

Letter From DLBA President & CEO

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With the number of challenges our global community faces in these uncertain times, one thing is absolute: it is unrealistic to believe that one person or a single entity will provide the solutions or the many resources necessary to address the hundreds of questions that still remain unanswered. But there is one constant that continues to resonate with me and millions of others: we're in this together and we will bounce back.

The cynics may say that misery loves company; I say we're bigger than that, and there's a deep level of genuine sincerity and commitment that will help us through this.

Our world has more in common today than ever before. As a community-builder, the Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) is a dedicated group of leaders who envision great progress for our Downtown. We are committed to the health and wellbeing of our neighbors and neighborhoods and are always willing to help when called upon. Now is the time to grasp the gravity of the situation and act with knowledge, compassion and determination.

Over the past 10 days, the DLBA team, including our Board of Directors, its committees, civic partners and neighborhood associations, have coalesced to share the best, most accurate information possible as we continue to serve as a clearing house of information and remain visible in the community with our daily services. Last week, we launched a resources web page that will be refreshed regularly with updated information crucial to local business owners, residents and Downtown

stakeholders.

While life in California as we know it has been placed on pause, the DLBA continues to provide essential services to the district. The following are just a few items worth noting:

- The **DLBA Clean and Safe Teams, guided by Steve Be Cotte and Broc Coward**, continue to be deployed and have heightened their collaboration with the Long Beach Police Department and our City's Public Works Department. Their work includes continuing power washing and porter services, which range from sweeping the sidewalk and gutters of the entire District, wiping the parking meters and pedestrian-crossing signal buttons, and ensuring cleanliness and sanitation. The Safety Teams and our Homeless Outreach workers remain diligent in their efforts to address all safety and quality of life issues. DLBA's Public Safety staff are working with our clean and safe contractor to ensure best practices in sanitation are employed to protect the health and well-being of employees.
- The **DLBA Economic Development** team, led by Austin Metoyer, Mo Mills and Brice Wildemuth, continues to work with our City counterparts to identify financial resources as they are slowly becoming available. While it may take some time to see and feel the full impact of the major financial piece to this puzzle, I'm pleased to share that the DLBA, the City and a couple of financial institutions are later this week announcing the funding of a micro-grant program for businesses. Our team has also co-authored a survey to businesses that will begin to assess the early impacts this crisis has had on our local economy.
- The **DLBA Marketing and Communications** team, supported by Nicole Hatley and Matt Cohn, are reaching out to businesses that remain open and asking them for information to participate in an online directory promoting their services and products. We are also launching a gift card campaign where the DLBA will purchase thousands of dollars of gift cards from

Downtown merchants and give them away regularly in a creative, fun and positive social media campaign. I'd also like to share that the DLBA has added Samantha (Sam) Mehlinger to our team to assist with our communication efforts. Until the first of the year, Sam was the editor for the *Long Beach Business Journal* before embarking on new endeavors, which included a long overdue vacation to Italy. Upon Sam's return to the States and prior to our shutdown due to the crisis, she wanted to be part of our efforts and help her community – so she's on board helping us strategize and execute.

- The **DLBA Social Media and Digital Marketing** efforts, coordinated by Lauren Mayne, has been busy posting stories and images from around our Downtown, including countless and incredibly warm random acts of kindness that have been shared online. We will engage in a campaign this week asking our community for more human-interest stories that run the gambit from amazing gestures to zealous advocacy – with compassion and kindness tossed in for good measure.
- The **DLBA Public Realm** team consisting of Mariah Hoffman and Stephanie Gonzalez, is continuing with its projects, including tracking our pedestrian wayfinding sign program to stay on schedule as much as possible, and researching unique ways to plan and host collaborative virtual events featuring artists and community spaces. Yes, while there may be a shutdown of most business and social gatherings, we are still thinking about how we can uniquely connect people and place.
- **Our Staff:** Is amazing. Cherisse Evans and Monica Morrill are keeping the administrative wheels on track and focusing on the inevitable finish line when things return to some normalcy. Most of us have been working long hours from home this past week and plan to continue to telecommute until we hear differently. Some folk stop in the office to check on things there, but our building has been closed except for essential services – which we consider ourselves. As I mentioned, our Clean and Safe teams are working seven days a week, and our

communications staff has a teleconference every morning prior to a staff conference call to design, plan and execute all programs that need to be launched or continued. Unless otherwise announced, all DLBA meetings including Board of Directors, Executive, all Administrative and Programming Committees will continue to convene using technology that allow the public to participate (the State has provided emergency guidelines to comply with the Brown Act).

While things are changing by the minute, I wanted to provide you with this overview of what is happening as we maintain contact with each other, our neighbors, directors, elected officials and city staff. While this challenging environment tests our resolve, I believe that the resiliency of Strong Beach will prevail now more than ever. We are one team that not only will see each other through this, but will be much stronger, better and caring as we emerge on the other side.

Let me hear from you. I would love to know what more we can do or perhaps consider not doing. . . . I miss y'all, but we'll be back at it before you know it and this community will prevail. In the meantime, stay positive. Be safe and be well. Take care of yourself and loved ones for this too shall pass.

We're all in this together.

Kraig Kojian
President and CEO