



MAYOR
REX RICHARDSON



CINDY ALLEN
VICE MAYOR

Date: April 11, 2023

To: Members of the City Council

From: Mayor Rex Richardson, Councilmember Mary Zendejas (Arts, Culture, and Tourism Committee Chair), Vice Mayor Cindy Allen (Economic Development and Opportunity Committee Chair)

Subject: **Establishing a City of Long Beach Legacy Business Registry and Program to Recognize and Support Historic Long Beach Businesses**

R-21

REVISED

RECOMMENDATION:

Request the City Manager to work with the Economic Development Department, the Development Services Department, and Long Beach Heritage to develop an official City of Long Beach Legacy Business registry, a designation certification process, and an associated system of supports for qualifying Legacy Businesses, and refer to the Arts, Culture, and Tourism Committee, and the Economic Development and Opportunity Committee for input and discussion.

Such supports may include, but are not limited to, technical assistance, commercial lease renewal and acquisition assistance, public education and commendation initiatives, marketing and promotional assistance, specialized grants for preservation, renovation and beatification, conflict resolution, and commercial eviction defense, contingent on the availability of funding to support such initiatives.

DISCUSSION:

Long Beach is home to a number of iconic small and family-owned businesses that help weave together the fabric of the communities they serve, many of them operating continuously for generations. However, rising commercial rents, increased costs of business financing and operating costs, and the debts and financial hardships endured during the COVID-19 pandemic have put many of Long Beach's cherished historic businesses at risk of closure.

Legacy businesses are valuable cultural assets and longstanding pillars in the community that promote a sense of neighborhood identity and pride, foster civic engagement, and create meaningful employment opportunities for local residents. They are the bedrock of local neighborhoods and help catalyze our city's tourist economy by drawing in visitors from around the region, state, and world.

Faced with the potential loss of such critical institutions, the City of Long Beach can play an important role in maintaining the unique character and cultural identity of Long Beach

by helping preserve legacy establishments that mean so much to our residents and neighborhoods.

Local nonprofit Long Beach Heritage has piloted a legacy business initiative since July 2022 and has developed model criteria as well as a list of existing businesses that may be incorporated as a part of the City's inaugural cohort of legacy businesses. The criteria are as follows:

A legacy business can be anything from a deli, to a law firm, to a tattoo parlor, as long as it:

A. Has operated for at least 35 years in Long Beach, or

B. Has a combination of at least two of the following qualities:

- Has operated in Long Beach for at least 25 years
- Contributes to a sense of history in the surrounding neighborhood
- Has distinctive architecture, interior design, or landscaping
- Supports the neighborhood's cultural life, diversity, or identity¹

Currently, the following businesses are included in Long Beach Heritage's program, and may be grandfathered in to any City-run program:

- Joe Jost's, 2803 E. Anaheim Street (Est. 1924)
- Outer Limits Tattoo, 22 S. Chestnut Place (Est. 1927)
- Long Beach Playhouse, 5021 E. Anaheim Street (Est. 1929)
- Tuttle Cameras, 5467 E. Carson Street (Est. 1946)
- Santa Fe Importers, 1401 Santa Fe Avenue (Est. 1947)
- Bodell's Shoes, 4190 N. Viking Way (Est. 1959)
- Mr. Baker Style Center, 1008 E. Pacific Coast Highway (Est. 1960)
- Jongewaard's Bake n' Broil, 3697 Atlantic Avenue (Est. 1965)
- University Trophies & Awards, 4221 E. Willow Street (Est. 1970)
- Emigh Dental Care, 5500 E Atherton St, Suite #430 (Est. 1972)
- Buono's Pizzeria, 401 W. Willow Street (Est. 1980)
- International City Theatre, 330 E. Seaside Way (Est. 1985)
- Long Beach Chorale and Chamber Orchestra (Est. 1988)
- Los Compadres Restaurant, 1144 Pine Avenue (Est. 1989)
- Gemmae Bake Shop, 1356 W. Willow Street (Est. 1993)
- George's 50's Diner, 4390 Atlantic Avenue (Est. 1996)

While Long Beach Heritage's pilot program provides a number of different supports including business promotion and service navigation, a City-run program that builds on this important foundation would have the capacity to provide a more robust and

¹ "About LBLB" Long Beach Heritage. <https://www.lbheritage.org/legacybusiness/about-lblb/>

streamlined system of supports by leveraging and packaging existing city services, much like the City-run programs in Los Angeles, Pasadena, San Francisco, and San Antonio.

Bringing a Legacy Business program in-house within the City structure could allow for broader marketing and promotional assistance, technical assistance in the form of lease negotiation and business assistance, specialized grant opportunities for facade improvements and preservation activities, additional support in navigating City permitting and project approval processes and help in transitioning businesses to employee ownership models when a legacy owner is looking to sell. City staff should explore policy best practices implemented by other jurisdictions to support the continued viability and success of Long Beach legacy businesses and include recommendations in the FY 24 budget.

This matter has been reviewed by Recovery Budget Officer Dee Okam on April 6, 2023.

Fiscal Impact

This recommendation requests the City Manager to work with the Economic Development Department, the Development Services Department, and Long Beach Heritage to develop an official City of Long Beach Legacy Business registry, a designation certification process, and an associated system of supports for qualifying Legacy Businesses. The City has existing programs that assist business and property owners with navigating the permitting process and historic preservation and that provide commercial façade improvement grants provided through the Development Services Department. As such, the proposed recommendation has no fiscal or staffing beyond the normal budgeted scope of duties and is consistent with existing City Council priorities. The local job impact is unknown.

Suggested Action

Approve recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rex Richardson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mayor Rex Richardson
April 11, 2023