



**DOWNTOWN
LONG BEACH
ALLIANCE**

February 18, 2025

Long Beach City Council
Civic Center Plaza
411 W. Ocean Blvd.
Long Beach, CA 90802

Subject: Agenda [Item #14](#) Support for the Small Business Rebound Initiative

Dear Mayor Richardson and Honorable Members of the City Council,

Please accept this correspondence on behalf of the Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DTLB Alliance) Board of Directors and enter into the public record for the City Council meeting scheduled for February 18, 2025, our support for the proposed Small Business Rebound Initiative. We also urge its inclusion in the FY26 budget. Small businesses serve as the economic and cultural backbone of Long Beach, contributing to job creation, community identity, and economic vitality. In Downtown Long Beach alone, small businesses represent a diverse array of industries, from independent retailers and restaurants to professional services and creative enterprises. However, as you know, many of these businesses continue to face significant challenges stemming from the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, rising operational costs, and ongoing public safety concerns.

We commend the City's leadership in proactively supporting small businesses through programs such as the **Visual Improvement Grants (VIP Grants)**, the **Legacy Business Program**, and **BizCare**, all of which have provided direct assistance to local entrepreneurs. However, more comprehensive and sustainable strategies are needed to ensure our small businesses not only recover, but thrive. The **Small Business Rebound Initiative** represents a necessary step forward in reinforcing and expanding the City's commitment to business retention, recruitment, and long-term economic growth.

We strongly support the initiative's key pillars:

- **Recruitment:** Expanding the "**Grow Long Beach Fund**" to offer low-interest loans for new and emerging businesses, reducing barriers to entry, and ensuring that commercial vacancies are activated with new, dynamic businesses. We also support the "**First-Year Free**" initiative, which would waive business license fees for startups in targeted areas, further incentivizing investment in underserved corridors.
- **Retention:** Strengthening the **Legacy Business Program** to ensure that longstanding businesses receive the resources and technical support needed for succession planning and long-term sustainability. Downtown Long Beach has a wealth of businesses that have been in operation for over a decade, and safeguarding their continued success should be a priority.
- **Reinforcement:** Implementing "**Safe and Secure**" grants to help businesses improve security measures, reduce the impacts of vandalism and theft, and create a safer environment for customers, employees, and business owners. Additionally, we fully support the formation of a **Long Beach Organized Retail Theft Taskforce** in collaboration with law enforcement and business stakeholders to proactively address property crime and deter further economic harm.



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The Small Business Rebound Initiative will not only provide much-needed relief but will also set the foundation for a **more resilient and inclusive business climate** in Long Beach. By expanding access to financial resources, reducing regulatory barriers, and prioritizing business safety, this initiative will drive economic opportunity and community well-being across our city.

The DTLB Alliance urges the City Council to approve and fund this initiative as part of the FY 26 budget. We look forward to working in partnership with the City to ensure its successful implementation and continued support for small businesses citywide.

Thank you for your time and leadership in championing small businesses. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can provide additional insight or assistance in advancing these critical programs.

Sincerely,

Austin Metoyer
President & CEO

DTLB Alliance Board of Directors

Mayor Rex Richardson, Office of Mayor Rex Richardson

Councilwoman Mary Zendejas, First District, City of Long Beach

Tom Modica, City Manager, City of Long Beach

Bo Martinez, Director of Economic Development, City of Long Beach