Guest Perspectives: DLBA
Board Chair Alan Pullman and
Past Chair Silvano Merlo

The following perspective pieces were written by Alan Pullman, the new Chair of the DLBA Board of Directors for Fiscal Year 2020-21, and Past Chair Silvano Merlo, who served during Fiscal Year 2019-20. Both include reflections upon the past fiscal year, which ended in September, as well as upcoming plans, challenges, and highlights to look forward to in the coming year.

**Alan Pullman, Chair of the DLBA Board of Directors**
*Founding Principal, Studio One Eleven*

In 2000, I founded Studio One Eleven in Downtown Long Beach because, after years working on architecture projects across the nation, I came to the conclusion that I really wanted to work and contribute in the city where I lived.

Working with DLBA seemed like a very natural progression, because if you’re going to dedicate yourself to revitalize your community, it is important to become involved with organizations and entities that share the mission of creating a fantastic city.

When I accepted the position of Chair-Elect for the DLBA a year ago, I of course had no idea that when I took on the role of Chair in October, we would be in the midst of a pandemic and an economic crisis. Every Downtown has struggled
tremendously through this COVID pandemic because urban places need to be lively. They’re about the creative combustion that occurs when people get together, whether it’s to socialize or do business together, or attend a performance event. We’ve really struggled through the pandemic shutdown because we haven’t been able to do that. We have a significant Downtown recovery to help facilitate at DLBA, and while it will be a challenge, I believe DLBA has helped many people and entities.

We are faced with many daunting tasks, including the need to rebuild our economic base and focus on attracting people into our Downtown — and we must accomplish this in a way that is equitable so that the benefits of our renewed economy flow to all members of our Downtown community. We have a resilient city. We have been through tough times before, and I feel that the community, the stakeholders, the City leaders, and DLBA are going to stick through this and rebuild.

I’d like to take a moment to reflect on the past several months and highlight the work DLBA did to assist its stakeholders. DLBA facilitated a dialogue that helped the City push forward on the Open Streets Initiative, which was a lifesaver for many businesses — I’m very proud of the work we did to help facilitate that and generate consensus around the Initiative in the Downtown. I think it has opened up even greater potential for vibrant streets into the future. Also of note was the cleanup event after the social unrest that occurred during Memorial Day weekend. That was a very painful time for our city. DLBA brought the community together at a challenging time, and it was a meaningful moment for the organization.

Looking to the year ahead, DLBA will begin the process of updating its Strategic Plan. As we move forward with this process, we will identify opportunities to diversify our board and bring more inclusive voices into our organization. We are also gearing up for a renewal of our Property Based Improvement District in 2022 and will engage the community in
I am ready and eager to continue working with my fellow board members, our incoming chair, Loara Cadavona, and the DLBA staff. We have such a dedicated group of people who care deeply about the Downtown, and I am thrilled to be working with them for another year on our efforts to create a healthy, safe, and prosperous city.

Silvano Merlo, Past Chair, DLBA Board of Directors
General Manager, Courtyard Long Beach Downtown

Serving as Chair of the Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) Board of Directors has been a fulfilling experience that will remain with me for the rest of my life. Motivated to become involved in the community and its business district, I joined DLBA’s Board seven years ago when I began working in Long Beach managing the Courtyard Long Beach Downtown. I look forward to continuing that journey as Past Chair.

Reflecting on this year, one of the things that stood out to me the most was the dedication of DLBA’s staff and the way they have communicated with, assisted, and promoted Downtown stakeholders through the pandemic. As a Board, we are there to make recommendations and provide our two cents to staff, but it’s their job to get the work done and they’re doing a fantastic job. One moment in particular stands out – DLBA’s role in organizing volunteers to clean up Downtown after the night of unrest on May 31 was a significant moment for our community.

A major accomplishment to highlight is DLBA’s publication of a study by Beacon Economics regarding the potential effects of...
an inclusionary housing policy on Downtown. That report was presented to the City staff, elected officials, and our community, and it provided excellent context for City leadership to examine the matter.

The past year has been a learning experience — challenging times often serve as strong lessons. Experiencing this pandemic both from the perspective as DLBA Chair and as a businessperson has really put things in perspective when it comes to what is critically important to our community. One of the things that really hit home is that people need to continue to have conversations about socio-economic differences that we have experienced not only in Downtown Long Beach but also in the entire country.

Moving ahead, I look forward to the forthcoming process to update DLBA’s Strategic Plan, which is already a solid framework for the organization, as well as the more long-term process of renewing the Property Based Improvement District. DLBA is one of the leading improvement district organizations in the United States, and I am confident it will continue as a positive example and innovator.

I wish all the best to Alan Pullman as he takes the reins as Chair. If I could offer him one piece of advice, it would be to take risks and act quickly when the times demand it — and to have faith in the decision-making process among DLBA’s Board and staff.

Thank you all for this wonderful opportunity and I appreciate your contributions to the DLBA and our Downtown community.
New CEO Guides Aquarium of the Pacific Through Uncharted Waters

Dr. Peter Kareiva, Aquarium of the Pacific’s (AOP) new President and CEO, realized that his job would include some unprecedented conditions when he began the interview process during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic. “There were four rounds of interviews, all on Zoom. That was challenging,” said Kareiva, whose wealth of oceanic experience includes multiple degrees in various life sciences fields as well as years of research and conservation efforts related to oceans across the globe.

Kareiva comes to AOP after serving as Director of the Institute of the Environment and Sustainability at UCLA. Before that, he was Chief Scientist and Vice President of the Nature Conservancy, where he oversaw a staff of 600 who worked on conservation science in 36 countries. He succeeds Dr. Jerry
Schubel, who served as President & CEO of the Aquarium for 18 years.

“I was overjoyed to get the job in part because there’s some sense of normalcy here at the Aquarium,” said Kareiva. “That’s a good thing. It shows that we can be COVID-safe and still enjoy good things.”

Kareiva, who loves working near the coast, is enjoying the change of scene. “At a university, one engages with students, faculty, and philanthropists,” he said. “Here at the Aquarium, we engage the whole world.”

One of Kareiva’s main goals at AOP is to increase awareness of how food and energy systems work. “People have the luxury of not thinking about these things,” he said. “If we can activate peoples’ thinking, change individual behavior and be a positive influence on environment-related business practices and government policy, we can truly influence the health and integrity of these systems.”

Due to public health guidelines, the Aquarium was closed to the public from March 14 through June 14. On July 3, the indoor spaces closed again on orders from Governor Newsom. Outdoor exhibitions such as the Sea Lion Habitat, Shark Lagoon, and the Lorakeet Aviary remain open, with safety protocols in place.

One can still get a great look at the Aquarium’s assortment of indoor habitats like the penguin habitat and creature-filled coral reef exhibition via a series of live webcams. All of the 12,000 animals who dwelled at the Aquarium before the pandemic are still there, cared for by Aquarium staff and a dedicated group of volunteer divers.

“When the pandemic hit, we rearranged our staff to assure that the things we were doing were safe for the staff and the animals, but the actual care of the animals hasn’t changed a lot,” said Brett Long, AOP’s Curator of Mammals and Birds.
“They require us to be on site seven days a week, all year round.”

AOP, always a strong presence with in-person engagement at various community events throughout the city in pre-pandemic times, remains connected by providing online educational content via partnerships with several local school districts. AOP also offers free programming for the community five mornings a week – including one program in Spanish – via the Aquarium Online Academy, AOP’s multi-faceted virtual learning center. Still, the Aquarium staff misses the person-to-person outreach, said Emily Yam, AOP’s Senior Manager of Education. “We are looking forward to going back out to the communities of Long Beach, asking people what they love about Long Beach and its relationship to the Pacific Ocean, and why they would want to protect that,” she said. “To know that the Aquarium cares really resonates with people.”

Kareiva and the rest of the AOP staff are eager to re-introduce the public to its diverse menagerie – including Kareiva’s personal favorite, Godzilla, the Giant Pacific Octopus – as well as the latest addition to the Aquarium, the dazzling Pacific Visions wing. Although temporarily closed, in the future visitors who enter Pacific Visions will first experience two huge galleries featuring a multi-channel video installation, a virtual waterfall, and new live animal exhibits.

After touring the galleries, visitors will enter a state-of-the-art immersive movie theater with a 120-foot curved screen, floor projections, sensory enhancement, and seating for all mobilities. Films shown here emphasize the connection between humanity and the ocean.

After experiencing the theater, visitors move into a culmination gallery filled with animal exhibitions and several interactive stations designed to enlighten visitors about climate science, food source awareness and other pressing
global issues.

“Pacific Visions is all about interactive immersion experience, drawing regular people into a conversation of what our future should be,” said Kareiva.

While Kareiva looks forward to the day the public has access to the entire AOP, he encourages visitors to stop by and enjoy the outdoor exhibits that remain open. “You’re not going to find a more educational and entertaining place that will make you feel totally safe and part of a community,” Kareiva said. “The Aquarium can thrive through these times, and the experience for visitors can be better than ever.”

Introducing the Staff of the Downtown Long Beach Alliance

The Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) is proud to introduce you to our talented, hard-working team. Each DLBA team member brings a unique expertise and a passion for making Downtown a healthy, safe, and prosperous place for businesses, visitors, residents, and property owners.

The dedicated staff of the Downtown Long Beach Alliance each brings unique skill sets and backgrounds to the organization. Staff members each belong to a department – Administration, Operations, Economic Development, Marketing & Communications, Placemaking, and Events – which are focused on providing stakeholders with resources catered to meet specific needs.
In the coming months, *Downtown Scene* will feature profiles on each of our staff members to introduce them to the community. To start off, we are sharing mini biographies and photos of our entire staff. We encourage you to familiarize yourself with these individuals — many of whom make their homes in Long Beach — who work together daily to help make Downtown a great place to live, work, and visit.

**Staff Biographies**

**Kraig Kojian, President & CEO**

Kraig Kojian currently serves as President & CEO of the DLBA. As president, Kojian oversees the management of the Downtown’s Property Based Improvement District and Downtown Parking Improvement Area, both of which consist of nearly 5,000 stakeholders and an annual budget that exceeds $4.9 million. Kraig leads, facilitates and motivates staff to accomplish all DLBA objectives as outlined in the mission statement and the PBID Management Plan. Subject to the direction of the Board of Directors, the President and CEO supervises and directs the day-to-day business and management of the organization and the BIDs.
Broc Coward, COO

Broc Coward is the Chief Operating Officer and oversees DLBA’s clean and safe programs, programming committees, and support for the overall day-to-day operations of each department. A self-proclaimed full-time “problem solver,” he enjoys bike rides in DTLB, a good view from the patio at one of our waterfront restaurants, and making sure visitors get the most out of Downtown. Broc previously served as the Chief of Staff for Long Beach Councilmember and Vice Mayor Suja Lowenthal (2006-2016) and brings over 20 years of state and local legislative and community organizing experience to DLBA, including management of small business corridor visioning studies, special events, panel discussions and neighborhood improvement projects. An alumnus of UCSB (Go Gauchos!) and CSUF (Go Titans!), his interests include live music, soccer, breakfast burritos and most especially, spending time with his wife and two sons.

Steve Be Cotte, Community Outreach Manager
Steve Be Cotte is the Community Outreach Manager for the DLBA and acts as liaison between the DLBA, residents, businesses, and community groups. He meets regularly with neighborhood associations. His fans call him Downtown Steve, and he cannot walk 10 feet without being recognized on the streets of Downtown. He has a passion for helping others and is a member of the Long Beach Coalition for the Homeless and sits on the board of the Long Beach Continuum of Care. He has a real zest for pressure washing, baby carrots with hummus, power tools, and fast cars. When he is not at work, he spends his time working on the Circuit Breaker nostalgia top fuel dragster.

Stephanie Gonzalez, Placemaking Manager
Stephanie Gonzalez serves as the Placemaking Manager for the Downtown Long Beach Alliance. She is passionate about placemaking and cities and wants to help bring life and activity to public spaces within Downtown Long Beach. She graduated from CSULB with a degree in Communication Studies and later attended Arizona State University to study Urban Planning. When she’s not at work, Stephanie loves doing craft side projects and talking with her husband about what kind of dog they’ll get one day. She also has a sweet tooth like a 5 year old and would never say no to some cotton candy.

Samantha Mehlinger, Communications Manager

Samantha “Sam” Mehlinger is the Communications Manager for DLBA. She oversees communications protocols and best practices, and is focused on growing awareness of Downtown, informing stakeholders, and managing public perception of DLBA and its programs. Sam grew up in Long Beach, attended Chapman University, and earned an MFA in Creative Writing at Cal State Long Beach. Following graduate school, she signed on as staff writer at the Long Beach Business Journal, where over the years (2013-2019) she fostered meaningful relationships with the City’s business community, government officials, and
residents. She ultimately advanced to the position of Editor, in which she was responsible for planning and executing each bi-weekly edition. After hanging up her journalist hat to explore new opportunities, she took a too-brief trip to Italy (thanks for cutting that short, COVID) before joining the team at DLBA. In summary: Long Beach is going to have a tough time ever getting rid of Sam. She lives here with her mischievous cat, Olive, and any attempts to oust them will result in scratches and a bit of biting. Your guess as to who would be the culprit.

Austin Metoyer, Economic Development & Policy Manager

Austin Metoyer serves as the Economic Development & Policy Manager for the Downtown Long Beach Alliance. In his role, he serves as a liaison for Downtown investors, developers, businesses and brokers through the recruitment, retention, planning and entitlement processes. Before his arrival to the DLBA, Austin served under former Los Angeles Mayor Villaraigosa’s Office of Economic and Business Policy, as well as the National Foreign Trade Council in Washington D.C. During his stint in D.C., he served as Senior Project Analyst for Brailsford & Dunlavey, a real estate development planning firm. Austin completed his BS in International Business at California State University, Long Beach and is pursuing an Executive Master’s in Urban Planning from the University of Southern California.
As the DLBA’s Executive Assistant, Kelsey supports the President and CEO while helping to enhance the general administrative functions of the organization. She comes to the DLBA with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science from Cal State Fullerton and a professional background in California Storm Water Regulation Policy (yes, it is just as exciting as it sounds). After years of working for the private sector, she is excited to become more involved with the lively community of Downtown Long Beach. In her spare time, you can find her at the beach, hiking, biking, or camping (she went 10 times last year alone!). If she is not doing something outside, she is probably busy spending time with her friends, family or, most importantly, her dog Penny. Be sure to ask her about Penny’s puppy for a good foster pup story!

Lauren Mayne, Social Media & Digital Marketing Coordinator
Lauren Mayne serves as the DLBA’s Social Media and Digital Marketing Coordinator. She is responsible for managing the organization’s digital presence through regular website updates and both paid & organic posts across their various social media channels. Like many, Lauren is a Long Beach transplant. Originally from the Central Valley, she made her way down to Southern California for college. After earning her degree in Communications-Advertising at Cal State Fullerton, Lauren worked as a copywriter for an e-commerce company in Irvine. There she wore a variety of hats, from product launch to digital marketing. Lauren was first introduced to the Long Beach community when she began playing kickball through the Varsity Gay League. It was love at first sight, in more ways than one. After 2 years of playing, she moved to her current home in Downtown Long Beach with her partner Lor, whom she met through kickball, and their two cats, Gilbert and Jenny. When the weather is particularly nice, you can often find them walking Gilbert throughout Downtown in her personal cat stroller.

Morris (Mo) Mills, Research & Public Policy Analyst
Mo serves as the Research and Public Policy Analyst for the DLBA, where he helps to gather data and insights used in reports and stakeholder assistance. In addition, Mo helps to track and manage the organization’s business and property databases, as well as monitoring city and county policy. Prior to working at the DLBA, Mo attended Occidental College in Los Angeles, where he majored in Urban & Environmental Policy. When he is not working, he is probably riding his bike.

Monica Morrill, Administrative Assistant

Monica came to the DLBA from a small retail chain called Crate & Barrel, or as she refers to it, “the barrel.” She considers herself a jack of all trades and is even forklift certified. Her hairstyle, the fun bun, is her trademark and you will not see her rocking any other hairstyle. She has a corgi named
Marshall Tucker, named after The Marshall Tucker Band, for no reason other than liking the name. As the Administrative Assistant, she keeps the office moving and grooving. Her role is to support all aspects of the office and assist the Executive Assistant daily. You will see her answering the phone, making giant bows, eating her lunch in the courtyard, filling the snack bowl, and so much more.

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**Sneak Peek: Downtown Long Beach Q3 Retail Snapshot Report**

Fulfilling its role as an information source for the Downtown business community and those who wish to join it, the Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) will present its *Downtown Long Beach Q3 Retail Snapshot Report* later this month. Since 2017, DLBA has created quarterly reports highlighting different aspects of the Downtown real estate market.

The upcoming report focuses on ground-floor retail, which according to (defined by Morris Mills, DLBA’s Research and Public Policy Analyst, Morris Mills, is defined as “any business you can walk into off the street”), and reveals some effects of the ongoing COVID-19 situation on Downtown businesses and real estate. The data analyzed in the report is sourced from the commercial real estate firm CoStar.

“Congruous to many other downtowns, the retail market in Downtown Long Beach was impacted by COVID-19 and resulting public health orders that limited operations for many ground
floor businesses,” explained Mills. “Gross retail sales through the second quarter of this year were 50% lower when compared to the same time period in 2019.”

Mills also noted that rental rates for storefronts in Downtown Long Beach – as well as nearby areas like San Pedro and Santa Monica – have decreased in recent months, as has the average occupancy rate of retail space.

The October Snapshot Report also includes results of a survey about the Long Beach Open Streets Initiative, the City program that allows businesses with restricted indoor access (due to COVID protocols) to expand their operations outdoors. The Open Streets Initiative, approved by the City in June, was an effort to help alleviate some of the limits placed on businesses to combat the spread of COVID-19. A DLBA survey given to all businesses eligible for Open Streets revealed that 84% of those who participated in the program would like to see it continue.

DLBA’s Snapshot Reports are intended to provide the community, local leaders, business owners, and potential Downtown entrepreneurs and investors with detailed information about Downtown’s real estate climate and economy. The upcoming retail-focused report will be available on October 15 at this link: https://downtownlongbeach.org/about-dlba/resources/.

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Micro-Mobility Program
Returns to Downtown

After being suspended in late March due to COVID-19 concerns, the Long Beach BikeShare and E-scooter Micro-Mobility Programs are back, providing convenient, emission-free transportation and exercise alternatives for Long Beach residents and visitors in Downtown and beyond.

With new sanitation protocols in place, riders can once again select from the fleet of BikeShare bikes. Visitors to Long Beach pay $7 per hour and can receive an extra free hour if they pre-pay $21 for a three-hour rental. Long Beach locals are eligible to enroll in a $15-per-month or a $120-per-year plan which cover up to 90 minutes of daily ride time.

E-scooters are also back: Three scooter operators – Lime, Bird, and Razor – have been given clearance to deploy their fleets at City-approved drop zones throughout the city. Each operator sets its own price based on a flat fee with a per-minute rate added. Scooter locations can be found on each operator’s app.

The Long Beach Public Works Department, working closely with
the City Attorney’s office and the Health and Human Services Department, developed post-COVID safety and sanitation standards for the micro-mobility programs that are compliant with guidelines established by the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

“We at Public Works know how important micro-mobility is to our community and we know how many people depend on it to get to work or essential services,” said Jennifer Carey, Community Relations Officer for the Public Works Department. “We wanted to get these programs back up and running as soon as possible with proper measures in place to protect the public. By developing these sanitation guidelines, we were able to re-establish these programs in a safe and responsible manner.”

BikeShare operator Pedal Movement and the three scooter operators were required to verify with the City that they had provided their staffs with personal protective equipment and had trained them in proper cleaning and sanitation protocols. In addition, the City issued a press release about the new micro-mobility guidelines and added that information to its website.

The new guidelines include the following:
• All Bikeshare and E-scooter operators must ensure that personal protective equipment is worn by all field staff.
• Micro-mobility fleet devices and staff vehicles are to be sanitized and disinfected daily, with an emphasis on frequently touched surfaces.
• All operators must educate staff and riders on proper COVID-19 safety and sanitation.
• All operators were required to submit safety and sanitation protocols to Public Works for approval prior to deployment of the fleets.

The new BikeShare and E-scooter guidelines, along with rules put in place by the City’s Open Streets Initiative, are helping to ensure a safe return to public activity in the City. “The guidelines implemented for both of these programs allow us to support residents and businesses while also ensuring that the safety of our community stays at the forefront of all we do,” said Carey.

The BikeShare program has been growing in popularity since its inception in March of 2016, tallying 37,911 memberships during the summer of 2019, an increase of 10,000 over the previous summer. The City’s E-scooter program was made permanent by a City Council vote in May of 2019 after operating as a pilot program for a year.
Prior to the arrival of COVID-19, the City had expanded the BikeShare program into North Long Beach and had revamped the bike fleet with new seats, handlebars, and baskets. Now that these micro-mobility programs are rolling once more, riders can look forward to expansion of the bike and E-scooter fleets and hubs soon.

“The Long Beach micro-mobility programs fit in with the City’s continuous goals of improving livability within the City,” said Carey. “We are fortunate in Long Beach to have great weather and surroundings throughout the year, making it an ideal location for incorporating more affordable and equitable forms of transportation.”

As a reminder, follow these health and safety practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19: when using E-scooters or bikeshare bikes, sanitize your hands before and after use, wear a mask, and avoid touching your face.
Q&A: Candidates for Long Beach’s Second Council District

The Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) is dedicated to providing timely information to its stakeholders regarding issues of importance to them, including local elections. In both the October and November editions of Downtown Scene, DLBA is including a two-part Q&A with Long Beach Second Council District Candidates Cindy Allen and Robert Fox, along with their biographies. Each edition will present questions in two formats: written responses and “fill in the X” responses to indicate positions on matters pertaining to Downtown, District 2, and the City as a whole.

The candidates’ biographies and responses are presented in alphabetical order – first Cindy Allen, then Robert Fox – and were not edited by DLBA.

We also encourage you to watch a live debate between the candidates on October 5. Held by the Long Beach Post, Long Beach Business Journal, Press-Telegram, and Grunion Gazette, the event will be livestreamed at 6 p.m. from the Long Beach Post website and all participating publications’ social media channels.

The election date for the Second District takes place in conjunction with state and national elections on November 3. Check your voter registration status at LAVote.net, and click here to learn more about your options to vote in person or by mail this election. Read on to learn more about the candidates for the Second District and where they stand on issues related
Candidate Biographies

CANDIDATE CINDY ALLEN

I was raised on the westside of Long Beach by a single mother who depended on assistance to support our family. I graduated from Long Beach Poly, before putting myself through Long Beach City College working as a waitress and maid.

I served as a Long Beach Police Officer at a time when there were few women on the force. I then pursued my education earning a Bachelors in Business Management and a Masters in Public Administration from Cal State Long Beach. Afterward, I owned and operated several small businesses in Downtown Long Beach, while serving on several community boards.
I’ve been involved with our local neighborhood activism for over 35 years. A former executive chef, I came to Long Beach and started a cleaning company. I used what I earned to become a housing provider, and I work in the real estate industry as a broker and property manager. As co-founder of all but one neighborhood organization in the 2nd District, current volunteer executive director of the Council of Neighborhood Organizations, former chair of two police advisory committees, and the first openly gay chairman of the Council of Business Organizations, I’m running to reform city hall and restore residents’ voices.

Positions on Key Issues

Candidates Cindy Allen and Robert Fox were asked to respond to the following questions by marking an “X” in the column that identifies their current stance on key issues in the City of Long Beach and Downtown. Below are their responses.
Q&A with the Candidates

The Second District Council Candidates were asked the same questions pertaining to matters of importance for Second District residents and the Citywide community. Below are their responses.

What do you view as the top three priorities for the Second Council District, and what is your plan to address them?

ALLEN: My top three priorities in office would be housing, COVID and the economic recovery, and the environment. I will implement inclusionary housing policies and increase affordable housing, reinforce our city public health
department to stop the spread of COVID, offer assistance to businesses to bring our downtown economy back quickly, work to convert our city fleet to fully-electric, and consider the environmental impact of all policies.

FOX: Parking. Housing security/homelessness. Public safety. The runner ups are the Broadway road diet (we have to go back to the drawing board and redesign it ASAP) and greenspace maintenance and beautification. They all require institutional knowledge, combined with energy, creativity, and more investment. My web site includes details of my parking proposal, including a Parking Master Plan, Parking Manager, and development requirements, as well as my other issue proposals.

What is one question you would ask your opponent?

ALLEN: Given the allegations by your former volunteer about your campaign’s tactics to deceive the voters and your threats of lawsuits against those who cover the story, how can the voters trust you to be truthful and open to civil discussion with constituents who disagree with you?

FOX: Whether she believes that the backing of the city machine insulates her from scrutiny, including her failure to explain why she pretended to sell her city contracts business to a fake media company with stock images for “executives” and her failure to provide even basic proof that she has been living in the 1-bedroom Airbnb unit where she registered to vote rather than her 5-bedroom family home in Fountain Valley.

What policy changes would you advocate to address quality of life issues in Long Beach?

ALLEN: I will implement policies to address air quality issues, especially around the port and along asthma alley. I will work with businesses to bring more good paying jobs with benefits to Long Beach. I will work to make it more affordable to live in Long Beach. I will implement policies to increase
mental health and related services for the unhoused populations.

FOX: First of all, now more than ever we need a tip to toe review of our fiscal situation—ranked near the bottom by the State Auditor—by an outside firm, as we did in 2012. The money we save from addressing special interest waste, fraud, and abuse should go toward rebuilding our retail economy, addressing parking, air quality, park space, beautification, and a reformed, community policing-based approach to public safety.

What measures should be taken to make Long Beach more business-friendly?

ALLEN: It is very difficult and costly to start a business in Long Beach. I would work to bring down the fees and make the process easier for new business owners. As we recover from COVID, we must ensure we keep our locally owned businesses that make Long Beach the city we love.

FOX: We need seriously to cut red tape, fees, and retail taxes to get competitive. Measure A has been devastating to small businesses, especially restaurants, even before the complete devastation of coping with the pandemic. We need to extend the business license late fee moratorium indefinitely and actually support businesses adapting to the new reality. I have also proposed a small business ombudsman to attract and groom new entrepreneurs to town.

Do you feel additional economic assistance is needed for Long Beach residents, business owners and property owners struggling due to the pandemic? What more should the City Council do?

ALLEN: Many people and businesses are struggling through no fault of their own. We need to help now instead of kick the can down the road. The city should implement protections and increase assistance to ensure residents can stay in their
homes. The city should also work with businesses to limit their fees and implement creative solutions to help businesses thrive (like the parklets and open streets have done for restaurants).

**FOX:** Absolutely! Why are we back-filling budget deficits produced by inflated top city salaries rather than supporting our dying small businesses with our federal Covid funds? The city taxes small business to death, then protects itself while they burn and get looted. Then it leaves them to the wolves during the pandemic, opening and closing them down with no guidelines or strategy and minimal to no support for moving outdoors.

What do you see as the housing needs of the City of Long Beach? How would you address these needs as a Council Member both in the Second District and from a citywide perspective?

**ALLEN:** The cost of housing is out of control. We need to implement inclusionary housing policies that increase affordable housing across the whole city. These policies must also be written to increase affordable units that are for sale to increase our home ownership rate, especially among black and brown communities.

**FOX:** I’m a believer in appropriately zoned grant and tax-incentive based affordable housing. Designed right, these complexes can be beautiful and help reinvigorate depressed communities. I believe strongly in preserving the relationship between housing provider and tenant for mutual benefit, particularly to keep rents affordable. If we do not support our rental housing industry soon, it will collapse, which would be a social and economic disaster. I oppose gentrification development.

Do you feel the Long Beach Police Department needs to undergo changes, and if so, what changes would you support? If not, why?
**ALLEN:** I have been speaking of the need for improvement at LBPD for years. We must reimagine our police force and reallocate funds to other agencies that are better able to handle social and mental health issues. Many calls should not have a response from an armed police officer. We must change the culture and policies to ensure police are held to a higher standard and bad cops are taken off the street.

**FOX:** I support Reallocate & Reform, rather than absolute defunding. That means we go back to the community oriented policing model pioneered in the 1990s by Chief Batts. We need major retraining, resources to make it possible for officers actually to walk the blocks they patrol and get to know everyone personally, to reopen our substations to the public, and we need major CPCC and accountability reforms—basically, a new police commission.