



**DOWNTOWN
LONG BEACH
ALLIANCE**

MEMBERS

John Edmond, Chair

Ashlee Carroll, Co-Chair

Courtney Chatterson

Dr. Karen Semien-McBride

Jade Sche

Holly Boutelle

Josh Rockwell

Varo Asorian

Michael Martin

STAFF:

Stephanie El Tawil
Economic Development &
Policy Manager

Ariel Meza
Business Navigator

Koda Strider
Administrative Services
Coordinator

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday, February 11, 2026

4:00 PM

DTLB Alliance Conference Room

100 W Broadway, Suite 235

Long Beach, CA 90802

Present: John Edmond, Ashlee Carroll, Courtney Chatterson, Jade Sche, Holly Boutelle, Josh Rockwell, Varo Asorian, Michael Martin

Absent: Dr. Karen Semien-McBride

DTLB Alliance Staff: Stephanie El Tawil, Ariel Meza, Koda Strider

Guests: Mike Gold

1. Call to Order – John Edmond, Chair
Meeting Presentation. Called to order at 4:31 PM.
2. **ACTION:** Approval of [Minutes from October 8, 2025](#), Economic Development Committee Meeting.
MOTION: 1st: **Sche**; 2nd: **Carroll**.
VOTE: None opposed. No abstentions. Motion passes.
3. Staff Report
 - a. FY25-26 Department Priorities
 - i. Attraction – El Tawil
 1. Brokers by the Beach Events: Resa, Waterfront, & other location TBD
 - a. This department’s signature event is used to highlight various development projects in Downtown.
 - b. It has been reduced from 4 times a year to 3 due to budget restraints, but it continues to get good reception.
 2. Retail Strategy
 - a. Alongside the Alliance updating our Strategic Plan, we are also contracting a group called Retail Strategies to put together a data plan that will highlight gaps and surpluses in DTLB’s retail strategy.
 - b. Following the creation of that data plan there will be a two-day academy for key stakeholders in DTLB to help better understand what areas should be prioritized.
 3. Franchise Forum
 - a. Discussed further in the Chairperson’s Report.
 4. Policy Advocacy
 - a. El Tawil focuses on advocacy efforts related to food vendor regulations, Entertainment Zone permitting, development projects, and letters of support for projects and initiatives impacting Downtown.
 5. Data Reporting



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- a. El Tawil is creating the data dashboard and generating quarterly market reports, a project that's moving ahead of schedule.
 - ii. Retention – Meza
 1. Grand Openings
 - a. There have been 6 Grand Openings since October, with 3 more pending.
 2. Mug to Mug
 - a. A networking event for businesses occurring every other month, now opening up to residents.
 3. Outreach – VIP Grants, Assistance with marketing/consulting
 - a. Meza is conducting outreach to 20+ businesses weekly.
 4. Ombudsman Support (zoning, leasing, permits, etc)
4. Chairperson's Report
 - a. FY25-26 Project Selection
 - i. Franchise Forum – An event planned for August/September to be hosted in DTLB connecting entrepreneurs and small business owners with franchise opportunities, funding sources, and existing franchise owners – Carroll
 1. The goal is to help fill downtown vacancies with regionally known brands that still feel local.
 2. Members discussed targeting second-generation spaces that are already built out, as they are easier and faster for new businesses to occupy than first-generation spaces requiring major construction.
 3. Potential participants mentioned included franchise brands, property owners, brokers, financial institutions, planning and health staff, and business owners with franchise experience who could participate in a panel discussion.
 4. Committee members plan to divide responsibilities such as logistics, venue selection, outreach, and recruitment.
 5. Success for the project was described as creating actionable connections between entrepreneurs, franchise brands, and available spaces, with a goal of at least one second-generation retail space becoming occupied as a result of the effort.
 6. Members noted that the project would require coordination between three key groups: property owners with available space, franchise representatives, and entrepreneurs interested in opening businesses. Due diligence with planning, zoning, and health departments would still be required for each project.
 - ii. Dining & Entertainment Area – Entertainment Permit by Right research, feedback, and recommendations to BOD, CDI, City Council – Edmond
 1. Members discussed ways to improve the permitting process for businesses located within the Dining and Entertainment



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- Zone, particularly for restaurants and entertainment-focused businesses seeking alcohol or entertainment permits.
2. It was clarified that the Dining and Entertainment Zone is an existing geographic area in downtown that allows amplified music, while the newer Entertainment Zone pilot is limited to designated special events and outdoor alcohol consumption in specific areas.
 3. Members expressed interest in creating a more predictable and streamlined permit process for businesses in the Dining and Entertainment Zone, including the possibility of expedited timelines or clearer expectations for applicants.
 4. The committee discussed gathering case studies and examples from existing businesses that have gone through the permitting process in order to identify common challenges and potential improvements.
 5. Members emphasized the importance of working collaboratively with city planning staff to identify realistic policy changes and “low-hanging fruit” that could improve the process without compromising safety or regulatory requirements.
 6. Discussion also included how improvements to the downtown Dining and Entertainment Zone could potentially serve as a model for similar efforts in other areas of the city.
5. Old Business
 6. New Business
 7. Public Comment (three minutes on all non-agenda items)
 8. Adjournment
- Adjourned at 5:41 PM.

NEXT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING:

Wednesday, April 8, 2026

4:30 PM

Location: DTLB Alliance Conference Room (100 W Broadway, Suite 235)

Mission: Cultivate, preserve, and promote a healthy, safe and prosperous Downtown for all

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