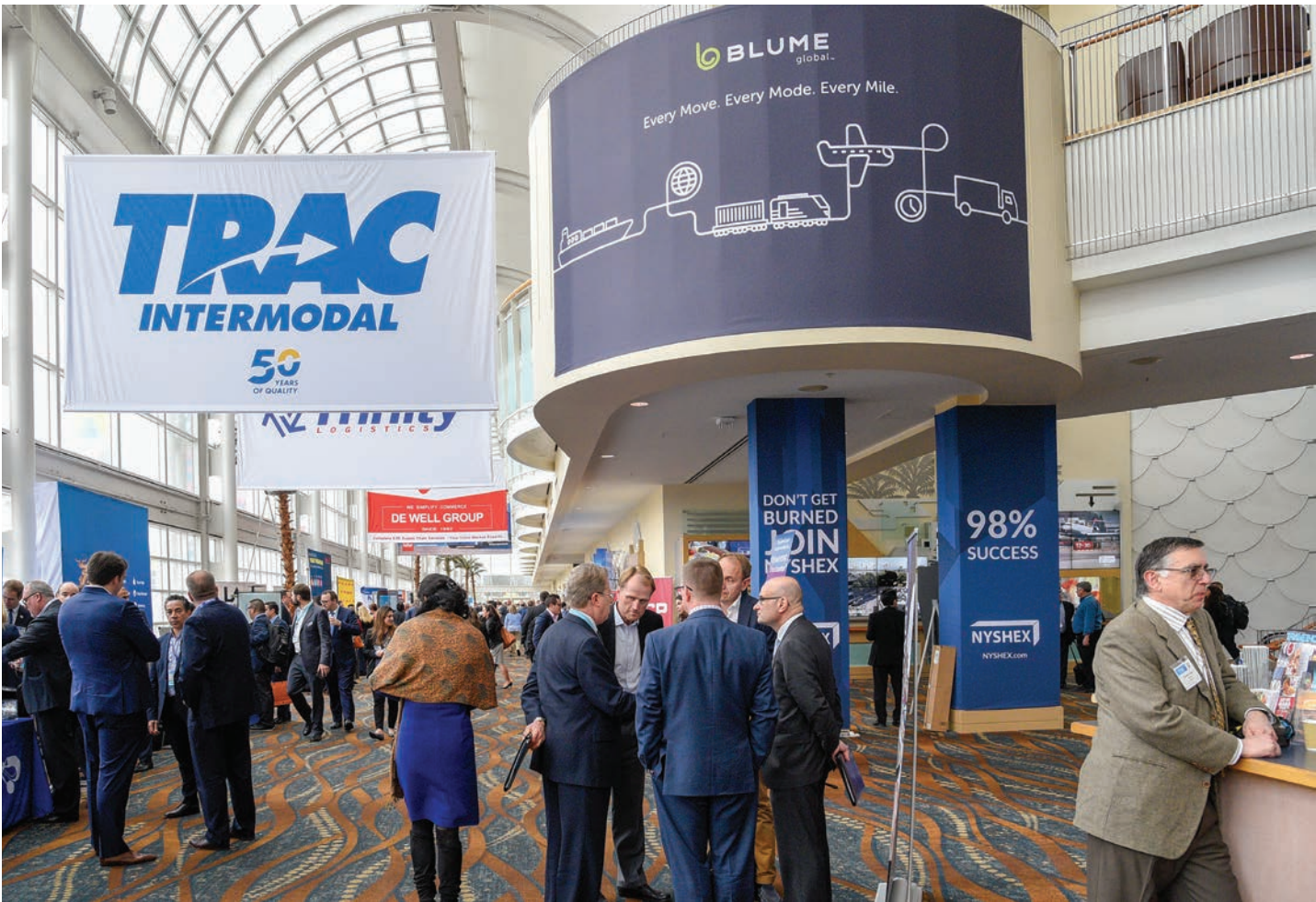
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Trans-Pacific Maritime 2019 conference attendees visit booths and chat inside the Long Beach Convention Center. Photo courtesy of Caught in the Moment Photography.

Trans-Pacific Maritime conference
returns to Long Beach this month

BY CHRISTIAN MAY-SUZUKI / Reporter

The Trans-Pacific Maritime (TPM) conference is returning to Long Beach.

The annual event, which brings together leaders in international trade and shipping from around the world, has historically been held in Long Beach—but the coronavirus pandemic interrupted that tradition. The conference was canceled in 2020 and held online last year.

The event, though, is once again set to resume in-person at the Long Beach Convention Center from Feb. 27 to March 2, following the TPM Tech event on Feb. 24 and 25 at the Renaissance Long Beach Hotel.

TPM is one of the largest gatherings of companies from all sectors of the global trade market. From ocean carriers to freight forwarders and technology companies to terminal operating companies, members of the international trade community come together to discuss the pressing topics in the industry.

With ships stuck waiting for a place to berth, supply chains delays stifling business and the White House becoming directly involved in dealing with port congestion, the event is perhaps more necessary than ever.

The conference was founded by the Journal of Commerce in 2001, and the information firm IHS Markit took over

the event when it purchased the journal in 2014. Long Beach hosted TPM from 2002 to 2019, with the exception of 2009, when it was held in Downtown Los Angeles.

Peter Tirschwell, who helped found TPM and now serves as the vice president of maritime and trade for IHS Markit, said the past two years of uncertainty with the conference have been difficult.

“It was a huge disappointment in 2020 when we canceled it,” he said by phone.

But it was necessary. The lead-up to the 2020 event was marked by COVID-19’s first real impacts in Long Beach.

“We were getting increasingly nervous as the week went on because we started seeing the first community spread cases,” Tirschwell said. “The first fatality was a week before TPM was going to begin.”

The firm decided to cancel.

It would be the first of many Long Beach conferences and conventions to change course that year. Now, its return solidifies the convention industry’s rebound.

“This is kind of symbolic in a way because this is the first conference that we had to cancel because of the pandemic,” Long Beach Conventions and Visitors Bureau representative Sam Mehlinger said by phone, “and now it is back.”

Mehlinger explained the conference’s significance for Long Beach.

“The TPM conference is probably the highest profile international trade conference in the U.S., and it has a high profile on the global scale as well,” she said. “Having that conference in Long Beach certainly puts us on the map in that community, and is a showing of the importance of the Port of Long Beach to international trade and that sector in the U.S.”

The conference also offers an economic boost to the city, with an estimated \$1.9 million in overall economic impact coming from the over 3,500 attendees of the conference.

Tirschwell, for his part, is excited to return to a live format.

“[TPM] is indispensable because it is an opportunity for us to interact in person with the market,” he said. “The main value this event creates is bringing people together on a live basis.”

Getting back to this point, though, was still a challenge.

As the pandemic showed signs of slowing down late last summer, TPM’s organizers had to decide what 2022’s conference would look like. COVID seemed to be slowing down for a moment, and Tirschwell and his colleagues at IHS Markit took a leap of faith.

“When we first made the call, we thought that there was a strong

enough chance that we would be able to hold the event live that we should put the planning process into motion,” Tirschwell said. “If we waited, the time period to plan might have been too compressed.”

Taking that step forward required an even bigger commitment from organizers, with the conference taking at least six months to plan and requiring contracts be made with the convention center as well as hotels and other entities in the city.

“We said ‘OK, we are going to take a chance,’ because by doing so, we had to invest money ... with the possibility that COVID might turn against us and make the event impossible to hold,” Tirschwell said.

The emergence of new COVID variants in the intervening months highlighted the risk that organizers were taking.

“On a couple of occasions over the past six-to-eight months, if you had asked anyone out of the market what they thought the chances of TPM happening live was, people would have said ‘I don’t know, less than 50-50,’” Tirschwell said. “If you asked me that question, I would have said, ‘I honestly don’t know if TPM is going to happen.’”

But with COVID-19 cases now on the decline once more, the event’s return has strong support.

“The response from sponsor companies has been very positive, and that reflects a strong desire from the market to be able to interact in person,” Tirschwell said.

COVID-19 safety protocols will be in place, but Tirschwell said the conference will otherwise largely remain the same as past iterations.

The location, meanwhile, was never called into question. He explained that IHS Markit views Downtown Long Beach—with its hotels, restaurants, and venues—as a perfect setting for the conference.

“The event is very well settled in Long Beach,” Tirschwell said.

“It is right next to and within view of the port, so for a lot of the [executives] at exporting and importing companies that attend, there’s a lot of maritime activity right there,” he added. “Everything from doing port tours to doing meetings, being in close proximity to the largest container gateway in all of America is a good location for a container shipping conference.”

Tirschwell also said the pandemic’s impacts on the supply chain have made this year’s conference as crucial as it has ever been.

“There have never been so many burning issues on the agenda in all of the 20+ years of TPM,” he said.

“The idea that the core of this industry is coming together at precisely the time where there’s never been more chaos out in the market,” he added, “makes it a real opportunity for meaningful and important discussions.”

For more information and to register, visit events.joc.com/tpm. ■

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City continues steady development of safe bike network

BY CHRISTIAN MAY-SUZUKI / Reporter

Work continues on Vision Zero, Long Beach’s plan to eliminate fatal traffic accidents by 2026—and forthcoming improvements to the city’s bike infrastructure, officials say, will help achieve that goal.

City Traffic Engineer Carl Hickman laid out a series of projects that will improve the city’s bike network during the Feb. 1 City Council meeting. The projects ranged from a series of curb extensions and pedestrian medians at intersections throughout Downtown Long Beach to a separated bike lane on Del Amo Boulevard between Atlantic Avenue and Orange Avenue—and council members also had their own ideas for increasing bike safety.

The plan in Downtown aims to improve visibility and safety for bike and pedestrian traffic. Approximately 190 extensions and medians are planned to be completed by 2025 between Magnolia Avenue, Alamitos Avenue, Seventh Street and Ocean Boulevard, Hickman said, for an estimated \$8.8 million, funded through a grant from the Caltrans Active Transportation Program.

Hickman also presented plans for a cycle track on Pacific Avenue from Ocean Boulevard to Pacific Coast Highway, which also has a projected 2025 completion date. The project will include bus islands and a separated bike lane, and will shorten the length

of pedestrian crossings. The Caltrans Active Transportation Program is also funding this \$8.3 million project.

And a separated bike is also coming to Del Amo Boulevard between Atlantic Avenue and Orange Avenue, which will connect their respective bike paths. To separate the lane, a flat, elevated curb will serve as a border between vehicular and bicycle traffic. Unlike the previous projects, this will be funded by local transportation return funds. Officials did not say how much it would cost.

Hickman also described a project to create a “bike boulevard”—a path with low motorized traffic designed to prioritize bike travel—on Pine Avenue between Eighth Street and Willow Street. This path would connect Downtown Long Beach to the Willow Street Metro Station and would encourage bike travel through “traffic calming” features including vehicle diverters, raised intersections and traffic circles. This path is also set to wrap up in 2025, and is funded with \$4.4 million from the same Caltrans Active Transportation Program.

That proposal, though, came with some resistance, with local resident Senay Kenfe arguing in public comment that the boulevard would be detrimental to those living in the neighborhood where the boulevard would be installed due to the removal of parking for adjacent complexes.

And council members had their own



A man rides in the bike lane along Third Street in Downtown Long Beach Thursday, Feb. 17, 2022. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

concerns, which tended to follow three themes: connectivity, consistency, and the use of bollards.

Several council members questioned the connectivity of West Long Beach to

other parts of the city, gravitating toward the Santa Fe Corridor as a potential place of focus.

“Our neighborhoods are great,”

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Long Beach port starts workforce training early with LBUSD partnerships

BY CHRISTIAN MAY-SUZUKI / Reporter

When asked what they want to be when they grow up, kids usually offer one of a few answers: an astronaut, a firefighter, an athlete, a rock star.

Jobs that turn the gears of society—like working at the country’s largest port complex, for example—aren’t high on the list.

But the Port of Long Beach recognized that long ago and has since taken steps to make its career offerings more attractive to students, including launching a scholarship program in 1993.

The port has expanded its focus on education in the decades since.

Port of Long Beach Executive Director Mario Cordero pointed to the adoption of the port’s Green Port Policy in 2005 as a key moment in developing the port’s educational partnerships.

“At that point, the Port moved forward with a leading policy for the time to address the environmental issues that were before us,” he said by phone, “and that included a plan of action to further elevate our engagement with our community, including the education community.” That commitment led to the 2016



A student uses an automated mini milling machine to shave down a piece of wood for a project at Jordan High School as part of the ACE Academy program Tuesday, Feb. 15, 2022. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

creation of the Academy of Global Logistics (AGL) at Cabrillo High School and last year’s launch of the Advanced Manufacturing, Construction, and Engineering (ACE) Academy at Jordan High School, among other initiatives.

AGL and ACE are dedicated educational tracks within the Long Beach Unified School District that

expose students to the knowledge and skills needed for different types of port careers.

With those programs, the port has also expanded its scholarship offerings. In addition to the general scholarship, the port also provides a scholarship for AGL students and a scholarship for ACE students.

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Officials break ground on temporary longshore worker training center at LA port

BY BRANDON RICHARDSON / Reporter

With the sound of container trucks nearby and seagulls flying overhead, Port of Los Angeles and county officials celebrated the groundbreaking of the first-of-its-kind Goods Movement Training Center earlier this month.

Located on a vacant parcel near APM Terminals on Pier 400, the largest container port terminal in the Western Hemisphere, the project will include the construction of a metal structure that will help in the training process, Mark Jurisic, labor relations representative for the ILWU Local 13, told the Business Journal.

“It’s going to be designed with working bays so we can actually bring in equipment that [dockworkers] currently work on the job,” Jurisic said. “And we can bring in new equipment so we can teach people wanting to learn ... or upskill the current workforce.”

The facility is slated to be ready for training in March 2023, according to Pacific Maritime Association Vice President Chad Lindsay. The price tag for the facility is between \$15 million



Los Angeles officials, union leaders and other stakeholders celebrated the groundbreaking of a temporary training center where hundreds of ILWU members will be trained as they continue moving record cargo at the San Pedro Bay ports. Friday, Feb. 11, 2022. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

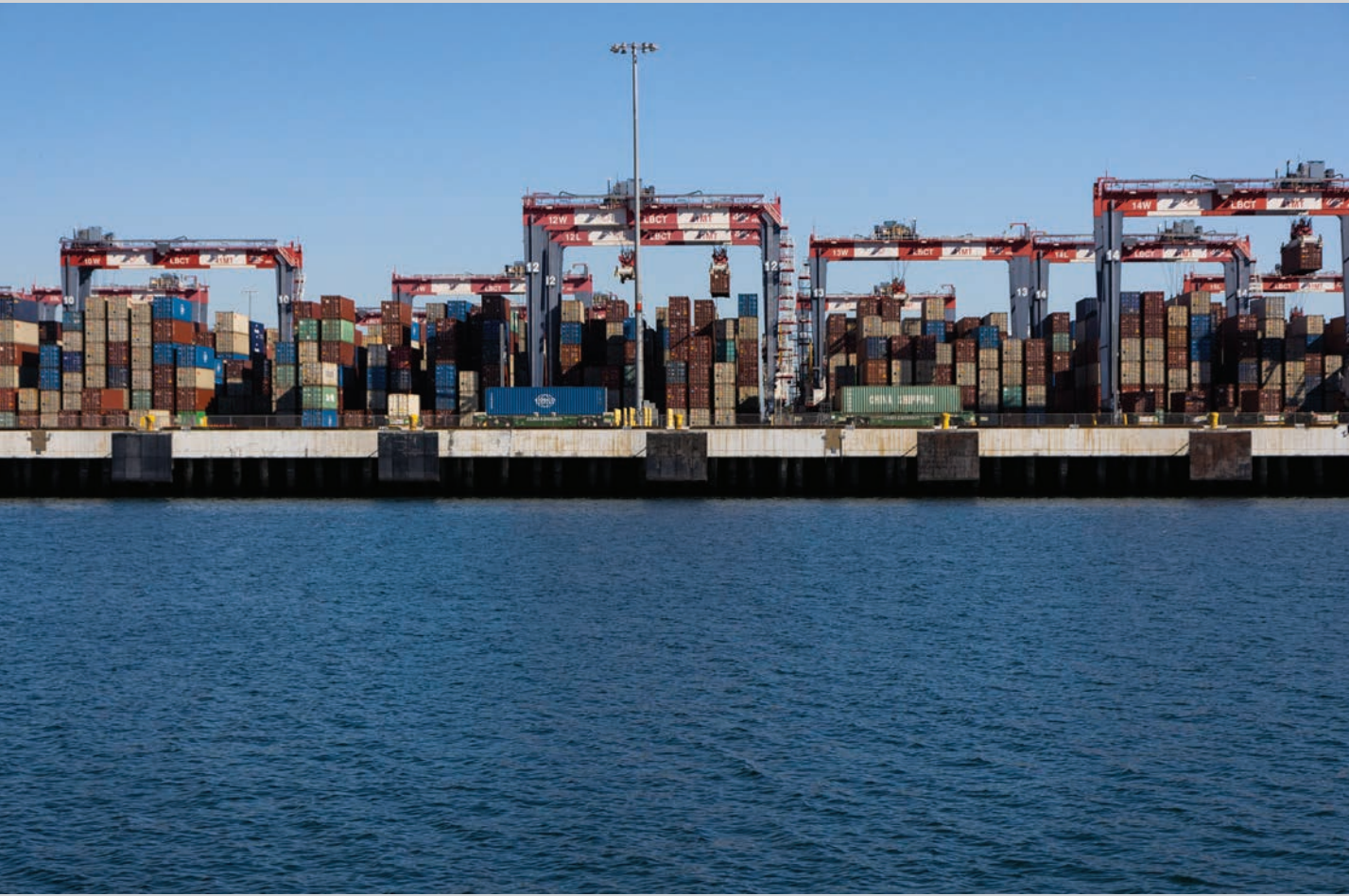
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Containers wait on the dock of the Long Beach Container Terminal Thursday, Feb. 3, 2022. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

FROM THE EDITOR: Will the ports’ container dwell fee—delayed more than a dozen times—ever go into effect?

BY HAYLEY MUNGUIA / Editor

It happens like clockwork. Every Friday, a pair of press releases from the Los Angeles and Long Beach ports arrive in my inbox: “‘Container Dwell Fee’ on Hold.”

The container dwell fee, which port officials announced in October but have yet to actually implement, would charge ocean carriers for cargo that lingers at the docks for an excessive amount of time—nine days or more for cargo that would be moved by truck and three days or more for cargo that would be moved by rail—\$100 per container per day.

Port officials have touted the penalty as one piece of a broader effort to address ongoing congestion at the twin port complex.

“With the escalating backlog of ships off the coast, we must take immediate action to prompt the rapid removal of containers from our marine terminals,” Port of Long Beach Executive Director Mario Cordero said in an Oct. 25 statement, when the fee was first announced. “The terminals are running out of space, and this will make room for the containers sitting on those ships at anchor.”

The penalty was initially slated to go into effect Nov. 15, but officials announced that day that because the ports had seen a significant decline in aging cargo, they would not yet start

charging the fee. But they kept the fine on the table and set a new date to potentially begin imposing it: Nov. 22.

The fee has since been postponed 14 times.

The Business Journal, along with many other publications covering the ongoing supply chain crisis, wrote about the announcement of the penalty and the first few delays. But at a certain point, the decision not to charge for lingering cargo was no longer news.

And yet, the postponement press releases kept arriving in my inbox, week after week. So I reached out to both ports to ask why they’ve approached it this way—and more importantly, whether they believe, at this point, that ocean carriers will ever actually be charged for aging cargo.

Port of Los Angeles Executive Director Gene Seroka declined my interview request, but Cordero told me, by way of background, that the idea for the fee came as part of a broader set of discussions with John D. Porcari, the Port Envoy to the White House’s Supply Chain Disruptions Task Force.

“I think the whole question emanates from the beginning discussions with the White House envoy” late last year, he said, “and that was: How do we address the capacity constraints at our terminals?”

“We had some very lively, substantive

discussions in terms of, ‘What’s the best approach to address this?’” Cordero added, “and hence came the fee to be placed on the carriers with regard to the imports sitting at the terminals for an excess amount of time.”

But between the fee’s Oct. 25 announcement and its planned Nov. 15 implementation, the twin ports saw a 26% drop in aging cargo.

“We’re encouraged by the progress our supply chain partners have made in helping our terminals shed long-dwelling import containers. Clearly, everyone is working together to speed the movement of cargo and reduce the backlog of ships off the coast as quickly as possible,” Cordero said in a statement at the time. “Postponing consideration of the fee provides more time, while keeping the focus on the results we need.”

When I spoke to Cordero earlier this month, he said the same logic still holds.

As of our Feb. 11 interview, there had been a 70% drop in aging cargo since late October.

“Given that progress,” Cordero said, “we will not act on implementing the fee [for now]. And frankly, given the collaboration that we’ve seen with the stakeholders, including the international carriers, I think that’s good news.”

“Our objective here is not to add fee on to fee here at the Southern California port complex,” he added. “The objective here is to make sure the industry

understands that if we do not collaborate to achieve some metrics, then of course there will be a fee that will be applied.”

While all of that makes sense in the abstract, I still didn’t fully grasp why the ports continue, four months on, to make weekly assessments when it seems the impact the fee would have is only getting smaller.

To that, Cordero had a couple of answers.

First, he said, the decline in aging cargo only began after the ports announced they would start charging for it.

“I think the threat was a factor” in that progress, he said.

And while the threat of a fee helped move the number of lingering cargo containers back in the right direction, the number of containers remaining at the docks is still far higher than it was before the supply chain crisis hit the ports.

On Feb. 11, there were 18,588 containers at the twin ports that had sat for nine days or more. While that’s far lower than the 62,158 lingering containers the ports had at the end of October, it’s still enough to impact port operations. (When I asked Port of Long Beach spokesman Lee Peterson if he could help put those numbers in context by providing the number of containers that sat for nine days or more before the supply chain crisis, he said the ports didn’t track those numbers before the current surge because containers generally dwelled for a maximum of four days.)

So maybe a reframing of the container dwell fee policy is in order. While the fee itself is purely theoretical—and may well always remain that way—the threat is real. Not only is it real, but the threat seems to be effective and, based on the numbers, still necessary.

Still, I had one question: Is there a certain metric the ports hope to reach before they decide the fee—or should I say, the threat of the fee—is no longer needed?

Cordero declined to give a straight “yes” or “no”—if he’s learned anything over the past couple years, it’s that circumstances can quickly change.

“It’s an ongoing assessment,” he said.

While Seroka declined my interview request, I still wanted to pose this question to him. So at his most recent press conference on Feb. 17, I did.

“The metric is very straightforward: zero containers on our docks nine days or more,” he said. “It’s a lofty goal, but we’re going to continue to pursue it, and we will keep the tool of that fee in our box as long as we need to.”

It seems I’ll likely continue to see those same press releases in my inbox, week after week.

But Cordero, at least, is optimistic about the fact that imposing the fee remains unnecessary.

“Right now, with the supply chain overall, I think we’re going in the right direction,” he told me, “in terms of anticipating delays and the bottlenecks and issues overall in the supply chain.”

“I want to make sure I’m not saying, ‘Mission accomplished,’” he added, “but on the other hand, there’s light at the end of the tunnel.” ■

Long Beach Transit to expand electric bus fleet 340% this year

BY BRANDON RICHARDSON / Reporter

Before the end of 2022, Long Beach Transit will more than quadruple its electric bus fleet, building on the agency’s long-standing environmental efforts.

The agency’s electric bus offerings began in earnest in November 2016, when the first e-buses hit the streets of Long Beach—an order of 10 at about \$1 million a piece through BYD in Los Angeles, a subsidiary of a Chinese manufacturer of the same name. The contract included an option to buy 14 more e-buses, which the transit agency opted to exercise in 2019.

“We’ve been a national leader when it comes to implementing the battery electric bus technology,” Long Beach Transit Vice President of Communications Michael Gold said. “We were a pioneer.”

The first of those additional e-buses are expected to be delivered soon, Gold said. With a few buses delivered each week, all 14 should be in Long Beach within the next month or two.

Last year, the agency’s board of directors authorized the purchase of 20 more electric buses from Canadian manufacturer New Flyer, which—save any supply chain issues—are slated to be delivered beginning this summer, Gold said.

“These are shorter buses, which means they can navigate through some of the neighborhoods a little bit easier,” Gold said, noting the buses are 35 feet rather than the standard 40 feet.

“So places like Alamitos Bay where we couldn’t go before, we can go there,” he said.

The new buses also cost about \$1 million each, Gold said. The agency pays for all new vehicles through grant funding from the state and federal governments, he added.

Once Long Beach’s electric bus fleet grows to the full 44, they will make up 20% of the agency’s active fleet, according to Gold. Long Beach Transit’s active fleet includes 122 low-emission compressed

natural gas vehicles, 10 electric, 76 electric-gas hybrids and 13 diesel buses.

While the diesel buses are included in the active fleet, they are not in the operational rotation, Gold noted. The agency has an additional 13 diesel and 12 CNG buses held as contingency.

As additional electric buses come online, the hybrids will be phased out of operation first, Gold said.

When first introduced, the electric buses only ran Long Beach Transit’s Passport service in the Downtown area, which is a short route. But since the initial period, during which the agency examined range and reliability, the electric buses have been phased into a regular rotation, serving all areas of the city.

The Long Beach agency was one of the first nationwide to deploy electric buses on a large scale, according to Gold. He said that many agencies across the country started small, purchasing one or two electric buses to start.

“Long Beach has air quality challenges,” Gold said. “It’s something that impacts our community, and we’ve made the commitment that we don’t want to be a contributor.”

The agency’s first electric buses arrived in the city two years before the state announced new regulations requiring public transit agencies to transition to 100% zero-emission bus fleets by 2040. The order was unanimously approved in December

2018 by the California Air Resources Board as a means to curtail emissions.

Long Beach’s ambition early on has given it the confidence to aggressively pursue its goal of having a fully zero-emission fleet no later than 2035, Gold said. While electric has been the focus of purchases thus far, Gold said hydrogen-fuel cell buses could also come to Long Beach in the future.

“Our North Long Beach location is the primary home for our [CNG] buses and we have the infrastructure to fuel those ... in the bus yard,” Gold said. “Converting that to hydrogen, it’s not heavy lifting because we already have the storage tanks and so forth.” ■



Passengers board one of Long Beach Transit’s electric buses on First Street in Downtown Thursday, Feb. 17, 2022. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

Groundbreaking

Continued from page 5

and \$17 million, Lindsay added, which will be covered by employers at the port—not public funds.

The land for the project was provided by the Port of LA.

The training center is expected to provide maintenance, repair, upskill and re-skill training for 900 registered longshore workers and mechanics working within the San Pedro Bay port complex, which includes the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

“We know that a strong port starts with a strong workforce,” LA Mayor Eric Garcetti said during a Feb. 11 press conference. “These things don’t move automatically. It’s human beings that show up every day to work these docks,

to build this port, who have made this America’s port.”

The groundbreaking took three years of negotiations and effort between the PMA and three local unions—ILWU locals 13, 63 and 90—Local 13 President Ramon Ponce de Leon said during the press conference.

“We can work together and move the membership into other jobs,” Ponce de Leon said, noting shifts in the industry toward electric equipment. “Training is important to keep the community workforce in a job. The employers recognize that and are putting up the money for this.”

The training facility at Pier 400 will be temporary, Jurisic said. Plans for the future permanent training center are still in the works, but a site within the San Pedro Bay port complex has been identified for a

20-acre facility with room to expand, according to Jurisic.

Port of Long Beach Executive Director Mario Cordero described the project as “exciting” during his annual State of the Port address earlier this month. Cordero said the facility meshes with the port’s workforce development and educational outreach efforts, which include a partnership with the Long Beach Unified School District, summer internships and scholarships.

“[The permanent facility] is going to encompass everything—not only upskill and re-skill, it’s going to encompass all the jobs we currently do,” Jurisic said, noting that it will also feature large cranes for training, which the temporary site cannot accommodate. “The idea is we’re going to re-skill our workforce to be more efficient, more productive, so

we will be able to respond better to the economy.”

In January, Gov. Gavin Newsom unveiled his proposed state budget, which included \$2.3 billion for the state’s ports. Of those funds, \$110 million have been earmarked for the construction of the permanent training center.

During the Feb. 11 press conference, Garcetti said he hopes the San Pedro Bay ports receive as much as \$5 billion from Biden’s historic infrastructure bill. The figure would be almost one-third of the \$17 billion allocated for the nation’s ports in that legislation.

“We hope to equal what the state is putting into this training center with federal funds,” Garcetti said, “to be ready here to show America what the future of our economy and our competitiveness looks like.” ■

BY BRANDON RICHARDSON / Reporter

Imports at the port increased 6.9% to 389,334 TEUs compared to the same month last year, while exports decreased 5.9% to 123,060 TEUs, the port announced. Empty container volumes saw a moderate increase of 1.8% to 288,550 TEUs.

“Terminal capacity is finally opening up thanks to support from our federal and state leadership, collaboration with industry partners, and the hard work of the men and women moving record amounts of cargo off the docks,” Port of Long Beach Executive Director Mario Cordero said in a statement. “We expect to remain moderately busy into the spring as we make significant progress to clear the docks and process the



Record volumes have come in the midst of an unprecedented supply chain crisis that has seen a backlog of ships waiting for their turn at berth. The San Pedro Bay ports, in partnership with

various other industry stakeholders as well as state and federal government, have made progress in easing the backlog, which reached 78 ships as of Feb. 9, down from a high of 105 only a few weeks prior. ■

Continued from cover page

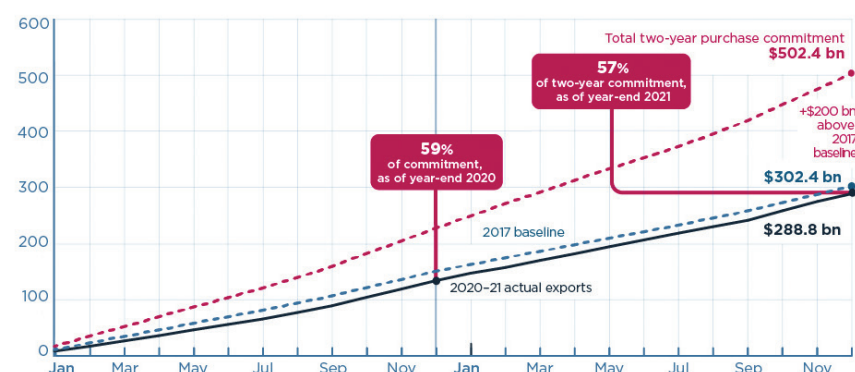
In 2019, the imbalance dipped back down to 2016 levels, despite both countries increasing tariffs amid ongoing negotiations.

No Phase Two agreement ever materialized between the nations. In fact, already in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, China quickly fell behind on the pace required to fulfill its

“We will not succumb ... to any trading nation that doesn’t share our ideals on worker empowerment, environmental stewardship and rules-based trade, but the Phase One trade deal has been a failure,” Seroka said in October 2021.

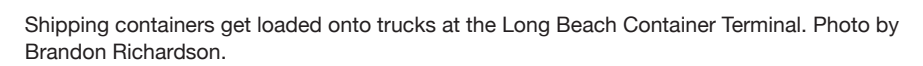
Combined, the San Pedro Bay ports

US monthly goods and services exports to China covered by the phase one deal, billions USD, January 2020 - December 2021



Note: Data refer to end of month cumulative totals. 2017 baseline refers to the 2017 export values, which were to be expanded by \$200 billion under the phase one agreement and is repeated for comparison purposes. Numbers may not sum to total due to rounding. Products and services covered by the 2020 Trade and Investment Framework Agreement include all goods and services covered by the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement between the United States of America and the People's Republic of China. Protrating in 2020 and 2021 are based on the 2019 US trade deficit with China. The increase shown in the text of the agreement indicates China must meet anything other than the year-end targets. Quarterly services data apportioned to monthly values. Monthly purchase commitments are equally adjusted to quarterly values. The share of US services exports to the world in the fourth quarter of 2021 are estimated based on US total services exports to the world in the fourth quarter of 2021. The share of US services exports to the world in the third quarter of 2021 that was reported to China.

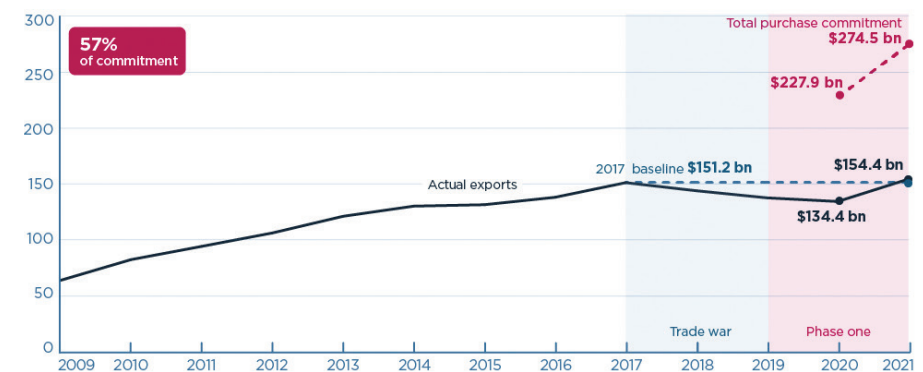
Sources: Constructed by the author with data from US Census and Bureau of Economic Analysis



U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, meanwhile, vowed to hold China to the terms of the deal. In an interview with Bloomberg following the release of the Peterson Institute's report, Raimondo said the administration "is in the thick of those negotiations now" but that "Beijing is not playing by the rules."

“The deal is another example of President Biden’s focus on strengthening relationships with our vital Allies and partners,” Raimondo said in a statement, “and working with them to address unfair practices by countries like China together.” ■


US exports to China of goods and services covered by the phase one deal, billions USD, 2009-21



Note: 2017 baseline refers to the 2017 export values, which were to be expanded by \$200 billion under the phase one agreement. Product and service categories covered by the "purchase commitment" are set out in Annex 6.1 of Economic and Trade Agreement between the United States of America and the People's Republic of China. Data for total US services exports to China in the fourth quarter of 2021 are estimated based on US total services exports to the world in the fourth quarter of 2021, apportioned with the share of US exports of services to the world in the third quarter of 2021 that went to China.

Source: Constructed by the author with data from US Census and Bureau of Economic Analysis.

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Port LBUSD Programs

Continued from page 4

exposed or introduced to the potential of not only international trade, but logistics-related jobs and careers,” Cordero said.

“Obviously it has been a tremendous success when it comes to our relationship with the school district,” he said. “It gives an indication that people are interested in this field that most students aren’t introduced to.”

AGL’s success, in fact, prompted the district and port to come together once again for a similar program: the ACE Academy at Jordan High School, which focuses on manufacturing, construction and engineering. That program began in October.

Through their four years with ACE, students practice engineering skills that include using product design software, 3D printing and milling to create custom metal parts, according to ACE lead teacher Fred Dizon.

The port’s commitment to giving students hands-on experience, though, isn’t limited to the classroom. The Port of Long Beach is offering 25 internships for high school students this year after a two-year hiatus due to COVID-19.

Unlike the AGL and ACE scholarships, these internships are not tied to any program, and are simply available to interested high school and college students who live in the area or are going to Long Beach schools. The six-week internships, which last from June 27 through Aug. 5, include staff mentors, behind-the-scenes tours of port operations and work-skill training.

While engineering is a popular field for students to work in for their internships, Cordero said, there are plenty of other departments for students to work with, like public works and information management.

“It’s port-wide, so it is not restricted, nor does it exclude any particular division or department,” he said.

Recognizing that students not only need specific experience in the field, but also more basic skills to succeed



Students use computers to design projects at Jordan High School as part of the ACE Academy Tuesday, Feb. 15, 2022. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

in any career, the Port of Long Beach also partnered with Pacific Gateway to provide interns with broader workplace training.

“This is a great component to what we offer, as it is not just getting experience in the job environment,” Cordero said. “It’s also to have skill sets available for them, and training in terms of: What does it take to embrace the skill sets that you need to succeed, no matter what occupation you pursue?”

“I think this is something that elevates their workplace skills with training that goes beyond the subject material criteria and focuses on their ability to enhance themselves further in any job space,” Cordero added.

“I think it is a very positive thing

for anyone, no matter what career or sector you get into.”

However, the most important role the internship program serves, Cordero said, is the exposure it provides kids to a new type of career path and working environment.

“This approach really encompasses trying to introduce professions like engineering to the next generation,” Cordero said.

Cordero, a “product of Los Angeles Unified School District and a homeschool environment,” admitted that he wasn’t exposed to careers like engineering early on because his parents didn’t have that experience. He said he knows he isn’t alone in that regard.

“A lot of the students in our school

district just don’t have the background or the household experience to be introduced to those areas,” he said.

For the port, these programs represent an ongoing commitment to being the type of engaged and conscientious organization that was outlined in that Green Port Policy almost 20 years ago. “Being a socially responsible organization encompasses more than just the environmental spectrum here,” Cordero said. “It also encompasses our relationship with school districts, and our educational partners to prepare the workforce of the future.”

Applications for scholarship and internship programs are due March 1. For more information, visit the Port of Long Beach’s Education webpage at <https://polb.com/community/education>. ■

State of the Port

Continued from cover page

2020, which was a record-setting year. Cordero highlighted several programs and projects aimed at improving the local supply chain, which is the largest in the country. The port is gearing up for a soft launch of its data-sharing tool that will better connect stakeholders. The “Supply Chain Information Highway” is expected to launch later this month, Cordero said.

An influx of funding is needed to meet demands for straining infrastructure, Cordero said, noting the Biden administration’s historic infrastructure bill that includes \$17 billion for the nation’s ports. Cordero also highlighted more than \$52 million

in state funding for the port’s massive Pier B On-Dock Rail Support Facility that is in the final planning stages.

Last month, Newsom unveiled his proposed budget, which included \$110 million for an innovative goods movement training center that will be centrally located within the San Pedro Bay port complex.

“We believe we have a responsibility to nurture the supply chain workforce for tomorrow, with a special focus on students from neighborhoods nearest the port,” Neal said, adding that the port recently expanded its partnership with Long Beach Unified School District to create a new supply chain-related program at Jordan High School last year.

“I have no doubt that we can handle whatever comes our way,” Neal added. Through their various efforts, the

ports have made progress in alleviating congestion. There were 78 container ships waiting to dock at one of the San Pedro Bay ports as of Feb. 9, down from a high of 105 only a few weeks prior.

“Let us recognize our success,” Cordero said. “But let us recognize this port does not want to accept the status quo.”

Cordero reaffirmed the port’s dedication to protecting the environment. Aside from increased rail, which will significantly reduce the number of trucks on the road, the port has plans to transition the drayage truck fleet to zero-emission vehicles by 2035, a move that will be funded through the Clean Truck Fund rate, the collection of which is set to begin in April.

The port also has significantly increased its usage of electric terminal equipment, including at the recently

completed Long Beach Container Terminal. The new terminal, which would be the nation’s sixth largest port on its own, uses almost exclusively zero-emission equipment, including 14 of the world’s most modern ship-to-shore cranes, Cordero said.

The port already has met all of its 2023 emission reduction targets, Cordero said, which are outlined in the Clean Air Action Plan, a joint environmental effort with the Port of Los Angeles.

“Almost two decades ago, [we] launched a green revolution that spread through seaports worldwide,” Cordero said, referring to the CAAP, which was first adopted in 2006. “We’re proud to be a global leader in reducing harmful air emissions, improving water quality, protecting marine life and implementing sustainable practices.” ■

LB Transit

Continued from cover page

“It was immediate,” Chavarria said of the dip in riders. “It was in the first couple of weeks in March [2020].”

That drop in ridership was led mostly by a decline in student riders, according to Chavarria.

The Long Beach Unified School District does not provide its own bus service, so many students rely on LBT to get to school. But when remote learning went into effect, that transportation was no longer necessary.

It’s unclear exactly how many rides on LBT that students took in the worst of the pandemic, but the agency’s annual budget books show that school-related trips as a percentage of total trips actually grew from fiscal year 2019 to fiscal year 2020—which may underscore COVID’s impacts on the agency.

About 30% of the approximately 23 million rides that LBT provided from July 2018 to June 2019 were for school-related purposes, according to data in LBT’s Budget Book. That share remained unchanged from the previous year, but it rose to 37.4% of the 18 million rides LBT provided between July 2019 and June 2020.

As ridership numbers fell and the virus continued to spread, it was clear LBT had to make changes. The agency cut down on its schedule and routes and offered free rides starting in April 2020, which were offset by federal and city funds.

LBT did not resume charging fares again until September 2021.

Meanwhile, many free services—including LBT’s AquaLink water taxi and the ‘Passport’ bus system through Downtown—were suspended.

“[COVID] obviously shifted how we were thinking of ridership,” Chavarria said.

“At [that] point, we are focusing on those frontline customers, and those customers are essential workers,” she added. “So how do we provide a service that is 1) useful for them, and also something that they feel safe using?”

This approach was not exclusive to riders. LBT’s own employees—considered essential workers themselves—were also impacted by the virus. With people falling sick or simply uncomfortable driving a public bus in a pandemic, LBT saw a shortage of workers.

“So the question became, ‘How do we manage that, and how do we continue with our hiring?’” Chavarria said.

LBT put several measures in place to reassure potential employees of the safety and benefits in working with the agency, including testing and an increase in pay for bus drivers.

“I mean, we’re still experiencing it now,” she said. “Like any organization that is hiring right now, we’re seeing challenges.”

As the pandemic moves closer to becoming endemic, LBT continues to take a measured approach toward its return to normal operations.

“We’re taking it one step at a time,” Chavarria said. “Health and safety is our main priority for both our employees and customers.”

Ridership numbers—which are unclear during the fee exemption

because payments are used to measure rides—began to gain momentum toward recovery last summer. Currently, ridership and overall bus service sits at approximately 75% of its pre-pandemic level.

As this number continues to grow and get closer to earlier norms, LBT has begun resuming some of the free services it was forced to cancel, including a weekend return of the AquaLink service and the Galaxy Express that provides free service to the LA Galaxy’s home at Dignity Health Sports Park.

“Our customers can feel safe returning back,” Chavarria said, “because there’s no issue for essential workers or grocery store workers or restaurant workers.”

While LBT doesn’t make projections, there is anticipation that ridership will return in stride when schools and their students get back on board Long Beach buses through the GoPass initiative that the LBT Board of Trustees adopted in December.

The two-year pilot program allows Long Beach schools to pay a fee to allow their students to ride on Long Beach buses and affiliated Metro lines for free, and LBT expects that schools will finish signing up for this program and begin implementing it soon.

“We do expect that when schools come on board, we will see an influx of students,” Chavarria said. “Hopefully that will help drive other customers in the city, other individuals that are not usually customers, and help them feel safe enough to bring them back on our buses.” ■



One of Long Beach Transit’s low-emissions compressed natural gas buses drives down First Street in Downtown Thursday, Feb. 17, 2022. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

Bike Network

Continued from page 4

Councilmember Rex Richardson said. “It’s the corridors that lack attention.”

Councilmember Suely Saro, meanwhile, commented on the importance of being connected with the Los Angeles River, while Councilmember Al Austin emphasized the need to keep paths to schools safe and connected for kids.

“One big priority that we should not lose focus of is the safety of our children,” Austin said. “We should put them first.”

Another topic was the consistency of safety and aesthetics throughout a bike path. Several council members noted that many bike paths need maintenance in several areas to remain consistent with the new paths, and emphasized the importance of keeping a bike lane safe through its entirety.

Finally, several members of the council who have bike lanes with bollards—temporary vertical posts that are used to separate bikes from vehicles on the road—wondered what they might be replaced with. Hickman explained that while separated bike lanes is the overall goal, the use of vertical, concrete posts would be considered as replacements.

Hickman, though, also spoke to the bigger picture of bike infrastructure in Long Beach. He said the growth of the city’s BikeShare program is encouraging, and progress on the development of Long Beach’s bikeway has been steady.

After starting in 2016 and reaching around 30,000 members by 2018, Long Beach’s BikeShare program had 46,112 active members in 2020 and grew that number to 58,338 in 2021.

This success prompted the city to not only renew its operations and maintenance contract for the program for another two and a half years, Hickman said, but also to make plans for growth in 2022. Starting in May, the expansion will see 100-150 new electric bikes and over 800 refurbished non-electric bicycles, along with 50-75 new bicycle racks around the city to accommodate them.

As for bike paths, 165 of the 300 miles of bike lanes set as a 2040 goal by the Bicycle Master Plan have been completed, according to Hickman. Looking ahead, this would require an average of 8 miles of additional bike lane constructed per year, a far cry from the under 2 miles completed in 2021, but it’s a goal the city will nonetheless meet over the next several years based on its plans.

Overall, Hickman said the city’s big picture plans—which include the 2017 Bicycle Master Plan and the 2020 Safe Streets Long Beach Initiative—have helped guide the city to where it is now and will continue to be critical in the years ahead.

Those plans have “really helped ground us and provide critical data to recommend projects,” he said, “and seek funding.” ■

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LONG BEACH WINS TOP AWARD IN CALIFORNIA TOURISM



Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau VP Communications, Samantha Mehlinger accepts the Visit California Poppy Award for Best Content Marketing. Long Beach won for its 2021 summer campaign featuring videos, articles and photography, beating two other finalists, San Diego and Tuolumne County.



Signage identifying the emergency department at Community Hospital Long Beach is covered, with the facility now shuttered and operating as a temporary COVID-19 testing site. Thursday, Feb. 3, 2022. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

City Council votes to change Community Hospital lease, ending requirement for emergency room

BY KELLY PUENTE / Reporter

Community Hospital in East Long Beach could eventually become a general health care campus, but it will no longer be required to house an acute care facility under an amended lease approved by the City Council last week.

The lease change signifies the end of a failed effort to save the nearly 100-year-old hospital after it was shuttered in 2018 due to seismic compliance issues, leaving the East Long Beach area without an emergency room.

Molina Wu Network signed a lease to run the hospital in 2019 and reopened it in January 2021. But the company said it lost roughly \$30 million and the hospital was closed less than a year later due to the mounting financial losses.

Under the lease agreement, the city, which owns the land at Pacific Coast Highway and Termino Avenue, is required to reimburse MWN for its operational losses. The city is now in negotiations to sell the property to MWN to satisfy the obligation.

The new contract unanimously approved by the council at its Feb. 15

meeting allows for the land to be used as a wellness campus for needs including behavioral health, recuperative care, social services, government offices and specialized services.

Councilwoman Suzie Price noted that while the loss of East Long Beach's only emergency room is disappointing, the area could still offer health services to meet community needs, like a center for mental health and substance abuse treatment and a detox facility.

She said any planned project would first require community outreach and council approval.

"It has been everyone's expectation that this was going to be an acute care facility and if that use is going to change, we've got to have appropriate outreach with all of the stakeholders," she said.

MWN has said the company is committed to a plan to operate a mental wellness campus on the site, as well as possibly developing housing.

The transition away from acute care means the facility would not require more than \$75 million state-mandated in seismic retrofits, as acute care medical facilities have the highest seismic standards in California.

The city is now working to assess the property's worth, with a potential sale finalized by the spring, officials said.

If the property is valued at less than \$30 million, the city would essentially "sell" the 8.7-acre site to MWN for \$0 to fulfill the lease agreement. For example, if the property is assessed at \$20 million, the city would not be required to cover the additional \$10 million.

If it's assessed at more than \$30 million, MWN would be required to pay the difference. A previous assessment before the city's contract with MWN valued the land at below \$20 million in its current condition.

Facing millions of dollars in seismic retrofits, former operator MemorialCare closed the facility, which sits on a major fault line, claiming that the necessary upgrades were not feasible.

MWN stepped up to take over the hospital and ultimately was awarded a 45-year lease with virtually no liability.

After delays at the state level, the facility was issued its acute care license and opened its emergency room last May.

Operators were required under the lease agreement to foot the cost of the seismic retrofitting, but they abandoned the project at the end of last year after construction costs soared to 50% higher than anticipated—for a cost of more than \$75 million.

They closed the ER at the end of last year, citing low demand, with only a 32% capacity and less than 24 emergency rooms visits per day.

Editor's note: John Molina—of Molina Wu Network—is the primary investor in the parent company that owns the Long Beach Business Journal. ■

Rocket Lab announces next launch window opens this month

BY BRANDON RICHARDSON / Reporter

Rocket Lab's "The Owl's Night Continues" mission will launch from the firm's New Zealand complex as soon as Feb. 28, when the 14-day launch window opens, the company has announced.

Launches could be delayed by inclement weather or other technical issues, which is why they are cleared for windows rather than specific days.

The mission will carry a single

StriX satellite orbit for Japanese Earth imaging company Synspecive as part of a three-launch deal. A second launch is slated for this year, with the third in 2023—each also carrying a single StriX satellite.

"The Owl's Night Continues" comes on the heels of Rocket Lab's first launch for Synspecive in December 2020. The pending launch was originally scheduled for a later date, after Rocket Lab's next launch for another customer.

But it was moved up on the manifest to accommodate Synspecive's needs, the firm stated.

"We designed Electron and our launch complexes to provide satellite operators with a high level of flexibility, enabling our customers to launch on their schedule," Rocket Lab founder and CEO Peter Beck said in the announcement.

"With a production line of flight-ready rockets and multiple launch pads, we can run concurrent launch campaigns

ensuring that if an individual customer needs to accelerate or delay missions, we can shuffle accordingly and keep our overall manifest on schedule," he added.

The satellites delivered by Rocket Lab are the first in Synspecive's planned 30-satellite constellation, which is designed to collect data that will help support urban planning, construction and infrastructure monitoring, along with disaster response, according to Rocket Lab. ■



Shoreline Square, an office tower in Downtown Long Beach, on Friday, Feb. 4, 2022. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

Shoreline Square office tower sold in leasehold purchase for \$85.5 million

BY CHRISTIAN MAY-SUZUKI / Reporter

The Shoreline Square office tower in Downtown Long Beach has a new occupant after the real estate advisory firm Newmark Group facilitated an \$85.5 million leasehold sale of the property, the firm announced earlier this month. The purchase was made by Shoreline Square Capital LLC from the building’s owner, Parallel Capital Partners.

Shoreline Square is a 20-story office building with 410,920 square feet, according to Newmark.

Parallel, for its part, purchased the site in 2014 for \$101.7 million. But the 16% drop in price wasn’t a reflection of the building’s value, according to Newmark representative Alexa Nestleroad. Parallel bought the property outright in 2014, while Shoreline Square Capital made a leasehold purchase, meaning the firm owns the right to occupy and make changes to the building—which includes owning the building’s tenancies—but does not own the property itself.

“They are not comparable purchases,” Nestleroad said.

When Shoreline Square Capital’s purchase went through, 92% of the building’s space was leased, and 52% of tenants were government agencies including U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the California State Land Commission, the Department of Defense, the California Coastal Commission and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. These tenants have racked up an average of over 28 years committed to the building.

“The buyer was attracted to the numerous credit government tenancies in this asset and the attractive cash on cash returns produced by a favorable debt market as well as the substantial discount to replacement cost,” Newmark’s co-head of U.S. Capital Markets Kevin Shannon said in a statement.

According to Matt Root, CEO of Parallel Capital Partners, this sale represents the completion of a successful venture with the Shoreline

Square Tower.

“We accomplished what we wanted with this property—including implementing multiple sustainability measures, attaining LEED gold status and renewing GSA’s Department of Homeland Security-Customs and Border Protection for 20 years—ultimately achieving a positive return on our investment,” Root said.

A part of Parallel’s success with Shoreline Square has been the development of the Long Beach Downtown area, which has come a long way since Parallel made its purchase eight years ago.

“Downtown Long Beach has seen over \$2 billion in investment over the last decade and has a robust future commercial and residential development pipeline,” Newmark Senior Managing Director Laura Stumm said in a statement.

“Corporations and government tenants alike have recognized the relative value that this market provides, as reflected by the tenure of the tenancy at Shoreline Square.” ■

Downtown Long Beach Alliance responds to recent uptick in vandalism

BY CHRISTIAN MAY-SUZUKI / Reporter

There’s been a recent uptick in vandalism impacting Downtown Long Beach businesses, and the Downtown Long Beach Alliance announced new initiatives earlier this month to make the neighborhood safer and help impacted business owners recover.

The biggest step the DLBA has taken is launching a \$30,000 Storefront Recovery Grant Program in which small business owners can be reimbursed up to \$1,500 to help with costs associated with vandalism damage, including insurance deductibles, boarding costs and storefront repairs. The grant program will draw on repurposed program funds from delayed projects until grant funding from the Long Beach Recovery Act can be secured.

Among the 14 incidents recorded by the DLBA from late January to mid-February are a break-in at Romeo’s Chocolates on Jan. 31, which was also burglarized in the incident. Other incidents include a break-in at Salon Row on Fourth Street and a burglary at Outfitters on Pine Avenue, according to DLBA spokesman Michael Berman.

The Long Beach Police Department, for its part, is aware of the recent trend. “At this time, we do not believe the incidents are related,” the department said in a statement. “However, detectives are actively investigating each incident, following up on all leads, and working closely with our patrol divisions to share information to identify and apprehend those responsible for each incident.”

The spike in crime comes as small business owners still deal with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, including an inflation surge that reached 7.5% in January.

“Many businesses are already operating on razor-thin margins as they manage through the ongoing challenges brought on by COVID-19,” DLBA Economic Development and Policy Manager Austin Metoyer said in a statement.

This is not the first time the DLBA has stepped up to help businesses. The organization raised \$40,000 for businesses in the wake of the theft and vandalism that broke out after the May 31, 2020, protest of George Floyd’s murder in Long Beach.

“As we learned from a similar recovery grant program in 2020, this type of financial assistance really makes a difference,” Metoyer said.

Additional measures the DLBA has taken to address the spike in vandalism include a collaboration with LBPD to “inform businesses and residents on how

Continued on page 18

By covered wagon from Arkansas to Belmont Heights—pioneers’ historic home now for sale at \$1.269 million

BY TIM GROBATY / Columnist

It took a while for Rev. George E. Jones and his young wife Julia to reach their eventual home in Long Beach.

The main holdup? They came by covered wagon drawn by oxen, leaving Arkansas in 1875, two years after they had married. That cut severely into their travel time; oxen-drawn covered wagons typically traveled at the speed of 2 mph.

What else could’ve gone wrong? Have you ever played “The Oregon Trail”? Obviously, dysentery for one thing. But the couple made it, across dry plains and burning deserts, crossing the El Cajon Pass into Southern California, where they stopped for a minute before hanging

a right turn and moving up into the Oregon wilderness where they bought 160 acres from the federal government in order to settle in the Oregon Territory.

Research by Maureen Neeley of HouStories shows that in 1910, 35 years after the Joneses set out from Arkansas, they left Oregon and landed in Long Beach where they bought some open farmland in what’s now Belmont Heights. Julia (who apparently handled the family’s finances) paid to have a house moved to 4826 Vista St., at the cost of \$250 in 1912.

In addition to the plot of land where the Joneses lived—in those days the Heights was wide open, with more fields and vacant lots than homes—the couple

bought additional land in the area, some of which they leased to another early Heights family for use as a mushroom farm.

George died in 1921 and the following year his widow built a new home on the site. Julia’s adventure ended when she died in 1933 at her daughter’s home in San Bernardino. She was buried next to her husband in Santa Ana.

And that’s the story of the early days of the little Spanish Bungalow at 4826 Vista St. in the heart of the Heights, where Julia Jones’ “new” 1922 home is now on the market for \$1.269 million.

Listed by Barrie Petersen of Compass, the 1,210-square-foot, two-bedroom, two-bath house warrants its listing price because of its prime location along with the fact that it’s been thoroughly modernized—likely not for the first time in its century-long history.

If you can imagine the home in 1922, Julia, a true pioneer woman, would have felt luxurious with an icebox (the first electric refrigerator to become popular was General Electric’s Monitor-Top, which, at nearly \$600, was almost twice what a Model T cost in 1922) and a gas stove. The house was wired for electricity, which was mostly employed for lighting in the days before radio, TV and dozens of kitchen appliances. She might have had a toaster, but not likely, since the first one that could toast both

sides of the bread at once didn’t hit the market until 1926.

And now? A fully equipped (at least by 2022 standards) kitchen with Viking appliances, an oversize island, custom cabinetry and wood flooring that flows out to an entertainer’s backyard and patio thanks to one of the house’s coolest features: a floor-to-ceiling, wall-to-wall sliding pocket door that opens to the backyard patio, all but dragging the kitchen outdoors, or vice-versa. It’s a feature that expands the living space and allows for great entertainment.

“Thanks to the door and the outdoor patio and areas, the previous owner had no problem having 60 guests at a party,” said Petersen.

In addition to the raised patio, the yard is divided into sections where small groups can gather.

The entire home, inside and out, is equipped with a Sonos surround sound system. There’s forced-air heating and air-conditioning and the fireplace, the sole source of heat for the Julia Jones, remains.

In addition to being a nice and short stroll south to Belmont Shore’s Second Street, head north and it’s about the same distance to the upgraded Colorado Lagoon.

In short, it’s a lovely home in a lovely neighborhood—certainly more than a pioneer family would’ve ever dreamed of 100 years ago. ■



Former pioneers’ Belmont Heights home at 4826 Vista St. is listed at \$1.269 million. Listing photo.



A well-designed backyard is ideal for entertaining guests. Listing photo.



An extra-large pocket door opens up the kitchen to the outdoor patio. Listing photo.

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At Home, a new furniture and decor store, to open at old Kmart site in East Long Beach

BY HAYLEY MUNGUIA / Editor

A new furniture store and showroom is slated to replace the shuttered Kmart on Bellflower Boulevard in East Long Beach.

At Home, the self-described “home decor superstore,” will open in the 118,320-square-foot property at 2900 Bellflower Blvd. in April, according to Carey Marin, a spokeswoman for the company. Marin said At Home does not have a specific opening date yet, but the company is planning a grand opening event for April 30.

The company has seen significant growth in recent years and has opened five new stores across the country since it was acquired by the San Francisco-based private equity firm Hellman & Friedman for \$2.8 billion in July. At Home now operates 235 stores in 40 states, with more—including the one in Long Beach—on the way.

The brand’s recent success is in sharp contrast to the property’s former occupant, which was the final Kmart in Long Beach when it closed for good last year. The shuttering was just one of hundreds of similar store closures in recent years. The underperformance of Sears and



Courtesy of At Home.

Kmart stores across the country was a major factor in the Sears Holding Corporation filing for bankruptcy in 2018 and being acquired by the Connecticut-based hedge fund ESL Investments the following year. While widespread shutdowns of Sears and Kmart stores began under Sears

Holding Corporation’s watch, ESL Investments has continued the trend. At Home, meanwhile, chose to locate a new store in the space because of “the traffic and synergy with other best in class retailers,” Marin said in an email. “We look for high-traffic retail nodes with great access and in close proximity

to our core customers.”

At Home typically employs about 25 people at each location, Marin said.

When customers get to shop at the Bellflower location later this year, the interior will likely be far different from the Kmart experience that locals were familiar with. Permits pulled from Long Beach’s Development Services Department for the location show the site has undergone significant work over the last year, including new storage rooms, employee offices, restrooms and a break room, along with structural changes to the storefront facade and new flooring, plumbing and shelving.

As for what will fill those shelves, Marin said At Home maintains an inventory of tens of thousands of home decor items “for every room, every style and every budget,” and the selection is always changing.

“At Home has a continually updated assortment, the latest trends and exciting seasonal products,” Marin said. “Hundreds of items arrive each week to provide fresh inspiration, and shoppers will discover new collections from designers Ty Pennington, Grace Mitchell, Tracey Boyd and Laila Ali.” ■

New East Long Beach pizzeria serves ‘excellent’ classics, quirky dessert pies



Pizzas are placed in to-go boxes at Ottimo Pizzeria in East Long Beach Thursday, Feb. 10, 2022. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

BY BRANDON RICHARDSON / Reporter

A new pizzeria quietly opened its doors this month on the outskirts of an equally quiet East Long Beach neighborhood. Inside, the smell of rising dough, melting cheeses and Italian meats fills the small space that pays homage

to the nostalgia of classic mom ‘n’ pop pizza parlors.

Owned and operated by five Long Beach locals, Ottimo Pizzeria opened its doors on Feb. 2 in the Time Square retail center and has already been well-received by the community.

“There are a lot of food options over

here, but what goes best with beer?” co-owner Ciaran Gough asked, noting that Steady Brew Beer Co. also resides in the small center. “Pizza.”

The restaurant industry is not new to Gough. He and Ottimo co-owners Juan Carlos Guerra and Todd Miller also own The 908, an upscale sit-down restaurant at the Long Beach Exchange two miles from the new eatery.

Opening the restaurant took over a year from inception, Gough said. In that time, the co-owners put in leg work to formulate the menu. They traveled to and ate at countless pizza joints in the region, even going as far as taking a trip to New York City.

After scarfing down their research over several months, they nailed down their menu.

The pizzeria serves 14-inch Neapolitan-style pies using hand-tossed dough and sauces made in-house, along with low-moisture mozzarella, Italian meats and other fresh, high-quality ingredients.

Ottimo’s menu features the standard cheese, pepperoni, meatball and margherita pizzas but also some more creative fare. The Fungi, for example: alfredo sauce, mozzarella, shiitake and button mushrooms, ricotta, parmesan, green onions and ranch. Or the Kalua

Pork—mozzarella, house-made barbecue sauce (with a pepper kick), pulled pork, bacon, pepperoni, crispy garlic, chili flakes and oregano.

In all, Ottimo has eight pizza options ranging from \$16 to \$22. The restaurant also offers three salads—Caesar, baby arugula and Caprese—for \$8 each.

But the most flamboyant items on the menu, by far, are the dessert pizzas. For \$12, customers can satiate their sweet tooth with a mozzarella-banana-cinnamon-sugar pizza or a Nutella-strawberry-powdered sugar ensemble.

“We wanted to start with [this menu] as our base and then we can expand from there,” Gough said. “The goal is to get it down, make sure the guests that are coming in are happy with the product, make sure you get consistency and then see what people are looking for.”

Based on feedback and reception in the coming months, Gough said the menu may be extended with more pizza sizes and recipes, additional salads and maybe even sandwiches.

Ottimo does not serve beer, or any alcohol for that matter, but the team of owners is using Steady Brew to its advantage (it doesn’t hurt that co-owner Marissa Textor’s husband is

Continued on page 21

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LBCC board advances final redistricting map

BY JASON RUIZ / Reporter

The Long Beach Community College District board of trustees voted unanimously last week to advance a final redistricting map that will keep all incumbents in their districts if the board adopts it ahead of the Feb. 28 deadline to submit a final plan to county election officials.

Board members voted 5-0 on Feb. 15 to advance a less controversial version of its new district boundaries to its Feb. 23 meeting, after a sometimes contentious discussion in which board members shouted over each other and lobbed accusations of tampering with the map-drawing process and using the maps to settle political disputes.

The redistricting process must be completed by elected bodies every 10 years based on U.S. census numbers to ensure that voters are given fair representation. While there has been a movement to shift that responsibility out of the hands of politicians, LBCC board members still get to draw their own political lines.

Before the Feb. 15 vote, Trustee Sunny Zia, who would have been drawn out of her district in one draft map under consideration, alleged that the lines were drawn specifically to remove her from her district. Zia’s Area 3 seat is up for

election in November.

“It’s shameful,” Zia said, alleging that members of the board had worked to remove her through the redistricting process.

If Zia were drawn out, she’d have to move to the new Area 3 to be eligible to run for reelection in November or wait until the 2024 election where she might have to challenge an incumbent, something she said she would not rule out.

A number of community members and labor union representatives spoke in favor of Zia and against the version of the map that would remove her, calling the maps “highly political” and unnecessary. Some threatened legal action if the map that removed Zia from the district advanced.

Trustee Vivian Malauulu pointed out that new City Council district lines removed two incumbents from their districts and said the idea that Zia could be drawn out was nothing personal.

Malauulu questioned why so many people spoke out specifically in Zia’s defense rather than in favor of certain neighborhoods or minority groups being unified, which are issues that are supposed to be considered during map drawing in order to comply with state and federal voting rights issues.

“Every time something happens that Trustee Zia takes something personal,

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DLBA Vandalism

Continued from page 14

to avoid being targets of crime and how to improve chances of apprehending a suspect once a crime is committed,” according to a DLBA statement.

“We’re grateful for the additional deployment of officers and business outreach being performed by LBPD,” DLBA COO Broc Coward said in a statement. “We believe DLBA’s initiatives complement those efforts and make our Downtown safer for businesses and residents to enjoy.”

Several steps are also being taken to improve overall surveillance of the city, including the deployment of extra safety ambassadors, particularly during evening hours. These safety ambassadors—who can be identified by looking for their bold red shirts—are spread throughout the Downtown area to provide directions, safety escorts, vehicle jumpstarts and other services to help maintain safety and comfort in the Downtown area.

“Safety ambassadors serve as extra eyes and ears for the Long Beach Police Department to assist in crime prevention,” Berman said.

The DLBA is also coordinating with public and private security and property firms for an added layer of awareness and protection. Ambassadors will be patrolling on two additional routes

Thursday through Sunday from noon to 8 p.m., according to Berman. One will be in the core of Downtown and another will be in East Village.

Other steps being taken to assist business owners include sharing an enhanced Quality of Life Decision Guide with businesses, residents and property owners to give them up-to-date information on who to call for various concerns and promoting the availability of DLBA safety escorts, who can be contacted seven days a week at (562) 244-1365.

As for the Storefront Recovery Grant Program, businesses are eligible if they:

- Occupy a ground-floor space within the Downtown Parking & Business Improvement Area boundaries (between 10th Street and Shoreline Aquatic Park, and between West Shoreline Drive and Alamitos Street);

- Hold an active city business license;
- Are privately held, sole proprietorship or independently owned;
- Have less than 35 full-time employees;
- Were damaged on or after Jan. 1, 2022; and

- Can provide proof of police report filed, proof of insurance claim filed (if applicable) and proof of purchase or contract worked for repairs.

Business owners can apply for the grant on the DLBA’s website, and those interested in donating to the program can email austinnm@dlba.org. ■



Romeo Chocolates on Pine Avenue was burglarized early Monday, Jan. 31, 2021. Photo by Kelly Puente.

Homegrown egg roll business, Rella Rolls, to open first brick-and-mortar in North Long Beach



Tarella Golden shows how she makes her unique egg rolls in a kitchen in Long Beach Friday March 5, 2021. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.

BY CHEANTAY JENSEN / Reporter

Tarella Golden of the popular gourmet egg roll food business, Rella Rolls, is slated to open her first brick-and-mortar

in North Long Beach.

Rella Rolls will take over the former Any’s Snack Bar, a smoothie and acai bowl business, in the same North Long Beach shopping center that’s home

to Western Union Bank and Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen on the corner of Atlantic Avenue and Market Street.

Golden said she’ll begin construction on the space in March and anticipates opening her restaurant in early summer.

“I’m ready. I know it’s gonna be a process, but I’m ready,” she said. “You gotta start somewhere.”

Since launching her business in 2013, the self-proclaimed “Eggroll Queen” has worked out of her home kitchen, rolling and frying dozens of eccentrically stuffed egg rolls to her devoted fan base, who would often wait for hours in the parking lot outside of her apartment for their orders of garlic lobster, chicken and waffles, pepperoni pizza or peach cobbler egg rolls.

For years, Golden had dreamed of owning her own restaurant. But it wasn’t until winning \$100,000 on the CBS show “The Price Is Right” last year that she began to formalize her vision. She had the funds. All that was left was finding the right spot in North Long Beach.

“I was raised in North Long Beach,” she said. “It’s one of the best communities.”

Golden learned how to make egg rolls from her mother, Lorna Golden, who

picked up the craft from her Japanese and Guamanian neighbors while the family lived in Hawaii for several years when Golden was a toddler.

When Golden’s family moved to North Long Beach, her mother continued the practice, but with her own fusion food recipes, and 5-year-old Golden would help roll. As an adult, Golden continued the family tradition and would fry them for her friends, but didn’t consider making a business out of it until colleagues at a church where she was volunteering urged her to go pro.

Since then, Golden has created over 30 types of fusion food fillings for her egg rolls that often feature soul and comfort foods, such as gumbo, pastrami, cheese, shrimp and grits, all wrapped and fried into a mouthwatering bundle.

With her menu locked down, Golden has her sights set on transforming her new space into the restaurant she’s always wanted. She will, at long last, have some more space in her fridge.

“My house will be a sanctuary instead of a restaurant. I’ll be able to come home and relax,” she said. “I’m looking forward to that part.”

Rella Rolls is at 5433 Atlantic Ave. and is expected to open in summer 2022. ■

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7 Long Beach businesses sold alcohol to minors during undercover stings, police say

BY JEREMIAH DOBRUCK / Reporter

Long Beach police and the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control say they caught employees at seven different businesses providing alcohol to people under 21 years old during a series of sting operations over the last few months.

The agencies used undercover, underage decoys to try to buy booze from 18 licensed alcohol sellers between Sept. 25 and Jan. 31, police said. Eleven of the locations passed the test, but employees at seven of the locations ended up illegally providing alcohol, authorities said.

Authorities said the locations that failed the test are:

- Hooters at 90 Aquarium Way
- Chili’s Grill & Bar at 30 West Shoreline Drive
- Q Smokehouse at 300 South Pine Ave.
- Liquor Mill at 5440 Long Beach Blvd.
- Prince Market and Deli at 6401 Cherry Ave.

• Para Liquor at 5660 Paramount Blvd.
• Rose Liquor at 1201 East South St.
The employees who sold the liquor will face a fine or community service if it was their first violation, police said, and ABC will pursue

administrative penalties against the business’s liquor license. That could include a fine, a suspension or a permanent revocation—a penalty that’s typically only imposed on repeat offenders.

When ABC first started using underage buyers in sting operations back in the 1980s, the percentage of businesses failing the test reached as high as 40% to 50%, according to police.

“When conducted on a routine basis, the rate has dropped in some cities as low as 10% or even lower,” the LBPD said in a statement.

Although almost 39% of businesses investigators visited failed in this case, one that passed was Green Diamond Liquor—the corner store at the center of a case involving a 20-year-old driver who says he got alcohol there before killing a family of three at Los Cerritos Park on Halloween 2019.

The woman accused of providing the alcohol is still fighting charges that she’s been using her daughter’s clean name as a front that allowed her to open Green Diamond despite a history of running afoul of liquor laws.

Police said that they visited the North Long Beach store on Nov. 12, and the decoy wasn’t able to buy alcohol. ■

LBCC Redistrict

Continued from page 17

it’s like, I don’t know, what do you do, take out an ad?” Malaulu said. “The press is involved. I mean, wow.”

Incumbents’ home addresses are not supposed to be considered while drawing map boundaries, but the City Council process was riddled with examples of politicians inserting themselves into the process either directly or through surrogates who lobbied on their behalf.

Last month, the Long Beach Independent Redistricting Commission that oversaw the City Council map-drawing process formally asked that changes be made ahead of the 2031 process that could help future commissioners by barring politicians from participating and having lobbyists identify themselves before speaking to the commission.

LBCC board president Uduak-Joe Ntuk said that the proposed maps were made because the board wanted to balance populations among the districts and keep certain communities of interest together, noting the board had to decide if it wanted to move Signal Hill into a West Long Beach district or push it into the Downtown area that Zia represents.

Ntuk and other members of the board claimed not to know where Zia lived and said they couldn’t consider her home address even if they did. Zia suggested that they had access to her address because of the board’s recent attempt to secure a court order to bar her from portions of meetings.

“You served me with a lawsuit, and

you know my address,” Zia said. “All of you do.”

Zia and the board had been embroiled in a public dispute for years. The board voted to censure her in 2019, and, more recently, they clashed over whether she could attend closed-session meetings regarding an investigation that was launched after the board voted to fire

former LBCC Superintendent-President Regan Romali in March 2020.

After nearly a year of seeking to block her from closed session discussions, a judge threw out the case in November, saying that a court order was unnecessary since Zia had voluntarily recused herself from discussions involving her alleged conflicts of interest.

The draft map advanced last week could be approved by the board at its Feb. 23 regular meeting and used to determine eligibility for LBCC district elections for the next 10 years. The board has until the end of the month to submit its final map to Los Angeles County election officials for use in the upcoming election. ■



Two students walk through the Long Beach City College Liberal Arts Campus Thursday, Feb. 3, 2022. Photo by Brandon Richardson.



A crane removes a lifeboat from the starboard side of the historic Queen Mary ocean liner in Long Beach Wednesday, Feb. 16, 2022. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

City kicks off project to remove corroded Queen Mary lifeboats

BY KELLY PUENTE / Reporter

Long Beach this month kicked off a critical project to remove 20 rotting lifeboats from the Queen Mary, forever changing the ship’s iconic silhouette, but hopefully making things safer for

eventual visitors.

The project is one of a handful of city-funded repairs this year estimated to cost a total of \$5 million. The ship remains closed while repairs are underway.

The city is hoping to reopen the

Queen Mary later this year.

The lifeboats were a top priority because of their deteriorated condition and potential damage to the vessel’s structural integrity, city officials said. Moreover, the Queen Mary’s longtime former inspector for years had warned that they were in

danger of cracking off and falling.

The city has contracted with Exbon Development, Inc. to remove 20 boats, while two will be retained for preservation. Thirteen of the lifeboats will be stored while the city determines if any museums or nonprofit organizations want to acquire one.

The boats on the port side were removed earlier this month, while a massive crane worked last week to remove the boats on the starboard side, which faces the city skyline.

Long Beach owns the Queen Mary but for decades has leased the ship to a string of operators who neglected critical repairs. The city took over full Queen Mary operations last year when former operator Urban Commons declared bankruptcy and abandoned its lease agreement.

“It is our responsibility to preserve the Queen Mary and ensure this historic landmark is properly cared for,” Mayor Robert Garcia said in a news release last month. “Now that the city has full oversight and control of the Queen, it’s important we make the critical repairs needed.”

The city is also planning to install new bilge pumps to discharge water and prevent flooding. Future repairs will include stabilizing bulkheads, installing an emergency generator and improving the water intrusion warning system.

The first \$2.5 million in repairs came from Tidelands Funds in the Fiscal Year 2022 budget, while the City Council will consider an additional funding request later this year.

A report released last year from marine engineering firm Elliott Bay Design Group, which inspected the ship last April, says the Queen Mary would need \$23 million in urgent safety repairs to stay “viable” over the next two years alone, while a marine survey in 2016 found that the Queen Mary would need up to \$289 million in repairs in the next five to 10 years. ■

Ottimo Pizzeria

Continued from page 17

a co-owner of the brewery). Eventually Steady customers will be able to order pizza from Ottimo while at the brewery. The pizzeria’s staff will then carry it across the parking lot to the famished beer connoisseurs.

The planned partnership with the beer brewer helped inform the Ottimo menu, according to Gough. The group came up with a menu that they thought “complimented what they’re doing over there with beer styles,” he said.

When it came to deciding on a name, co-owner Mike Salvanera said a few ideas were tossed around. Including East Side Pizza.

“But when you think ‘east side,’ you could also think of East Side New York pizza and we’re nowhere near New York-style pizza,” Salvanera said. “But ottimo in Italian means excellent and we’re just trying to make excellent pizza.”

Walking in the front door, customers’ eyes are instantly drawn to the large, red pizza oven in the open-air kitchen area, which allows anyone to watch cooks toss dough into the air, slather on sauces, place cheese and toppings and slide the raw pizzas into the oven.

The interior design is simple and elegant with checkerboard tile work on the walls accompanied by fresh white paint.

“I feel like a lot of the great pizza I’ve had has been in mom-and-pop shops that are cute and cozy,” said Textor, who designed the interior. “You walk in and you get that good, warm feeling. I wanted to stick to those traditional patterns but flip it on its head, make it fun and a little more modern and elevated.”

“It’s clean, sharp and crisp,” she added. “Hopefully that carries over to the food and the whole experience is excellent.”

There are no tables in the small space yet, but there will be a few eventually, Textor said. But with the shared outdoor dining area in the center’s parking lot and serving patrons at the brewery, onsite dining shouldn’t be an issue, she noted.

The first week and a half of service was great, Gough said. As expected for a new restaurant, some days are better than others, but despite no public announcement of the opening, he said there was a line of customers on Day One simply because of the retail center’s continuous foot traffic, mostly locals from nearby neighborhoods on walks or bike rides.

Over time, as the pizzeria adds hours, Gough said the size of the staff will grow in tandem. Once the operation is fully ramped up, he said he expects to have 20 employees, all of which will share in the tips.

“People tip on to-go—maybe it’s not quite as much as sit-down but it’s still very good,” Gough said. “So that really helps us get a reputation as a place where you can make good money. Then you’ve got great people—and your business is a lot easier to run when you’ve got talented people working for you.”

Ottimo does not have its own delivery driver and has no plans to hire one, Gough said. However, the restaurant’s pies can be ordered via GrubHub and other delivery services. The Ottimo owners were able to negotiate good rates from the services, allowing them to retain a worthwhile profit margin, Gough explained.

Time Square has experienced a renaissance over the past several years. The property was remodeled and now features Mexican food at long-time staple Baja Sonora, sandwiches and baked goods at the Coffee Parlor, Chinese food at Yang Chow 2.0 and beer at Steady.

“There’s plenty of room for all,” Gough said. “Nobody’s really in competition—we all have different things ... and will all rise together.”

“We want to just keep growing and be here for a long time,” Textor added. “I think it’d be great to have the kids that come here now bring their kids here one day.”

Ottimo Pizzeria is located at 2938 Clark Ave. and is open Wednesdays and Thursdays from 5-9 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays 4-10 p.m. and Sundays 4-8 p.m. ■



Carlos Garcia tosses pizza dough into the air at Ottimo Pizzeria Thursday, Feb. 10, 2022. Photo by Brandon Richardson.



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City submits new 8-year housing plan for state approval

BY KELLY PUENTE / Reporter

Long Beach submitted a revised Housing Element plan to state regulators earlier this month after the City Council unanimously approved the document at its Feb. 8 meeting. The plan includes more parcels for housing in higher income areas as well as updates on how the city can improve fair housing conditions.

The city every eight years is required to submit a Housing Element plan to the California Department of Housing and Community Development that shows how it expects to meet regional housing needs. Long Beach was assigned the goal of creating space for more than 26,000 units between 2021 and 2029, and nearly 60% of those units must be affordable.

If the city doesn’t receive state approval, it could face penalties including having to implement a major rezoning program that would require substantial resources, officials said.

Mayor Robert Garcia noted that Long Beach has made significant gains in the past decade in its approach to housing, thanks to efforts from the city and community advocates.

“If you go along the Downtown Corridor along Midtown and along Cambodia Town, you’re going to see a lot of great projects and development that’s happening,” he said. “And much of it is affordable.”

The Housing Element identifies parcels where developers can build housing based on local zoning laws, but it doesn’t guarantee housing will be built.

In fact, the city met only 17% of its affordable housing requirements during the last cycle.

The effort this time around includes allowing housing on more parcels identified in “high resource” areas of the city like Cal Heights, Bixby Knolls and all of East Long Beach, as well as an inclusionary housing policy that will require developers to reserve a percentage of new units for lower-income households.

This is the third draft Long Beach has submitted to the state because regulators required changes for the last two drafts. After a second round of review, state regulators in January mostly approved the plan but required some tweaks to fair housing and inventory analysis, officials said.

The city for its third draft added more analysis on smaller sites, an

estimated number of housing units in need of replacement and more information and community feedback from fair housing assessments.

Officials changed a previous version of the plan to add parcels in more affluent areas, like East Long Beach, following state feedback and criticism from community members who said affordable housing should be more widespread.

Councilman Rex Richardson said Long Beach needs to plan for growth that includes all residents, but finding funding for more affordable housing will continue to be a challenge without a dedicated source of revenue.

“We’re squeezing as much blood from the turnip as we can, but the truth is, we can’t compete with the scale that’s needed to keep things affordable,” he said. “We have a lot more work to do.” ■



Powdered sugar is added to the banana dessert pizza at Ottimo Pizzeria in East Long Beach Thursday, Feb. 10, 2022. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

Grand Prix track construction begins for second time in 6 months as organizers prep for April race



Workers piece together the racetrack for the 2022 Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach in Downtown Thursday, Feb. 17, 2022. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.



Grand Prix Association of Long Beach President and CEO Jim Michaelian and Indy car driver Oriol Servia stand on the racetrack ahead of the 2022 Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach in Downtown Thursday, Feb. 17, 2022. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.

BY JASON RUIZ / Reporter

Construction on the track that will host the Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach in April began last week, just five months after the annual race zoomed through Downtown in the fall due to the pandemic.

This is the second time organizers have had to set up the track on such short notice, the first time being when the race was moved to April after the inaugural event in 1975. The 2021 race was held in September and was one of the first mega-events in Southern California after stadiums largely sat empty since the pandemic began in March 2020.

Jim Michaelian, the CEO and president of the Grand Prix Association of Long Beach, said the race is riding a lot of momentum coming out of the September event, when Long Beach hosted a championship race for the first time. But Michaelian added that it feels good to be back on the race's normal schedule with this year's event April 8-10.

"We're delighted," he said. "We actually trademarked the name, 'Southern California's Official Spring Break,' and so we're back in the spring time, and it feels good."

A new addition to the April race will be the Porsche Carrera Cup North America series, which will run Saturday and Sunday. Two 45-minute races will include up to 35 identical Porsche race cars, a first for the city's track.

Michaelian said the April race could look a little different from September now that Los Angeles County health officials have lifted mask wearing requirements for outdoor mega-events like the Grand Prix.

In addition to mask wearing, attendees had to show proof of vaccination or a negative test to get into the September race. As of now, that could still be the case by the time race weekend arrives,

but Michaelian said they would comply with whatever health orders are in place at the time.

"We'll adhere to whatever the protocols are," he said. "If masking came back in as a requirement, we'd have to adhere to it."

The 50-day setup window is expected to conclude by the Thursday before race weekend. Crews would then have three weeks to take down the race track infrastructure.

The City Council voted in October to let race organizers keep up about 1,000 concrete railings from the September event to help with the quick turnaround but also reduced the setup window from 53 days to 50 days.

In December, the council approved a five-year extension with the Grand Prix that also provides organizers with a seat at the table for any future developments that might happen on the "Elephant Lot," the parking lot east of the Long Beach Convention Center that serves as an area for pit crews, grandstands and some of the race's turns.

That extension requires the Grand Prix Association to pay an annual contribution of \$30,000 to help restore streets that are damaged during the race and will also lead to a complete resurfacing of the stretch of Pine Avenue that is affected by race activities.

While Michaelian said interest is high for the April race despite it being just months removed from the Grand Prix's previous race, hosting two races per year is not something that is being explored.

"If you run another event, it better be something substantial because the stakeholders are going to endure having the streets shutdown, etcetera," he said.

"A logical request on [the city's] part is that there be a significant economic impact. If you can't deliver that, it makes it difficult to justify shutting these streets down for another whole weekend of racing activities." ■

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S-25 Sewer Lift Station Rehabilitation	WD-10-21	02/24/2022
Slurry/Ready-Mix Concrete	ITB LB22-013	02/25/2022
Project Room Key	RFP HE22-018	02/28/2022
LBRA Digital Inclusion Confidence Program	RFP ED22-021	03/01/2022
LBRA Digital Inclusion Free Internet Services	RFP ED22-022	03/01/2022
And Computing Devices		
Market Street Corridor Improvements Project	R-7177	03/02/2022
Make-up Air Unit Pre-Purchase Package	WD-27-22	03/02/2022
Exhaust Fans Pre-Purchase Package	WD-26-22	03/02/2022
Air Handling Units Pre-Purchase Package	WD-24-22	03/02/2022
Chiller Pre-Purchase Package	WD-25-22	03/02/2022
Heat Hot Water Sys. Pre-Purchase Package	WD-28-22	03/02/2022
Eng. Svcs. for Alamitos Reservoir Potable Tank #7 & Recycled Tank #22 Rehab.	RFP	03/02/2022
Furnish & Deliver PE Pipe and Fittings	ITB ER22-020	03/03/2022
Spinnaker Bay Drive Water Main Replacement, Phase 1	WD-17-20	03/03/2022
PRM Mass Care Shelter Electrical Project	RFP PR22-015	03/10/2022

Bidder Registration

To receive notifications of bid opportunities, register with the City of Long Beach at www.longbeach.gov/purchasing. 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
<http://www.longbeach.gov/finance/services-and-permits/towing-and-lien-sales/auction/>

Mar. 1 & 15, 2022
Registration & Viewing Hours:
8:00 A.M. – 9:50 A.M.

Time to Transform

New rail infrastructure, innovative data solutions, moving to 24/7 operations – the Port of Long Beach is working to meet today's challenges while preparing for tomorrow. Find out more in Executive Director Mario Cordero's 2022 State of the Port address at polb.com/stateoftheport.



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