

LONG BEACH

BUSINESS JOURNAL

An edition of the Long Beach Post

June 28, 2022

**BUILDING A BETTER
LONG BEACH**



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BUSINESS JOURNAL

211 E. Ocean Blvd., Ste. 400
Long Beach, CA 90802

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A man rides a bike across Long Beach Boulevard in front of the Broadway Block, a 432-unit mixed-use development in Downtown that includes a 23-story high-rise tower and a seven-story mid-rise building, Wednesday, June 22, 2022.

Brandon Richardson / Business Journal

In This Issue:
Building a Better Long Beach3

Work on ‘8 by 28’ Olympic initiative continues	3
Development List	4
Mayoral hopefuls share their visions for future of development in Long Beach	8
New townhouse project coming to North Long Beach	8
Ongoing development will help city’s rebound from COVID-19	9
LGBTQ cultural district coming to Broadway	13
What recession would mean for commercial and residential development in Long Beach	13
City extends ban on development along two West Long Beach corridors until June 2023	14
Developer breaks ground on Douglas Park office condos	15
Newswatch	17
Long Beach unemployment dips below pre-pandemic level	17
Blue Shield of California to bring jobs to Long Beach	17
West Coast port operations to continue if no labor agreement is reached by July 1 deadline—which is likely	18
A tear-down on Naples’ Treasure Island is listed at \$5M	19
City parklet program is ending, but staff will consider extensions for owners hoping to make them permanent	20
Nonstop flight to Nashville coming to Long Beach Airport	21
Long Beach Airport recovery continues, pacing ahead of nationwide rebound	22
May marked 2nd busiest month ever for Port of Long Beach—after May 2021	22
City Council approves new management agreement for imperiled Queen Mary	23
South of Nick’s Mexican Kitchen coming to Second Street next year	23
Gerald Desmond Bridge demolition begins July 9	24
DLBA awards \$20,000 in prizes to local startups in annual Pitchfest	24
Commission closing in on design for Belmont Shore’s new entryway signage	24
Health care wage increase could be on November ballot	25
Belmont Shore parking rates set to increase	26
Able ARTS Work becomes a 1st-time property owner with building in Bixby Knolls	26
Biden talks inflation, supply chain and infrastructure at Port of Los Angeles	27
Michael’s on Naples to close attached pizzeria, open Italian market pantry	28
Students learn coding, robotics and more with Shared Science	28
Celebrate Halloween with Shaquille O’Neal (maybe) at the Queen Mary’s Shaqtoberfest	29

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Long Beach Business Journal
211 E. Ocean Blvd., Ste. 400
Long Beach, CA 90802

Editorial Deadline:
Two weeks prior to publication. Email press releases to editor@lbbj.com.

Advertising Deadline:
Wednesday prior to publication.

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monday morning coffee

& Biz Brief

FREE email newsletters about issues, events and meetings for the week.

Monday Morning Coffee is sent out at 7 a.m., and BizBrief is news of the day, sent out Wednesday and Friday afternoons.

Work on ‘8 by 28’ Olympic initiative continues

By Christian May-Suzuki

As the 2028 Olympics—set to be hosted in Los Angeles—draw nearer, Long Beach continues to prepare for its role in the international event.

Mayor Robert Garcia announced the “8 by 28” initiative in 2016, which highlights eight major development projects the city is aiming to complete by the time the Olympics arrive in town.

Some of the projects—which are mostly being funded by Tidelands Operating Funds—were conceived prior to the announcement of the initiative, but they were brought under the umbrella as a representation of the city’s efforts to revitalize the areas that will act as the Long Beach Sports Park, the main hub for the Olympics in the city.

Here is a look at the progress of the eight projects that are part of the initiative.

Metro Blue Line improvements

Improvements to the Metro Blue Line—now known as the A Line—is one of the first projects completed as part of the initiative. LA Metro pumped around \$350 million into the improvements to the agency’s oldest line in service, which launched in 1990.

The renovation, which wrapped up in November 2020, modernized the connection between the Seventh Street Metro Center in Long Beach and the Compton Station.

“We’ve been pushing Metro for a long time to really upgrade the A line,” City Manager Tom Modica said. “Now we have brand new stations that got redone and brand new cars that got redone.”

These improvements were made by Metro mainly to bring the line up to modern safety and technology standards. That includes the addition of new crossover tracks and signal system and the addition of digital displays to stations on the line.

This project helps connect Los Angeles with Long Beach, which will be two of the main hubs of the 2028 Olympics.

Beach concession stands

Improvements to three of four concession stands along several of the city’s beaches have already been finished.

The completed stands—which are located at Bayshore Beach, Junipero Street and Granada Street—each host their own food vendors.

At Bayshore Beach is Grill ‘em All, a heavy metal themed burger establishment that caught the public’s eye when it was featured as a food truck on Food Network’s Great Food Truck Race. A water play area was also installed by the city at this stand, which has been such a success that Joshua Hickman, who serves as the Business Operations Bureau



Brandon Richardson / Business Journal

People wait to board the Metro A Line at the station on Long Beach Boulevard at Anaheim Street.

Manager for the Department of Public Works, said inspired a similar project in Downtown currently under construction. (Those projects are not related to the newly installed “Wibit” at Alamitos Beach.)

The vendor for the Granada location has yet to start operations as it works through the Coastal Commission permit process, but the stand is open after receiving a major facelift and a “water feature playground.”

Junipero’s location received a similar renovation to the Granada location, but it was given a different color scheme to differentiate the two stands. It has welcomed Saltwater Deck, which serves grass-fed beef burgers, wraps, breakfast burritos and frozen yogurt.

The fourth location, which is currently under construction at Alamitos Beach, is the largest project among the concession stand improvements. Unlike the other projects, an entirely new structure is being built at Alamitos Beach. The “core and shell” construction—which refers to the construction of the structure of a building before developing individual units—was recently completed, Hickman said.

At Bayshore Beach is Grill ‘em All, a heavy metal themed burger establishment that caught the public’s eye when it was featured as a food truck on Food Network’s Great Food Truck Race. A water play area was also installed by the city at this stand, which has been such a success that Joshua Hickman, who serves as the Business Operations Bureau

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SPACE BEACH

Relativity Space
Address: 2400 E. Wardlow Road
Size: 1 million square feet
Will house the company’s mission control center, proprietary Stargate 3D printers and more

ABL Space Systems
Address: Port of Long Beach – Pier T
Size: 8 acres
Spacecraft processing facility with office and warehouse space
Waterfront area will be used for delivery and shipping of cargo

SpaceX
Address: Port of Long Beach – Pier T
Size: 6 acres
Site used for docking vessels and offloading equipment, warehousing and office space
Company’s new West Coast launch vehicle recovery center

Rocket Lab
Address: 3881 McGowen St.
Relocation and expansion of headquarters
New facility houses the company’s first U.S.-based Mission Control Center with increased capacity for production of more than 12 launch vehicles annually

Virgin Orbit
Address: 3470 E. Conant St./3550 E. Conant St.
Expansion of existing headquarters to accommodate four new buildings totaling 315,000 square feet
Premier aerospace and rocket manufacturing facility
Project slated to bring 600 new jobs to the city

LONG BEACH AIRPORT

Completed

New Ticketing Lobby & Checked Baggage Inspection System
Building Height: One story
Size: 14,310 square feet
Amenities: Relocation of airline ticketing facilities into new 16,700-square-foot building that also includes 2,000 square feet of airline operation office space and 6,545 square feet of checked baggage inspection system facility
Start/Completion: 2020/2022

Under Construction

Baggage Claim
Building Height: One story
Size: 13,000 square feet
Amenities: 380 linear feet of airline side baggage claim devices for passenger side and a total of 240 linear feet of airline-side baggage claim devices
Start/Completion: 2020/Expected completion in late 2022

Historic Terminal Renovation
Amenities: Future home of rental car customer service operations, seismic upgrades and major renovations, will be restored to its classic west entrance
Start/Completion: 2018/Expected completion in late 2023

Approved

Final Phase II Projects
Projects approved: Terminal roadway improvements, ground transportation center and rental car ready-return
Will conclude the Phase II Terminal Area Improvement Program
Part of the city’s 8 by 28 Olympics initiative

NORTH LONG BEACH

Completed

Bridgepoint Long Beach
Address: 2400 E. Artesia Blvd.
Developer: Bridge Development Partners
Building Height: 36 feet
Size: 416,000-square-foot contemporary warehouse
Parking: 453 parking stalls
Amenities: 21,000 square feet of office space, mezzanine, solar panels
Start/Completion: 2019/2021

Under Construction

Edgewood Point
Address: 5100 Long Beach Blvd.
Developer: City Ventures
Building Height: Three stories
Units: 38 townhomes
Parking: 86 stalls
Amenities: Social event garden, outdoor living space, vegetable planter, bbq kitchen, harvest table, small shade structures, enhanced landscaping
Start Completion: 2021/TBA

Residential Project
Address: 4800 Long Beach Blvd.
Developer: City Ventures
Building Height: Three stories
Units: 18 townhomes
Parking: 41 stalls
Amenities: Vegetable planter area, kitchen and outdoor community spaces
Start/Completion: 2022/TBA

Residential Project
Address: 1115 E. Artesia Blvd.
Developer: Urban Pacific
Building Height: Three stories
Units: Five units
Parking: Ground-floor two-car garages
Amenities: Balconies
Start Completion: 2022/TBA



Edgewood Point
Courtesy of the city of Long Beach

Approved

Rhythm
Address: 5801-5893 Atlantic Ave.
Developer: Brandywine Homes
Building height: Three stories
Units: 84
Commercial Space: 2,294 square feet
Parking: 19 parking stalls for guests
Amenities: Two-car garage and private balcony accompanied by a common pool, community room, street-fronting commercial space, café, restaurant and outdoor dining space
Start/Completion: TBA

MIDTOWN & WEST LONG BEACH

Completed

Las Ventanas
Address: 1795 Long Beach Blvd.
Developer: AMCAL California
Building Height: Four stories
Units: 101 affordable housing units
Commercial Space: 3,938 sq. ft.
Parking: 68 residential parking spaces, 9 commercial parking spaces
Amenities: Children’s play area, computer lab, community room, adjacent to Metro A Line
Start/Completion: 2019/2021

Millennium Homes
Address: 116 + 128 W. 14th St./1348 Pacific Ave.
Developer: Habitat for Humanity of Greater Los Angeles
Building Height: Two stories
Units: 10 townhomes
Parking: Three guest parking spaces
Amenities: Each home will have a private yard and two-car garage as well as 1,500 square feet of common space, located near Metro A Line and other major transit routes
Start/Completion: 2020/2021

Bloom at Magnolia
Address: 1770 Magnolia Ave.
Developer: Linc Housing
Building Height: Four stories
Units: 40 affordable housing units
Parking: 20 parking spaces
Amenities: Computer lab, office space for case managers, bicycle parking, indoor and outdoor community space
Start/Completion: 2020/2021

Woodbridge Apartments
Address: 1117 Elm Ave./421 W. 33rd St.
Developer: Century Affordable Development
Building Height: Two, three-story buildings
Units: 49 affordable housing units
Parking: 106 parking spaces
Rehabilitation and preservation of existing affordable housing project
Amenities: Picnic areas, courtyards, on-site laundry facilities, gated access
Start/Completion: 2019/2021

Laserfiche
Address: 3443 Long Beach Blvd.
Developer: Urbana Development
Building height: Four stories
Size: 102,848-square-foot office building
Parking: Parking structure with 343 stalls
Amenities: Creative office building, large windows and terraced decks allowing for plenty of natural light
Start/Completion: 2019/2021

The Vault
Address: 1000 New York St.
Adaptive Reuse Project
Building Height: Four stories
Units: 19 live-work studios
Amenities: Rooftop access with panoramic views, large floor plans and secured entry
Start/Completion: 2020/2021

26 Point 2
Address: 3580 E. Pacific Coast Highway
Developer: Excelerate Housing Group
Building Height: Four stories
Units: 76 affordable housing units
Parking: 18 stalls
Amenities: Multi-purpose room, community kitchen and on-site supportive services to be provided by Mental Health America of Los Angeles
Start/Completion: 2022/TBA

Affordable Housing Project
Address: 2450 Long Beach Blvd.
Developer: Meta Housing
Building Height: Five stories
Units: 192 affordable housing units
Commercial Space: 5,622 square feet
Parking: 172 stalls
Start/Completion: 2022/TBA



The Cove
Courtesy of the city of Long Beach

Under Construction

Anaheim & Walnut
Address: 1500 E. Anaheim St.
Developer: BRIDGE Housing
Building Height: Five stories
Units: 88 affordable housing units
Commercial Space: 23,800 square feet
Parking: 156 stalls
Amenities: Community health and wellness center, expansive roof deck, commercial offices and health clinic
Start/Completion: 2021/Estimated 2023

The Cove
Address: 2221 W. Williams St.
Developer: Century Housing
Building Height: Four stories
Units: 89 affordable housing units
Commercial Space: N/A
Parking: 40 parking spaces
Amenities: Access to a network of on-site supportive service providers
Start/Completion: 2022/TBA

Long Beach Senior
Address: 941 E. Pacific Coast Highway
Developer: Mercy Housing
Building Height: Four stories
Units: 68 affordable housing units
Commercial Space: 4,000 square feet
Parking: 38 stalls
Amenities: Communal garden and resident programs related to health and wellness, financial literacy, art and cooking
Start/Completion: 2022/TBA

26 Point 2
Address: 3580 E. Pacific Coast Highway
Developer: Excelerate Housing Group
Building Height: Four stories
Units: 76 affordable housing units
Parking: 18 stalls
Amenities: Multi-purpose room, community kitchen and on-site supportive services to be provided by Mental Health America of Los Angeles
Start/Completion: 2022/TBA

Affordable Housing Project
Address: 2450 Long Beach Blvd.
Developer: Meta Housing
Building Height: Five stories
Units: 192 affordable housing units
Commercial Space: 5,622 square feet
Parking: 172 stalls
Start/Completion: 2022/TBA

Residential Project
Address: 4501 Orange Ave.
Building Height: Three stories
Units: 32 townhomes
Parking: Attached garages
Amenities: Balconies
Start/Completion: TBA

Shoemaker Bridge
Improve existing traffic safety operations
Increase multi-modal connectivity within project limits and surrounding area
Enhance complete streets elements by providing bicycle, pedestrian and streetscape improvements on major thoroughfares
Start/Completion: TBA

DOWNTOWN LONG BEACH

Completed

Shoreline Gateway
Address: 777 E. Ocean Blvd.
Developer: Anderson Pacific LLC
Building Height: 35 stories
Units: 315
Commercial Space: 6,700 square feet
Parking: 458 stalls
Amenities: 4,081-square-foot rooftop deck containing multiple deck areas featuring landscaping and hardscape amenities, including lounge tables and seating, as well as a 92-square-foot community room.
Start/Completion: 2018/2021

Ocean View Tower
Address: 200 W. Ocean Blvd.
Developer: MEIAO Investment
Building Height: 15 Stories, includes added two-story rooftop penthouse units
Units: 98
Parking: 150 stalls
Amenities: Pool and spa, community/pool room, fire pit, fitness room, outdoor dining, dog run
Start/Completion: 2017/2022

The Magnolia
Address: 500 W. Broadway
Developer: Ensemble Real Estate
Building Height: Seven stories
Units: 142
Commercial Space: 4,110 square feet
Parking: 191 stalls, 21 EV stalls
Amenities: Market café, rooftop pool and spa, fitness center and bicycle storage
Start/Completion: 2020-2022

Residential Project
Address: 3655 Elm Ave.
Developer: Olson Urban Housing
Building Height: Three stories
Units: 15
Amenities: Designed around a central motor court area with common open and private open space surrounding the outer ring
Start/Completion: TBA

Volta on Pine
Address: 635 Pine Ave.
Developer: Holland Partner Group
Building Height: Two eight-story buildings
Units: 271
Commercial Space: 1,305 square feet
Parking: 341; 56 bicycle stalls
Amenities: Rooftop terrace, fitness center, swimming pool and hot tub, grilling areas, electrical vehicle charging stations
Start/Completion: 2018/ 2021

5° at the Streets aka Place at the Streets
Address: 495 The Promenade N.
Developer: Shooshani Developers
Building Height: Four stories
Units: 20
Commercial Space: 5,200 square feet
Parking: 30 stalls
Amenities: Ground floor 24-hour eatery
Start/Completion: 2018/Fall 2022

Shaun Lumachi Innovation Center
Address: 309 Pine Ave.
Developer: City of Long Beach, Economic Development Department
Building Height: Two stories
Amenities: Working and meeting spaces, small business programs and resources
Start/Completion: 2018/2022

Granada Beach Concessions
Address: 5098 E. Ocean Blvd.
Developer: General Consolidated Constructors, Inc.
Building Height: One story
Commercial Space: 565 square feet
Amenities: Updated beach concessions with improved accessibility, children’s water play area, adult fitness and dog rinse station
Part of the city’s 8 by 28 Olympics initiative
Start/Completion: 2019/2021

Junipero Beach Concessions
Address: 2630 E. Ocean Blvd.
Developer: General Consolidated Constructors, Inc.
Building Height: One story
Commercial Space: 891 square feet
Amenities: Updated beach concessions with improved accessibility, basketball court, children’s play area, adult fitness station and dining
Part of the city’s 8 by 28 Olympics initiative
Start/Completion: 2019/2021

Under Construction

Breakers Hotel
Address: 210 E Ocean Blvd.
Developer: Pacific6
Building Height: 14 stories
Units: 185 hotel rooms
Amenities: Ground floor dining, wine bar, penthouse dining, rooftop bar, spa and fitness spaces, and meeting rooms
Start/Completion: 2019/TBA

Continued from page 5

Broadway Block
Address: 330 E. Third St. & 333 E. Broadway
Developer: Onni Development Group
Building Height: 23-story high rise, seven-story building
Units: 432
Commercial Space: 17,793 square feet
Parking: 582 stalls
Amenities: 104 bicycle stalls, proposed partnership with CSULB for programming of commercial/ public spaces, and a housing component for students
Start/Completion: 2019/2023

Aster
Address: 250 E. Broadway & 125 Long Beach Blvd.
Developer: Raintree-Evergreen, LLC
Building Height: Eight stories
Units: 218 – a mix of studios, one-, two-, and three-bedroom market-rate apartments and townhouses
Commercial Space: 7,292 square feet
Parking: 312; 44 bicycle stalls
Amenities: 11,600-square-foot courtyard, swimming pool, spa, barbeque area, and lounge seating amenities on third floor, bicycle kitchen, coworking space on ground floor, 749-square-foot rooftop lounge on eighth floor
Start/Completion: 2021/TBA

Broadstone Promenade
Address: 201 The Promenade N.
Developer: Alliance Residential
Building Height: Eight stories
Units: 189
Commercial Space: 10,000 square feet
Parking: 257; 40 bicycle stalls
Amenities: Ground floor retail space, fitness room, swimming pool, roof decks
Start/Completion: 2021/2023

Locust Long Beach Apartments
Address: 1112-1130 Locust Ave.
Developer: Locust Equities
Building Height: Seven stories
Units: 97
Parking: 122; 20 bicycle stalls
Amenities: Bicycle kitchen, approximately 2,000 square feet of fitness center recreational space, 2,588-square-foot courtyard, 2,500 square feet of open space, courtyard area on third floor with pool, spa, outdoor seating, landscaping measuring 3,710 square feet, third floor recreation room and gym measuring 1,850 square feet
Start/Completion: 2020/TBA

Alamitos Beach Concessions
Address: 780 E. Ocean Blvd.
Developer: Macro-Z Technology
Building Height: Two stories
Commercial Space: 4,240 square feet
Amenities: Café on ground floor, roof deck, game area, restroom and storage facilities, recreational equipment rental facility and outdoor recreation area
Start/Completion: 2019/ Estimated 2022



The Armory Art Collective

Courtesy of the city of Long Beach

Partake Collective
Address: 456 Elm Ave.
Building Height: Three stories
Units: 19 tenant commercial kitchens
Commercial Space: 60,040 square feet
Amenities: Designated public space for indoor dining, retail area, show kitchen for demonstrations, menu development, recipe tasting, and content creation
Start/Completion: 2021/2022

Ocean Center Building
Address: 110 W. Ocean Blvd.
Developer: Pacific6
Building Height: 14 stories
Units: 74
Size: 7,200 square feet of restaurant space; 5,400 square feet of retail space
Parking: 83 stalls
Amenities: Rooftop terraces and common spaces
Start/Completion: 2020/2022

SilverSands
Address: 2010 E. Ocean Blvd.
Developer: Silversands Properties, USA, Inc.
Building Height: Four stories
Units: 40 guest rooms, 56 condo units
Parking: 168 stalls
Amenities: Public stairway for coastal access
Start/Completion: 2021/TBA

The Hotel
Address: 107 Long Beach Blvd.
Developer: Yogesh Patel
Building Height: Five stories
Units: 34 guest rooms
Size: 30,620 square feet
Parking: 17 stalls
Amenities: On-site parking, rooftop deck, lounge areas, pool and spa
Start/Completion: 2018/2022

Residential Project
Address: 2200-2212 E. Seventh St. + 600-620 Dawson Ave.; 621 Dawson Ave.
Developer: Project Verve
Building Height: Three stories
Units: 23 for-sale units
Parking: Two-car attached garage, six guest parking stalls
Amenities: Rooftop decks and balconies
Start/Completion 2021/TBA

Office/Restaurant Project
Address: 180 E. Ocean Blvd.
Developer: 180 East Ocean LLC
Building Height: 12 stories
Size: 150,000 square feet of office space; 4,000 square feet of ground-floor retail
Parking: 1,012 stalls
Amenities: Indoor and outdoor communal workspaces and creative environments
Start/Completion 2021/Estimated September 2022

Approved

Civic Center Mid-Block
Address: 321 W. Ocean Blvd.
Developer: TBD
Building Height: Two, six-story buildings
Units: 580 total, 58 affordable and inclusionary
Commercial Space: 40,000 square feet
Parking: 885 parking stalls
Amenities: Large interior courtyards, pool, fitness and amenity space
Start/Completion: TBA

West Gateway/World Trade Center
Address: 600 W. Broadway
Developer: Trammell Crow
Building Height: Six buildings, 30-story tower, seven- and eight-story mid-rise buildings
Units: 756
Commercial Space: 1,000 square feet
Parking: 1,576 stalls
Amenities: Large open common spaces, rooftop decks
Start/Completion: TBA

Third + Pacific
Address: 131 W. Third St.-328 Pacific Ave.
Developer: Ensemble Real Estate
Building Height: Eight stories
Units: 271
Commercial Space: 11,912 square feet
Parking: 395; 59 bicycle stalls
Amenities: Public paseo, courtyard, fitness center, pool, roof deck and club room
Start/Completion: TBA

Mixed-Use Project
Address: 525 E. Broadway
Developer: 525 East Broadway, LLC
Building Height: Seven stories
Units: 48
Commercial Space: 5,415 square feet
Parking: 60 stalls
Amenities: Bicycle parking, storage rooms, covered outdoor arcade seating area, open common spaces and sun deck
Start/Completion: TBA

Armory Arts Collective
Address: 854 E. Seventh St.
Developer: Gundry Partners, LP
DBA Howard CDM
Building Height: Five stories
Units: 86 with 64 reserved for lower-income households
Amenities: Office space, performing arts center, gallery space, garden
Start/Completion: TBA

Calypso
Address: 636 Locust Ave.
Developer: Starpoint Properties
Building Height: Seven stories
Units: 108
Commercial Space: 1,045 square feet
Parking: 135 stalls
Amenities: Pool, community room, fitness area, lounge, barbeque grill, rooftop deck
Start/Completion: TBA

Residential Project
Address: 923 & 927 Long Beach Blvd.
Developer: A&H Architects, Inc.
Building Height: Six stories
Units: 75
Parking: 104 stalls
Amenities: 1,234 square-foot courtyard on second floor, roof deck
Start/Completion: TBA

American Life Hotel
Address: 100 E. Ocean Blvd.
Developer: American Life, Inc
Building Height: 30 stories
Units: 429 guest rooms
Size: 25,000 square feet of meeting and ballroom area; 15,000 square feet of restaurant area
Parking: 151 stalls
Amenities: Restaurant space, meeting and ballroom functions and rooftop deck
Start/Completion: TBA



6500 Pacific Coast Highway

Courtesy of the city of Long Beach

The Regency Palms II
Address: 810 Pine Ave.
Developer: American Life, Inc
Building Height: 10 stories
Units: 78 rooms for older adults
Parking: 86 stalls
Amenities: Fitness room, hair salon, physical therapy room and ground floor bistro
Start/Completion: TBA

Proposed & Under Review

Mosaic
Address: 501-599 Long Beach Blvd. and 450 The Promenade N.
Developer: Waterford Property Company
Building Height: Three eight-story buildings
Units: 900 (with a number of inclusionary units)
Commercial Space: 36,000 square feet
Parking: 1,383 stalls
Amenities: Creative offices and restaurant
Start/Completion: TBA

Queen Beach
Address: 937-947 Pine Ave.
Developer: Beach Cities Capital
Building Height: Eight stories
Units: 69
Commercial Space: 1,800 square feet
Parking: 123 stalls
Amenities: Rooftop deck, 5,000 square feet of amenity space
Start/Completion: TBA

Residential Project
Address: 909 Pine Ave.
Developer: Beach Cities Capital
Building Height: Five stories
Units: 49 micro-units
Start/Completion: TBA

EAST LONG BEACH

Completed

Dorado
Address: 3655 Norwalk Blvd.
Developer: Pulte Home Company, LLC
Building Height: Two stories
Units: 40 single-family homes
Parking: Two-car garages
Amenities: Gated community, open areas include meandering path, seating, BBQ area, play equipment
Start/Completion: 2018/2021

Parkside North Residence Hall at CSULB
Address: 1601 Earl Warren Drive
Developer: California State University, Long Beach
Building Height: Four stories
Units: 472 beds
Amenities: CSU system's first net-zero energy and LEED Platinum building, solar-paneled rooftop terrace, multiple courtyards, study spaces, laundry room and more
Start/Completion: 2021/2022

Under Construction

Airway Office Park
Address: 3810 & 3816 Stineman Court
Developer: Urbana Development
Building Height: Two stories
Commercial Space: Units range in size from 3,000 to 6,000 square feet
Amenities: All units have roll-up glass doors to private patios or covered balcony spaces and offer green space amenities
Start/Completion: 2021/ Estimated 2023

Approved

Belmont Beach and Aquatic Center
Address: 4200 E. Ocean Blvd.
Developer: City of Long Beach
State-of-the-art community aquatic space for recreation, teaching, competition and therapy
Maximizes use of beachfront location while expanding program capacity
Part of the city's 8 by 28 Olympics initiative


Onni Marina Shores
Address: 6500 E. Pacific Coast Highway
Developer: Onni Group
Building height: Two five-story buildings
Units: 670
Commercial Space: 4,000 square feet
Start/Completion: TBA

Mixed-Use Project
Address: 6615 E. Pacific Coast Highway
Developer: Carmel Partners
Building height: Six stories
Units: 380, including 71 affordable units
Commercial Space: 4,800 square feet
Start/Completion: TBA

Mixed-Use Project
Address: 6700 E. Pacific Coast Highway
Developer: Holland Partner Group
Building height: Six stories
Units: 303, including 13 affordable units
Commercial Space: 3,390 square feet
Start/Completion: TBA



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Mayoral hopefuls share their visions for future of development in Long Beach

By Christian May-Suzuki

The Long Beach mayoral race, which voters will decide in November, is down to two candidates: 9th District Councilmember Rex Richardson and 3rd District Councilmember Suzie Price, each with their own views and approach on how to tackle the various issues in the city, including development.

The Business Journal spoke with both Richardson and Price to get a better understanding of their thoughts on property development in Long Beach. Their responses have been edited for length and clarity.

What are your thoughts on how Long Beach has and should approach development?

RR: When I first started, it was very difficult to attract investment to our community to provide the basic needs and services and amenities that neighbors want. We had to do the hard work of addressing zoning

to make it easier for our city to attract the types of uses that the community wants.

Coming out of the pandemic, you see vacant storefronts and vacant buildings in almost every council district. Well, that's all we knew when I started. So I have a unique perspective, because if we were able to turn around the economic circumstances and attract investment in North Long Beach, we can do it anywhere, right?

Now, you need that perspective on Second Street and Belmont Shore. You've got closed down grocery stores on Los Coyotes in East Long Beach and North Long Beach, so we are in discussions to bring two new grocers to North Long Beach right now. From that standpoint, I have the hands-on experience of working together with the community on development that helps bring it up.

I also think that there needs to be balance. It's important that we develop with and for local residents. If we don't make sure that there

are protections in place to keep people from being forced out of their neighborhoods, then we're a part of the problem, not the solution.

Life support like protections for tenants, no net loss policies, inclusionary housing, these are policies and I've helped champion in the city that helped make sure that as we invest and as we grow as a city, we do so in a way that doesn't leave low-wage workers and working families behind.

SP: I think we've done a great job over the last eight years in terms of seizing development opportunities that makes sense for the city, but I think we have a lot more potential.

I see the city, especially our waterfront area, as having so much untapped potential. There are opportunities for us to showcase everything that Long Beach has to offer and really focus on our waterfront areas in a way that we have not been, and certainly have the potential to.

I think the focus of the city

moving forward really should be in two places. One is our waterfront, figuring out how to have development there that makes sense and brings people to the waterfront.

Whether that is investing in things like museums, public art, a remote campus for either LBCC or CSULB, sports or concert venues, we should have amenities that bring people to the waterfront.

The second area where our focus should be is on more mixed use developments that offer housing. Revitalizing our commercial corridors and large shopping centers that are no longer serving a purpose of attracting retail into mixed use developments is something that we need to focus on.

As we think about that, you look at where we need a lot of housing right now. We need more senior housing and middle income workforce housing for sure. You look at the Senior Arts Colony that we built in Long Beach, it's a great concept and allows for a lot more

Continued on page 10

New townhouse project coming to North Long Beach

By Christian May-Suzuki

A new zoning plan in North Long Beach has officially been put to use for the first time.

Long Beach-based developer Urban Pacific earlier this month celebrated the groundbreaking for a three-story, five-unit townhouse concept at 1115 E. Artesia Blvd. The project is one of five similar developments around the city. Its five units will be intended mainly for working class families that live with multiple generations of relatives.

Of the five units, four will have five bedrooms and five bathrooms, with the last being a three-bedroom unit. Many of the households that Urban Pacific Founder and CEO Scott Choppin expects to apply will have multiple income earners because of their multi-generational status, meaning that setting income requirements is difficult.

There are no specific income ranges required to apply, but Urban Pacific's focus will be on households making between 80-120% of the area median income. For a household of five, that equates to \$102,950 to \$129,688 per year.

"We're not required to only rent

Continued on page 14



Brandon Richardson / Business Journal

Construction crews work on a residential development at Anaheim Street and Walnut Avenue in the heart of Cambodia Town.

FROM THE EDITOR: HAYLEY MUNGUIA

Ongoing development will help city's rebound from COVID-19

While COVID-19 brought development to a halt in cities across the country and the world, construction continued to hum in Long Beach—albeit at a slower pace.

"One thing we did really early on, which was not the case in other big cities: When the pandemic hit, we made a direct appeal to the governor, as did a couple of mayors in California, to not stop construction of projects," Mayor Robert Garcia told me over the phone last week, "and we got that."

These days, construction across the city is nearing its pre-pandemic level. There's about \$500 million worth of projects that have been permitted and are under construction and about 4,000 residential units currently in the pipeline.

Garcia attributes the ongoing momentum to Long Beach's early action in 2020.

"Having that conversation [with Gov. Gavin Newsom] and him giving us the authority to still put into place really strong protections," he said, which included testing, social distancing and other requirements for construction workers, allowed the city to safely continue to build.

"Certainly we had to shut down businesses and restaurants, but construction actually didn't stop."

"If construction were to stop, we could have

killed and permanently stopped dozens of projects," Garcia added. So while the pandemic "did slow down construction in some cases, it didn't stop projects."

Now, there are two dozen major projects currently under construction in Long Beach, while 18 more have been approved and more are under review.

The Downtown area has been a major focus for developers in recent years, as the city's skyline continues to grow. Just last year, a new tower—Shoreline Gateway—claimed the title of the tallest building in Long Beach.

But some of the most exciting projects looking forward are slated for other areas of the city. Three new developments are coming near 2ND & PCH in Southeast Long Beach that will offer more retail space and more than 1,300 new residential units.

Of course, those new units are sorely needed. As the city continues to build, housing remains a key concern. Under the Regional Housing Needs Assessment, Long Beach has been tasked with building 26,502 units between 2021 and 2029—even as the city failed to meet its previous housing needs goal of 7,048.

And while the Southeast Long Beach projects will contribute to that lofty goal, Garcia said

he still expects most of the housing growth to continue closer to Downtown.

"The single most important part of what we're doing is more housing," he told me. "California is in a housing crisis, and we need a lot more housing. We need a lot more density in areas that can take the density—particularly in Downtown and Midtown."

The city's list of ongoing development projects bears that out. In Downtown alone, the long-awaited Broadway Block, which is slated for completion next year, will offer 432 units, while a slate of other forthcoming projects like the Civic Center Mid-Block, West Gateway/World Trade Center and Third + Pacific will add over 1,500 more.

To be clear, COVID-19 did slow down progress on several projects. But it's significant that those developments are still moving forward. The city is continuing to reinvent itself in ways that will, ideally, ease the burden of rising housing costs while offering better amenities and a more diverse array of businesses, shops and restaurants for the community.

We're not there yet, but together we're rebounding from the worst of the pandemic. Together, we're building a better Long Beach. ■

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Brandon Richardson / Business Journal

Ninth District Councilmember and mayoral candidate Rex Richardson speaks during a groundbreaking ceremony for office condominiums at Douglas Park.

Mayoral Hopefuls

Continued from page 8

engagement and housing for seniors.

What are your thoughts on the Elephant Lot and how it should be used?

RR: I think the Elephant Lot presents an opportunity to meet some of the city's biggest challenges. In the years ahead, we need to figure out how to grow our revenues as a city.

The first thing I would do is engage directly with the stakeholders from the adjacent residents on Ocean, then talk to the Convention and Visitors Bureau to figure out what their vision is. Although there hasn't been a meaningful conversation with the Angels, if that opportunity presents itself, we need to make sure that whatever we negotiate protects the interests of our residents.

Personally, I would like to see some combination with entertainment, since that is the Downtown entertainment district. If there's an opportunity to make sure that there's local good jobs that pay a living wage and housing, it would be great if there's an opportunity to integrate those things into that site.

We certainly need to be smart about the way it is planned, but I've seen some really creative things in other cities with the way that development has taken place. I think it's a real opportunity to add something that will really enhance our waterfront and add economic value to the city.

In terms of what exactly the use is, I'm a bit agnostic. I think we just have to understand what our guiding principles are and let that drive the discussion.

SP: I think the Elephant Lot is an underutilized asset, and we need to activate it for the people who live and work here. We need to be creative and open minded, but have it be a public service type of establishment, whether it's a museum, or concert venue, or a sports complex as we head into the Olympics.

How do we create spaces, either in or around the Elephant Lot,

that are similar to things like the Highline in New York, where you've got a lot of walkability and public art along the way?

I think about how we feature that area and incorporate—with the help of some urbanists—public art and walkability around that area and use the Elephant Lot as a public serving amenity. I also worry about uses that would create too much of a parking impact.

Anytime you have a surface lot adjacent to the ocean or close to like the Elephant Lot is, you have a unique opportunity for something to help activate it.

Obviously, I'd want to have a lot of public engagement on it, but I would love to see an art museum with a music venue at that location that partners with the university. I think that would be fantastic.

How do you feel the city should tackle meeting the affordable housing requirements set by the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (10,000 by mid-October, 26,502 units by 2029)?

RR: I think you have to invest in every community. The most significant barrier to building housing is not the space. We've already identified through our Land Use Element space and capacity for 26,000 units in Long Beach. So what is the challenge of getting into affordability? It's because we don't have a dedicated source of revenue.

When redevelopment agencies ended in 2013, that took about \$25 to \$30 million a year away, and we haven't replaced that. We've done grant programs to do things like motel conversions, but it pales in comparison to the scope that we need to build.

We're going to need to partner with other agencies who also have similar interests. By working together, we can identify how we can layer funding together around projects and how we can leverage shared use of properties, facilities and land.

Imagine if we had had a program that guaranteed that the affordable housing produced in our city goes to students on free and reduced lunch. Those students now have a better chance at higher educational attainment levels, better graduation



Courtesy of Suzie Price

Third District Councilmember and mayoral candidate Suzie Price poses during a photoshoot in Downtown.

rates and better educational outcomes, because they have housing stability and security.

That's the way that we have to as a city think comprehensively about bringing all of our partners together. If we partner with educational institutions, health care and others, we can build housing that's available for our workforce here in Long Beach.

SP: We've taken some good steps in the past few years by adopting policies like our inclusionary housing policy, which does incentivize affordable housing projects. Right now, our number one source of affordable housing creation in the city is our ADUs. That's not low-affordable, but it does provide different price points for people to be able to enter the housing market. I think we need to continue to do that where it makes sense.

I think trying to promote and incentivize more affordable housing projects throughout the city is critical for us and working with developers to streamline their approval processes will help in that endeavor.

When I talk to developers who create affordable housing projects, they will say that it takes years for a project to come online, and that's just unacceptable because the need is now. Really thinking about how we can streamline and incentivize the process to develop affordable housing is critical.

I think the other thing that we really should be doing more of is public-private partnerships with the city, or the city can leverage some of its own credit rating and financial status to be able to work with private developers to create more affordable housing projects.

Those kinds of partnerships provide opportunities for us to enhance our affordable housing stock, but it needs to be made a priority.

If you are elected, what would be the first thing you do or push for to change development in the city?

RR: One of the first things that I'll do as mayor is establish a deputy mayor for economic development, recovery. This will be sort of a czar in the Mayor's Office who can help lead and grow a Long Beach Advisory

Team whose job is to explore opportunities to attract businesses and high paying jobs to our city, and housing is central to that.

When people think about doing business with Long Beach, we should think about three words: ease, speed and predictability. It should be easy and fast, you should know what to expect from our city, and we should know how long it's going to take and how much it will cost.

In the first 100 days, I'm going to convene partners in education and health care to see what commitment and partnerships can be made to produce housing that's truly affordable for the average family with students in public schools here in Long Beach.

I'm going to make sure that whatever we do is in partnership with those communities who are very invested in making sure that we get it right. We're going to partner with educational institutions, nonprofits and community development corporations to make sure that we have the right people at the table to make sure that we do smart development in our city.

SP: It's a really simple thing: I would add more planners for our city's Development Services team.

We have fewer planners per capita than most of our peer cities, and that has resulted in a lot of unnecessary delays and a disincentive for people to want to invest in the city. Given the potential that we have a city of our size, we really need to have more developers and a streamlined process.

I also think it's important for us to consider having an architect on staff to help with the broader vision on projects we review. We have an amazing team already in place, but we have a team that is short staffed and often doesn't have the ability to have a watchful eye over every project.

I would love to have an architect on staff who's connected with the broader architect associations in the city and the region. We can have a peer review and more of an eye on what the future developments look like and how they fit together so that we have some consistency in the city in terms of style and direction. ■

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Olympic Initiative

Continued from page 3

their service lives. But that process has proved more complex than initially anticipated.

One challenge came when one of the towers, painted with a rainbow of colors and dubbed a Pride Tower to celebrate the LGBT community during 2020's Pride Month, was vandalized and burned down almost a year later. A new Pride Tower was erected in June last year.

While the timeline for this project has not been significantly impacted by COVID or this incident, the cost may have been. Hickman estimated that the cost for each lifeguard tower was around \$60,000, but that figure is from prior to the pandemic.

"There's been some inflation and other things that have impacted different costs," Hickman said. "So, those are somewhat old numbers."

Hickman could not provide current estimates for the cost.

Long Beach Arena

The Arena itself received renovations in the form of the Pacific Ballroom in 2013, but there is still one major step that needs to be taken to prepare the venue for the Olympics.

"Our arena is heavily used right now, but the seats aren't really used," Modica said.

Once a place that hosted a plethora of concerts and some of the biggest sporting events in the world, including volleyball events at the 1984 Olympics, the arena has since seen its use shift to events like conferences that fit within the arena space itself and don't require use of the built-in seating.

Now, the city is looking to prepare the arena for a return to its roots—and the seating needs to be upgraded. The arena's seating is the primary issue that needs to be addressed for spectators to view handball events, which Modica expects to be completed by the 2028 deadline.

On top of seating upgrades, Modica said there will be small improvements to HVAC and other systems that keep the building functioning behind the scenes. The full scope of the improvements has yet to be finalized.

Convention Center hotel

While there are plenty of hotels in the Downtown area, city officials hope to provide even more accommodations in the immediate vicinity of the Long Beach Convention Center to maximize convenience for visitors.

To that end, work on conceiving a new hotel at 100 E. Ocean Blvd., at Pine Avenue, was key to facilitating the hosting of the Olympics. Plans for the project were shown to the public in 2019, and the land for a 30-story hotel has been sold to American Life, Inc., Modica says, but COVID-19 caused a long delay in the process.

"Obviously in the pandemic hotel

financing has become difficult," Modica said. "They're looking to get their project up and going."

Despite this, Modica expects the project to be complete in time for the Olympics, but the timeline is still unclear. The hotel will join a long list in Long Beach's Downtown scene, but its location is crucial for Modica and his team.

"That will be a huge, 20-plus story hotel right there on our key corridor overlooking the entire event," Modica said. "So that'll be a customer experience as well."

Belmont Pool

The largest and longest standing project is also one of the only pieces of the 8 by 28 initiative that will not be ready in time for the Olympics.

Work to build a new Belmont Pool started in 2014, soon after the previous building—which played

host to the 1968 summer Olympic swimming trials—was demolished due to safety concerns related to the building's age. The city has been using an outdoor pool in its stead, but a new swimming complex has been in the works ever since.

However, delays in receiving approval from the Coastal Commission pushed the project beyond the Olympic deadline. After designs for the pool were held up for years in legal challenges and appeals by residents, the commission tasked the city with making concrete changes to the plans for the complex last February to make the pool more accessible for those in less affluent communities.

Plans for the new complex feature a 50-meter Olympic-sized swimming pool alongside a shallower pool for classes and youth. Diving boards will be installed at several different heights, and the existing outdoor

pool will be replaced by another more permanent pool as part of the complex, which will be outfitted with new restrooms and showers.

Seating is also key for spectators, and plans for the project call for almost 2,000 seats to be built throughout the complex, including 1,555 at the main pool.

Currently, Modica said the project is in its financing stages, and the team working on the project is hoping to have that completed by the end of the year, with construction expected to start soon after.

The pool is not expected to be completed by the 2028 deadline, and the cost is expected to be in excess of \$100 million. Modica said more specific projections on the costs for the pool and other projects will be shared in an upcoming town hall on the initiative. ■



A rendering of the future Belmont Veterans Memorial Pier enhancements, which will see the pier transformed into a rainbow-shaped arch.



A rendering of the the Belmont Beach and Aquatic Center.

LGBTQ cultural district coming to Broadway

By Jason Ruiz

Long Beach is moving forward with the initial phase of designating the Broadway Corridor and its surrounding neighborhoods as a cultural district to recognize the contributions of the LGBTQ community.

The City Council voted unanimously last week in favor of having city management start discussions with residents, LGBTQ community members and historians on how to move forward with the potential designation.

Mayor Robert Garcia, the city's first openly gay mayor, said the corridor has been a center of political activism, inclusion and a safe haven for the city's LGBTQ community for decades and it was time to recognize the historical contributions and significance of the corridor.

"It was the one place you could go to and be open, come out and be with friends," Garcia said.

The corridor was broadly defined in Garcia's letter to the council as the stretch of Broadway between Alamitos and Junipero avenues and the adjacent neighborhoods, but the scope of any district is likely to be decided through community input.

Councilmember Cindy Allen coauthored the request and said



People walk across Broadway near Hot Java using a rainbow crosswalk.

that the corridor played a central part in the LGBTQ community's history and that the city should stay focused on being even more welcoming and inclusive.

Allen echoed Garcia in pointing out the significance the corridor still plays for the community.

"They are homes away from homes, community centers and

gathering centers and make people feel safe in our community when so many other communities do not feel safe," Allen said of LGBTQ-owned businesses in the area.

It's unclear how long the outreach process will be or how much designating the cultural district could cost the city. Part of the request asked for an initial feasibility

assessment and for the city manager to identify funding.

The city typically starts its annual budget process in July, when the mayor and city manager release a tentative budget, followed by public hearings in August and September before the council adopts the full budget before the start of the fiscal year in October. ■

What recession would mean for commercial and residential development in Long Beach

By Christian May-Suzuki

So far, 2022 has been a year of economic red flags. The Federal Reserve approved a dramatic increase of 75 basis points to combat a colossal 8.6% inflation rate, the highest since December 1981. The NASDAQ is down 3,000 points from the same time last year—and almost 1,000 points since May.

Taken together, many economists agree that these things point to a potential recession looming, just two years after COVID-19 caused its own recession. But the quick turnaround offers insight into how the development picture in Long Beach could be impacted.

After seeing record-breaking numbers for permits issued in 2017 and seeing similar numbers in 2018 and 2019, the city went from around 12,600 permits in 2019 to 10,300 permits issued in 2020—a decrease of over 18%.

Long Beach's Development Services Department is also concerned about the valuation of those permits, which can reflect the size of projects decreasing during a recession.

"A permit for a high-rise is different from a permit for an addition to a single-family home," the department's Deputy Director Oscar Orci said. "The value of those permits dropped, which tells the story that even though we issued over 10,000 permits in 2020, they're largely for smaller projects than what we had encountered in the previous three years."

Overall value of the permits dropped 30%—significantly more than the actual number issued.

Luckily for Long Beach, though, projects don't just suddenly stop when economic factors are looking grim and new permits aren't being issued. When banks commit funding to a project that takes multiple years, they can't simply pull out of their obligations if they

see a recession coming.

"It's not as though when you're in the middle of a development, even if a recession hits, you can just stop," Eric Sussman, adjunct professor of accounting and real estate at UCLA, said. "You're already out of the ground, you've gotten commitments for financing and contracts with subcontractors presumably, so you move forward with the development and finish where the economy is."

This system has allowed for development plans to continue, even through the pandemic. Projects like SilverSands—a mixed-use development on Cherry and Ocean—and the Aster on Broadway and Long Beach were projects that started prior to the pandemic are still moving forward, albeit slower than originally planned due to COVID-related delays.

"Those are projects that were slowed down, but they have their financing, and now they're moving forward," Orci said. "We have a lot of

that activity here in the city."

Still, according to Richard Green, director and chair of the USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, the housing market typically will be the first sign of recession—and of the recovery that follows—while commercial projects tend to lag behind because of the length of the process to approve and construct such developments.

Long Beach is not immune to this trend. Development is still able to move forward, Orci said, but the complexity of larger housing and major commercial projects made those options unattractive during the recession.

"We did see a transition to those smaller projects that have potentially less value," Orci said. "One of the realities of the world is the guy that's replacing your roof, as an example, needs to feed his family. And he's not going to slow down because of COVID."

Looking forward, it's hard to predict exactly when the next

City extends ban on development along two West Long Beach corridors until June 2023

The idea is to prevent the loss of valuable space for a grocery store, pharmacy or even a coffee house—amenities the area is lacking.

By Jason Ruiz

A moratorium blocking the construction of residential developments along two West Long Beach corridors has been extended after the City Council asked for another 12 months to give planners more time to update zoning in the area.

The existing moratorium applied to the Santa Fe Corridor between Pacific Coast Highway and Wardlow Road and the Willow Street Corridor between the 710 Freeway and the city’s boundary with Wilmington. It was set to expire June 15.

The ban was put in place

in June 2021 at the request of Councilmember Roberto Uranga, who said that continued development before new zoning laws are implemented could lead to the loss of valuable space for a grocery store, pharmacy or even a coffee house—amenities the area is lacking.

“We need to activate those two streets, and they need to be developed and be more neighborhood-serving,” said Uranga, who represents West Long Beach.

A city memo said the Development Services Department needed more time to continue the community engagement process and satisfy posting requirements before approving the zoning changes.

Long Beach updated its land-use policies in recent years but has yet to implement those changes through all communities, meaning that decades-old zoning laws are currently in effect in some parts of the city.

The Santa Fe and Willow corridors are designated to have up to three stories of development, but new land-use plans would encourage using the bottom story for neighborhood-serving purposes

like retail or restaurants.

Gilbert Ayala said he purchased a property in the affected area in 2020 with the hope of developing what used to be a parking lot into two duplexes, but before he was able to pull permits for the project the moratorium was approved.

But that was after he spent money on an architect and other pre-building processes, Ayala said.

“I don’t think it’s fair for me,” Ayala said. “I followed all the guidelines the city gave me to follow. I think I should be compensated for the money I spent on my property.”

A market study aimed at attracting investment to the area has also not been completed. The memo said that the study is likely to begin in July and could take up to 24 months to complete.

The moratorium went into effect June 21 and will run another 12 months or until the city’s zoning is brought up to date with its recently adopted policies.

However, Allison Spindler-Ruiz, the acting planning bureau manager for the city, said she anticipated the new zoning should be ready to be voted on by the end of 2022. ■

Recession

Continued from page 13

recession will hit—and that’s because the factors that go into a recession are complex. The National Bureau of Economic Research’s definition maintains that “a recession involves a significant decline in economic activity that is spread across the economy and lasts more than a few months,” but it uses a swath of criteria to determine when exactly those conditions have been met.

For Sussman, the technicalities may be beside the point.

“We have already experienced and are going to experience a significant slowdown in consumer spending, and that is going to result in a significant slowdown in GDP growth,” he said. “Whether we slip into a recession and go negative or it’s anemic and there’s one or 2% economic growth, you’re way behind inflation, so the real growth is negative.”

As for whether or not long-term losses for the economy are coming, Green and Sussman both project that there is a strong possibility for recession in the next year. But Sussman said trying to calculate the exact probability is not productive.

“A couple of weeks ago Goldman Sachs were handicapping the odds of recession at 35%. OK, I could say it’s 68.7%. It’s ridiculous,” Sussman said. “No one can predict a recession with certainty, but that’s not exactly the right question.”

Whether there is an official recession or economic growth continues to stagnate, this isn’t the first time Long Beach has faced such adversity. Orci has worked through multiple recessions over his over 30 years of experience, giving him the experience to know what tools Development Services will need to tackle another recession.

The department is not reliant on the general fund, instead generating money through its services. That has allowed it to create a reserve fund to help protect itself from shortfalls.

Monitoring and forecasting projects has also become an important part of Development Services’ routine to ensure the city is prepared for a rainy day.

“We monitor our permit activity, our valuation activity, our revenues and expenses on a quarterly basis,” Orci said. “There’s a lot more careful review.”

On the side of projection, Orci said that the city takes a modest approach to ensure that money is available during the inevitable stretches of economic struggle.

“It’s foolhardy to think that there won’t be [tough periods], because that’s the nature of the economy here in the United States,” Orci said. “We are very conservative in our forecasting, so that we’re ready for the next recession if and when it hits.” ■



Brandon Richardson / Business Journal

Developers, construction workers and city officials celebrated the groundbreaking of Airway Office Park, an office condominium project at Douglas Park, after an early morning summer storm muddled up the construction site.

Developer breaks ground on Douglas Park office condos

By Christian May-Suzuki

After more than a decade, Douglas Park near Long Beach Airport is nearing completion.

Urbana Development last week celebrated the groundbreaking of the two-building Airway Office Park, which is billed as the final office project in the 200-acre Douglas Park business development.

“This is a success story,” 9th District Councilmember Rex

Richardson said. “It’s a watershed moment.”

Airway Office Park will occupy 3.7 acres of land across two units. The first, at 3810 Stineman Court, will be approximately 32,591 square feet and will share a lot with a roughly 27,664-square-foot building at 3816 Stineman Court. Units in the two buildings will share a 230-space parking lot for tenants.

Both buildings will feature a total of 14 individual office condominiums ranging from

approximately 3,000 to 60,000 square feet. These units will each have individual signage opportunities, though agreements for a full floor or building are also available for interested parties.

Units will be built with patio and balcony space and are outfitted with roll-up glass doors to facilitate the flow of natural light into the units.

Urbana Development has been deeply involved in the Douglas Park development project, most recently completing The Terminal at Douglas

Park prior to the pandemic.

As the final office project in the Douglas Park development, officials said the kickoff of this project is an accomplishment for both Urbana and the city of Long Beach.

“With smart planning, good staff, and great partners, we were able to pull off a municipal miracle,” Richardson said of Douglas Park.

Both buildings are for lease or sale. Construction is slated to wrap up in March. For more information, visit airwayofficepark.com. ■

New Townhouse

Continued from page 8

to tenants that are in that specific range. We’ll have families that are above that,” Choppin said. “But [80%-120%] is going to be typical of what you see.”

Parking will be provided to each unit in the form of a ground-floor two-car garage.

“What we find is these multi-gen families are quite often sharing cars,” Choppin said. “The idea that would typically strike people as ‘five bedrooms and five people must mean five cars’ is not correct.”



Courtesy of the city of Long Beach

A rendering of the urban townhouse project concept at 1115 E. Artesia Blvd.

The development is the first to fall under the Uptown Planning Land Use and Neighborhood Strategy (UPLAN), which changed zoning to encourage uses like housing, grocery stores and health care.

“One of the bigger issues was the outdated zoning in North Long Beach,” Councilmember Rex Richardson, whose 9th District includes the project, said. “We had liquor stores and motels and a whole lot of certain uses, and not a lot of what the community needed.”

He championed the UPLAN as a way to tackle that problem, and his efforts were rewarded when the first phase of the plan—involving

zoning changes in the Atlantic and Artesia Corridors—was adopted in November 2020.

Adding this townhouse project to North Long Beach will also make use of a long underutilized lot. Richardson said the lot has been vacant for at least two decades, and the UPLAN changes made it easier for Urban Pacific to get this project approved.

The building itself will boast a contemporary design with awnings and a sharp color palette to improve building depth. Each of the units will feature balconies and a variety

of window sizes along the front of the building for aesthetics and access to light.

Richardson said the project is an important step toward reimagining development in North Long Beach.

“We have to find opportunities to provide housing that’s affordable,” Richardson said. “No matter the size, whether it’s five units or 50 units, we have to explore all those opportunities.”

Construction for the project is expected to take 8 to 10 months to complete. ■



Courtesy of Urbana Development

A rendering showing the outdoor spaces at Airway Office Park, an office condominium project at Douglas Park.



Courtesy of Urbana Development

A rendering showing the facade at Airway Office Park, an office condominium project at Douglas Park.

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By Brandon Richardson

More than two years after massive pandemic-induced job losses, unemployment in Long Beach has dipped below pre-pandemic levels, according to data released by the California Economic Development Department earlier this month.

In May, Long Beach unemployment dropped to 4.6%, down from 4.8% the month before. The unemployment rate was 4.8% in February 2020, before the pandemic sent it skyrocketing, reaching a high of 19% by May of that year.

"The only two industries that are really lagging are arts, entertainment, recreation and accommodation, and food service," Nick Schultz, executive director of the city's Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Network, told the Business Journal in an interview. "Other industries, like transportation and warehousing, are up 14% from pre-pandemic levels."

The Long Beach labor force and number of employed residents, however, are actually lower than they were prior to the pandemic, the data shows. The city's labor force was 231,900 in May, down 11,500 from February 2020. Similarly, the number of employed residents was down 10,500.

The industries that are at or above pre-pandemic levels are typically higher paying than the hospitality and tourism jobs that are lagging, Schultz said. Because of that, he said



Brandon Richardson / Business Journal

A server talks to diners sitting on the parklet in front of Open Sesame in Belmont Shore.

he believes the city is in a stronger economic position—in terms of jobs—than it was before COVID-19.

Several factors have likely contributed to the suppression of the labor force and number of employed residents, Schultz said.

"Women haven't returned to the workforce in the same numbers that they were before the pandemic—child care and some other things continue to be a challenge," he said.

"Also," Schultz added, "a lot of people, because of the number of better paying jobs, are taking some time to do training or figuring out how to transition to a better job in one of these industries that are booming."

Residents who are not actively looking for work are not included in the city's labor force or employment figures.

The city's unemployment rate is on par with Los Angeles County's overall, which is 4.5% as of May. However, the city is trailing behind nearly 67% of all 124 other cities and areas countywide. Only 29% of the county's cities and areas have higher unemployment rates than Long Beach.

Four cities—Hawthorne, Los Angeles, Norwalk and Pico Rivera—have the same unemployment rate as Long Beach.

Statewide, the unemployment rate fell to 4.3% in May, down

from 4.6% the month before. California's unemployment rate remains elevated compared to the national rate, which reached 3.6% last month—just shy of the 3.5% unemployment rate in February 2020, which was its lowest point since 1969.

With the highest inflation in decades and interest rates being hiked up quickly, some economists are predicting the U.S. will enter a recession soon and that unemployment rates will begin to rise. In its most recent outlook report, Beacon Economics predicts the country is inching ever closer to a "serious contraction."

"The trillion-dollar questions are when will a recession likely begin and how bad will it be; timing wise, certainly not yet," Beacon founding partner Christopher Thornberg said in a statement.

In Long Beach, Schultz said he would not make predictions about impacts on the local economy's labor market. He said there is too much uncertainty that essentially boils down to consumer spending habits.

Amid the pandemic, money was spent heavily on goods, but now leisure and entertainment are making a comeback, Schultz explained. If consumers pull back from goods in favor of experience, the reduced demand could eat into profits.

"When you reduce the demand and the profit that the producers can make," Schultz said, "that's when we start to see job loss." ■

Blue Shield of California to bring jobs to Long Beach

By Brandon Richardson

Nonprofit insurance provider Blue Shield of California, the state's third largest health plan, recently signed a long-term lease for office space in East Long Beach that will bring over 1,000 jobs to the city.

The company signed an 11-year lease for 71,753 square feet of office space at 3840 Kilroy Airport Way at the Aero Long Beach office campus. The five-story, roughly 136,000-square-foot building has sat vacant for about two years after Epton America relocated its headquarters to Los Alamitos in the summer of 2020.

The news comes shortly after BH Properties announced on June 13 it had purchased two Monterey Park office buildings from Blue Shield for \$15 million in a leaseback deal with the health provider.

"Blue Shield has decided to consolidate some of its office spaces in the Los Angeles region," the company said in an email to the Business Journal. "This aligns with Blue Shield's new hybrid approach to work, which gives employees flexibility to remain working from home much of the time, purposefully using the office space for activities best done in person."

Though its leaseback with BH runs through July 2023, the company



Brandon Richardson / Business Journal

Blue Shield of California recently leased over 71,000 square feet of office space at 3840 Kilroy Airport Way in East Long Beach.

stated it plans to occupy the Long Beach space in May of next year.

Between 1,200 and 1,300 people will work from the new satellite office, according to the company, which remains headquartered in Oakland. Monterey Park employees will relocate to the Long Beach office.

"[Blue Shield] was attracted to the Long Beach area for its diverse, exceptional talent pool," the company stated, "its central location for LA employee commutes, proximity to the nearby Long Beach airport and many other local amenities." ■

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West Coast port operations to continue if no labor agreement is reached by July 1 deadline—which is likely

Neither the dockworkers union nor the agency representing their employers expects a deal to be reached prior to the expiration of the current agreement.

By Brandon Richardson

As negotiations between the union representing tens of thousands of West Coast dockworkers and the agency representing their employers continue, neither party expects a deal to be reached prior to the July 1 expiration of the current agreement, according to a joint statement.

Heading into discussions, there were concerns from industry experts that negotiations between the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, which represents more than 22,000 workers at 29 ports, and the Pacific Maritime Association could become contentious and cause further disruption to the already overburdened supply chain.

The two parties, however, have stated no such disruptions will take place.

“This timing is typical, and cargo operations continue beyond the expiration of the contract,” the groups said in a joint statement earlier this month. “Neither party is preparing for a strike or a lockout, contrary to speculation in news reports.”

Fears in the industry stem from previous negotiations, which have seen workers strike and employers lock out employees more than once over the past two decades.

In 2002, heated negotiations led to PMA, which represents dozens of ocean carriers and terminal operators, locking out its workforce for 10 days. An agreement was reached only after the Bush administration intervened.

Contentious, yearlong contract negotiations in 2014 and 2015 again saw the federal government step in—this time the Obama administration. During that dispute, workers engaged in slowdowns and stoppages.

Leading up to the current negotiations, West Coast dockworkers spent over two years moving record amounts of cargo amid the global coronavirus pandemic. At the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, the largest port complex in the United States,

monthly and annual cargo records have been set repeatedly.

The twin ports alone account for more than 30% of all U.S. imports. After the initial shock of the pandemic that saw cargo volumes drop briefly, volumes surged as Asian ports reopened and online shopping exploded due to stay-at-home orders. The demand has not subsided, and the ports continue moving record amounts of cargo amid supply chain congestion, which, at one point, saw more than 100 ships sitting idle off the Southern California coast.

Earlier this month, the backlog of container ships was 29, according to the Marine Exchange of Southern California. The ports, however, are already gearing up for their peak season, which typically begins in August ahead of the new school year but is expected earlier this summer, according to Port of LA Executive Director Gene Seroka.

Heightened demand has led shippers to increase rates exponentially. A few years ago, the spot rate for a 40-foot container from Asia to the U.S. was less than \$2,000, Bloomberg reports. Last year, the rate topped \$20,000 and has recently been hovering just under \$14,000.

High demand and increased rates have resulted in exorbitant profits for shippers to the tune of

\$150 billion in 2021, according to Bloomberg. During the first quarter, the container industry had a profit just shy of \$60 billion, marking the sixth consecutive quarterly record, Seatrade Maritime News reports.

Record profits have a cost for shoppers, however, economists warn. Extended periods of heightened freight costs are fanning inflation, economist Nicholas Sly told Bloomberg.

Union leaders are likely looking for raises that outpace the historic inflation that is hitting Americans’ wallets hard, Jake Wilson, professor of sociology at Cal State Long Beach, told the Los Angeles Times.

“What’s really unique about dockworkers around the world is their strategic location in the world’s choke points. Working in the ports provides a lot of leverage,” Wilson said. “The money is there, the shippers are accumulating massive amounts of profit, while most people aren’t.”

While profits should be able to cover demanded pay raises, PMA recommitted itself to advancing automation at the ports—likely a sticking point with workers. Shippers and terminal operators claim increased automation would increase efficiency at ports and allow for higher throughput. Dockworkers, however, maintain that automated container

movement is less efficient and would cost thousands of jobs.

While port officials are not part of negotiations, they do work closely with both parties involved. Port of Long Beach Executive Director Mario Cordero recently said automation should not be the focus of ports—at least not now.

“Before we spend money on that type of infrastructure, let’s explore how we can create velocity with the resources we have today,” Cordero said in a June 2 interview. “We can substantially increase velocity and productivity ... with the workforce we have today, which has been so essential working day in and day out since the beginning of this pandemic.”

Cordero has been a proponent for moving the U.S. supply chain, including terminal operations, trucking and warehousing, to a 24-hour model, which is used in Asian ports and others around the world. The majority of cargo into the San Pedro Bay ports comes along transpacific routes from Asian countries.

To that end, several pilot programs are underway to test the 24-hour model at the ports of Long Beach and LA.

“The good news is that 24/7 is no longer just a vision,” Cordero said. “It is something that now has legs. We have opened the door.” ■



Dockworkers at a Port of Long Beach container terminal.

Courtesy of the Port of Long Beach



Thomas R. Cordova / Business Journal

A home destined for destruction on Treasure Island in Naples.

COLUMNIST: TIM GROBATY

A tear-down on Naples’ Treasure Island is listed at \$5M

The third most expensive home for sale in Long Beach right now shouldn’t surprise you with its listing price of \$4,999,000. The address alone is impressive: 5 The Colonnade. The location is unbeatable, sitting on the point at the eastern end of Naples’ Treasure Island—the “good” part of Naples.

Got water toys? Like yachts? The house comes with three slips on the open water of Alamitos Bay, so there’s no having to lower the mast to sneak through bridges. Just get up and go. The views are indescribable. You consider all of that and suddenly \$5 million seems like a bargain. You reach for your Amex Black Card to close the deal, and almost as an afterthought, you ask, “What’s the house like?”

You mean now? Can we talk instead about how it looked back in 1953? “Unique” is how it looked in an area that today leans toward nautical themes with more than a sprinkling of gaudy gold coast mansions (doesn’t matter which coast as long as it’s gold). The home at 5 The Colonnade in 1953 seemed to be more of a nod toward the mountains than the sea. It was decidedly rustic, like a “Yellowstone” ranch house.

The home was built for businessman John Fleitz and his wife Beverly 70 years ago. The two were both world-class tennis players, with Beverly winning several international

tournaments and being ranked the No. 1 female player in the United States in 1959, winning several international tournaments.

Beverly told the Independent, Press-Telegram’s Southland Sunday magazine in 1953 that she and her husband had dreamed of building a modern home, but when she saw architect James E. Barton’s more traditional mountain-lodge style, she said, “I told my husband, ‘This is it!’ So we scrapped all our plans and started over.”

The result, said Beverly, “is what I call modern farmhouse style.” That’s a style you don’t find much in Naples.

The home was built with redwood siding and shakes. A low rustic fence was built in front of the house with a tiny gate.

The living room was curly redwood with a knotty pine ceiling; the floor was pegged hardwood.

One corner of the kitchen was taken up by a brick barbecue and fireplace with rotisserie. Cabinets were knotty cedar.

Upstairs, the hall closet was lined with knotty cedar and the walls were papered with a brown-and-yellow plaid pattern.

John died in 2011 and Beverly died three years later. The house, sadly, has followed. If there can be said to be an eyesore anywhere in Naples, it’s here at 5 The Colonnade. And it’s yours for \$5 million.

It’s been sitting vacant and poorly maintained to the point that the first thing you’re going to have to do when you buy it is tear it down. It’s listed by Spencer Snyder for its land use only, and for sure it is highly desirable land.

But, to further complicate your acquisition, the home’s current owner, who also owns the house next door, is redrawing the lot lines to increase his home’s property, which will cut into your lot size.

The buyer does get to keep the three boat slips, though. And, even if you have to build an abbreviated home on the lot, you really can’t beat the view. ■



Thomas R. Cordova / Business Journal

A sign on the door of the Fleitz family home on Treasure Island in Naples.

City parklet program is ending, but staff will consider extensions for owners hoping to make them permanent

The pandemic-era outdoor dining program will largely end at the end of this month.

By Jason Ruiz

Long Beach will allow some of the city’s outdoor dining parklets and other temporary installations to apply for extensions as they work toward a permanent status, but the outdoor dining program that was one of the earliest policies passed by the City Council to help businesses during the pandemic will largely end at the end of this month.

The vote came during the council’s June 14 meeting after hours of testimony from some residents who said the installations were an eyesore that had become a public nuisance in the form of traffic hazards, loud noises and in some cases, public urination.

Restaurateurs argued that the program had allowed them to survive and that they were still a necessary part of the city’s dining scene given some customers’ preference to still sit outdoors because of the pandemic.

Ryan Hoover, the owner of KC Branaghan’s in Naples and a member of the Long Beach Restaurant Association, said the program was a godsend but with thousands of COVID-19 cases still being reported daily and signals that another mask mandate could be enacted at the county level, the program should be extended.

“I think it’s a little too early to close this program’s door,” Hoover said.

Jeff Cozart, who owns Belmont Athletic Club, said he was 100% supportive of the program at the start of the pandemic but said it’s now time to end the program to free up the vital parking spaces that all businesses on Second Street need for their patrons.

“Now the rest of us need what we all share, back,” Cozart said. “It’s really that simple.”

About 52 parking stalls are currently used by parklets, representing about 10% of all available street spaces along Second Street.

Businesses with existing temporary parklets had until June 20 to notify the city of their interest in making outdoor setups permanent. Ineligible locations and those who don’t express interest in making their sites permanent will have until mid-July to remove them.

Other non-parklet installations,



A lone worker tears down the large temporary patio area in the parking lot in front of Enrique’s Mexican Restaurant in southeast Long Beach.

like those set up on public or private parking lots, will be eligible to apply for an extension through the end of September.

At the program’s peak, there were about 300 parklets, sidewalk dining or other outdoor dining setups in parking lots and other non-public areas that allowed businesses to open and serve patrons when health orders placed a ban on indoor dining.

That number has shrunk to 120 such locations, many of which are expected to go away after the program ends at the end of the month.

Joy Contreras, a spokesperson for Long Beach Public Works, said that sites would still have to be evaluated by the department to ensure they’re compliant with laws protecting people with disabilities and that they don’t present a traffic hazard or block other city infrastructure like storm drains or bus stops.

Even then, getting approved for a permanent parklet won’t be as simple as gaining city approval, Contreras said. For parts of the city in the coastal zone, like Belmont Shore, the parklets will also have to get a coastal development permit through a separate process that is administered through the city.

So far, about 30 businesses have expressed interest in wanting to operate a permanent parklet beyond the city’s current program.

Seventeen of those are along Second Street in Belmont Shore, where the largest concentration of parklets has existed for the past two years—and where the most vocal opponents of the program have called for its end.

“We have more parklets in our 14 blocks than probably anyone in any other district,” said longtime Belmont Shore Business Association director Dede Rossi.

Rossi, who returned to her position in a temporary role earlier this year, said the temporary parklets have been controversial, as parking-related issues typically are in Belmont Shore.

The parklets have helped some businesses bring in more revenue on the weekends because they have more space to seat people, and Rossi believes that a handful will end up following through with permanent installations.

However, non-restaurant owners want their parking back and feel they’ve given restaurateurs enough of a break over the past two years, Rossi said. Rossi isn’t against permanent parklets but said some businesses shouldn’t be given a leg up while applications are pondered or processed.

“I think it’s only fair, that if one goes, they should all go,” Rossi said of the proposed phase-out of the parklets. “Even if they apply for permits.”

Melinda Cotton has lived in Belmont Shore since 1983 and

said that parking has always been an issue, but the introduction of the parklets has exacerbated the parking shortage and forced customers who could park on Second Street to park on the residential streets instead.

“We’re basically the parking lot for Saint and Second, we’ve always been,” Cotton said.

Cotton, a member of the Belmont Shore Residents Association, said that the parklets have also created issues for people with disabilities who sometimes have to navigate sidewalks and for public transit because delivery trucks sometimes use areas designated for buses to park and unload their products to restaurants.

A group named “Parking, Not Parklets” circulated a petition to present to the council to show the support to remove all the temporary parklets and banning new permanent ones from being approved.

Cotton said there’s a historical precedent to block them, pointing to a 2012 decision to block George’s Greek Cafe from building a parklet in front of its Second Street location.

While upward of 17 businesses in Belmont Shore could ultimately apply for a permanent parklet, Cotton said the group has a number it would like to see.

“Zero, for the Shore,” Cotton said. “But we’re not trying to tell other parts of the city what to do.” ■

Nonstop flight to Nashville coming to Long Beach Airport

By Brandon Richardson

Using a new flight slot recently relinquished by another carrier, Southwest Airlines has announced daily, nonstop service from Long Beach to Nashville, with service set to begin Nov. 6.

The flights will depart every morning at 9 a.m. from Long Beach, traveling to Nashville International Airport. On weekdays, after a 45-minute stop, the aircraft will continue directly to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport in Arlington, Virginia, which is a primary airport for Washington, D.C.

“We’re grateful to the city of Long Beach for additional access at the airport that will bring travelers much more than just nonstop travel to and from Nashville,” Adam Decaire, vice president of network

planning for Southwest, said in a statement. “Nashville service also brings dozens of cities in the East within faster reach, and the fastest trip between Long Beach and the heart of the nation’s capital region.”

Travelers can arrive in D.C. six and a half hours after departing Long Beach.

Tickets for the Nashville service are available now at Southwest.com.

Of Long Beach’s 53 daily flight slots, Southwest now holds 38 and flies to 15 U.S. cities. The latest flight slot was one of two recently relinquished by Delta—the other was awarded to the city’s newest carrier, Breeze Airways.

The Nashville route was part of a broader Southwest schedule announcement, which included flights between San Jose and Palm Springs, Nashville and Steamboat Springs, Colorado, and San Diego



A Southwest aircraft comes in for a landing at Long Beach Airport.

and Colorado Springs.

For years, daily flight slots have gone unused at Long Beach—even before the pandemic, as JetBlue began quietly winding down service out of the small municipal airport. As the facility continues to rebound after the coronavirus pandemic decimated air travel, the use of additional slots by the city’s leading

carrier is welcome.

“We welcome this exciting new addition to Southwest’s nonstop destinations from Long Beach Airport,” the airport’s director Cynthia Guidry said in a statement. “Beyond Nashville, this new service adds flexibility and options for travelers to connect to the East Coast and Southwest’s broader network.” ■

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Gerald Desmond Bridge demolition begins July 9

By Christian May-Suzuki

The long-planned demolition of the Gerald Desmond Bridge is finally slated to begin next month. The Port of Long Beach announced earlier this month that the deconstruction of the bridge, which has been closed to traffic since October 2020, will begin at 6 a.m. July 9. This first step will involve the removal of a 410-foot span of the bridge suspended 155 feet over the Back Channel at the port. Vehicle traffic on the International Gateway Bridge, which replaced the Gerald Desmond Bridge, will not be affected by the demolition, but the waters the bridge hangs over will be closed to all traffic from the beginning of the operation until 6 a.m. July 11. The removed section of the bridge will be deconstructed and lowered onto a barge for removal, but materials from the old bridge will be “recycled whenever possible,” according to a release announcing the demolition.

Port officials expect the entire demolition of the bridge to wrap up by the end of 2023. The expected cost of \$59.9 million to remove the old bridge was included in the budget for the design and construction of the International Gateway Bridge. Opened in 1968, the Gerald Desmond Bridge was named after a former Long Beach City Council member and attorney who was key in securing the funding needed to build the bridge. Desmond’s contribution will still be recognized in the form of an outlook on the new bridge, which will be named after him.

The old bridge’s demolition is necessary to allow space for modern ships, which are larger than their predecessors, to access the port complex. The International Gateway Bridge has a 205 foot clearance over the water, 50 feet higher than the Gerald Desmond Bridge. “We became the nation’s premier port for international trade during a period of extraordinary growth, thanks to infrastructure like the Gerald Desmond Bridge,” Port of Long Beach Executive Director Mario Cordero said in a statement. “The new bridge shines as a regional landmark that serves as a fitting and lasting tribute to the old span.” ■

DLBA awards \$20,000 in prizes to local startups in annual Pitchfest

By Christian May-Suzuki

The Downtown Long Beach Alliance is once again giving local startups a leg up. Seven Long Beach startups walked away from this year’s Pitchfest, the annual business competition hosted by the DLBA, with a combined total of \$20,000 in prize money. The largest prize in the May 14 competition, \$6,000, went to PAVANAS, a wind turbine concept by Cal State Long Beach doctoral candidate Komal Gada. The innovation comes in the form of “vortex generator” tape that is meant to help reduce the air resistance of wind turbine blades, which will improve both their life span and effectiveness. Gada’s efforts were also recognized at the CSU Startup Launch challenge last month, where PAVANAS won third place in the contest’s products track. “I have been studying the aerodynamic characteristics of birds, drag reducing properties of shark skin, and the streamline body of dolphins for nearly a decade,”

Gada said in a statement. “Putting together years of research and innovative thinking along with my mentor Dr. Hamid Rahai at CSU Long Beach, I have developed a novel design which can be used on any slender body to improve its aerodynamic characteristics.” In order to qualify for the Pitchfest competition, the 12 participating startups were required to attend the DLBA’s Entrepreneur and Small Business Education Series, which consisted of weekly classes meant to teach entrepreneurs the skills required to run a business. Topics, which ranged from human resources to marketing to negotiating a lease, were taught by faculty from Cal State Long Beach’s Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship and College of Business, alongside several established professionals in the Long Beach area. Judges used a series of criteria to determine winners based on their understanding and innovation in their field. Pitches needed to demonstrate knowledge of the target customer base while showing appeal to potential investors. The product or service itself needed to

be innovative and stand out from competitors, and the entrepreneurs behind them had to lay out a plan of how they would use their resources to implement the business model. The six other startups to receive cash prizes were: • Cheri’s Caribbean Kitchen, a planned restaurant that is looking to bring Caribbean cuisine to Downtown Long Beach, which won \$3,000. • Kelpie, a start-up trying to create a swimsuit bottom that is comfortable for trans kids to wear, which won \$2,000. • plus3mm, a creative design and marketing studio that will operate out of the U.S. and Germany, which won \$2,500. • MindWallet, an investment advisory business that specializes in high yield bonds, which won \$2,000. • Mobile Wine Bar SoCal, which will serve as a pop-up mobile wine bar for private events, which won \$2,000. • SistaGals Bake Goods, a business focused on authentic Southern desserts, which won \$2,000. This year marked the fifth time this pitch event has been held by the DLBA. ■

Commission closing in on design for Belmont Shore’s new entryway signage

By Jason Ruiz

Belmont Shore is inching toward replacing its decades-old wooden entryway sign as the neighborhood’s parking commission is eyeing funds for two new signs to greet visitors to the corridor. The process to replace the termite-infested sign has been years in the making, but it has ramped up over the past few months. The Belmont Shore Parking and Business Improvement Area Advisory Commission, which regulates parking rates in the area and directs those revenues toward improvements along the corridor, seems to have landed on a design to replace the “old and tired” sign that has become a “buffet for termites.” While a design hasn’t been formally approved, the commission has expressed unanimous support for one rendering and has signaled

that it would like to get the project completed while the current City Council is in office. New members of the council will be sworn into office in December. Commissioner Ryan Hoffman presented the likely design, a 22-foot-tall pole with LED letters spelling out “Welcome to Belmont Shore,” at the commission’s May 19 meeting. The design is meant to resemble the historic streetlights throughout Belmont Heights, and if approved, they could be installed at the north and south entrances to Belmont Shore. “To give it a real identity that you’re kind of entering an area that’s different from the rest of Long Beach, which I think was kind of our goal,” Hoffman said. The current design features a red flag at the top of the post and blue lettering that will be lit up for visitors traveling into Belmont Shore on Second Street from the



Courtesy of the city of Long Beach
A rendering of the sign concept currently being considered by the Belmont Shore Parking and Business Improvement Area Advisory Commission.

east and west. Hoffman said that a rough estimate for the signs could put the cost at about \$40,000 per sign, but a final price has not been determined. Matt Peterson, co-owner of

Continued on page 26

Health care wage increase could be on November ballot

By Kelly Puente

Long Beach voters this November could decide whether to raise the minimum wage from \$15 to \$25 for health care workers following an initiative from an arm of one of the nation’s largest service employee unions. The initiative from the Service Employees International Union-United Healthcare Workers West (SEIU-UHW) aims to raise the minimum wage in private sector hospitals, integrated health systems and dialysis clinics. The plan, which would impact Long Beach’s largest hospitals and smaller clinics, would cover a broad range of workers in a health care setting, including aides, technicians, maintenance workers, janitors, housekeeping staff, groundskeepers and food service workers. Proponents with the SEIU-UHW say the wage increase would recognize the value of essential health care workers other than doctors and nurses who have also put their lives at risk in the pandemic. Opponents from the state’s largest hospital systems, including Kaiser Permanente and Dignity Health, say the effort unfairly excludes public sector workers and would lead to increased health care costs for consumers and patients. The SEIU-UHW began circulating a petition for the initiative in February, and on June 6, the Long Beach city clerk approved a petition with more than 41,000 signatures. Under the city charter, proponents need 27,054 valid signatures (10% off the voters in the city), for the petition to be found sufficient, according to City Clerk Monique De La Garza. “They were able to gather a lot of signatures in a short amount of time,” De La Garza said. The Los Angeles County Registrar Recorder/County Clerk is now reviewing the signatures, with results expected in mid-July, she said. If the signatures are verified, the Long Beach City Council will be required to adopt an ordinance mandating a wage increase or place the issue on the November ballot. The SEIU-UHW, which represents more than 100,000 workers across the state, has also launched petitions in nine other area cities including Los Angeles, Lynwood, Monterey Park, Downey and Culver City. The main SEIU represents more than 1.9 million workers in the United States and Canada and is a top donor for Democratic political campaigns. The initiative could become an issue in a heated election season with a tight mayoral race in Long Beach between City Council members Suzie Price and Rex Richardson. Earlier this month, the Long Beach City Council unanimously approved a request for an economic



Brandon Richardson / Business Journal
A health worker wheels a large O-arm into an operating room at Long Beach Memorial.

impact report on the potential benefits and risks of implementing a citywide private health care minimum wage increase. The council item was proposed by 6th District Councilmember Suely Saro and co-sponsored by 2nd District Councilmember Cindy Allen. Allen said she supports the workers but would also like to better understand both the positive and negative impact on the local economy. “It seems to me that the community is ready to stand up for health care workers,” she said. “These workers have put themselves in harm’s way for the rest of us ... they’re overworked and understaffed and barely make more than minimum wage.” Price, who represents the 3rd District, said she would like more information on the percentage of health care workers who would be included or excluded in the initiative before moving forward. Richardson, who represents the 9th District, said he has heard “good and bad” feedback on the initiative, which is why it’s important to study the issue.

“Considering what we’ve been through, lifting up our health care workers as much as we can is incredibly important,” he said. Long Beach City Manager Tom Modica said the city has an Aug. 9 deadline to make a decision on how to move forward. Speaking before the council, some local health care workers told of their experiences during the pandemic. Greg Shorter, a Long Beach resident and orthopedic technician, said he struggles to afford food and rent. “From the beginning, we have shown up to care for patients despite high risks of infections ... now we are dealing with mental trauma and burnout,” he said. “Too many of us struggle to afford housing and other

basic needs, while our employers are making record profits. At the very least we should be paid fair wages.” Adena Tessler, regional vice president of the Hospital Association of Southern California, speaking before the council, said the initiative

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Bid Opportunities

Title	Bid Number	Due Date
Hydraulic Cleaning Tools, Miscellaneous Equipment, and Repair Services	WD-44-22	06/21/2022
Engine Generator Set Equipment Purchase	ITB PW22-063	06/21/2022
Bilge System Pump	ITB PW22-056	06/21/2022
Debt Collection System	RFP FM22-036	06/30/2022
On-Call Construction Services for Wells/Pumps Repair & Rehabilitation	WD-53-22	06/30/2022
Litter-free Long Beach Program Coordinator	PW-22-086	06/30/2022
Equipping of Water Wells North Long Beach 13 and North Long Beach 14	WD-13-21	07/05/2022
Engineering Consulting Services on Storm Water Pump Stations & Storm Drain Projects	RFP PW21-105	07/08/2022
Annual Calendars	ER-22-085	07/12/2022
Engineering Consulting Services on Pump Station Recovery Mitigation Project	RFP PW22-069	07/14/2022
Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon	PW-22-083	07/14/2022
General Automotive Parts	ITB FS22-052	07/21/2022

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Belmont Shore parking rates set to increase

By Jason Ruiz

Parking rates in Belmont Shore are set to increase next month, as the City Council approved a proposal to raise the hourly rates for metered spaces by 50 cents.

The current price for parking will move from \$1 per hour to \$1.50 per hour, likely in July, now that the council approved the February recommendation from the Belmont Shore Parking and Business Improvement Area Advisory Commission.

Revenue from the parking meters funds the commission, which is required to spend it on maintenance, construction or other improvements along the corridor in Belmont Shore.

Matt Peterson, the chair of the commission, said raising the rates will allow the Business Improvement Area to keep funding things like security, sidewalk cleanings, median landscaping and other long-term projects like replacing the entryway signage for the corridor.

After taking a hit in 2020 due to the pandemic, parking revenues have been trending up in Belmont Shore with over \$483,000 being collected through May 2022, according to commission budget documents.

But Peterson pointed out that inflation and general supply shortages could mean that it will be more expensive to fund projects the



Brandon Richardson / Business Journal
A woman blocks the summer sun so she can read a parking meter in Belmont Shore.

commission wants to see through.

“Everything we do on behalf of the neighborhood is going to be hit with higher costs, so it’s natural at this point to try and increase revenue through meter increase,” Peterson said in February.

The \$1.50 per hour rate will bring Belmont Shore’s metered parking rates even with those paid to park in Downtown. Only The Pike has more expensive metered parking rates, where visitors pay \$2 per hour.

The amount of time someone

can park would be limited to two hours, which raised some concerns about patrons being ticketed during hours-long hair appointments or while watching a sporting event at a restaurant, but enforcement may not be that stringent.

Peterson said that by using a smartphone app or simply manually putting more money into the meter, visitors can park for more than two hours. They just can’t pay for more time until the original two-hour block expires. ■

LGB Recovery

Continued from page 22

Nationwide, air travel has not rebounded quite as much as it has in Long Beach. Last month, nearly 67.8 million people passed through U.S. airports, still down more than 10% from pre-pandemic levels, according to data from the Transportation Security Administration. In May 2019, over 74.7 million people used U.S. airports.

Due to concerns centered around the highly contagious omicron variant in January and February, however, year-to-date passenger volumes at Long Beach remain nearly 14% below pre-pandemic levels through May. But because 2021 began in the midst of the deadliest surge of COVID-19 to date, this year is tracking over 116% over last year, according to city data.

Total air cargo being processed at Long Beach Airport remains well below pre-pandemic levels due to the fact that the number of daily cargo planes remains cut in half. For years, the airport saw a daily cargo delivery from both UPS and FedEx. Late last year, however, FedEx gave up its slot.

Last month, the airport handled 1,084 tons of cargo, a 1.3% improvement from the same month last year. The figure remains nearly 42% below 2019 levels. ■

Belmont Shore Sign

Continued from page 24

Legends Sports Bar and chair of the commission, said that there has been some community interest to backfill any deficit for the project through crowdfunding.

“There’s lots of potential to push this project forward in a positive fashion,” Peterson said.

The commission could get help with funding if the City Council approves parking meter rate increases that would go into effect in July. The 50-cent hourly increase should boost the commission’s ability to fund projects like the new signage.

Parking meter revenue has been slowly rebounding since the pandemic hit and a combination of the rate increase and the city ending the temporary parklet program in the coming weeks could further boost those numbers because more parking spaces will be freed up.

Long Beach started a process of overhauling the gateway signage and way-finding signs in 2015 when a proposal to bring more cohesion to the city’s signs was advanced by the council.

New signs were installed Downtown and at the city’s entry points with the new approved patriotic color scheme and minimalist design, something that was rejected by Belmont Shore residents for lacking character. ■

Biden talks inflation, supply chain and infrastructure at Port of Los Angeles

By Kelly Puentes

President Joe Biden paid a visit to the Port of Los Angeles, the nation’s busiest, earlier this month to address inflation and supply chain issues amid the skyrocketing costs of consumer prices.

Standing on the waterfront with a backdrop of cargo containers and tugboats, Biden said the twin ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles play a critical role in inflation.

“One of the keys to fight inflation is by lowering the costs of moving goods through the supply chain,” he said.

Biden said the ports have made significant gains since December in reducing the historic supply chain backlog, with 40% fewer cargo containers clogging the docks compared to last November. Both ports are slated to once again see a record year for cargo movement. Last month, the Port of Los Angeles saw its busiest month on record, while Long Beach saw its second busiest month ever.

Biden said several major infrastructure initiatives, such as the Port of Long Beach’s Pier B on-dock rail project, will continue to improve the supply chain.

The project, which will transform the Pier B rail yard into a high-tech rail support facility that can move at least 35% of cargo, cleared the federal environmental review process earlier this year.

While Americans are understandably anxious over the rising costs of food, gas and other goods, Biden said he remains encouraged by a strong economy.

Biden said the nation last month added 390,000 news jobs, for a total of 8.7 million since he took office.

“The job market is the strongest it’s been since World War II, notwithstanding the inflation,” he said, adding that the unemployment rate remains at historic lows.

Families, meanwhile, are carrying less debt on average and have more savings, he said.

“We’re doing it all while cutting the federal deficit by \$1.7 trillion this year and \$325 billion last year,” he said. “Because of the progress, America can tackle inflation from a position of strength unlike any other country in the world.”

His speech comes at a time when the country is seeing the highest inflation rates since 1981. The government has reported that



Evan Vucci / Associated Press
President Joe Biden speaks about inflation and supply chain issues at the Port of Los Angeles

consumer prices climbed 8.6% in May compared to a year ago. That’s the worst reading in more than 40 years and a troubling sign for the economy as rate hikes by the Federal Reserve have yet to tamp down inflation and gasoline costs are surging upward.

AAA separately reported that average U.S. gas prices reached a record \$4.99 a gallon, an increase that has overwhelmed the president’s previous efforts to reduce overall inflation.

The gas hikes have hurt Biden’s public approval and have drawn criticism from Republican lawmakers, who have claimed that the current inflation rate is the result of his government aid being too generous and his restrictions on U.S. oil production too onerous.

Biden, during his visit, framed the problem as a global challenge, triggered first by the pandemic and then by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

The effort to improve the supply chain also comes at a time when contract negotiations are underway for more than 22,000 workers at 29 West Coast ports. The contract for the International Longshore and Warehouse Union expires July 1, but negotiations are expected to extend past that date, which is common, officials said.

A major point of contention is automation and its impact on jobs amid supply chain issues.

The Associated Press contributed to this report. ■

Able ARTS Work becomes a 1st-time property owner with building in Bixby Knolls

By Tess Kazenoff

After nearly 40 years of providing the Long Beach community with accessible art services, Able ARTS Work has purchased its first home.

The organization launched an ambitious capital campaign in November 2020 for \$2 million, and founder and CEO Helen Dolas was determined to combat the property displacement that was facing her organization.

“To have a home of our own really mitigates that kind of displacement,” said Dolas. “We know that we’re going to be there, we’re going to be safe, we don’t have to move our services, people know where to find us.”

Throughout its history of

providing creative art services and art therapy to individuals with disabilities, the nonprofit has moved nearly every decade, often due to climbing rent prices, each time having to navigate finding a safe location that is fully accessible and allows its over 3,000 clients each year to flourish creatively, explained Dolas.

Its fifth and final home on Atlantic Avenue in Bixby Knolls will not only save the organization \$76,000 each year in rent fees, but will allow Able ARTS Work to be at the heart of both a community-centric and art-centric neighborhood, said Dolas.

“The visibility is so great for our students and our families and for the community,” she said. “It’s going to provide us also with additional

opportunities for sustainability and revenue for Able ARTS Work as a nonprofit, so we can continue to expand into our work, but also in providing those services for even more people.”

For Dolas, purchasing a home for her organization has been a dream since the nonprofit’s birth, and it could not be more exciting for her and Able ARTS Work’s participants, she said.

“Everyone was dancing,” she said, explaining that many participants have already submitted ideas to be incorporated into the new space.

Apart from the building’s regular services during the day, Dolas intends for the new building to be a home for community gathering, not only offering free art and wellness workshops, but professional

Continued on page 30

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Michael’s on Naples to close attached pizzeria, open Italian market pantry

By Cheantay Jensen

Michael’s on Naples will close a 12-year-old pizzeria attached to the upscale main restaurant, with plans to open a market pantry in its place where customers can buy a range of Italian groceries.

Michael’s Managing Partner Massimo Aronne said the main reason behind the change was to bring back the market the restaurant had launched during the beginning of the pandemic, a move many restaurants took to keep money coming in since patrons were no longer allowed to dine in. During the pandemic, both the Michael’s on Naples and the Michael’s Downtown offered fresh produce, pantry staples and even toilet paper, as well as fresh-made pasta, sauces and family meals from their menu. It was surprisingly successful.

“We did really well,” Aronne said. “It kept us afloat.”

No changes are planned to the Michael’s Downtown restaurant at The Promenade.

Michael’s on Naples will be adding the wood-fired, naturally leavened Napoli-style pizzas to the restaurant’s fine-dining menu, a move Michael’s management said had long been requested by patrons.

The new 850-square-foot market will offer a number of gourmet Italian imports, with produce, pantry staples and other ingredients necessary to replicate an authentic Italian meal at home.

The original Michael’s on Naples

market ran for about a year, Aronne said, but after they shut down they realized that customers had really enjoyed the concept and wanted to see it return. Rather than look for a brick-and-mortar nearby, the family business thought it smart to merge the two businesses to make way for the Michael’s Market, which management estimates will be ready for patrons by August.

Once open, shoppers can expect a wide array of fine Italian imports: olive oil and balsamic vinegars from across Italy, flours for pizza and pasta, produce, cheeses, cured meats and gourmet toppings such as truffles.

Michael’s also says it has plans to incorporate a corner of the restaurant for produce sourced from local and regional farmers, such as the Wiser Family Farms and Harry’s Berries in Oxnard, that will be available on Wednesdays and Thursdays each week. There may also be options for grab-and-go foods, such as sandwiches, that can be reheated and eaten on site. Dinner hours will also feature a rotating menu of single or family-sized meals from the restaurant, such as lasagna, braised short rib or fried chicken, though this menu will likely be available sometime after the market opens, according to management.

The Napoli-style pizzas, named after the city in which it originated in Naples, Italy, is flame-licked and made with Italian double-zero flour.

Michael’s on Naples is at 5620 Second St. Michael’s Market business hours, once open in August, will be from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. ■



Courtesy of Michael’s on Naples

Italian fine-dining restaurant Michael’s on Naples is closing down its adjacent pizzeria, Michael’s Pizzeria, to make way for an Italian imports market coming this summer.



Courtesy of Michael’s on Naples

Michael’s Napoli pizzas are made with Italian double zero flour and naturally leaved for 24 hours before baked in a wood-fired oven.

Students learn coding, robotics and more with Shared Science

By Tess Kazenoff

Shared Science began in 2008, when Michelle Wells, Jennifer Crans, and Trish Isoiasue were all moms to second graders in the Long Beach Unified School District.

With aging computers and little class time dedicated to technology or engineering topics, the three recognized a change that had to be made.

“We just thought that there was this huge need, because we felt that having access to technology and understanding how the world works would be essential for our second graders when it came to be their time to pursue careers,” said Wells.

The benefits to a STEM education are clear, explained Wells—on average, those who use technology in

the workplace earn 14% to 27% more than those who do not, and salaries for non-STEM-related jobs earn roughly half of people in those fields.

“So that directly links to future quality of life and health and equitable opportunities for youth, by just encouraging them to embrace this language of technology and become advocates themselves for STEM-related topics,” said Wells.

The kindergarten through 12th grade students in Shared Science’s STEM in-school, after-school, summer and special event programming build upon concepts over the years, starting by discovering engineering through Legos, and exploring coding with robots—all activities that are meant to spark curiosity and ignite learning.

But introducing STEM to youth

is more than just the individual topics of science and technology, engineering and math, said Wells.

“It’s more about the integration of those topics and responding to real-world topics and providing real-world problem-solving techniques,” she said.

It’s also about introducing these topics early, and combatting certain stereotypes that may come with the territory, Wells said.

“There are so many kids who are set on this difficult trajectory of catch-up with their peers because they just don’t have access to the right tech or even knowledge in some families about the importance of STEM education,” said Wells.

“You want to start early, begin fostering those positive attitudes, so that even first graders who are experiencing some math anxiety

won’t hold on to stereotypes like math is hard, or more importantly, in computer science, that coding is just for boys or just for nerds.”

For women and people of color in these fields, there can be even more barriers to combat, both as a student and later on when working in the industry, said Wells.

“We have seen such a change in family perspective for girls participating particularly in the last five years,” said Wells. “But when we first started, it was primarily boys, like 70, 80% boys, and tracking over the last few years, we’re now up to 41% girls, so we’re getting closer but it’s still not 50-50.”

Shared Science aims to make the introduction to STEM as seamless as possible, going directly into schools and community sites so that families

Continued on page 30



Sarahi Apaez / Business Journal

A total lunar eclipse rises behind the Queen Mary in Long Beach.

Celebrate Halloween with Shaquille O’Neal (maybe) at the Queen Mary’s Shaqtoberfest

Because the ship is currently undergoing \$5 million in repair work, Shaqtoberfest will take place on the land around the Queen Mary instead of on board.

By Anthony Pignataro

It looks like the annual Dark Harbor Halloween event held at the Queen Mary is no more. But a new Halloween event at the ship will take its place, organizers announced earlier this month.

Dubbed “Shaqtoberfest,” the event will be narrated by former NBA all-star Shaquille O’Neal and will include six Halloween-themed areas and fun for both families who

want trick-or-treating and adults looking for something scarier, according to event producers New York-based ABG Entertainment and Denver-based Thirteenth Floor Entertainment Group.

The areas will feature Halloween trails, games, live entertainment and food and beverage vendors, and will “encapsulate O’Neal’s playful personality,” according to the event producers.

During the afternoon, the trails throughout the event area will offer trick-or-treating fun for kids, who are encouraged to come dressed in costumes. But at night, “energetic lights and music,” along with “O’Neal’s ghoulish minions” will descend on the trails to do their best to frighten adult attendees, according to the event news release.

The Queen Mary has been closed since March 2020, when the statewide stay-at-home orders went into effect to curb the spread of COVID-19. The ocean liner hasn’t

been open to the public since.

Because the ship is currently undergoing \$5 million in repair work, Shaqtoberfest will take place on the land around the Queen Mary instead of on board.

Thirteenth Floor, which bills itself as the world’s largest Halloween-themed entertainment company, currently produces 16 Halloween events throughout the country. But Chris Strafford, CEO of Thirteenth Floor Entertainment, said Shaqtoberfest will be “unlike any other Halloween attraction that we have ever produced.”

While Matt Goldstein, senior Vice President for Entertainment and Special Projects at ABG Entertainment says that, “Fans of all ages are going to have the time of their lives celebrating Halloween with Shaq,” it hasn’t actually been announced if the 15-time NBA all-star and owner of the Big Chicken chain of restaurants will actually make an appearance at Shaqtoberfest, though event

producers said a recording of O’Neal’s “instantly recognizable voice” will narrate the entire event.

Shaqtoberfest will run from late September through Halloween, but exact dates weren’t available at press time. Ticket prices are also unknown.

There is a Shaqtoberfest website, but it currently offers little information beyond a form for people to fill out to get upcoming news on the event and a 30-second video of O’Neal saying the word “Shaqtoberfest” a lot. There is also a Shaqtoberfest Instagram account (@Shaqtoberfest) though at press time its only post is the 30-second Shaq video.

The popular Dark Harbor event was first canceled in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, a decision made in line with federal, state and local guidelines and uncertainty regarding the pandemic, then canceled again in 2021, though event organizers at the time said it would return for 2022. ■

Able ARTS Work

Continued from page 26

development for counselors, teachers, therapists and community health care providers, she said.

“It’s going to be really significant and give us that opportunity to really grow our services in a very permanent way,” said Dolas. “We’re generating art-driven inclusion opportunities for adults with disabilities and underserved minority populations, and so with this larger building, we’ll be able to expand our community services and promote social cohesiveness and address the mental and emotional health issues in our community.”

After completing the first phase of its capital campaign by raising over \$1 million to put a 50% down payment on the building, located at 3841 Atlantic Ave., and secure a bank loan for another \$1.25 million (largely thanks to private donors and grants, including \$1 million from the John Gogian Family Foundation),



Courtesy of Able ARTS Work

The purchase of a new building in Bixby Knolls is “a dream come true” for founder and CEO Helen Dolas, who introduced Able ARTS Work to the Long Beach community nearly 40 years ago.

Dolas is eager for the second phase, which is to raise another \$1 million for renovations, making the building accessible for its participants.

With renovation plans ideally finalized in July, Dolas hopes that construction will begin in August, just in time for the organization’s official 40th anniversary, potentially

moving into the new location in January or February.

Able ARTS Work has had a busy few months; apart from realizing Dolas’ 40-year vision for her organization, the nonprofit has focused on its expansion in San Diego, as well as continuing to develop its Learn for Life platform

that has reached people in 79 countries and 47 states, plus its monthly student podcast, Artbeat Radio, with nearly 80,000 unique visitors last year, said Dolas.

And in the meantime, it is continuing to provide artistic career path opportunities to artists of all abilities, while bridging connections and fostering creativity.

“Back in the day, it used to be where these individuals were isolated ... (without being) afforded the chance to make friends and to feel a community and belonging,” said Dolas. “Our mission is based on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, and it’s love before learning and being able to offer the space where people can feel safe, and be respected and be treated with dignity and feel like they have a place where they belong, where they can achieve creative goals.

“Able ARTS Work really provides that space where those synergies can occur naturally, and it’s all about life transformation,” said Dolas. “And we use the arts to create that bridge.”

Contribute to Able ARTS Work’s capital campaign at ahomeofourown.funraise.org. ■

Shared Science

Continued from page 28

can avoid complicated enrolling processes, said Wells.

Creating accessibility is key to combatting the added barriers, and this is accomplished partially through scholarship-based programs, such as a week-long Tech Girls program for middle school and

high school girls in the first week of August, said Wells.

Collaborating with other organizations such as the Salvation Army and the Boys and Girls Club also allows Shared Science to offer no-cost programming thanks to private funding, said Wells.

“We want to impact their self-value and motivate them to consider that a STEM pathway is truly viable,” said Wells.

Since its incorporation as a

nonprofit in 2009, the organization has expanded its reach from just Lowell Elementary and Naples Elementary to 15 school sites and then to offering elementary robots at another 13 schools in 2019.

Of course, over the past couple of years, services were severely limited, and the focus of this year is on rebuilding, with a major emphasis on expanding its staff of instructors, class aids, and those with a passion and curiosity for STEM topics, said Wells.

Returning to schools in-person this past March was “eye-opening,” said Wells. “We became very aware of social, emotional learning issues where it was very difficult for students to pay attention and be able to think critically and so we had to make adjustments.”

Students nowadays are more fearful of failure, said Wells, who has observed that many students are eager to find the right answer immediately.

“Our whole job has been—a lot of success comes out of failure, so it’s OK that it didn’t work the first time,” she said. “What’s more important is the process of inquiry.”

Despite the difficulties navigating the new needs of students, Shared Science instructors continuously and successfully revamp lessons and activities that will engage students and hold their interest, explained Wells.

For instance, Wells recalled a recent lesson that illustrated bridges and how they break to kindergartners.

“I think that was our loudest activity ever in terms of shouts of delight when structures break, as well as when structures stood,” said Wells. “Those triumphs, those small times of ‘How do I make it break? How do I make it be strong?’ are all inquiries that they will take with them experientially.”

While a kindergartner may not remember vocabulary words such as compression and tension and gravity, they will understand the lesson, said Wells.

“They will take with them at that core, the delight in failure and in success as they move through their exploration of future science topics,” she said. “This two-year hiatus, it wasn’t for naught. We’re back and we are making a difference. We know that we can engage students and get them excited.” ■



Courtesy of Shared Science

Shared Science aims to make its programming accessible and affordable, going directly to schools and other community sites. Fees are also kept low and scholarships are continuously made available.



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