
Date: May 3, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor Garcia and Members of the City Council

From: Councilwoman Suely Saro, Sixth District
Councilwoman Mary Zendejas, First District
Vice Mayor Rex Richardson, Ninth District

Subject: Recognition of Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation to request the City Council to recognize and celebrate Asian Pacific Islander American Heritage month.

Discussion

May is Asian Pacific Islander American Heritage Month – a celebration of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. The month of May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. Many of the workers who laid the tracks were Chinese immigrants¹.

Asian Pacific Islander American (APIA) have cultivated and advanced the fields of the arts and humanities, business, education, information technology, law, public safety, science, sports, and the environment and revitalized many of California's communities while bringing new ideas and economic opportunities.

In Long Beach, Asians make up 12.6% and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders make up 1.1% of Long Beach's 462,257 population. That is 58,244 Asians and 5,085 Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders in Long Beach (U.S Census, 2010). APIA have a long and rich history in Long Beach. Japanese began arriving in Long Beach in the early 20th century and by 1907 almost 200 Issei had established small businesses and farms on land they rented or worked as sharecroppers. On 1942, Executive Order 9066 was authorized by President Roosevelt to remove Japanese nationals and Japanese Americans for internment to inland facilities. Most did not return to the city after their

¹ <https://asianpacificheritage.gov/about/>

release from the camps. Due to this and other factors, Japanese Americans now make up less than 1% of the population of Long Beach, but the Japanese Community Center and a Japanese Buddhist Church survived².

According to U.S. Census Bureau data, concentrations of Filipinos developed in west Long Beach in the 1940s because many were enlisted in the United States Navy and that was the location of the United States Naval Shipyard³. An influx of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders arrived in California in the 1950s after World War II. Post-World War II, military service brought Pacific Islanders from the United States territories of American Samoa and Guam to California⁴. Cambodian connection to Long Beach began in the early 1960s when students attended a CSU Long Beach through a program funded by USAID. Large numbers of Cambodians resettled in Long Beach beginning with evacuees following the fall of Cambodia to the Khmer Rouge in 1975, making Long Beach the largest Cambodian community in the United States.

As Long Beach is committed to honoring all its people, and celebrating our diversity, accomplishments, and history, it is important that we take the time to recognize Asian Pacific Islander American Heritage Month and thank the APIA community for all of its contributions to our city.

FISCAL IMPACT

Due to time constraints no fiscal analysis was conducted.

SUGGESTED ACTION

Approve Recommendation.

² <http://www.californiajapantowns.org/longbeach.html>

³ <https://www.presstelegram.com/the-grunion/>

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<https://books.google.com/books?id=VQ1zAwAAQBAJ&pg=PA1860&lpg=PA1860&dq=Samoan+Community+history+in+Lon#v=onepage&q&f=false>