

LONG BEACH

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A pelican flies above the water at the Port of Long Beach at sunset.

Brandon Richardson / Business Journal

East Coast may overtake San Pedro Bay in cargo volume

By Brandon Richardson

For years, the twin ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach have ranked as the two busiest container ports in the United States, respectively. Following a record year in 2021, however, the San Pedro Bay ports continue to lose market share to East and Gulf coast ports, putting their top rankings on the line—at least for this year.

In August and September, the Port of New York and New Jersey—regularly ranked as the third busiest container port in the U.S.—handled more shipping containers than both the San Pedro Bay ports, a rare occurrence that

has only happened two other times since the start of 2019—and that was in February and March 2020 when trade dropped sharply on the West Coast amid closures at Chinese ports due to the outbreak of the coronavirus.

“For a number of years, we have witnessed an incremental loss of market share,” Port of Long Beach Executive Director Mario Cordero told the Business Journal. “The big picture from the nation’s perspective, it’s not a bad thing. [Other ports] have been engaged in their own capital improvement investments, so they offer great options for the American shipper.”

While the East Coast port moved

842,219 20-foot equivalent units (the standard measure for a shipping container) in September, Long Beach and LA moved 741,823 and 709,873, respectively. The figures indicate that LA has experienced a more drastic decline in cargo, since the port regularly outperforms Long Beach.

Despite the loss in volume, as of September, the Port of LA had moved over 7.86 million TEUs compared to nearly 7.37 million and over 7.34 million in New York-New Jersey and Long Beach, respectively.

While October data for the Port of LA, as well as for the Port of New York and New Jersey, isn’t yet available, Port of LA Executive Director Gene Seroka said during a recent Harbor Commission meeting that he expected to see a “significant drop” in October.

Indeed, Port of Long Beach data for last month showed a 16.6% drop compared to the same month last year. Imports decreased 23.7% to 293,924 TEUs, while exports decreased 2% to 119,763 TEUs. The number of empty containers moving through the port fell 13.4% to 244,743 TEUs.

While other ports make improvements to remain competitive, Cordero attributed a large portion

New facility will add rail capacity out of San Pedro Bay ports

By Brandon Richardson

Shipping containers at the San Pedro Bay port complex destined for rail will soon have an expedited path out of Long Beach and Los Angeles thanks to a massive rail facility announced by BNSF Railway.

The rail company, which operates one of the largest freight railroad networks in North America with 32,500 miles of tracks, unveiled plans last month for the 4,500-acre Barstow International Gateway. The project consists of a rail yard,

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Metro to consider more homeless outreach

By Jason Ruiz

Metro may consider changing its “end-of-the-line” policy after leaders in Long Beach have argued the transit agency’s policy of forcing unhoused individuals to exit trains late at night is increasing crime and homelessness in the city.

The Metro board of directors discussed the issue late last month, with specific options expected to come back in January.

At the end of each route, Metro trains are emptied so they can be cleaned, which some say has contributed to a 62% rise in homelessness Long Beach has experienced since 2020. Some have called on Metro to provide services to the unhoused who ride their trains and buses during the day.

County Supervisor Janice Hahn, who serves on the board, said while the cleaning of trains isn’t likely to end, Metro needs to look at ways to partner with the county and other agencies to connect these riders with help.

“I want staff to do more than just evaluate or analyze it,” Hahn said. “I think by now I’m pretty clear on what the policy is, but we want them to come back with some solutions on how maybe we could do things differently.”

Directors threw out some ideas at the Oct. 27 meeting that included having more

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monday morning coffee

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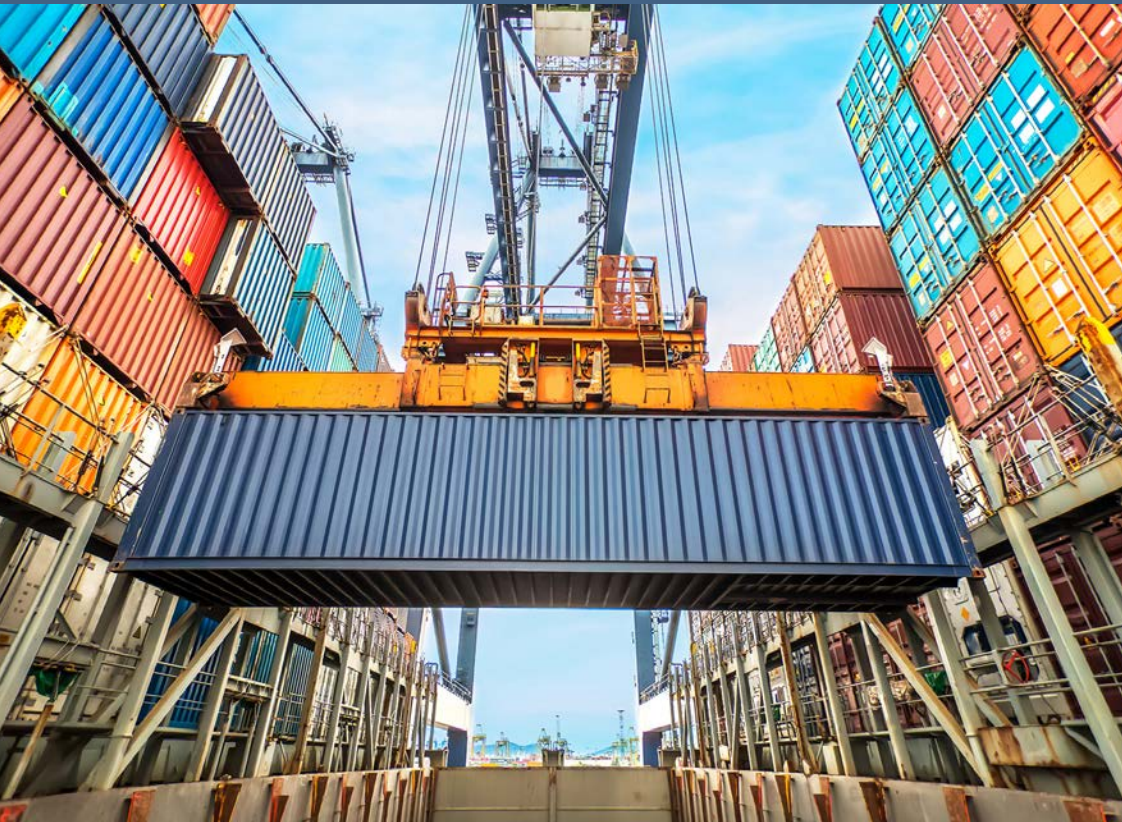
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Inflection Points in the Business Lifecycle



Businesses and industries in Long Beach and the South Bay are growing, innovating with expert advice from Bank of America.

By Emily Jameson
Business Bank Market Executive
Bank of America

The Long Beach business community has proven to be nimble and resilient over generations, and will continue to drive economic growth for the entire Southland region. With the current headwinds, it’s a good reminder to keep in mind that some decisions and “inflection points” can change the trajectory of your business and have a profound impact on the long-term success of your company and the legacy you leave.

What are those inflection points for your business? Drawing on client insights and perspectives, we have identified a few key moments in time currently “in-play” for companies based in or with substantial operations in Long Beach:

Growth

While a company is growing, there are several considerations: hiring the right talent, expanding your operations and accessing additional capital.

Talent: When growing your workforce, you’ll want to provide comprehensive benefits to help attract and retain the best talent. Forward-looking companies are taking an integrated approach to help support employees’ broader needs, including financial wellness, saving and investing.

Leasing: Whether it’s essential equipment or additional space for offices, warehouses or manufacturing, a business owner must weigh the risks and benefits of purchasing vs. leasing

equipment and real estate. Some factors include cash on hand, risk mitigation, strength of balance sheet and tax implications. So, for example, if technology is changing rapidly in your industry, it may be advantageous to lease equipment and upgrade as needed.

Asset-based loans: Businesses can borrow based on their own financial and physical assets, which can range from accounts receivables and inventory to equipment and real estate.

Fine Tuning Operations

Maintaining and expanding your business involves automating tasks, strengthening working capital and creating accountability to strengthen operational efficiency.

Payments: Making and accepting payments are a lifeblood for business owners. Nearly eight in ten payment transactions globally are now contactless. As real-time payment methods are adopted, suppliers and companies will increasingly expect faster, more efficient payments.

Working capital: The pandemic showed us how volatile our systems could be, especially in Long Beach with supply chain disruptions and labor shortages. Even well-capitalized companies are vulnerable to market changes. To strengthen their working capital and mitigate risk, companies should examine how to lower costs, evaluate weeks of float, identify new revenue streams and automate tasks to reduce manual work.

Optimize existing technology: Many companies in Long Beach are optimizing

existing technology without making significant investments. For example, manual tasks, like accounts payable, are being automated or streamlined.

Mapping your strategy: Whether through international expansion, going public or M&A activity, the decision-making process represents a critical inflection point for a company. When developing a growth strategy, it is crucial that business owners determine the effects on various stakeholders, including employees and partners.

Digital transformation: Digital tools are rapidly supporting expansion, including systems that provide real-time and other payments across geographies, streamline cross-border compliance and protect businesses from fraud and cybercriminals across global jurisdictions.

Exit Strategies

In my role leading business banking for Long Beach, I help more and more clients with succession planning – and good succession planning involves deliberation over what is needed for the long-term success of a business. A comprehensive succession plan should include a roadmap for current and future leaders to assess opportunities and risks, earmark strategic investments, plan for disruption and position the company for sustainable growth.

Before exiting, I advise business owners to assess whether they have a successor with the right skills and desire to take on their role. They should also determine if they want to sell the business, transfer it to a partner or family member, take it public or liquidation.

Every moment can be an inflection point, a chance to move your business forward with the right strategy, planning and action. Assessing your business’s overall growth and direction regularly can create a valuable legacy in the years to come.



Emily Jameson

Port of Long Beach to receive \$30M grant for zero-emission cargo-handling equipment

By Tess Kazenoff

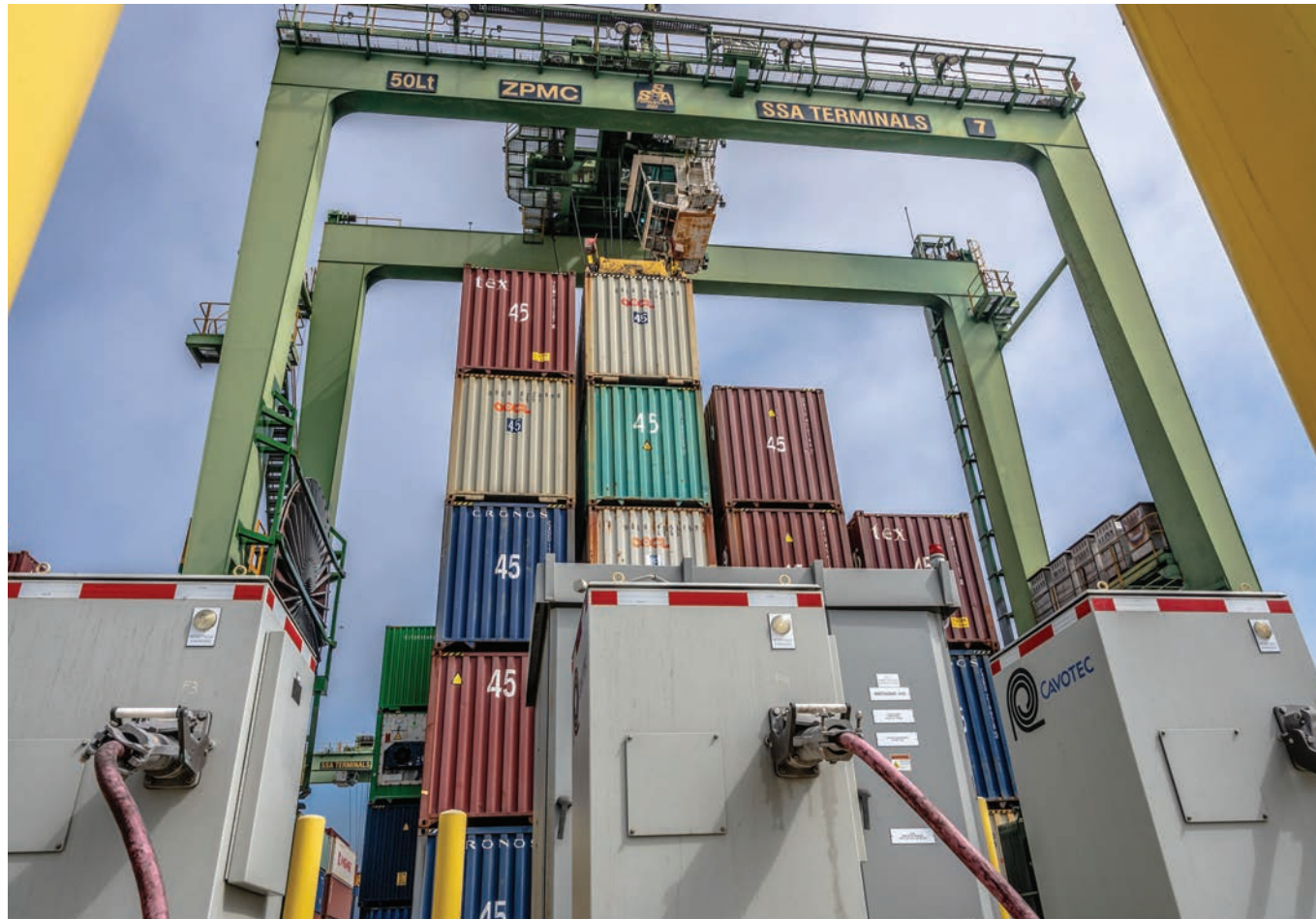
The Port of Long Beach announced late last month that it will receive a \$30.1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation to deploy the nation's largest fleet of manually operated, zero-emission cargo-handling equipment at a single marine terminal.

The funding is a critical step toward reaching the port's goal of operating a fully zero-emission cargo-handling fleet by 2030 as part of the joint Clean Air Action Plan, which was first implemented in 2007 and then updated in 2017.

Funding for the new clean air project comes from the 2022 Port Infrastructure Development Program, which is administered by the U.S. Maritime Administration, and will replace diesel yard tractors at the Long Beach Container Terminal with approximately 60 electric, human-operated yard tractors.

The project at the container terminal, which can move over 3 million cargo container units annually, includes the construction of electric equipment charging stations with energy efficiency-enhancing software, training for operators and maintenance personnel, and installation of software equipment to streamline cargo-handling operations within the terminal.

This project "is everything we strive for as the nation's most sustainable seaport—moving cargo in a way that protects the health of our residents while ensuring our operations can continue to grow and support the economy," Port of Long Beach executive director Mario Cordero said in a statement.



Nick Souza for the Port of Long Beach

One of nine newly converted electric cranes moves a shipping container at the SSA Marine terminal on Pier J at the Port of Long Beach.

Since 2021, the port has implemented several initiatives to mitigate its environmental impacts, including launching its Clean Truck Fund Rate and committing \$150 million to zero- and near-zero-emission demonstration projects.

The port also aims to have a zero-emission drayage truck fleet by 2035, but in September, the port announced that its trucking company partner, 4 Gen Logistics, will convert to fully zero emissions by 2025, 10 years ahead of its 2035 goal.

Currently, about 17% of the cargo-handling equipment at the port is electric-powered, the largest such fleet in the United States, according to the port.

Compared to 2005, the year before the Clean Air Action Plan was adopted, the Port of Long Beach has reduced emissions of diesel particulate matter by 88%, nitrogen oxides by 49%, and sulfur oxides by 96%, according to a statement.

Still, more work needs to be done: Last year, unprecedented congestion

drove up emissions. The port's annual emissions inventory report showed that greenhouse gas emissions last year were 22% above 2005 levels.

"I want to thank our partners at the Department of Transportation for continuing to invest in the Port of Long Beach," said Mayor Robert Garcia in a statement. "We've made incredible progress through the Clean Air Action Plan, and this funding to expand the use of zero-emission equipment will continue to improve community health as we strengthen our supply chain." ■

Long Beach Airport came as close as ever to pre-pandemic passenger volumes in September

By Brandon Richardson

The number of passengers traveling through Long Beach Airport in September was closer to pre-pandemic levels than it has been since the emergence of the coronavirus, coming within 2.5% of 2019 levels.

In September, 282,191 people passed through the small municipal airport, compared to 289,502 in September 2019. Passenger volumes plummeted amid the pandemic, and this September's volume represents

a 413% increase from 2020 and a 55.6% increase from 2021.

"Long Beach Airport's commercial passenger activity for the month of September remains strong," Airport Director Cynthia Guidry said in an email. "We consistently see high demand for air travel during what is typically a slower, post-summer travel season."

While about 11,000 more people flew out of and into Long Beach in August, the passenger volume was 9.7% lower than pre-pandemic levels, according to airport data. In the

four months leading up to August, passenger volumes were within 4% to 7.6% of 2019 levels.

Air travel nationwide, meanwhile, continues to lag, with this September's almost 63.6 million passengers remaining nearly 6% below September 2019, when almost 67.6 million people passed through U.S. airports, according to U.S. Transportation Security Administration data.

In Long Beach, over 2.41 million travelers have passed through the airport this year as of Sept. 30, compared to nearly 2.65 million

during the same period in 2019—an 8.9% decrease. The year-to-date figure, however, marks a 173.3% and 75.8% increase over 2020 and 2019, respectively.

Total air cargo tonnage passing through the local airport continues to trail far behind pre-pandemic levels, following the departure of FedEx, which gave up its only flight slot on the airfield last year. In September, the airport handled 1,121 tons of cargo, down over 28% from the same month in 2019. Compared to September 2021, air cargo was down over 15%. ■

Rail Capacity

Continued from cover

intermodal facility and warehouses for transloading freight from international to domestic containers.

The facility will allow the direct transfer of containers from ships at the twin ports to trains that will carry them through the Alameda Corridor onto the BNSF mainline up to Barstow. Once at the hub, containers will be processed using green cargo-handling equipment and staged for trains moving east along BNSF's network.

"By allowing for more efficient transfer of cargo directly between ships and rail, the Barstow International Gateway will maximize rail and distribution efficiency regionally and across the U.S. supply chain and reduce truck traffic and freeway congestion in the Los Angeles Basin and the Inland Empire," BNSF President and CEO Katie Farmer said in a statement.

Westbound freight also will be processed more efficiently as it works its way to the ports and other California terminals, according to the company.

The ports of Long Beach and LA have been working for years to increase the percentage of containers



Brandon Richardson / Business Journal

Shipping containers sit ready for transport via rail off of Pier J at the Port of Long Beach.

that are transported out of the complex via rail. During normal operations, Port of Long Beach Executive Director Mario Cordero said up to 28% of containers are moved via rail—though, at some points during the pandemic, that dropped closer to 20%.

With the introduction of new rail projects, such as Long Beach's nearly \$1.6 billion Pier B On-Dock Rail Support Facility, Cordero said the percentage of containers moving by rail could reach as high as 38% in the years to come, meaning fewer trucks

congesting the roads and less pollution.

"When you put that together with the BNSF endeavor, that will really elevate what we are able to do in terms of maximizing cargo velocity," Cordero told the Business Journal. "These two projects complement each other."

The \$1.5 billion state-of-the-art facility in Barstow is the first of its kind to be developed by a Class 1 railroad. No public funds will be used for the project.

The BNSF project is the second logistics development planned for the

Mojave Desert announced this year. In August, the Kern County Board of Supervisors announced its support for Houston-based Pioneer Partners' 400-acre Mojave Inland Port, which also will accept containers by rail from the San Pedro Bay ports via the Union Pacific Railroad.

No construction schedules have been announced for either project.

Throughout the pandemic, the San Pedro Bay ports experienced a historic surge in cargo volumes, which resulted in a backlog of ships waiting to enter the complex and increased dwell times for containers waiting to leave the ports after being unloaded.

At the peak congestion, the number of containers on dock awaiting rail transport for nine days or more in Long Beach was 15,206 on July 10, according to port data. As of Nov. 8, that figure had dropped to 1,329, its lowest point since mid-February.

While supply chain congestion on the West Coast has already waned, Cordero said projects such as the two inland ports—along with efforts by port authorities and other agencies—will help ensure goods can continue to move smoothly in the future.

"It's game-changing," Cordero said, praising the BNSF project. "I applaud BNSF for taking this huge step to address an issue that has been plaguing this complex for a number of years." ■

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1st nonstop flight to Nashville takes off from Long Beach Airport

On weekdays, after a 45-minute stop, passengers can continue on to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport in Arlington, Virginia.

By Tess Kazenoff

Officials celebrated a long-awaited expansion of Southwest Airlines’ destination offerings out of Long Beach Airport earlier this month, when the first nonstop flight to Nashville International Airport took off.

The Nov. 6 flight included a musical send-off for departing passengers from California country singer-songwriter Victoria Bailey, as well as customized cookies commemorating the occasion.

“We gave Southwest passengers on (the) first nonstop flight from Long Beach to Nashville a big sendoff in celebration of this convenient new route between two great destinations,” Airport Director Cynthia Guidry said in a statement.

The flights to Nashville will depart seven mornings per week at 9 a.m., utilizing the airline’s Boeing 737 fleet.

On weekdays, after a 45-minute stop, passengers can continue on to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport in Arlington, Virginia, a primary airport for Washington, D.C. The flight arrives in Arlington after six and a half hours without a plane transfer.

“Beyond Nashville, this new service adds flexibility and options

for travelers to connect to the East Coast and Southwest’s broader network,” Guidry said.

The Dallas-based airline first began service in Long Beach in 2016 and has continued to increase its presence at the airport since then.

Including Nashville, Southwest Airlines now flies nonstop to 15 U.S. cities from Long Beach Airport.

Of the 53 daily flight slots available at Long Beach’s airport, Southwest currently holds a majority, with a total of 38 daily flights.

Southwest Airlines first announced its new route to Nashville in June, as part of a broader Southwest schedule expansion that also includes flights between San Jose and Palm Springs, Nashville and Steamboat Springs, Colorado, and San Diego and Colorado Springs, Colorado.

The latest flight slot was one of two recently relinquished by Delta—the other was awarded to the city’s newest carrier, Breeze Airways.

Long Beach Airport currently offers nonstop service to 17 destinations across the nation, including Hawaii.

“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,” said Adam Decaire, vice president of network planning in a statement, when Southwest Airlines first announced service in June. “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, with through-service to Reagan National Airport.”

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



Courtesy of Long Beach Airport
Long Beach Airport celebrated Southwest’s inaugural flight to Nashville with live music.



Brandon Richardson / Business Journal
A Long Beach Transit bus drives down Ocean Boulevard toward Downtown.

Long Beach Transit to expand service, green fleet in 2023

By Tess Kazenoff

Long Beach Transit is looking forward to several new initiatives in the upcoming year, including expanding its zero-emissions fleet and services.

Long Beach Transit first began its efforts to transition to electric buses in 2016, and is aiming to operate a fully zero-emissions fleet by 2035. To that end, in early 2023, the agency will add 20 electric-operating buses, bringing its total number up to 54 electric buses.

While initially the electric buses only operated in a shorter route in the Downtown area, they now are in regular rotation, serving areas throughout Long Beach.

The addition of its new electric battery-operated buses, which at 35 feet, are smaller than the standard 40-foot buses, will allow Long Beach Transit to extend its services, particularly in smaller, denser neighborhoods throughout the city such as in Alamitos Bay, according to Long Beach Transit spokesperson Arantxa Chavarria.

The extended route will hopefully connect a gateway for Long Beach Transit’s water taxi that boards in Alamitos Bay, which will overall “give more mobility,” Chavarria said.

Long Beach Transit is currently beginning its efforts to implement more charging stations, which will be necessary for increasing the electric bus fleet, as every bus will require nightly charging, Chavarria said.

Long Beach Transit currently has 25 chargers for recharging and one for training purposes.

In addition, Long Beach Transit will be introducing five new coach-style electric buses next year to

be utilized specifically for special services, including its weekday direct services from Long Beach to West Los Angeles.

Long Beach Transit’s coach-style, zero-emissions buses, used for its weekday route to UCLA’s Westwood campus, offer more comfort to customers compared to city buses for the hour-and-a-half route, which Long Beach Transit began offering in April 2019. The new vehicles will replace five buses currently in use, adding to the one coach-style zero-emissions bus that Long Beach Transit already has.

Apart from additions to its fleet, Long Beach Transit also looks forward to an extension of its services and plans to bring its service back to 100% in 2023, Chavarria said.

Long Beach Transit is currently at 85% service compared to its pre-pandemic level due to bus operator hiring challenges, Chavarria said.

As for AquaLink, 2022 was Long Beach Transit’s first year providing year-round service, and the agency is excited to continue year-round service next year, Chavarria said.

AquaLink service will be offered every day during the summer and on weekends, from Friday to Sunday, during non-summer months.

In the meantime, prior to launching these new efforts, Long Beach Transit’s Passport service will be returning for this holiday season, beginning in mid-December.

The Passport service will provide free rides around the Downtown area for visitors, residents and customers, Chavarria said.

“We’ve done it historically multiple times throughout Long Beach Transit’s history, so community members are well aware and excited to have it back,” Chavarria said. ■

Cargo Volume

Continued from cover

of the shift away from one of the world’s busiest port complexes to the pandemic-induced congestion and ongoing labor negotiations that cast a shadow of uncertainty over the West Coast ports.

“The American shipper wants to diminish their risks, I can’t blame them for that,” Cordero said.

Often unforeseeable fluctuations in the supply chain amid the pandemic, coupled with an increase in online shopping, caused unprecedented congestion at the ports of Long Beach and LA. At its peak earlier this year, there were over 100 container ships awaiting their turn at the port complex. At the same time, the number of containers sitting idle on docks for extended periods of time waiting for trucks and trains skyrocketed.

The backlog of ships, however, has been mostly in the single digits since mid-September, according to data from the Marine Exchange of Southern California. Similarly, the number of lingering containers fell to just over 3,100 on Nov. 9, port data shows, its lowest level since Nov. 1, 2021, when over 30,000 containers sat for nine days or longer.

The labor contract for International Longshore and Warehouse Union, which represents tens of thousands of dockworkers on the West Coast, expired in July and negotiations are ongoing. Despite no indication that a deal will be made anytime soon between the union and the Pacific Maritime Association, cargo continues to flow through the West Coast with no slowdowns or strikes expected, Cordero said.

Both sides agreed to a full media blackout ahead of negotiations, which means no updates are available on the progress—or lack thereof—being made.

Once labor negotiations are squared away, and with congestion greatly reduced, Cordero said he expects the twin ports to regain some of the lost market share. With that said, he explained that cargo volumes are not the most important metric at the Port of Long Beach.

“Success is not just measured by volume but what we’re doing in other aspects of leading in the sustainable movement of cargo,” Cordero said, touting the port’s quest to reduce emissions to zero in the coming years.

“If we continue to do that, I can guarantee we will remain competitive,” he said, adding that continued infrastructure investment will also increase Long Beach’s competitive edge. “I’m very excited about the next 10 years.”

The Port of Long Beach’s cornerstone project is its forthcoming \$1.5 billion Pier B On-Dock Rail Support Facility, which has been working its way through various channels toward groundbreaking for years. The project would greatly increase rail capacity, removing trucks from the road and

decreasing emissions.

As it stands, about 28% of containers leave Long Beach via rail, a figure that could reach as high as 38% over the next decade.

While rail will play a major role in the future of the San Pedro Bay ports, labor negotiations between rail owners and unions pose a new threat to the national supply chain. While there has been some headway in negotiations, with numerous unions approving—though sometimes narrowly—new contracts, several hold-outs remain, including the country’s third largest railroad union, the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division, which represents over half the track maintenance workers.

No rail strike is imminent because the union agreed to return to the bargaining table; however, there is a Nov. 19 deadline and negotiations have been deadlocked over the unions’ demands for paid sick time, according to a USA Today report.

As was made evident amid the cargo surges over the past two years, there are not enough truck drivers or chassis to make up for the loss of rail. The result would be another backlog of goods, only this time it would be nationwide, Cordero said.

Cordero acknowledged that the prolonged labor negotiations are part of the growing trend across the country for employees to demand higher wages and better working conditions.

“This dynamic has resulted from the pandemic period we have been in,” Cordero said. “Railroad workers, dockworkers, health workers—this is a phase that we’re going through.”

“The exciting news for us is we’re getting back to the normalization of operations,” Cordero continued, noting that the economy is strong in terms of the labor market, unemployment and personal spending. He noted that the National Retail Federation expects holiday shopping to increase 6-8% year-over-year.

“Those are positive numbers that give us confidence,” Cordero continued. “We’re still in a very good position.” ■

Protecting Blue Whales and Blue Skies Vessel Speed Reduction Incentive Program

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Global shipping companies reduced speeds
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Photo by John Calambokidis

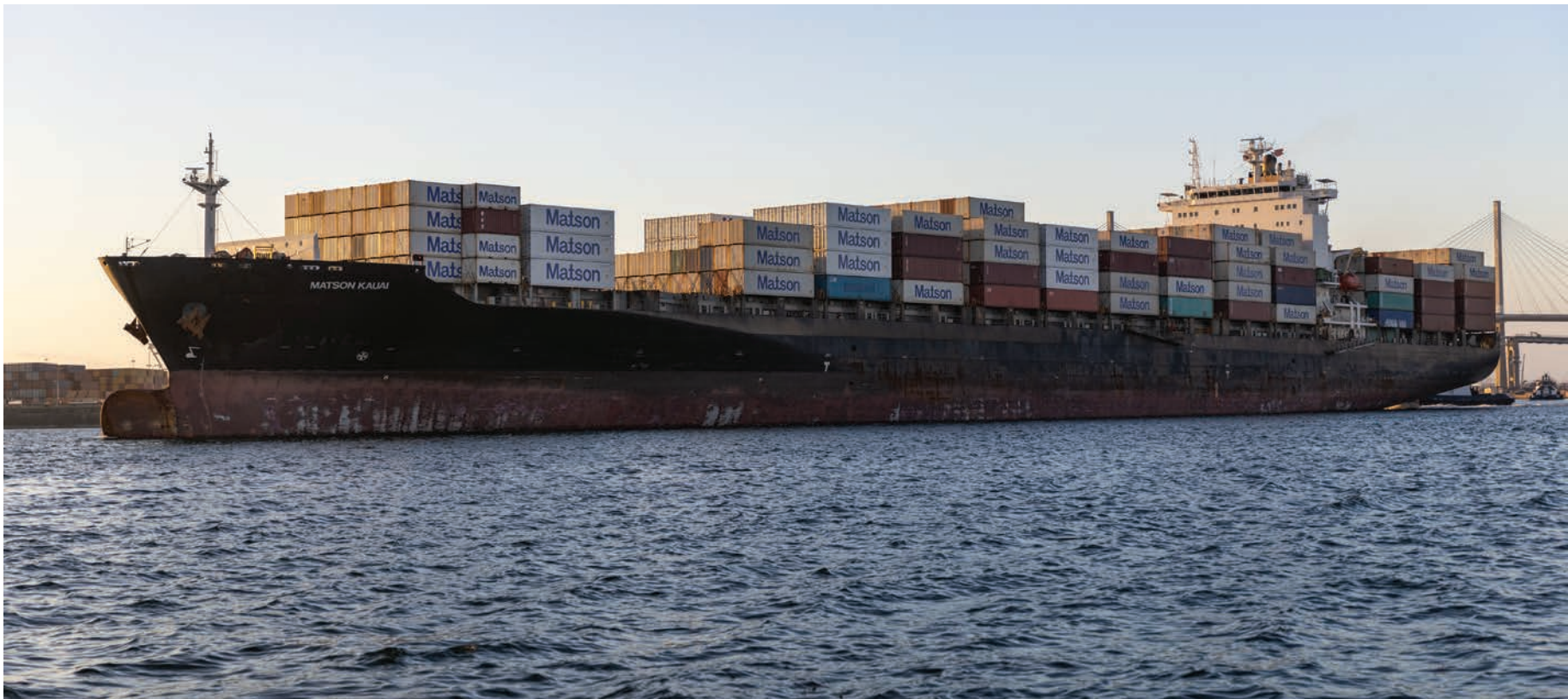
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The 2022 program runs May 1 through December 15, 2022
For more information, visit bluewhalesblueskies.org



A container ship leaves the Port of Long Beach complex via the Main Channel.

Brandon Richardson / Business Journal

Ports of Long Beach, LA team up with Singapore to create green shipping corridor

By Brandon Richardson

As part of a global challenge initiated by the United States and Norway last week, the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles have partnered with the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) to create a green and digital shipping corridor.

The agencies have begun discussions to establish the corridor, which will push the development of low- and zero-carbon fuels as well as digital tools to increase efficiency and support the deployment of greener vessels, according to a joint announcement released on Nov. 7.

The collaboration was announced as part of the Green Shipping Challenge, which launched during the World Leaders' Summit at the 27th United Nations Climate Change Conference in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, last week. The challenge, which encourages stakeholders to decarbonize the shipping industry, was initiated by the U.S. and Norway.

"Decarbonizing the supply chain is the future of our industry, and partnerships like this on the world's most important trade route are important for fulfilling that ultimate goal," Port of Long Beach Executive Director Mario Cordero said in a statement.

The San Pedro Bay ports—the combined operations of Long Beach and LA—handled 31% of all containerized goods into and out of the U.S. in 2021, according to Port of LA data. Singapore, for its part, was the 17th largest goods trading partner with the U.S., with \$57.8 billion in

total (imports and exports) goods traded during 2020, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative reports.

The U.S. has a trade deficit with Singapore, meaning it imports more from the Asian country than it exports to it. The trade balance shifted from a \$4.8 billion surplus in 2019 to a \$3.9 billion deficit in 2020, according to federal data.

The two countries have had a

in partnership with the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, a group of 97 mayors around the world that represent about 8.3% of the world's population but 25% of the global economy. The group is working to confront climate change and advocates for a Global Green New Deal.

Pacific Environment, a global environmental organization that has been critical of shippers'

2018, accounting for nearly 3% of total global CO2 emissions that year. If left unchecked, experts estimate shipping could account for 17% of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 as other industries reduce fossil fuel consumption, according to a Washington Post report.

Last week's announcement follows in the footsteps of a similar agreement between the ports of LA and Shanghai

"Decarbonizing the supply chain is the future of our industry, and partnerships like this on the world's most important trade route are important for fulfilling that ultimate goal."

- Mario Cordero, Port of Long Beach Executive Director

close and relatively smooth trade relationship since the United States-Singapore Free Trade Agreement that took effect on Jan. 1, 2004.

"The trans-Pacific corridor is one of the busiest trade routes in the world," Teo Eng Dih, chief executive of the MPA, said in a statement. "Through this corridor, we hope to support the long-term objective of decarbonizing global supply chains, complementing efforts undertaken by the industry and the International Maritime Organization to drive the decarbonization and digitalization transition for international shipping."

The corridor will be developed

contributions to global pollution, praised the Biden administration—specifically U.S. climate envoy John Kerry—for pushing the challenge.

"As [Kerry] said himself, 'At Paris, no one talked about shipping,'" Madeline Rose, climate campaign director for the organization, said in a statement. "Pacific Environment is proud of the momentum we see today in building a clean, just, healthy future—and yet, we must all go faster."

According to the International Maritime Organization, the U.N. agency that regulates international shipping, the industry emitted over 1 billion tons of carbon dioxide in

Homeless Outreach

Continued from cover

bus connections at the end of Metro's rail lines that could allow passengers to return to the city in which they boarded, acquiring more shelter space near the end of lines and pushing for more homeless services to be available in the late evenings and early mornings.

Hahn brought the item to Metro after the Long Beach City Council sent a formal letter to the agency asking it to look at the issue.

In Long Beach, the end of the A Line is typically the First Street platform in Downtown, where Hahn said a recent survey showed between 20 and 35 unhoused riders exiting the train when it's cleared just after 1 a.m.

This has led to complaints from residents and business owners at end-of-the-line locations across the county, including Long Beach.

The county has already pledged to partner with Metro to offer more outreach workers, potentially having them on trains or at stations and having round-the-clock navigation hubs that could help connect people to shelters when people are forced to exit trains. Metro's full board of directors is scheduled to meet again Jan. 26. ■



People exit the Metro A Line at the First Street station in Downtown Long Beach.

Brandon Richardson / Business Journal

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FORWARD

Long Beach could look to incentives to reduce Downtown office building vacancies, convert spaces into housing

By Jason Ruiz

Long Beach could look at incentives like tax and fee reductions to try and draw more businesses to vacant Downtown office spaces or to convert those spaces into housing. The City Council voted on Nov.

1 for city management to come up with options that could include business license holidays to try and attract more businesses to the area that has seen vacant office space hit its highest marks in 20 years. A report released by the Downtown Long Beach Alliance in August showed that 22.4% of office

space in Downtown was vacant as of the second quarter of 2022. Some of the highest levels of vacancy were in the city's largest office buildings like Landmark Square, which was just 53% occupied. According to the report, there were about 1.2 million square feet of available space, not including underutilized office space and businesses that might choose to decrease their office space in the future.

Vacancies have been attributed to declining retail sales in the area due to fewer office workers being in the area throughout the week. Retail sales have rebounded since 2020, but employee visits from area businesses continue to lag, according to the report, which could be due to some workers working remotely or in a hybrid setting.

Councilmember Rex Richardson, who asked for the report, said that the city needs to develop options to fill these vacancies. That could include rezoning areas meant for commercial space to allow residential development and applying for state funding to help pay for the adaptive reuse of buildings, among other incentives.

"We know it's an economic imperative that we all join in to address this issue," Richardson said.

Austin Metoyer, the president and CEO of the DLBA, said he supported the request and wants to look at ways to activate unused retail space on the ground levels of buildings.

Richardson's request also called for a dedicated homeless outreach plan in Downtown. Long Beach saw a 62% increase in its homeless population between 2020 and this year's count, and Downtown residents and business owners say it's negatively affecting the quality of life in Downtown.

Some have pointed to the A Line train as a source of the major increase in Long Beach's homeless population. The LA County Metro board of directors and the LA County Board of Supervisors said they want to partner to provide more services along the transit lines, one of which ends in Long Beach.

A report is expected to come back to the City Council with potential incentives the city can use to decrease vacancy rates in Downtown office buildings before the City Council authorizes any program moving forward. ■



Brandon Richardson / Business Journal
A leasing sign faces the street at 555 E. Ocean Blvd. in Downtown Long Beach.

LBCC, Long Beach Collective Association host first-of-its-kind cannabis symposium

By Tess Kazenoff

Long Beach City College and the Long Beach Collective Association, a cannabis trade organization, are charting new territory when it comes to career development in the cannabis industry. The two agencies have a years-long partnership in place that helps prepare students to navigate the legal framework and understand what it takes to be successful in the budding field. Now, they've built on that relationship with a first-of-its-kind cannabis symposium that was held on Nov. 4, where officials shared their knowledge and introduced other higher education institutions, students, business owners and employees to the possibilities of developing similar partnerships and programs beyond Long Beach. The two organizations had plenty of knowledge to share, as their partnership dates back more than five years. Voters approved the statewide

legalization of recreational cannabis use in 2016, and the industry had been expanding across the state. But there was a void when it came to workforce development and

"A lot of people don't fully understand how much the industry has changed from 10 years ago, 15 years ago, five years ago, and the requirements and the regulations

eight-week academic curriculum, the partnership between the collective association and LBCC was a first of its kind, Hijazi said.

And the interest in the new program became immediately clear: When the pilot program first launched in 2020, within two hours, over 800 people had applied, Hijazi said.

Between 200 and 300 students have since gone through the program, which has since engaged participants from across the state, country, and even internationally, Hijazi said.

While the program does not currently involve direct job placement, participants complete the course with a certificate from LBCC's workforce development program and the Long Beach Collective Association, as well as with a well-rounded introductory understanding to the cannabis industry and its regulatory framework, plus access to an employment pipeline through connections to industry professionals, Hijazi said.

"As a city, Long Beach always wants to be at the forefront of things. We want to say, 'We were there first, and we're creating this space that you'll follow.'"

- Dana Friez, Long Beach City College Interim Director of Workforce Development

education for people interested in pursuing careers in the industry, said Adam Hijazi, CEO of two licensed dispensaries in Long Beach and president of the Long Beach Collective Association.

of how to run your business really demand skill and an educated workforce," Hijazi said. With the idea to build a team of instructors made up of experienced industry professionals and format an

Christopher Koontz named director of Development Services

By Brandon Richardson

Longtime city employee Christopher Koontz has been named director of Long Beach Development Services, the city manager's office announced earlier this month.

Koontz officially took over the department on Nov. 7.

Koontz came to Long Beach in 2015 as an advanced planning officer. He was promoted to planning bureau manager in 2018 and deputy director in 2020, and has served as acting director of the Development Services Department since August of this year.

"I look forward to continuing the important work coming out to the Department of Development Services especially at this time of great community need, change and opportunity," Koontz said in a statement.

In his new role, Koontz oversees planning, permitting, code enforcement and housing services, leading a staff of 210 with an annual budget of \$91 million.

Koontz, a Long Beach resident, brings nearly 17 years of experience in development services and city planning to his new role. He holds a Master of Planning degree and a Bachelor of Science in policy, planning and development from the University of Southern California.

"In addition to his impressive portfolio in planning and development services for the public sector, Mr. Koontz also demonstrates leadership qualities and compassion for public service to best serve our diverse community," City Manager Tom Modica said in a statement.

In the city's announcement, officials praised Koontz for his ability to "implement successful programs and initiatives related to planning, housing, transportation and economic development." The announcement also stated Koontz has worked to align operations across the various bureaus to better address housing and quality of life needs in the city, among other things. ■



Courtesy of the city of Long Beach
Christopher Koontz, Director of Long Beach Development Services.

Simply Salad opens in Long Beach

By Brandon Richardson

In August 2019, Daniel Gonzalez was the chief financial officer at Popeyes and became one of the masterminds that kicked off the Chicken Sandwich Wars that saw Chick-fil-A trying to defend its turf while countless other fast food chains scrambled to match the success of the Louisiana Kitchen's new menu item. Today, as a co-owner of Simply Salad, Gonzalez said the "salad wars" are about to begin—and Long Beach is now on the frontline.

"The wars are coming," Gonzalez told the Business Journal in a recent interview at the new Long Beach location, noting that healthy food options are on the rise. "Over the next decade, we're going to be the fastest growing category in food."

"With the salad wars, there's a big prize," Gonzalez said, adding that now that the Los Angeles brand has expanded into Long Beach, competitors are already chattering about following suit.

The healthy fast-casual eatery, which offers build-your-own salads and wraps, quietly opened its first



Brandon Richardson / Business Journal
Ashley Sanchez preps the work area at Simply Salad fast-casual restaurant near the Traffic Circle.

Long Beach location at 1775 Ximeno Ave. on Oct. 3, and the reception has been warm, Gonzalez said.

The new store is the seventh location for the company but only the second south of the 105 Freeway, joining Gardena. A Cerritos location is expected to open in the first quarter of next year, Gonzalez said.

The first Simply Salad opened in the South Park area of LA in 2010 by Bruce Teichman and Cameron

Lewis. The original site has a map of California that has stars at each location, with more to come.

"When you have a map of California and a few little stars, it's kind of ridiculous," Lewis told the Business Journal. "But we want to be everywhere."

Over the past two years, the company has been able to add more stars to the map in part thanks to a partnership with Gonzalez, who

Continued on page 12



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Simply Salad

Continued from page 11

invested in the company.

With the Long Beach store, the partners wanted to encapsulate the city’s creative spirit and musical history. The space includes a mural featuring hip-hop legends and other imagery related to the city. One sign behind the counter reads: “Snoop’s new favorite greens.”

“Long Beach is full of legends, especially in music, and there’s a graffiti art culture, too,” Gonzalez said. “Warren G, Snoop Dogg, Sublime, VIP records—you can’t open here without paying homage to the legends that made LBC what it is.”

While the LA stores have transplants from all over the country, Lewis said the new store is being worked mostly by born-and-raised Long Beachers.

The Long Beach store is one of very few health-oriented food options near the Traffic Circle, which is dominated by fast food drive-thrus like Carl’s Jr. and Raising Cane’s.

“Obesity is a problem in America; fast food is generally not as healthy,” Gonzalez said, adding that customers value convenience over health. To that end, the goal at Simply Salad is to join health

and convenience.

“Healthy food needs to find a way to become fast food and change what that definition is,” Gonzalez said. “Everyone is trying to figure out the right way to address the McDonald’s customer ... in a way that’s healthy.”

The restaurant’s build-your-own salads start at \$8.95—wraps at \$8.45—and include five “simple” toppings and one dressing with additions costing 50 cents each. The combinations are seemingly endless, a choice of five types of greens, 65 toppings (including “premium” items) and 29 dressings.

Gonzalez said the menu has nothing that is unfamiliar or “scary to order” because they want the healthy options to be easy and accessible to everyone.

“We just want the basics and we want to do them really, really well,” Gonzalez said.

The company also has 12 signature chef-created salads and wraps that vary in price from \$7.45 to \$14.

The new location has not been heavily marketed, Lewis said, adding that they first want to work out any kinks with the store and its employees.

“You only get one shot at a first impression,” Lewis said, with Gonzalez adding that rather than spending on marketing, the restaurant is investing in food



Ashley Sanchez adds ingredients to a bowl filled with greens as she makes a salad bowl at the new Simply Salad in East Long Beach.

quality. Simply Salad’s ingredients are farm direct, Gonzalez said, which means it is never frozen, always fresh.

As the salad wars heat up, Lewis said the next and most obvious step—outside of further expansion—is the introduction of drive-thrus, which will help the concept compete with

longstanding fast food chains. In the meantime, as more healthy concepts migrate to Long Beach and beyond, Gonzalez said Simply Salad welcomes the challenge.

“We’re not trying to take 100% of the market. I want good competitors to come over here and make us better,” Gonzalez said. “Bring it on. The customers win in the end.” ■



Megan Gaza uses a double mezzatuna to chop salad ingredients at the Simply Salad fast-casual restaurant near the Traffic Circle.



Ashley Sanchez grabs the greens to make a salad bowl at Simply Salad near the Traffic Circle. The new fast-casual eatery has several nods to Long Beach's musical fame, including this Snoop Dogg homage

Queen Mary gets \$1M more in city funds for repairs

By Brandon Richardson

As work continues on the Queen Mary in the hopes of a partial reopening by the end of the year, the City Council approved another \$1 million earlier this month for additional repairs identified by the company tasked with reopening and operating the historic ocean liner.

The item was approved unanimously on Nov. 1 with no discussion by the council or public comment. Councilmembers Cindy Allen, Stacy Mungo, Suzie Price and Roberto Uranga were absent from the vote.

In June, the council approved a hotel management agreement with Evolution Hospitality for the reopening and operation of the ship and adjacent events for five years. Since then, the company has overseen various improvements aboard the vessel, but city staff say additional repairs necessary for reopening have been identified, including:

- The replacement of linoleum flooring and carpet that will “improve the aesthetics” of the ship and reduce trip hazards. The flooring will be replaced with historically accurate materials.
- HVAC and refrigeration repairs to ensure proper heating and cooling throughout the ship. Kitchen freezers and coolers will be repaired or replaced as needed.
- Elevator modernization to ensure safety while also providing aesthetic improvements.
- The installation of kitchen hoods that meet the fire code and allow food service to resume aboard the ship.
- The installation of new guest room locks for added safety as some older locks are malfunctioning.

Funding for the additional repairs will come from the Tidelands Fund, which is used to pay for projects, maintenance and services along the city’s coastline. While the ship has been closed to the public, the city’s Special Events and Filming Bureau continued to market the Queen Mary as a filming

location, which generated \$1 million in unbudgeted revenues for the Tidelands Fund, according to the staff report included in the council item.

Using \$2,870,500 approved as part of the management agreement, Evolution already has addressed plumbing issues throughout the ship, restored internet and WiFi, has begun restoring handrails and is in the process of improving energy efficiency by replacing light bulbs and fixtures, according to the city. The company also has begun the process of replacing the ship’s boilers and heat exchangers.

In addition to ship updates, parking improvements will be made, according to the staff report. The city’s parking operator, LAZ Parking, is working with staff to bring recommendations to council to enhance parking, which is a major revenue source for the vessel.

The parking recommendations are expected to be presented before the end of the year, according to city spokesperson Kevin Lee.

City officials had previously announced the Queen Mary would partially reopen by October but pushed the timeline back in late September, saying it would be “by the end of the year,” which is still the target, Business Operations Bureau Manager Johnny Vallejo said during the meeting.

It remains unclear which parts of the ship will open this year, according to Lee.

The remainder of the ship is expected to open in phases beginning early next year, Vallejo said.

It’s still unclear how the city could pay for long-term capital improvements on the ship after years of neglect threatened its structural integrity. Keeping the ship operating over the next 25 to 100 years could cost anywhere from \$150 million to \$500 million depending on how much work the city wants to put in, according to an analysis last year.

Even giving up and scrapping the Queen Mary would be costly, with an estimated price tag of at least \$105 million. ■



A woman walks along Bluff Park backdropped by the Queen Mary, which has been closed to the public since the beginning of the pandemic.

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Shop Close to Home with this Long Beach Holiday Gift Guide

There's no need to go all the way to the North Pole. Here at the Long Beach Post, we're hoping you'll consider supporting local businesses by checking off your holiday shopping list close to home. Santa's helpers can find whatever they're looking for right here in their own backyard with this 2022 Holiday Gift Guide!

Ace Hardware

746 E. Fourth St.
562-432-2100
acehardware.com/store-details/09371

A local one-stop-shop for all the DIYers on your list, Long Beach Ace Hardware's knowledgeable team, including longtime owner Tyler Barnes, provides top-quality products and a level of customer service that no "big box" store can match. Since 1987, Ace has been the neighborhood go-to for finding the right fix for any home improvement project, plus a wide variety of holiday decorations.

Ammatoli

285 E. Third St.
562-435-0808
ammatoli.com

Mediterranean restaurant Ammatoli, located in the Mosaic shopping center downtown, is a popular catering choice for holiday parties for good reason. Chef Dima carefully crafts delicious, modern cuisine that honors traditional recipes, using exotic flavors from the Levant region. The welcoming restaurant serves dishes packed with fresh vegetables, halal meats and big flavor is inspired by tastes from Jordan, Syria and Palestine.

Ash Bay Soap Co

440 E. First St.
213-505-3386
ashbaysoapco.com

Ash Bay Soap Co's Mint Chocolate Soap Bar is the perfect gift for washing away 2022 and starting clean in 2023. The mint chocolate has natural essential oils of spearmint and peppermint, coupled with organic cocoa butter and chocolate for a blissful treat reminiscent of ice cream. It's one among many handmade artisan soaps that give the gift of zen to whoever receives them.

Buono's Pizzeria

250 W. Ocean Blvd.
562-432-2211
buonospizza.com

Warm up with some hot authentic Italian cuisine this winter at Buono's Pizzeria. Owner Frank Buono says gift certificates wrapped in our cute little mini pizza boxes make GREAT stocking stuffers. The family-owned restaurant specializes in hand-kneaded pizza made fresh daily, plus other authentic Italian specialties such as lasagna, spaghetti, eggplant parmigiana and more. The other locations are in LB on Willow and in San Pedro - "Little Italy"

Creative Cakery

2948 Clark Ave.
562-493-6550
creativecakery.com

Those looking for a sweet gift to bring or have delivered to any holiday party need look no further than Long Beach's Creative Cakery, the original bundt cake bakery. A tradition for the sweet-toothed in the community since 1983, everything is fresh daily, with seven main cake flavors, plus the Sampler which is a bundt cake made up of sections of each of the seven flavors and brunch favorite Crumb Coffeecake—that come topped with a signature cream cheese frosting."

Craft + Light

5614 E. Second St.
562-607-5959
craftandlight.org

Need some help making a gift from the heart? Craft + Light in Naples is ready to ignite your creativity with Holiday Candle Making Workshops. The cost of the illuminating introductory workshop, including materials, is \$55. The craft studio also offers other classes for adults and youth to explore their creative whims, from paper flower art to soap making and much more.

District Wine

144 Linden Ave.
562-612-0411
districtwine.com

Oenophiles know and love District Wine in the East Village. The wine bar and lounge, which also offers take-out and delivery service, has been a favorite among locals since it opened in 2010. Regulars know District Wine's Club Membership for \$40 a month makes a really "grape" gift since it comes with small production bottles, 15% off all retail purchases, half-off wine tastings and free entry into members-only events.

Ficklewood Ciderworks

720 E. Broadway
562-676-4497
ficklewood.com

Designed to be a welcoming sort of living room, Ficklewood is a homey place to unwind and socialize in the East Village with dry and full-bodied ciders that are the perfect drinks for the holiday season. For gifters, Ficklewood sells special monthly (\$45) and quarterly (\$50) home delivery options of bottled all gluten-free and vegan ciders that celebrate both old-world craft and modern pioneering spirit.

Kleefeld Contemporary Art Museum

1250 Bellflower Blvd.
562-985-5761
csulb.edu/carolyn-campagna-kleefeld-contemporary-art-museum

At the Carolyn Campagna Kleefeld Contemporary Art Museum at Cal State Long Beach, visitors find an archive of contemporary culture. The public museum was founded in 1973 and houses more than 2,000 works of art, with portions of its renowned collections regularly lent to other museums around the world. The museum is always seeking community support and memberships at various levels are great gifts for art lovers.

Loose Leaf Boba Company

315 The Promenade North
562-435-1559
bobacompany.com

At the original Loose Leaf Boba Company, married owners Thomas Liu and Jasmine Yip have created boba drinks inspired by flavors from around the world that you can't get anywhere else. With gift cards available this holiday season, giftees will enjoy made to order drinks freshly brewed in house. The company is "keeping it real" using milk and fresh fruit, no powdered ingredients, to make the best drinks possible.

Naples Rib Company

5800 E. Second St.
562-439-7427
ribcompany.com

The family-owned Naples Rib Company has been a favorite in the community since its founding in 1992. The restaurant, which sells gift cards, prides itself on being not only a spot for great comfort food, but also a warm, welcoming place for neighbors to gather together — or order some delicious barbecue catering to be delivered at home — especially during the holiday season. Pick up is available daily 10 AM – 9 PM.

Portuguese Bend Distilling

300 The Promenade North
562-435-4411
portuguesebenddistilling.com.

It's easy to get into the holiday spirits at Portuguese Bend, a gastropub that celebrates new American eats and all things boozy, with alcohol distilled on site. The perfect gift for cocktail lovers, Portuguese Bend sells a Holiday Old Fashioned Cocktail Kit (\$75) that comes with a bottle of Portuguese Bend Bourbon, simple syrup, house made cranberry bitters, dehydrated oranges and cranberries for garnish.

Long Beach Post

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Looking for a great gift idea for those who like to stay in-the-know about all things Long Beach? A membership to the Long Beach Post is the gift that keeps on giving because it supports free, public news coverage for all of our community members, regardless of their ability to pay for it. Plus, it comes with cool perks including access to exclusive deals with businesses around town, special member-only events and discounts on Long Beach-branded merch at shop.lbpost.com.

The Village Cookie Shoppe

888-490-6688
villagecookieshoppe.com

No cookie-cutter holiday gift, every box of the award-winning cookies and brownies sold at The Village Cookie Shoppe supports Mental Health America of Los Angeles, which works to help individuals with mental health needs achieve meaningful, healthy lives in their communities. The delicious gift box sets are made from scratch with only the best ingredients and prepared by people on their way to recovery, teaching them valuable job skills and self-sufficiency. Holiday orders can be placed online today.

Whimsical Charm

112 E. 22nd St. San Pedro
855-477-5138
whimsicalcharm.com

Whimsical Charm offers uniquely embroidered baby blankets, and other cozy and comfortable products for infants and children, including robes, clothing, shoes and accessories. Founder and Creative Director Rosie Arias, who embeds passion into every product she sells, creates practical, purposeful and high-quality items. She says her gift baskets are completely customizable and designed to provide children with warmth and style.

Tinsel & Bow

5318 2nd Street #278
562-342-3131
tinselandbow.com

Tinsel & Bow is a specialty gifting service based here in Long Beach. BIPOC, LGBT & woman owned and established in 2015, they help nonprofits, event planners, real estate agents and executives from all industries with hassle-free gift giving. Tinsel & Bow does all the work, you get all the credit!

Spirit Cruises

429-D Shoreline Village Drive
562-495-5884
Spiritmarine.com

Voted #1 Best in Long Beach & the South Bay! Southern California's leading cruise operator for over forty years. Specializing in Award-Winning events and dinner cruising. The all-inclusive pricing makes planning the easiest part of the trip! Give the gift of a one hour harbor cruise or sunset cruise, starting at \$19. Full cocktail bar & beer on board.The best destination for your next occasion is with Spirit. Let us make your event an unforgettable success!



Relativity Space unveils record-breaking 3D printers—again

The Stargate 4th Generation printer defies conventional 3D printing methods by moving horizontally, rather than vertically.

By Brandon Richardson

The world’s largest metal 3D printers are operating in a massive Long Beach factory, printing Relativity Space’s reusable Terran R rocket, the company announced late last month.

The Long Beach-based space firm unveiled its Stargate 4th Generation printer, which defies conventional 3D printing methods by moving horizontally, rather than vertically, as it feeds multiple wires into a single print head.

Relativity has beaten its own record with this latest generation, as the company has long been home to the world’s largest 3D printers.

“Iteration empowers innovation not only in our rocket design, but also in our own Stargate printers,” Scott Van Vliet, senior vice president of software engineering at Relativity, said in a statement. “In its short history, Relativity has made great strides in evolving its core 3D printing technology, but Stargate 4th Generation printers are our most innovative leap yet.”

The first, second and third generation Stargate printers already

operate at speeds faster than the industry standard, the company stated. The new model, however, prints up to seven to 12 times faster.

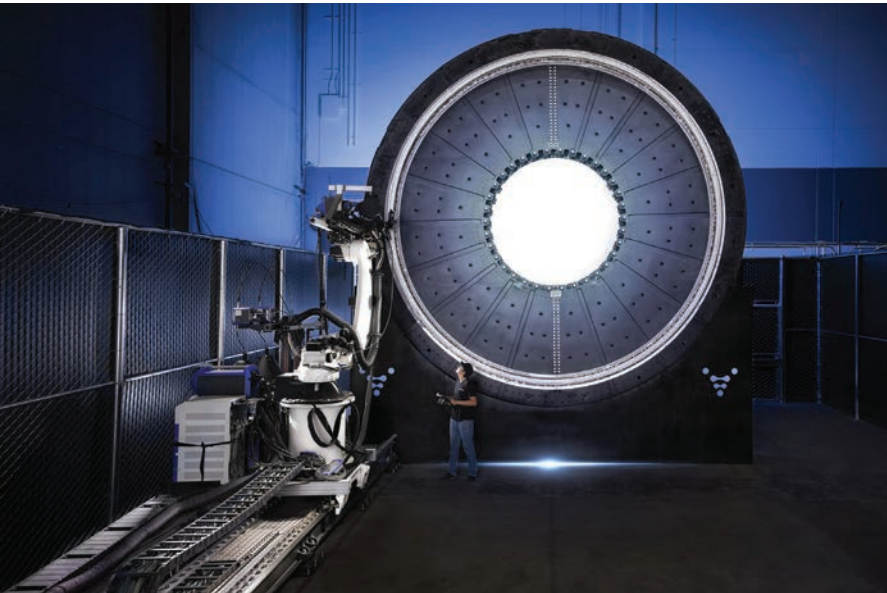
In addition to increased speed, the new printer also can manufacture objects that are 55 times larger than the third generation model. Thanks to its horizontal orientation, Stargate 4th Generation printers are capable of printing objects up to 120 feet long and 24 feet wide, according to the announcement.

“Stargate printers are designed to unlock rapid iteration, which opens up opportunities for innovation in large-scale manufacturing products,” co-founder and CEO Tim Ellis said in a statement. “What would take traditional aerospace and space manufacturers years to develop and build, will be reduced down to months due to a highly adaptable, scalable, and automated process, made possible through software-driven manufacturing.”

By 3D printing its rockets entirely, Relativity Space produces rockets with 100 times fewer parts faster than traditional rocket building.

Relativity is developing customized software and machine learning techniques that will allow the new printers to produce more complex and even larger metal products at faster speeds with more reliability, which reduces cost, the company stated.

The new printer will support the development and production rate of the company’s Terran R rocket, its first fully reusable spacecraft that will be capable of



Relativity Space’s Stargate 4th Generation printers are the largest metal 3D printers in the world.

launching 20,000 kilograms to low Earth orbit. The company already has secured \$1.2 billion across five customer contracts for the Terran R, including a multi-launch agreement with OneWeb and a commercial mission to Mars with Impulse Space.

The majority of Terran R components will be printed in Relativity’s new 1 million-square-foot headquarters at the former Boeing C-17 manufacturing plant, which has been dubbed The Wormhole. The Aeon R engines will continue to be produced at the company’s other Long Beach facility, The Portal, on Redondo Avenue.

The company said it plans to have more than a dozen Stargate 4th Generation printers at The

Wormhole, each capable of manufacturing four Terran R rockets per year at full capacity. The site is currently 33% operational.

In the long term, Relativity stated that the new printer offers “value-generating potential” for other products within the more than \$1 trillion aerospace, aviation, energy and defense industries.

“The compounding rate of progress is high, and we are still in the early days of what printing can achieve,” Ellis said. “We see 3D printing as an automation technology that has the power to change the pace of innovation in manufacturing, which is why we’ve invested in building our own proprietary tech stack from day one.” ■

Officials celebrate groundbreaking of new North Long Beach townhome and retail project

“RTHM” will consist of 84 residential townhomes and 2,294 square feet of commercial space.

By Tess Kazenoff

City and business representatives celebrated the groundbreaking of a new townhome and retail community coming to North Long Beach earlier this month.

The project, “RTHM,” is located at Atlantic Boulevard and South Street and will consist of 84 residential townhomes and 2,294 square feet of commercial space.

The residential area will include two, three and four-bedroom condominiums for sale, accommodating larger families.

“It’s not going to solve every issue in the city, but it’s really important, this style of housing,” said Christopher Koontz, director of the Development Services Department. “It’s what people want. It’s what we haven’t been able to deliver for many years.”

The project, situated on a 2.3-acre site, will also have 187 parking stalls through attached two-car garages and 19 surface parking stalls.

Each unit is expected to include



From left, Alex Hernandez, president of Brandywine Homes, Inc, Pasha Darvishian of the Uptown Business Improvement District, City Councilmember Rex Richardson, Planning Commissioner Joni Ricks-Oddie and Shaheen Sadeghi of LAB Holding LLC celebrate the groundbreaking of a new townhome and retail community coming to Uptown.

a private open space such as a balcony or patio.

Additionally, common open space will be centrally located in the middle of the development in the form of a pool and deck area, along with a community room with a small kitchenette and common bathrooms, according to the site plan review. A small coffee kiosk will also be accessible from the common area.

As for the project’s commercial space, according to the site plan review, the development is expected

to include a public plaza with two cafe/restaurant/retail buildings.

Koontz estimates that the project will take two years or so to complete.

Partners in the project development include LAB Holding LLC, Brandywine Homes, Inc. and the Uptown Business Improvement District.

“I’ve lived here for 10 years, this has been an empty lot for that entire time that I’ve lived here,” said Joni Ricks-Oddie, a planning commissioner who also serves as vice president of the Deforest

Neighborhood Association and as a board member for the Uptown Business Improvement District. “I have a 1-year-old and a 4-year-old. I want to be able to walk down the street, take them to coffee shops, take them to local restaurants, making this a true core business corridor, a true Uptown just like our Downtown that’s flourishing and that we as residents can really enjoy.”

“This really shows to the city that there are ways that we can invest in communities that have been forgotten. We can do things like build housing. We can expect the best for our communities. People can have the things that they need within walking distance,” said City Councilmember Rex Richardson, who hosted the event. “And that’s what this project truly represents.”

Not only will the project complement the Michelle Obama Neighborhood Library, which is across the street from the lot, but it will also create an area more engaging to the public sphere that will invite positive social interaction, Richardson said.

“We’re talking about the corner of Atlantic and South Street being iconic, and being engaged with restaurants and foot traffic. You’re talking about an opportunity for people to walk across the street and get coffee from the library,” Richardson said. “We’re helping make a neighborhood. That’s what’s important about what we’re doing here.” ■

Cannabis Symposium

Continued from page 10

At the forefront of the programming is a focus on social equity—a certain number of slots in each workshop is allotted to those who have been impacted by the criminalization of marijuana.

“Our community was severely impacted by criminalization, and it’s incredibly important for them to be able to benefit,” said Dana Friez, LBCC’s interim director for workforce development. “Now that it’s legal, they should have an entry point into that industry.”

For LBCC, a partnership such as this was “uncharted territory,” but one that was necessary, both to serve the community, and to support local businesses, said Friez.

While leadership initially worried about how offering a cannabis course could potentially impact the school’s ability to garner federal financial aid, LBCC was able to successfully

navigate the risks with the help of the collective association, Friez said.

For instance, of the two cannabis workshop series offered, no actual products are brought to campus, and the programs operate out of LBCC’s workforce training arm, rather than its degree program, so as not to complicate federal funding, explained Friez.

But Hijazi hopes that this will change in future iterations of the program—and that eventually, students will be able to complete a full-fledged degree program with other already-existing courses that relate to the cannabis industry, such as chemistry and marketing, he said.

But in the meantime, partnerships with local colleges and developing an educational program such as this are crucial to reducing some of the stigma that still surrounds the cannabis industry today, Hijazi said.

“It’s probably one of the pinnacles of the work that we’ve done over more than the last decade,” Hijazi said. “We’re so proud of that

partnership, and we’re so proud of the community college for taking this bold step. They didn’t really have to, but they—early on—adopted this perspective of what the future is going to look like, three, four, five, 10 years ahead.”

Although working in the industry “can be a lot of fun,” there is immense responsibility in every area, from cultivation to retail to manufacturing, Hijazi said.

While many higher education institutions may still be hesitant about forming a similar partnership, cannabis is a rapidly growing industry, Hijazi said.

“In the state of California, we approximate that there’s a \$15 billion cannabis industry—maybe \$10 billion of that is in the illicit market, and only \$5 billion is in legal, but this is a growing market, a growing segment, a growing product of the future, and at the end of the day, you can only not deal with this for so long before it starts to change serious landscapes in the business industry,” Hijazi said.

Business landscapes are already altering. Cannabis tourism is now a \$17 billion industry, and a recent report indicates that 50% of millennials are more likely to travel to a destination with legal access to cannabis, Hijazi said.

“There’s stigma to it, but you have to realize that this is coming, and the best way is to get ahead of it,” Hijazi said.

The symposium that was held earlier this month was one more step along the way to mitigating that stigma.

“Over the last few years, at LBCC, we’ve taken a lot of meetings with folks from other institutions, (asking) ‘How are you doing it? How do you get around this? Why didn’t you do it this other way?’ So we thought it would be helpful to have this space where we can talk about it,” Friez said.

“As a city, Long Beach always wants to be at the forefront of things,” Friez added. “We want to say, ‘We were there first, and we’re creating this space that you’ll follow.’” ■

Rocket Lab delivers another satellite to space; rocket catch attempt scrapped

By Brandon Richardson

Rocket Lab has successfully delivered its 152nd satellite to space after the 32nd launch of its Electron rocket earlier this month but called off its second attempt at catching a stage of the rocket in mid-air as it fell to Earth.

The mission, dubbed “Catch Me If You Can,” took off from the firm’s New Zealand launch complex just before 10:30 a.m. Long Beach time on Nov. 4 carrying OHB Sweden’s Mesospheric Airglow/Aerosol Tomography and Spectroscopy (MATS) satellite for the Swedish National Space Agency.

The spacecraft is the basis of the

SNSA’s science mission to observe atmospheric waves and better understand how Earth’s upper atmosphere interacts with wind and weather patterns.

MATS was originally slated to fly on a Russian rocket, but Sweden canceled the mission in March following the invasion of Ukraine in late February.

“Preparing for a launch from Russia is unthinkable under the current circumstances,” a spokesperson for the SNSA told City A.M. at the time.

About 53 minutes after liftoff, Rocket Lab delivered MATS to a 585 kilometer circular orbit.

As the name implies, the mission was meant to build on

Rocket Lab’s first attempt at recovering Electron’s first stage in mid-air as it descended back to Earth in May.

“Our first helicopter catch only a few months ago proved we can do what we set out to do with Electron,” founder and CEO Peter Beck said in a statement ahead of the Nov. 4 mission.

The firm’s Sikorsky S-92 helicopter was initially stationed in the recovery zone for an attempt to catch the stage. However, due to a loss of telemetry upon reentry, the helicopter was ordered out of the recovery zone for safety and a water recovery team was deployed to fish the stage out of the ocean

upon splashdown, spokesperson Murielle Baker explained during a livestream.

The Nov. 4 mission expands on the firm’s record-breaking year in which its launch cadence has grown. Its previous record for launches in a single year was set in 2020 with seven. “Catch Me If You Can” was Rocket Lab’s ninth mission this year.

The firm has had a successful launch every month since April and is slated for a December launch—its first on U.S. soil from its new complex at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport on Virginia’s Eastern Shore.

Details for the firm’s final launch of the year have not been released. ■

Both mayoral candidates confident, but it could be weeks before the election outcome is official

By Jason Ruiz

On Election Day, Councilmember Rex Richardson proclaimed victory in the mayoral race after coming away with a lead over Councilmember Suzie Price, but it could be weeks before the race is officially called due to the county’s lengthy ballot counting process.

When Richardson made the statement on stage at his election party last Tuesday night, he held about a 10-point lead over Price. Overnight, that lead reduced to a 6.7-point margin.

As of Friday, his lead was 8.5 points. Richardson issued a statement the day after Election Day, saying he was optimistic that as ballots are finished being counted, he would remain on top and was looking forward to being the next mayor.

Price also issued a statement saying she was going to spend time with friends and family while votes continued to be tallied. She, too, said on election night that she was confident she’d be the next mayor despite Richardson’s early lead.

Richardson’s campaign said his lead will hold up as more votes pour in. How many more is the big unknown.

When Long Beach shifted to having the county administer its elections, it lost the ability to track how many ballots had been cast and how many had been counted. All ballots used to be funneled into City Hall to be counted, but now they’re mixed in with 88 other cities. Voters are allowed to cast their ballots from anywhere in the county.



Long Beach mayoral candidates Rex Richardson, left, and Suzie Price.

This has left candidates and campaign advisors largely in the dark because county updates include figures from nearly 90 cities, which explains why some updates from the county didn’t include changes to Long Beach vote counts on election night.

“You don’t know if they’re from Claremont or Santa Clarita,” said Danielle Cendejas, a consultant who worked on Richardson’s campaign.

Cendejas said there’s an expectation that the total voter turnout will continue to grow from the 23% of ballots already returned in Long Beach. Turnout could grow to the low 40% range, which means potentially tens of thousands of ballots more to count.

In the March primary, turnout

for the mayoral race was 28%, and is typically higher in the general election.

While Richardson and Price are both Democrats, Cendejas said that because Richardson was endorsed by many high-profile progressive groups like Planned Parenthood and the Democratic Party, they are optimistic that late-arriving ballots will trend more toward him as the county issues updates.

“What we saw in the primary was Rex continued to do very well with votes that continued to come in and counted after Election Day,” Cendejas said. “We anticipate that’s going to be the same thing this time.”

Richardson held a 3-point lead on election night in June, but that grew to a 7-point lead by the end of the

primary certification process.

County election officials are set to update figures twice a week on Tuesdays and Fridays through the end of the month, or until they’re done counting. Ballots are legally allowed to be counted if they were postmarked on or before election night and arrived before Nov. 15.

The results released by Los Angeles County election officials last week are unofficial and could remain that way until Dec. 5, when the county estimates it will certify this election.

A photo showing an unknown amount of mail-in ballots received by the county was tweeted out last week, and county election officials said they received a “surge” of ballots through the mail on Election Day.

Drawn-out elections will likely be the norm for Long Beach races in the future. Voters appear to have approved two ballot measures that will permanently align the city and LBUSD elections with the state’s cycle. Measures LBC and LBU both had over 70% approval as of Friday.

That means in presidential election cycles, Long Beach elections will be held in March and November and gubernatorial cycles like this year will be held in June and November. The passage of both measures will move the city’s elections off of its schedule laid out in the city charter, which was April and June in even-numbered years.

The county will continue to administer the city’s elections, which could mean that close races could take several weeks to sort out. It could also make recounts and special elections in the city more expensive going forward. ■

3 new faces to join Long Beach City Council after elections

Based on early returns, it appears the races for Districts 3 and 9 may already be decided, while District 5 results remain close.

By Anthony Pignataro, Jason Ruiz and Laura Anaya-Morga

The Long Beach City Council is slated to have three new members after last week’s elections. Voters took to the polls to pick new representatives for the city’s 3rd, 5th and 9th Districts.

Based on early returns, it appears the races for Districts 3 and 9 may already be decided, while District 5 results remain close.

Here’s an overview of where things stand.

District 3

Early voting results show Kristina Duggan appears on track to become the new representative of Long Beach’s 3rd City Council district after taking an early lead over her opponent, Kailee Caruso.

With only mail-in ballots counted, Duggan jumped ahead 58% to 42%, and as votes continued to be tallied, that lead expanded, reaching 59% to 41% as of Friday. Votes could continue to trickle in and be tallied all the way to Dec. 5, but Duggan’s lead of over 2,000 votes would be difficult to overcome.

Duggan, who finished first in the March primary, ran to the right of her opponent, saying she will enforce the city’s anti-camping ordinance to address homelessness, rein in government spending and bolster police.

Caruso has been endorsed by the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, multiple Democratic clubs and many in the more progressive faction of the council, including mayoral candidate Rex Richardson.

The city’s 3rd Council District includes the Southeast Long Beach communities of Naples, Belmont Heights and Belmont Shore, and extends as far north as the Traffic Circle after last year’s redistricting process shifted district lines.

The district has had some of the higher voter turnouts when compared to other districts in the city and was at 26% voter participation heading into last week’s election. About 25% of those were cast by registered Republicans while over half were Democratic voters.

District 5

Just 433 votes separate the two candidates for Council District 5, and the outcome could have significant consequences for the next mayor and the balance of power on the nine-

member City Council.

As of Friday, establishment-backed progressive Megan Kerr had a slim lead over City Hall critic Ian Patton, and both say they are cautiously optimistic about their chances of winning. The most recent count shows Kerr with 51.8% (6,300 votes) and Patton with 48.2% (5,867 votes).

The Registrar has counted 12,167 votes in the district so far, but it’s impossible to say how many votes remain to be counted. There were 14,873 votes cast for 5th District candidates in the 2022 primary election, and vote tallies in general elections usually exceed primary elections.

While very close, the current 433-vote margin doesn’t meet the threshold for an automatic recount, according to the city charter. That would only happen when the margin between the two candidates is half a percent or less and there are 50 votes or less separating them.

Patton said he’d almost want the race to fall into automatic recount territory because that would “vindicate” him by showing city officials how the current recount system isn’t working.

Patton was behind efforts to force a recount after the passage of a measure to increase the Measure A sales tax indefinitely, which passed in 2020 with 16 votes. But the recount rule only applies to candidates, not ballot measures, and a judge ruled that Patton and the Long Beach Reform Coalition would have had to pay for the \$240,000 recount on their own, a figure well beyond what the group could afford.

Patton said he has not thought about whether he would push for a recount if the final vote tally was still close but beyond the automatic recount threshold.

Kerr would not comment for this story, beyond a brief statement thanking her family, supporters and voters and saying her campaign is “grateful to have a small lead and looks forward to the remaining ballot counts.” Follow-up questions sent to her campaign team were not immediately answered.

She ran a confident, almost relaxed campaign, benefitting from a wide array of endorsements from Democratic Party officials, including Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia, six members of the City Council and 15 labor unions. During their Long Beach Post debate, Kerr never criticized Patton.

“She acted like she was an incumbent,” noted Patton, who repeatedly criticized Kerr during the campaign as he ran against what he termed the “city machine.” Unlike Kerr, Patton had no support from well-financed independent expenditure committees.

Patton, who was endorsed by three former City Council members—including Water Resource Board candidate Gerrie



District 3 council candidates Kristina Duggan, left, and Kailee Caruso.



District 5 council candidates Ian Patton, left, and Megan Kerr.



District 9 council candidates Joni Ricks-Oddie, left, and Ginny Gonzales.

Schipske—as well as Long Beach Community College Trustee Ginny Baxter, who also endorsed Kerr. He ran as an “outsider,” according to Cal State Long Beach political science professor Matt Lesenyie.

“People who are not happy with the establishment is a style that works well in elections,” said Lesenyie. “They’re always interesting in office: do they fall in

line or do they rabble-rouse?”

That question could matter a great deal to the incoming mayor. At press time, Councilmember Rex Richardson, who endorsed Kerr, leads Councilmember Suzie Price, 54.3% to 45.7%.

Price, currently one of four more moderate members of the council, did not endorse either candidate.

Regardless of who becomes

Early election returns show all 3 incumbents taking lead in LBCC races

By Anthony Pignataro

Early returns showed all three incumbents running for the Long Beach City College Board of Trustees with sizable leads over their challengers.

As of Friday, Area 3 incumbent Sunny Zia had 73% (5,692 votes) while challenger Marianne Case had 27% (2,121 votes); Area 5 incumbent Virginia Baxter had 60% (11,875 votes) with challenger Juan Cepeda-Rizo bringing in 40% (7,763 votes).

Board President Uduak-Joe Ntuk, the Area 1 trustee, did not have a challenger and has won reelection.

The trustees serve four-year terms

and govern the community college district by allocating money for student programs and ensuring the district’s long-term fiscal health, which could be a key issue in upcoming years. The board in recent years has been wracked by in-fighting and litigation, exemplified last month when Ntuk accused Baxter of being aligned with the far-right conspiracy group QAnon.

Zia was first elected to the LBCC board in April 2014 and said one of the reasons she’s running for reelection is to ensure the school develops more workforce training. Case, her challenger, is a human resources specialist who never set up

a campaign committee or website.

Like Zia, Baxter joined the board in 2014. She said she has more than 50 years of experience at the college, having started working there in 1970 teaching U.S. history, and is running again to continue bringing her “fiscally conservative” ideas to the board as it tries to deal with both the enrollment declines and increasing pension liabilities.

Her challenger, Cepeda-Rizo, is an engineer with Rocket Lab and an instructor at Cal State Long Beach who said the board’s internal battles have been “embarrassing.”

Ntuk has sat on the LBCC board since 2018 and also works as a

supervisor of the California Geologic Energy Management Division, which regulates oil and natural gas wells across the state.

Though he ran unopposed, Ntuk raised more than \$93,000 and spent \$69,000 during the campaign, though most of his committee’s expenditures were donations to other political campaigns. Zia raised \$69,000 and spent about \$60,000, even though Case raised no money during the race. Baxter out-raised Cepeda-Rizo, \$38,000 to \$35,000, but was out-spent by a huge margin—her \$9,000 to his nearly \$29,000, according to the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk. ■



Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia speaks during the groundbreaking ceremony for a 90-unit affordable housing development for veterans at the Century Villages at Cabrillo.

Garcia, Barragán lead in congressional races

By Anthony Pignataro

Early returns showed Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia with a commanding lead in the race for the 42nd Congressional District over Republican John Briscoe in this open race.

Nanette Barragán, meanwhile, held a similarly significant lead in her latest bid to represent the 44th Congressional District.

In the race for the 42nd, Garcia, a Democrat, had 65% of the vote (56,014 votes) while Briscoe had 35% (30,058 votes) as of Friday.

In the race for the 44th, Barragán, a Democrat, had 69% of the vote (58,916 votes) as of Friday, while challenger Paul Jones, a Republican, had 31% (26,421 votes).

Registered Democrats hold a strong advantage in the newly

redrawn 42nd District, which runs from the Port of Long Beach through East Long Beach, then north through Lakewood, Bellflower and Downey to Huntington Park and Bell Gardens.

The 44th District includes much of western Long Beach and a small eastern portion of the city that falls south of Heartwell Park.

Garcia easily won the Democratic Party nomination in the June Primary election and has since been endorsed by a long list of officials and organizations including Vice President Kamala Harris, Gov. Gavin Newsom, U.S. Sen. Alex Padilla, three dozen members of Congress and more than 30 labor unions. Briscoe, a real estate broker and Ocean View School District trustee, previously ran for Congress in 2018 and 2020 against Rep. Alan Lowenthal, losing each time by nearly 30 percentage points.

Lowenthal, a five-term Congressman, announced his retirement in December.

Garcia campaigned on civil liberties issues like abortion and voting rights, raising the minimum wage, increasing paths to citizenship for immigrants and the need for added restrictions on handguns and semi-automatic rifles. Briscoe ran on conservative issues like putting more security at the borders, making it easier for judges to sentence homeless substance abusers to treatment or prison and increasing private sector influence in health care.

Garcia's campaign raised six times what Briscoe's campaign brought in, \$1.6 million to \$264,000, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. Garcia also spent 73 times what Briscoe spent, \$1.3 million to just \$17,000, according to the CRP. ■

Maria Isabel López takes lead over Nubia Flores in school board race

By Laura Anaya-Morga

Early returns show Maria Isabel López, a longtime educator and administrator, with a lead over Nubia Flores, a parent organizer for Long Beach Forward, in the race for a seat on the Long Beach Unified School District Board of Education.

López, the outsider in the Area 1 race to represent the North Long Beach and Bixby Knolls areas on the LBUSD board, had 54% of the vote as of Friday, compared to Flores, who had 46%.

The early election results are not final and could change significantly as provisional ballots and mail-in ballots postmarked by Election Day continue to trickle in. The Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk's office said vote total updates will continue through Dec. 5 if needed.

The winner will replace Megan Kerr, who ran for the City Council.

While Flores was endorsed by the Teachers Association of Long Beach, the LBUSD board president and several City Council members, López ran a more grassroots campaign,

with support from LBUSD teachers, students and others.

López has been working in schools for over two decades and is an LBUSD alumna. Her platform focused heavily on arming students with the right resources and guidance to succeed.

Flores has served as a Commissioner of the Citizens Advisory Commission on Disabilities and School Site Council, the PTA Executive Board, the LBUSD Community Advisory Committee and is a parent organizer with Long Beach Forward. ■

Josh Lowenthal takes 20-point lead over Al Austin in 69th Assembly race

As of Friday, Lowenthal had claimed 60% of the vote, while Austin had 40%.

By Anthony Pignataro

Early election returns in the 69th Assembly District race showed small business owner Josh Lowenthal taking a seemingly decisive lead over Al Austin, a Long Beach City Council member.

As of Friday, Lowenthal had claimed 60% of the vote, or 37,713 votes, while Austin had 40% (25,364 votes).

Both candidates in this open seat are Democrats. Al Austin is a labor organizer who has spent the last decade representing the 8th District on the Long Beach City Council. In contrast, Josh Lowenthal is a son of U.S. Representative Alan Lowenthal and a member of one of the most politically connected Long Beach families, but he has no political experience himself beyond a failed 2018 state Assembly race in Orange County.

After redistricting, the 69th now includes virtually all of Long Beach as well as Signal Hill and portions of Carson.

Austin and Lowenthal talked about many of the same issues during the campaign, including reducing homelessness, creating good jobs and reducing gun violence.

Lowenthal far out-raised Austin during the race, raising nearly \$1.4 million this year in campaign contributions, according to the California Secretary of State's office. That was nearly six times that of Austin's campaign, which brought in \$240,000. This allowed Lowenthal's campaign to spend a little more than \$1 million during 2022, about four times that of Austin's campaign.

Lowenthal also picked up far more endorsements than Austin, including retiring Assemblymember Patrick O'Donnell, who currently represents Long Beach in the state Assembly, Rep. Lowenthal, state Sen. Lena Gonzalez, Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia and Long Beach City Council members Cindy Allen, Roberto Uranga and Mary Zendejas, among others.

Long Beach City Council Member Stacy Mungo endorsed Austin, as did a variety of Carson officials, including Mayor Lulu Davis-Holmes, and longtime Signal Hill Councilmember Edward Wilson. ■

City Council

Continued from page 19

mayor, a majority of the new nine-member City Council is expected to support a progressive agenda. Even without the 5th District, councilmembers Mary Zendejas, Cindy Allen, Suely Saro, Roberto Uranga and newly elected Joni Ricks-Oddie are all Richardson supporters.

However on Sept. 21, Uranga suffered a stroke, and has been excused from every City Council meeting since then. It's unknown when he will return, and his staff is handling constituent services while he recovers.

A Kerr victory in the 5th District would provide the progressive camp with five safe votes even with Uranga absent. But if Patton wins, that block of votes would drop to five with Uranga present and just four if he's absent, setting up potential tie votes that could complicate any future mayoral administration's agenda.

The mayor of Long Beach does not vote in City Council meetings, but has a powerful voice in setting the agenda.

Regardless of who wins the 5th District, Uranga's continued absence from the council could result in a number of councilmembers having powerful

swing votes, according to Lesenyie.

District 9

Early election returns show Joni Ricks-Oddie, an educator, with a commanding lead over her challenger in the race to represent North Long Beach on the City Council.

As of Friday, Ricks-Oddie had 66% of the vote, and her competitor Ginny Gonzales had 34% of the vote.

Ricks-Oddie was the heavy favorite heading into last week's race after nearly winning outright in March over Gonzales, a longtime resident of the district.

Ricks-Oddie was endorsed by Councilmember Rex Richardson, who has held the seat for eight years and is leading in the race for mayor. She is an educator, city commissioner and member of the DeForest Park Neighborhood Association, and has said she wants to focus on issues related to city spending and homelessness.

Gonzalez has described herself as a candidate for the people. She is a 20-year resident of the 9th District and a certified public accountant.

In addition to Richardson, Ricks-Oddie is endorsed by U.S. Rep. Nanette Barragán, state Sen. Lena Gonzalez and all of the 9th District neighborhood association presidents, among others. A campaign website for Gonzalez has not been active through the election season. ■





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City’s plans to rezone Central Long Beach take shape

By Jason Ruiz

Draft versions of the new development zones that could be implemented along major corridors in Central Long Beach could be available to the public in December as the city works toward completing its “Zone In City Core” project, potentially in early 2023.

The city is in the process of rezoning portions of West and North Long Beach, but the City Core project is focused on the central part of the city bounded by Pacific Coast

Highway and 10th Street between Ximeno Avenue in the east and Magnolia Avenue in the west.

Rezoning the PCH, 10th Street and Anaheim Street corridors could allow more housing to be developed in the future and prohibit unwanted uses like liquor stores, motels or more industrial uses. Some areas of the city haven’t been rezoned in decades and have existing developments that are out of step with recently approved city development guidelines, officials say.

The project could also lead to other pedestrian improvements and

potentially more affordable housing. Part of the City Core area overlaps with the city’s inclusionary housing zone, which requires 11% of new units built to be reserved for affordable housing.

While the zones aren’t locked in, members of the public who spoke at the Nov. 3 Planning Commission meeting called for more safety improvements to the area, most of which wouldn’t require zoning changes.

Jesus Esparza, president of the Washington Neighborhood Association, which sits at the western edge of the project area, said more grocery stores and

lighting would be nice, but a cleaner neighborhood would improve the quality of life for residents.

“What I would also like to see in my community is more trash cans on the corners and big items like furniture, and tires to be picked up on a regular basis,” Esparza said about illegally dumped items. “And the owners of buildings and homes to keep their areas clean.”

Mike Clemson, who lives on the opposite side of the project area, said the city’s new zoning should protect people from being displaced from neighborhoods if new developments are built in the future, and that the sidewalks and streets need to be made safer so people feel safe walking.

“I want there to be a street safe enough where I can feel safe enough to let go of his hand without worrying a speeding driver will kill him,” Clemson said of his 2-year-old son.

The Planning Commission held the Nov. 3 study session to get a preview of what those zones could look like when they’re made public next month.

The tallest buildings could be limited to six stories in the project area, mostly concentrated along major corridors like PCH, Anaheim and north-south streets like Redondo and Cherry Avenues. Future development there could range from three to six stories with mixed-use buildings that provide retail on the ground level, according to the presentation.

Five-story developments could be allowed toward the western end of the project along Atlantic and Pacific avenues. That could come in the form of low-rise apartments or condos, or it could also be grocery stores, restaurants or other retail developments.

Outside of the corridors, the existing two-story height limit assigned to residential-only areas could remain intact. It could still provide for the construction of bungalow-style housing or townhomes in the future but could prevent more dense buildings from being built inside existing neighborhoods.

“We need dense, tall apartment buildings, but that can’t be the sole solution to our housing problems,” said Christopher Koontz, who is now the director of the Development Services Department.

Throughout the process, community members have called for more cultural spaces, community centers and neighborhood-serving uses like grocery stores, cafes and other businesses. Things like auto-repair shops, car washes, motels and dispensaries are things they’d like to see less of, according to city planners who’ve surveyed residents.

The draft zones are expected to be made public in December and the Planning Commission could conduct its first public hearing sometime in January, according to the city. The City Council, which has final approval authority and could change the zones before it approves them, could vote on them by this spring. ■

Proposed medical building next to Sunnyside Cemetery heads to City Council for approval

By Jason Ruiz

A new 3,000-square-foot medical building could be built next to Sunnyside Cemetery if the Long Beach City Council approves a zoning amendment to clear the way for construction.

The Planning Commission voted on Nov. 3 to recommend that the council approve the project, which would include the construction of the new medical building at the corner of California Avenue and Willow Street, and the removal of a small walking trail and picnic area north of the proposed project.

It requires the City Council to approve a zone change because the parcel is currently designated as open space. The parcel is west of the cemetery and south of Willow Springs Park, but if approved, the site would be changed to neo-industrial.

A city report said the rezoning would correct a city “error” because the land is privately owned and used as commercial space. The trail and picnic area currently on the lot were added by the site’s private owner. The site is not considered to be a park.

Across California Avenue from the lot is the city of Signal Hill, where a number of industrial and commercial buildings are located.

The parcel was originally approved for use as a parking lot for an adjacent business in 2017, but city planners accidentally zoned it as open space when the city updated its Land Use Element in 2018.

“We just got it wrong. The line is drawn in the wrong place,” said Christopher Koontz, who is now the director of Development Services. “Even though it’s an error, staff can’t correct it. It needs approval from this body.”

Much of the existing parking lot would still be used by the business across California Avenue with the new medical building being built toward the north end of the parcel near where California and 27th Street intersect. The walking paths would be removed to make room for parking spaces north of the building, according to plans submitted to the city.

The city exempted the project from a full environmental review because of its intended use, and the project is under 10,000 square feet.

However, the developer will have to track tribal resources that may be under the proposed site. Conditions for approval for the project include about three pages of requirements for partnering with a Kizh Nation-approved monitor to track the discovery of tribal resources, including burial sites and human remains. If remains are

found, construction would have to stop while a plan for relocating the remains or resources is agreed to by the developer and the monitor.

Long Beach is part of the Tongva tribe’s footprint that once extended from Palos Verdes to San Bernardino. The proposed project

site is a few miles northwest of Puvunga, a sacred Tongva site located on the campus of Cal State Long Beach. ■



The site of a narrow parking lot at 2600 California Ave. is being proposed for a medical building.

Thomas R. Cordova / Business Journal



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Pet Food Express opens in Belmont Shore

Founded over 30 years ago, Pet Food Express has more than 60 locations across the state, including one in Bixby Knolls.

By Laura Anaya-Morga

Pet Food Express, a popular California pet store chain, quietly opened its second Long Beach location in Belmont Shore late last month, and a celebration to officially launch the site followed shortly after. Located at 5265 E. Second St., the store serves the pet-loving Belmont Shore community, said Michael Levy, President and CEO of Pet Food Express. “We are amazed at all of the dogs and their owners walking down Second Street,” said Levy. “We feel a connection with the community and believe they value their pets like we do. We are excited to be a part of the Belmont Shore community and look forward to getting to know everyone and their pets.”

A grand opening celebration took place on Nov. 5 and 6, and customers had the chance to enter special giveaways and discounts including raffles for \$100 gift cards, free self-service pet washes, free pet treat samples and more. Local cat and dog adoption centers were in attendance throughout the weekend for anyone looking to bring a furry friend home. The new store currently employs 15 people, according to Levy, and the company is actively hiring. Those interested can apply in store or online. The store operates from 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily. Founded over 30 years ago, Pet Food Express has more than 60 locations across the state, including one in Bixby Knolls. The Belmont Shore location is the company’s 65th. The store offers a variety of pet food and products along with its



Brandon Richardson / Business Journal

Rene Perez lets Ramses, 2, sniff out a treat at the newly opened Pet Food Express at 5265 E. Second Street in Belmont Shore.

signature self-service pet wash station, and the company says it aims to deepen its partnerships with the Long Beach rescue and shelter community as well as offer adoption, rescue and shelter support to its customers, according to the company. “Through our Bixby Knolls location, we’ve been so fortunate to build close relationships with the community and with local animal rescue and shelter partners,” Levy said. “Adding another location in Long Beach will allow us to serve customers and their pets in the Belmont Shore neighborhood as well.” The new Pet Food Express is located at 5265 E. Second Street. The Bixby Knolls location is at 4220 Long Beach Blvd. ■



Brandon Richardson / Business Journal

Lifelong Long Beach resident Heather Wood, 49, walks her daughter's dog, Navi, 3, into the new Pet Food Express at 5265 E. Second Street in Belmont Shore.

MemorialCare opens new Spring Street location

By Tess Kazenoff

MemorialCare Medical Group celebrated the opening of its new location on Spring Street late last month. The new site is improving access to maternity care and OB-GYN services in Long Beach, where there is currently a gap in access to care, said Annamarie Jones, MemorialCare Medical Foundation’s chief operating officer. “It is important for us to provide wraparound care for the community, and that’s part of what drove this decision to come here,” Jones told the Business Journal. The location, which has eight exam rooms along with lab services, has two OB-GYNs, who each will see roughly 15 to 25 patients a day, Jones said. “Busy women won’t need to travel to get their blood draws done, and we’ll also provide ultrasound and fetal nonstress tests right here under this roof,” Jones said during the event. The new location, at 5977 E. Spring St., is across the street from MemorialCare Miller Children & Women’s Hospital, allowing for easy access to additional care if necessary, Jones said. MemorialCare Medical Group



Tess Kazenoff / Business Journal

MemorialCare Medical Group staff and city officials tour the new facility at 5977 E. Spring St.

has multiple locations throughout the Greater Long Beach Area, providing primary care through family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics and urgent care. MemorialCare currently has OB-GYN presence in two other Long Beach locations: its Douglas Park location, which has five or six physicians, and its Bixby Knolls location, which has three physicians

and one nurse practitioner, said Kris Cowley, director of strategic initiatives and transformation at MemorialCare Medical Group. On Nov. 7, the new location also added an additional primary care doctor to its team. The site began offering primary care services at that time to people of all ages, improving access to full-family care, said Jones. ■

The Habit Burger Grill to open near Traffic Circle

By Fernando Haro Garcia

California-based chain The Habit Burger Grill will open its second location in East Long Beach on Nov. 16 near the Traffic Circle. The burger joint, which boasts more than 300 locations, will be taking over the site of a former Burger King at 4542 Pacific Coast Highway. The new location will offer takeout and dine-in services, along with a self-serve kiosk. It will also include a drive-thru and delivery options. “The Habit was born in California and even though we’ve expanded throughout the U.S. and overseas, there’s always an extra level of excitement when we open another restaurant in our home state,” Iwona Alter, the restaurant’s chief brand officer, said in a statement. “No matter how many new locations we open, our team goes above and beyond to ensure our signature craft never wavers.” The Habit is recognized for its smoky flavors that are the result of an open-flame sear, which earned them a place on Thrillist’s list of “Underrated Burger Chains that Need to be in Every State!” in 2019. ■

CITY OF LONG BEACH Bid Opportunities

Title	Bid Number	Due Date
Cathodic Protection Improvement of Recycled Water Systems Project - Phase 5	WD-23-026	11/16/2022
Hoses & Fittings	WD-23-033	11/16/2022
Metal Parts Washers	WD-23-032	11/16/2022
Smog Inspection and Repair	WD-23-031	11/16/2022
Organic Waste Consultant	PW-22-128	11/16/2022
Fire Alarm System Inspection and Repair Services	WD-23-037	11/17/2022
Sewer Dye	WD-23-036	11/17/2022
Landscape Equipment and Repair Service	WD-23-035	11/17/2022
Landscape Supplies	WD-23-034	11/17/2022
Construction Management Services for J. Will Johnson Trunks Roof Repairs Project EO-3630	WD-23-024	11/18/2022
Modular Shelter Manufacturer	HE-22-158	11/23/2022
Toyota OEM Parts and Service Bid	FM-23-191	11/29/2022

Bidder Registration

To receive notifications of bid opportunities, register with the city, and download additional bid details, visit www.longbeach.gov/purchasing.



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Ground Education grows gardening program with new LBUSD funding



Courtesy of Ground Education
Ground Education was initially founded in 2008 and became an official nonprofit in 2017.

By Tess Kazenoff

Holland Brown and Karen Taylor are on a mission to build a garden in every elementary school in Long Beach. It's a substantial goal—there are 47 Long Beach Unified School District elementary schools, plus six K-8 institutions—but Brown and Taylor and their nonprofit, Ground Education, are well on their way, thanks to a new partnership with LBUSD that will provide \$315,000 through a new state program. The district's Board of Education approved the agreement for the funding last month. The organization currently serves about 10,000 students with monthly gardening programs. But through this funding that will extend into next summer and fall, Brown and Taylor plan to reach even more students, by building more gardens, improving garden maintenance, adding additional nature paths in schools and creating supplementary programming before school, after school, and during the summers—all efforts to create more opportunities to access nature for Long Beach students.

"Everything the kids are learning in a classroom, to bring it outside, it's really solidified with the hands-on experience of being in a nature space," Taylor said. "Kids will realize these nature spaces are available for them no matter who they are, that it's something that can support them, not only in learning, but in life." Not only do gardening programs complement in-class learning, but the programs have become a powerful tool in empowering students and developing confidence, Brown said. "Kids feel supported in the garden. They feel active and powerful because they are active, not just as participants, but they maintain and they nurture those spaces," Brown said. Each year, students return to the garden with more confidence and can witness the growth of the garden along with their personal development, emotionally and academically, Taylor said. "Nature can validate who you are, hear you and see you and help set you up to care for nature going forward," Taylor said. Just like its gardens, Ground Education has continued to blossom



Courtesy of Ground Education
Ground Education currently has gardening programs in 16 elementary schools. The organization hopes to expand to every school that serves elementary schoolers in the district.

since officially becoming a nonprofit nearly six years ago. In the last year alone, the organization has expanded from having gardens in 11 elementary schools to 16—mostly concentrated in North, Central and West Long Beach, where there is less access to green spaces. The nonprofit's staff has also grown from 15 last year to 21 including co-founders Brown and Taylor, plus a garden infrastructure team and administrative support. The nonprofit also recently began a partnership with LBUSD's nutrition services due to a "Farm to School" grant, bringing fresh produce to each school and supplementing Ground Education's gardening lessons with additional produce, creating an opportunity to highlight students to local farmers, Taylor said. LBUSD has "been an unreal collaborator," Taylor said. "It got lifted off last year, but it's really in full swing this year." Building connections to nature and food sources are at the core of the organization's programming. In Ground Education's school gardens, older elementary school students are currently planting wheat, greens and winter vegetables such as carrots and rainbow chard. First graders are planting peas, while kindergarteners are "getting their hands on slushy, rotten, old pumpkins after Halloween," Taylor said. Along with its current services, Ground Education plans to expand to offer more wraparound services that complement the current programming, Brown said. This past summer, gardening programs were offered in 13 schools, a number Brown and Taylor hope to grow to 18 during the summer of 2023. In October, Ground Education taught 100 classes, a record for the organization, and Brown and Taylor hope to get six more gardens built over

the next year with this new LBUSD funding, with the eventual goal of building a garden each month. "It's a grand step towards making these natural spaces more integrated into the fabric of these schools, and stretching that into the school community," Taylor said. Ground Education's gardens are already becoming community spaces, with some schools introducing family nights and wellness programming in their outdoor spaces, Brown said. With childhood moving largely indoors, creating meaningful time outside during the school day is extremely impactful for students, Brown said. "Part of my perspective has always been, nature belongs to all of us," Brown said. "If you don't have much time spent, if you don't make those memories and connections and have those 'aha' moments about how the natural world works, it's hard to be part of the generation that's going to care for our natural resources. Everybody deserves to have those moments of discovery and wonder." Brown and Taylor are eager to accelerate the pace of Ground Education's growth through this new funding, and are in the planning stages to determine the logistics of utilizing the funding. "It's almost too good to be true, it's like that wish where you have to pinch yourself and say, 'is this really happening?'" Brown said. "You start to realize that this is a part of the school day where they feel pretty great, regardless of anything else that's been happening for them that day, so I really hope that plants some really positive seeds," Brown said. "Seeing their sense of confidence grow and grow and their sense of agency grow ... I just hope that that continues to pay dividends for them in all aspects of their lives going forward." ■



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