

Date: November 18, 2025

From: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Historical Society of Long Beach – Olympic Legacy Report**

As part of the City's Fiscal Year 2025 Adopted Budget, the City Council approved \$100,000 in General Fund support for the Historical Society of Long Beach (HSLB) to document and archive Long Beach's history in the 1932 and 1984 Olympic Games. This funding supported HSLB's efforts to produce a formal historical report and an accompanying exhibition highlighting Long Beach's Olympic legacy.

Following City Council approval, the City's 2028 Games Executive Leadership Team coordinated with HSLB throughout the development of the report. City Manager's office staff met with HSLB to discuss the project scope, provided feedback during the writing process, and reviewed the final draft. Staff also connected HSLB with the City Clerk's Office to access historical City Council records from the 1984 Games and facilitated referrals to additional research resources, including the LA84 Foundation's Digital Library and the LA84 Committee archives at UCLA Library Special Collections.

HSLB has completed the attached *Advancing our Olympic Legacy in the City of Long Beach Olympic Legacy Report*. The report accompanies HSLB's "Olympics on the Golden Shore" exhibition, which remains on display at the Historical Society museum located at 4260 Atlantic Avenue.

Next Steps

In the coming months, staff plan to schedule a presentation with HSLB at an upcoming City Council meeting and continue coordinating with HSLB to explore options to make elements of the exhibition mobile so they can be shared throughout the community. If you have any questions, please contact Tyler Bonanno-Curley, Deputy City Manager, at tyler.curley@longbeach.gov.

ATTACHMENT

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ADVANCING OUR OLYMPIC LEGACY
IN THE CITY OF LONG BEACH
OLYMPIC LEGACY REPORT

Prepared for
Office of the City Manager
City of Long Beach

Prepared by



Historical Society
of
Long Beach

September 30, 2025
Revised November 15, 2025

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

September 30, 2025

Dear City Manager's Office Team,

The Historical Society of Long Beach is pleased to share "Advancing Our Olympic Legacy in the City of Long Beach." The attached pdf document includes:

- I. Long Beach Historical Report Narrative
- II. Long Beach Legacy Recommendations
- III. Long Beach Olympics Exhibition, *Olympics on the Golden Shore*

The Historical Narrative, Legacy Recommendations, and exhibition text pieces will be available after November 15, 2025: <https://hslb.org/olympics-on-the-golden-shore/> until further notice. The current installation of *Olympics on the Golden Shore* at the Historical Society of Long Beach 4260 Atlantic Avenue includes artifacts on loan to the HSLB. Artifacts on display will not travel with the printed pieces.

Sincerely,

Julie Bartolotto

Executive Director

Historical Society of Long Beach

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL	ii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
PURPOSE OF REPORT	6
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	9
CHAPTER 1: 1932 OLYMPICS IN LONG BEACH	14
Selling Los Angeles	14
Early Long Beach Urban Development	18
Origins of Long Beach as an Aquatic Sports Capital	19
Origins of Marine Stadium	21
Long Beach Hosts Aquatic Competitions	23
Marine Stadium Transforms into an Olympic Venue	26
1931-1932 City Budget—Olympic Advertising	37
Local Public Prepares for the Olympics	39
The Games: August 9-13, 1932	45
Legacy of the Xth Olympiad and Marine Stadium	50
CHAPTER 2: 1984 OLYMPIC GAMES RETURN TO LONG BEACH	55
Los Angeles' Olympic Bids, 1939-1978	55
Negotiating Funding: Who is paying for the Olympics?	58
Creation of the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (LAOOC)	62
Preparing for the Olympics: Bringing the Games to Long Beach	64
Structural Changes to the City Landscape	65
LAOOC Press Releases Announce Long Beach Agreements	67
Long Beach Signs Olympic Contract Permits	74
Government Role: Key Individuals and Organizations	77
Preview to the Olympics	79
Community Engagement	81
Games in Long Beach	88
Notable Winners	93
Olympic Legacy	94

CONCLUSION	99
LEGACY RECOMMENDATIONS	104
WORKS CITED	108
APPENDIX 1: TIMELINE	117
APPENDIX 2: "OLYMPICS ON THE GOLDEN SHORE" EXHIBITION	122

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Historical Society of Long Beach proudly presents its report, “Advancing Our Olympic Legacy in the City of Long Beach.” The City Manager’s Office, City of Long Beach, engaged the Historical Society of Long Beach and its team to produce the following deliverables:

- I. Long Beach Historical Report Narrative
- II. Long Beach Legacy Recommendations
- III. Long Beach Olympics Exhibition, *Olympics on the Golden Shore*

The Historical Narrative, Legacy Recommendations, and exhibition text pieces will be available here <https://hslb.org/olympics-on-the-golden-shore/?v=0b3b97fa6688>.

This initiative explores Long Beach's pivotal role in the 1932 and 1984 Olympic Games through comprehensive research and compelling imagery. The historical narrative report, “Advancing Our Olympic Legacy in the City of Long Beach: Olympic Legacy Report,” written by staff historians Brian N Chavez and Victoria Roa, carefully examines relevant topics. The 1932 section heavily utilizes HSLB’s City Manager Correspondence Collection 1923-1953, historical accounts, data from local newspapers, *Xth Olympiad Official Report*, and souvenir programs. The 1984 section pulls from Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee’s *Official Report of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad Los Angeles, 1984 Volume 1 Organization and Planning* and *Volume 2 Competition Summary and Results*, HSLB’s Long Beach Redevelopment Agency Collection, documents from the office of Long Beach City Clerk, and local newspapers

from the time. Other pertinent sources include a Master's thesis, City of Long Beach reports and maps, and the *Southern California Quarterly*.

The historical report reviews Long Beach's involvement in the 1932 and 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games with extensive citation for further research. The report provides documentation of local events, sites and venues. Also included are key City of Long Beach officials, local investments and investors, the civic role, and cultural and economic impacts as the Xth Olympiad was the first Olympic Games to turn a profit.

In 1932 at the Xth Olympiad, the sole sport held in Long Beach was rowing, made possible by the foresight of Long Beach city officials and residents. Although the channel that became Marine Stadium was not originally purchased and dredged because of the Olympics, it did play a part helping secure the Los Angeles Olympic Games.

In 1923, the City of Long Beach purchased a piece of property that included the San Gabriel River estuary. The green space was named "Recreation Park," and included the former grounds of the Virginia Hotel's golf links, but also a brackish water system that stretched from present day 7th Street all the way to Alamitos Bay. The estuary was dredged to make space for swimming, diving, and other aquatic sports. Dredging created a "lake" and a channel. The lake, after a number of iterations, became what we now know as Colorado Lagoon. Amenities such as picnic tables, diving and swimming platforms, and swim lessons were added to entice locals to the area. Local officials also worked with national organizations to bring aquatic competitions to Colorado Lagoon.

The channel that was created in the original dredging underwent minimal changes and some additions such as a judging platform and bleacher-style seating in order to secure the Rowing competitions of the 1932 Olympiad. The updated channel was eventually referred to as a “Marine Stadium,” as we still call it today. The new Marine Stadium was strategically located parallel to the existing Pacific Electric Railway’s Newport Line.

Since the late 1930s, Los Angeles and Long Beach officials and boosters worked to get the games back. Finally in 1977, the 1984 Olympic Games were secured for Los Angeles. In 1980, Long Beach secured four sports in the XXIII Olympiad:

- Volleyball at Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center, July 29-August 11 (Permit 15492-006, 007)
- Yachting in the harbor with dedicated facilities in the Downtown Shoreline Marina, July 31-August 11 (Permit 16769)
- Fencing at the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center Exhibition Hall and Terrace Theater, August 1-11 (Permit 15492-006, 007)
- Archery at El Dorado Park’s Archery Range August 8-11 (Permit 16765)

The XXIII Olympic Games turned an astounding \$223 million profit due in part to leveraging television rights. Some of the profits fund the LA84 Foundation that supports youth sports, and houses a library (a source for some of our research).

Drawing from Chapters 1 and 2 of the report, the in-gallery exhibition “Olympics on the Golden Shore” showcases infrastructure, athletes, and community memorabilia that explores the lasting impact of the Olympics on Long Beach.

Carefully selected photographs, graphics, and artifacts illuminate Long Beach's Olympic journey. We highlight the remarkable 40-year campaign that secured the 1984 Games and showcase our city's contributions to Olympic trials, athletics, and aquatics competitions. To balance our exhibition, we turned to the community. A community call yielded invaluable items that now anchor our exhibition, bringing authentic voices and tangible history to visitors.

For deeper exploration of athlete biographies and additional historical details, we encourage visitors to connect with the LA84 Foundation, LB908 magazine, and the Long Beach Century Club—each offers unique perspectives and extensive resources about our Olympic legacy. Our goal with this exhibition was to create a foundation for understanding Long Beach's Olympic heritage. This exhibition illustrates the strategic planning and community spirit that made Long Beach an integral part of Olympic history.

Research Team

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Jaslene Aragon, Student Volunteer

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The agreement between the City of Long Beach and the Historical Society of Long Beach (HSLB) advances the history of the local Olympic legacy through research, narrative, and exhibition.

HSLB engaged two historians to investigate past Olympic games with specialized focus on the role Long Beach played in securing two previous Olympiads. From the research, two separate narratives were created, included in this report as “Chapter 1: 1932 Olympics in Long Beach,” and “Chapter 2: 1984 Olympic Games Return to Long Beach.”

Historians Brian N Chavez and Victoria Roa searched the Historical Society of Long Beach collections through the database and manually with the help of HSLB staff and interns. Research through outside educational databases was also conducted. Drawing from primary sources such as the City Manager files, and secondary sources such as Official Souvenir Programs, historic newspapers, and monographs, they built the historical narrative of pre-Olympic interest, aquatic and sporting legacy, and community and city leaders’ support.

Other elements in this report include a summary of findings, recommendations for a legacy installation memorializing the Olympic events held locally, a Works Cited for additional resources, a timeline, and description of the exhibition created to support the findings of this report.

Chapters 1 and 2 provided historical context for the curation and exhibition about past games as part of a preview to the 2028 Olympics.

OBJECTIVE 1: Long Beach Olympic Legacy Report:

ADVANCING OUR OLYMPIC LEGACY IN THE CITY OF LONG BEACH OLYMPIC
LEGACY REPORT

This report identifies and explores the development of local venues that were vital to securing the 1932 and 1984 Olympic Games such as Marine Stadium in the Recreation Park channel, and previously constructed venues such as the archery range at El Dorado Park, the Entertainment and Performing Arts Center (Long Beach Arena, Terrace Theater, and Exhibition Halls), and the Shoreline Marina.

It also identifies key city officials, directs readers to outside resources about local Olympians, discusses local investments in infrastructure, the civic role, cultural and economic impacts, investments and opportunities following the Olympic Games.

OBJECTIVE 2: Long-term Commemorative Olympic Installation

Recommendations

Identify possible installation sites, present potential installations and possible topics based on the history of the Olympic Games in Long Beach, and what does or does not already exist.

OBJECTIVE 3: Preview to LA 2028 in Long Beach, An Exhibition

Drawing from OBJECTIVE 1, provide a succinct summary of themes covered in Chapters 1 and 2 of the report; visually illustrate key themes.

About the Organization

The Historical Society of Long Beach (HSLB) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our mission is to connect people to the past and to the place they live by collecting, preserving, and exhibiting the material history of Long Beach. Through our programs and services, we help develop an inclusive community narrative that gives residents a greater understanding of their role in the story of their neighborhood and their city. The HSLB serves as an important resource for groups and individuals including preservationists, architects, historians, artists, filmmakers, authors, journalists, educators, researchers, students, policymakers, genealogists and the community at large.



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Natural Estuary to Aquatic Legacy

“Here you have the world’s finest course for one of the world’s greatest sports... I congratulate you on the perfection of this stadium. Never have I seen its equal.”-- IOC President Count de Baillet-Latour. After the 1932 Olympic rowing events, Long Beach secured the “Aquatics Capitol” legacy.

Redirecting the San Gabriel River and estuary began when partners from the Virginia Hotel leased almost 300 acres of undeveloped land, east of Long Beach from Anaheim Street to the Alamitos Bay. When the Virginia Country Club moved northwest, voters recognized the importance of a protected natural space, approving the purchase of what became Recreation Park “for almost every popular outdoor game or sport.” Dredging 2,000,000 cubic yards of earth created what city officials and reports called “a small lake” (what we now know as Colorado Lagoon) and one long channel (what we now call Marine Stadium). A series of successful aquatic competitions within the confines of the “lake” and channel proved to William May Garland, President of the Xth Olympiad Committee, that Long Beach would be an invaluable partner in winning an Olympic bid.

Long Beach City Council approved and built aquatic improvements in Recreation Park including eight swim lanes and a diving platform built in time for the 1930 Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) Swimming and Diving Championships. After the Xth Olympiad was

secured, the city was responsible for dredging the channel to eliminate a sand spit, build fencing, flood controls including a tide gate, and construction of the Colorado Street bridge. The Xth Olympiad Committee was responsible for grandstands, docks, starting platforms, dressing rooms, and equipment. Marine Stadium was officially dedicated on July 23, 1932 before a crowd of 90,000 people. However, there is no evidence indicating local officials, citizens, or media, made specific efforts to bring any event other than Rowing to Long Beach in 1932. Yachting was also left out of Long Beach's bidding process.

Locals enthusiastically supported aquatic events. The first recognized four-oared race on the Pacific was the Naples Regatta, held in Alamitos Bay in 1907. Long Beach Chamber of Commerce and the Aquatic Sports Committee hosted the Water Carnival of Southern California every Labor Day weekend from 1925 until the 1932 Olympics. Swimmers participated in a pier-to-pier swim (1925) and the 1930 AAU events. Long Beach residents showed their Olympic enthusiasm by decorating homes and streets with banners, gardens, and flowers, winning the "Best beautification program in the Southwest" in the L.A. County floral show (1932).

Pre-Olympic sporting events, galas, dinners, promotional movies, and contests bolstered support for the Xth Olympiad after many years of hardship including World War I, the influenza pandemic of 1918-19, and the Great Depression. Mindful of the importance of affordability, transportation deals and tiered ticketing helped offset costs so people from diverse economic backgrounds could participate and spectate. Locally unemployed people sold souvenir stickers provided by the Chamber of Commerce, keeping half of the proceeds to spend as they needed.

National and international advertising, attention to affordability, and Olympic enthusiasm resulted in a profit of approximately \$1,200,000, the first modern Olympiad to turn a profit. The Greater Los Angeles area, including Long Beach, was known globally after the Games, and infrastructure built during this time period, including the Los Angeles Coliseum and Marine Stadium, helped win the 1984 Olympic bid.

Olympism Connects the World

After almost five decades of failed bids, a confluence of events brought the Olympics back to the Greater Los Angeles area, with four events held in Long Beach: Yachting at the Downtown Marina; Archery at El Dorado Park; Volleyball at the Arena; Fencing at the Terrace Theater and Exhibition Hall. Funding for these projects came from the Redevelopment Agency, city bonds, and Tidelands Agency funds. Although these venues helped secure events held in Long Beach, they were not planned to capture Olympic events specifically, but to bring business to a decaying amusement zone and a declining city.

The Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (LAOOC) convinced the International Olympic Committee (IOC) that using existing infrastructure, building only the necessities, private funding, and selling television rights ensured a prosperous Olympics. Tragic events at the 1972 Munich Games, fiscal irresponsibility at the 1976 Montreal Games, civil instability in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, and a boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics left Los Angeles as the sole bidder for the 1984 Summer Games, and put negotiations favorably on the city's side.

The Long Beach 1984 Committee, made up of Chamber of Commerce and community members, formed in 1981 to promote the City of Long Beach to Olympic visitors and local residents. Sporting events such as Olympic Classes Regatta, the International Women's Volleyball Tournament, World Archery Championship, Long Beach Boat Show, and a press tour allowed people to experience Long Beach attractions and venues before the Olympic Games. Although there was some friction between LAOOC and Long Beach over the Art Exhibition and Olympic Torch Relay, LAOOC recognized Long Beach as an official Olympic Neighbor in 1983.

Long Beach locals pitched in to raise funds through a concert series, galas, dinners, International Festival and Sand Sculpture contest, a marathon, and city clean-up. The Alamitos Bay Beautification Project and "Operation Facelift" added greenery to the marina, banners and celebratory materials to downtown, and general improvements in the parks and beyond.

In order to increase visibility and connect a sprawling set of Olympic venues for Olympic athletes, coaches, and spectators, designers created the "Festive Federalism" look and the "kit of parts" wayfinding system to celebrate internationalism and multiculturalism, decrease politicization, and bring unity to the fragmented Games. Brightly colored banners, scaffolding, and sonotubes marked venues and ticketing, and played well to the international television viewing crowd.

The 1984 Summer Games not only turned the first profit since 1932, the approach to management changed the way all future bidding cities thought about hosting. Overcoming political upheaval and a return to embracing the "Olympism" philosophy shifted the modern Olympic Movement. Globally televised games resulted in

a substantial profit that went to the IOC and Olympic debt, and was used to create the LA84 Commission which, as of 2025, still helps fund local youth sports.

1932 OLYMPICS IN LONG BEACH



By Brian N Chavez and Victoria Roa

Selling Los Angeles

Los Angeles' Xth Olympiad promised to make a splash on Long Beach's well-established seaside entertainment, bringing thousands of international spectators to witness Rowing at Marine Stadium.

Enthusiasm for such a spectacle began in the summer of 1925, when the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce, joined by an aquatic sports committee made up of local businessmen, city officials, and aquatic sports organizers, collectively announced the arrival of the first annual Pre-Olympic Water Carnival of Southern California. This showcase of watersports included swimming, aquaplaning, high diving, and horse swimming races, and was held on the shores of Alamitos Bay every Labor Day from

1925 leading up to 1932. The carnival sought to boost public excitement for the Olympiad, promote Long Beach as an aquatic sports venue, and raise money for the eventual execution of water-related sports in the city. But at the time, Long Beach had not yet secured any contracts to host Olympic Games for Los Angeles, and much would change in seven years. Come 1932 only one Olympic sport—Rowing—would make its way to Long Beach, but that one opportunity to host a game at the newly constructed Marine Stadium physically transformed the city and solidified its place as an internationally-recognized aquatic sports destination.

William May Garland, President of Los Angeles' Xth Olympiad Committee, was largely responsible for bringing the Olympics to the region for the first time. As a resident since the 1890s, real estate broker, member of numerous boards and clubs, and powerful figure of Los Angeles, Garland was well invested in the city's economic future and an ardent supporter of urban boosterism.

The conclusion of the Civil War and subsequent expansion of railroads across the country opened the door for commercial interests to sell Southern California's Pacific coast as an untapped sub-tropical paradise for healing and recreation. At the time, Los Angeles and its surrounding areas were largely rural and reminiscent of the region's pastoral Hispanic pasts. As thousands migrated west across the United States in search of health and opportunity, the landscape around the pueblo quickly replaced adobe and expansive ranch lands with paved roads, railways, commercial agriculture, townships, and seaside resorts.

Incorporated cities, such as Santa Monica and Long Beach, were products of transcontinental migration and the commercial success of selling untouched paradise.

The burgeoning motion picture industry at the turn of the twentieth century, which included Long Beach's own Balboa Feature Films, further elevated the region's popularity within the United States. Scholar Barry Siegel states in his monograph, *Dreamers and Schemers*, "what Americans saw of Los Angeles in movie theaters beckoned them to a land of endless happiness and possibility."¹ Garland enthusiastically supported the complimentary promotions of his beloved Los Angeles by motion picture. But even amid rapid growth, Los Angeles was far from a household name.

By 1918, uncertainty over a world war and a deadly pandemic had slowed growth and tourism threatening William Garland's real estate empire. In response, Garland took a vested interest in expanding commercial infrastructure to attract conventions, expositions, and sports competitions, seeing these events as opportunities to improve the appeal of the city. He encouraged his fellow businessmen to move forward with development regardless of anxieties over costs, believing a city with greater tourist-boosting infrastructure, such as grand hotels, would encourage perpetual economic growth.² Garland's high position as President of the Los Angeles Athletic Club further motivated him to expand the number of venues that could accommodate large scale athletic tournaments in the city.

In 1920, the idea to host the Olympics in Los Angeles crossed Garland and his recently incorporated group, the Community Development Association. The non-profit was managed by an eight-man executive committee of newspaper publishers,

¹ Barry Siegel, *Dreamers and Schemers: How an Improbable Bid for the 1932 Olympics Transformed Los Angeles From Dusty Outpost to Global Metropolis* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 25.

² Ibid, 33-34.

politicians, and businessmen dedicated to the upbuilding of Los Angeles.³ A recession at the end of World War I and the Great Depression a decade later brought periods of economic uncertainty and questions over the distribution of wealth in the face of labor unrest and social revolution. Historian and Long Beach City College Professor Sean Dinces, argues in his essay, “The 1932 Olympics: Spectacle and Growth in Interwar Los Angeles,” that the wealthy elite, like the members of the Community Development Association, were drawn to “flashy mega-events” which were seen “as relatively cheap and politically uncontroversial means of increasing local consumer demand, since they did not require any significant redistribution of wealth within cities.”⁴ Hosting the Olympics was therefore a safe, relatively uncontentious opportunity for capitalists and local government to expand city infrastructure, expand the region’s recognition, and make a profit amid socioeconomic instability.

Garland was sent to Antwerp, Belgium in August 1920 with his two sons and a representative for the Los Angeles City Council to attend the Olympic Games and begin the city’s bidding process. At home, the City of Los Angeles assessed the feasibility of constructing a seventy-five-thousand-seat stadium in the heart of the city designed by renowned architects Jon and Donald Parkinson.⁵ These plans were the basis of what would eventually be the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. Garland presented the Coliseum blueprints and Los Angeles’s formal invitation to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Antwerp. Though enthusiastically received by the committee, the bid

³ Ibid., 36.

⁴ Sean Dinces, “The 1932 Olympics: Spectacle and Growth in Interwar Los Angeles,” in *Los Angeles Sports: Play Games, and Community in the City of Los Angeles*, ed. David Wiggins and Wayne Wilson (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2018), 135.

⁵ Siegel, 37.

for the 1924 games did not go through. The Coliseum's construction nonetheless continued with finances and construction managed by the Community Development Association. As the new coliseum was underway, Garland was appointed to represent the United States as an elected member of the IOC. These two factors placed Los Angeles on a higher pedestal of consideration for hosting the Olympics in the coming years.

Questions over Los Angeles' ability to host 1924 and 1928 continued to bounce across the IOC, and Garland himself stressed the need to "be given at least one year's advance notice" before the city could host in order to properly prepare for such a large-scale international event.⁶ After serious consideration the IOC, supported by Garland, approved Paris as the host city of the 1924 games. In 1925, Amsterdam had their bid confirmed for the 1928 Olympics leaving a strong chance 1932 would go to Los Angeles. However, the fight to secure the '32 bid was far from over, and Long Beach had a vital role to play in the process.

Early Long Beach Urban Development

The history of Long Beach's growth and eventual participation in the Olympics echoed the history of neighboring Los Angeles. During the late 19th century, an almost continuous stretch of undeveloped coastline at the southern edge of Rancho Los Cerritos inspired people of diverse backgrounds to establish fishing and seaside resort communities along the shore's edge. These coastal developments built the foundations of what would eventually become the City of Long Beach; first incorporated in 1888.

⁶ Ibid., 58-59.

Like the City of Los Angeles, the 1880s was a time of growth for the emerging seaside town. A transcontinental connection made possible by the Southern Pacific Railroad expanded access to the town. Housing developments, churches, stores, social clubs, and a grand wooden hotel along the shore's edge furthered growth.

In 1902, developer Col. Charles Drake purchased and developed oceanfront property from Alamitos Avenue to the mouth of the Los Angeles River with the intent of attracting tourism and residential growth.⁷ The area he transformed, commonly known as the Pike, was reminiscent of other boardwalks that had emerged in coastal cities across the United States during the period. Piers, hotels, and a pavilion already present before Drake's development were quickly incorporated into a dynamic playground boasting amusement rides, a bathhouse, a lighted boardwalk, movie palaces, a dance hall, concessions, piers, a bandstand, and a grand auditorium. The amusement zone predated those of Santa Monica and Venice, and helped make Long Beach the fastest growing city in the United States by 1910.⁸

Like William Garland, developers and politicians of Long Beach wanted continued growth. Development of the Port of Long Beach in 1911 and the discovery of oil in 1921 aided the process of upbuilding, but the naturally existing beaches and estuaries remained the city's most valuable assets for attracting people.

Origins of Long Beach as an Aquatics Sports Center

⁷ Loretta Berner, *A Step Back in Time*, ed. Dick Craven (Long Beach: Historical Society of Long Beach Journal, 1989-1990), 35.

⁸ George and Carmela Cunningham, *Port Town: How the People of Long Beach Built, Defended, and Profited from Their Harbor* (Long Beach: Queen Beach Printers Inc., 2015), 14.

In the decades before 1932, Long Beach hosted several swimming, diving, yachting, and rowing competitions that helped build the city's reputation as a venue for water-based athletics and recreation. Most were at the state and national level and frequently attracted spectators from across the Los Angeles Basin—their travel made easy by the Pacific Electric Railway's extensive public transit network. Many swimming competitions were held in Long Beach's open waters. On one such occasion the Recreation Department and the *Press-Telegram* co-hosted a tryout of mostly local swimmers between the Pine Avenue and Belmont Piers in the summer of 1925 for a proposed future swim across the Catalina Channel. Bud Lyndon, a young 16-year-old Polytechnic High School student, was the winning swimmer of the tryout. The idea to host a channel swim was inspired by the promotional success of swim competitions across the English Channel which the *Press-Telegram* proclaimed occupied "much space in the newspapers" and if a similar event was hosted here, it might attract "world-wide interest."⁹

The co-hosting of this event by the local newspaper and government illustrates the close relationships commercial and municipal entities shared in their effort to promote Long Beach on a global scale. However, the internationally recognized channel swim initiated by Catalina Island owner and chewing gum magnate William Wrigley Jr. would not occur until 1927, and instead went between the Isthmus of Catalina and Point Vicente in Rancho Palos Verdes.¹⁰ The winner of the marathon swimming race was

⁹ "Germ of Catalina Swim Idea Borne in Paper's Office," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, Sunday, January 16, 1927, 1927.2011.001, Section 1, pg. 4, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

¹⁰ Jon Wertheim, "Sea of Dreams: How William Wrigley Jr. brought the Wrigley Ocean Marathon to Life," *Sport Illustrated*, June 23, 2017, accessed April 2, 2025, <https://www.si.com/more-sports/2017/06/23/wrigley-ocean-marathon-swim-catalina-island>.

George Young, a 17-year-old from Toronto, Canada. International swimmers and locals from Long Beach participated in the successful event while hundreds of people gathered on boats and on shore to witness the arduous 20.2-mile battle between athlete and sea.

Origins of Marine Stadium

The San Gabriel River estuary also served as an early aquatic sports venue for Long Beach. It was situated on the city's eastside and included the Alamitos Bay, Naples Island, and a portion of Recreation Park. In March 1907, the Alamitos Bay hosted the "Naples Regatta" where Stanford University and the San Diego Rowing Club competed in Long Beach's first rowing event and the first four-oared race on the Pacific coast.¹¹

The Alamitos Bay inlet lacked large waves or currents, and was of a width and depth suitable for various water sports. The waterways connected to the bay provided swimmers with a place to train. Dredging soon opened the area up to incorporate diving competitions, swim classes, and rowing. These changes came not long after land for the proposed Recreation Park was purchased by the City of Long Beach in 1923.

Recreation Park was created with the intent to be a public park "for almost every popular outdoor game or sport" including boating, swimming, and fishing.¹² During the summer and fall of 1924, an estimated 2,000,000 cubic yards of earth were removed from the San Gabriel River estuary on the park's southern edge in order to facilitate

¹¹ "History," *Long Beach Rowing Association*, February 11, 2015, accessed April 2, 2025. <http://www.longbeachrowing.org/history/>.

¹² "Recreation Park," Pamphlet, Long Beach City Manager Files, Circa 1923, 1998.1922.414, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

water-based recreation. This process created one lake—later called the Colorado Lagoon, and one long channel—later called Marine Stadium.



Drawn map of what eventually becomes Colorado Lagoon and Marine Stadium, Press-Telegram

The wishbone-shaped lake was connected to the channel by a thin slough. The channel sat to the southeast of the lake and carefully paralleled the existing Pacific Electric Railway's Newport Line. It contained one opening into the Alamitos Bay to retain the flow of water between the bodies. The dredged earth was used to build the levees around the lagoons and fill the park's remaining marshes.¹³ With brand-new aquatic amenities at Recreation Park, a large bay surrounding Naples Island, and the expansive

¹³ "Recreation Park Dredging 1924-1925," Folder, Long Beach City Manager Files, 1998.1922.415, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

open waters of the Pacific Ocean, the City of Long Beach felt ready to host a large aquatic sports showcase.

Long Beach Hosts Aquatic Competitions

Well aware of Los Angeles's efforts to host the Olympics, Long Beach jumped on the opportunity to play a part in what would be the largest international event the region had ever hosted. Sport enthusiasts and city promoters first floated the idea of bringing the Xth Olympiad to Long Beach as early as Summer 1924 with development at Recreation Park suggested as venue for aquatic sports.¹⁴ In the summer of 1925, just a few short months after the completion of the lake and channel at Recreation Park, the Long Beach Aquatic Sports Committee again proposed bringing the Olympics to Long Beach. Long Beach was not large enough, nor did it have the infrastructure or resources to hold all Olympic games, but it did have the advantage of a long legacy of hosting water-related sports and recreation, especially compared to its neighboring towns and the mostly land-locked city of Los Angeles. Committee member M.R. Marston, President of the Surf and Bay Club, determinedly stated within the *Press-Telegram*:

The Olympic water sports would bring a quarter of a million persons to Long Beach—people from all over the world. Long Beach would have its name flashed by wireless to every corner of the globe as the winners of the events are announced. Newspapers all over the world would give publicity to this city.

¹⁴ Frank P. Goss, "The Olympic Games and the Olympic Idea," *Long Beach Press Magazine and Fiction Section*, Sunday, July 6, 1924, Historic Newspaper, 2011.1924.008, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives, pg. 3.

Thousands of feet of motion pictures would be taken here and shown all over the United States and in foreign countries.¹⁵

Marston's words echoed William Garland's belief in the promotional power the Olympics could bring to the region. It was believed the Olympics would place "Long Beach"—its name and character—on every paper and silver screen in the world. The Aquatic Sports Committee believed that seven years of celebrating the Pre-Olympic Water Carnival served its own promotional value by focusing attention across the Southland towards Long Beach. Stimulating local attention was a necessary step in placing Long Beach under consideration for Los Angeles's coming Olympics. Long Beach needed to prove its worth to the Community Development Association and Garland himself.

To rouse local and national attention the City of Long Beach, the Chamber of Commerce, Aquatic Sports Committee, and the Recreation Commission, planned a series of competitions and events to be held within the city's waters in the years leading up to 1932.

In 1925, the annual Labor Day Pre-Olympic Water Carnival began. The Aquatic Sports Committee acquired certification by the Amateur Athletic Union (A.A.U.) elevating the event's official status. The A.A.U. had a strong influence in bringing water sports to the city, in large part because of the advocacy of local A.A.U. commissioner, Howard Cleaveland. He also stressed, like many others, the need to bring aquatic competitions to Long Beach before the Olympics in an effort to garner national support for the city's

¹⁵ "Long Beach Seeks Water Sports of 1932 Olympics," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, Sunday, August 9, 1925, 2011.1925.007, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives, pg. 4.

eligibility and participation in 1932.¹⁶ From A.A.U. commissioner Cleaveland's conversations with the Chamber of Commerce in 1927, it appears he was aware of tentative plans regarding the construction of a large swimming stadium in Los Angeles. In response he urged Long Beach to start raising funds, approximately \$5,000, for a large national swim and dive meet to cement the city's bid on the games before it was too late.

The A.A.U. Swimming and Diving Championships were finally hosted at the Colorado Lagoon on July 3-6, 1930, at a total cost of \$25,000.¹⁷ The lagoon was fitted with eight-lanes and a high diving platform installed to Olympic standards that would continue to serve residents for many years after. Former 1928 and future 1932 Olympic medalists participated in the championships including Josephine McKim, Buster Crabbe, Maiola Kalili, and Argentine National swimmer Alberto Zorrilla. The Los Angeles Athletic Club was represented by its own team of swimmers which included McKim and Crabbe.

More than 105,000 people attended the popular event. At the event's conclusion, officials of the national competition proclaimed, "America cannot afford to select any other city but Long Beach for all National Swimming championships for the future as well as the '32 Olympics." The *Press-Telegram* echoed the sentiment and noted the importance of hosting future events like the Olympics in order for Long Beach "to remain the aquatic capital of the world."¹⁸

¹⁶ "Long Beach in Running for Olympics," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, Thursday, September 22, 1927, 2011.1927.008, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives, pg. 12.

¹⁷ Walter Case, *Long Beach Community Book* (Long Beach: Arthur H. Cawston, 1948), 225.

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Marine Stadium Transforms into an Olympic Venue

The path towards becoming an internationally recognized aquatic sports capital was not solely paved by a series of highly publicized competitions. The physical alterations made to the natural landscape at Recreation Park played the largest role in this process and had a substantial impact upon Los Angeles's own bid to host the Xth Olympiad.

By the mid-1920s, the newly dredged Recreation Park lagoon and channel were considered by local officials as possible future Olympic venues for swimming, diving, and rowing competitions. Based on correspondence between the City of Long Beach and Los Angeles' Xth Olympiad Committee—the committee formed in 1927 by the Community Development Association to promote and administer the games—it is apparent William Garland was aware of the city's efforts to host the water-based sports of the Olympics.¹⁹ In 1929, the *Press-Telegram* reported that this committee was “impressed with Long Beach's claim that it is the ideal place for aquatic events.”²⁰ In fact, Garland himself was an advocate for the renovation of the Recreation Park channel into a “marine stadium” for rowing in the Xth Olympiad. Rowing was frequently practiced in Alamitos Bay, but the bay was not up to the as an aquatic venue standards demanded by the International Olympic Committee. The new channel created in Recreation Park had a straight profile, thick width, long length, and a surrounding

¹⁹ Dinces, 132.

²⁰ “Beach, Lagoons Prove Good Argument; Committee Sees Success in Effort to Land Olympic Aquatic Sports,” *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, Thursday, April 11, 1929, 2011.1929.010, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives, pg. 15.

landscape capable of carrying supplementary buildings and a large number of spectators, that made it a viable location for such an event.

Rising international and national speculation over the Recreation Park channel's Olympic qualification posed a risk to securing Long Beach's bid and Los Angeles's own. Los Angeles was due to present a case to host the 1932 games to the IOC in Berlin in May 1930. The Xth Olympiad's detailed reports for submission to the IOC included the plans for the channel among other Olympic facilities.²¹ Garland first quelled most speculation from national and local rowing authorities after many had their own waterways tossed into the hat for consideration, including the cities of Sacramento, Newport Beach, San Diego, and San Francisco. Lake Merced in San Francisco was supported by Henry Penn Burke. Burke was the President of the National Association of Amateur Oarsmen, the national governing body for rowing in the United States at the time. Lake Merced was a good location as it had a large enough width and length, and proximity to a major city, while also retaining natural charm. It's possible that Garland may have previously considered the location and others like it. Based on correspondence, between him and Burke, it is evident that the President of the IOC, Count Henri de Baillet-Latour of Belgium, had warned more than once "that we must strictly conform with the Protocol- Rules and Regulations" in considering the location for the rowing events.²² The rules and regulations referred to by de Baillet-Latour state:

²¹ "City in Line for Olympic Aquatics: Organizing Committee for 1932 Games Reported as Favorable to Plan," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, Sunday, February 9, 1930, 2011.1930.001, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives, pg. 1.

²² William Garland, President of the Organizing Committee of the Games of the Xth Olympiad, to Mr. Henry Penn Burke, President of the National Association of Amateur Oarsmen, Correspondence, Long Beach City Manager Files, March 7, 1930, 1998.1930.114d, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

The events must all take place in the town chosen either at the Stadium or in its surroundings. The only exception which can be made is in the case of nautical sports when geographical condition shall necessitate this. The town chosen cannot share its privilege with another anymore than it can add or allow to be added anything not in accordance with the Olympic ideal.²³

The IOC's rules and regulations required the City of Los Angeles to host within the city limits or in the vicinity thereof. Lake Merced and other proposed sites in California did not meet this requirement. While open ocean and the San Pedro Bay were within the city limits, none of the Los Angeles locations were found to be suitable for rowing competitions likely due to environmental factors such as currents and wake.

Garland put forward a strong case to Burke that the location chosen should be the channel in Long Beach for its beautiful park setting, thirty-minute proximity to the Olympic Stadium in Los Angeles, adjacent stop to the Pacific Electric Railway, and proximity to major boulevards connecting Greater Los Angeles and its environs.²⁴ In one final response to Burke's request in March 1930, Garland explained, "we took immediate steps towards providing a rowing course specially designed to meet all of the Olympic requirements... in cooperation with the City of Long Beach... with the finishing touches to be completed within the next few months."²⁵ Garland and Secretary-Manager Zack Farmer of the Xth Olympiad had worked closely with Long Beach City Manager, George L. Buck from late 1929 to the Spring of 1930 on plans to retrofit the channel to

²³ William Garland to Arthur S. Dudley, Secretary- Manager, Sacramento Chamber of Commerce, Correspondence, Long Beach City Manager Files, March 5, 1930, 1998.1930.114e, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

²⁴ William Garland to Mr. Henry Penn Burke, 1998.1930.114d.

²⁵ Ibid.

“an ideal rowing course.” Successive City Managers in 1931 and 1932, Claude C. Lewis and Edward S. Dobbin, would similarly take on the bulk of collaborative work between Los Angeles’ Xth Olympiad Committee and the City of Long Beach. Under Farmer’s recommendations, Buck coordinated a multi-departmental effort to expand the length of the channel and ensure proper depth at lowest tide.

Early in 1930, representatives of the Xth Olympiad Committee made their way to Long Beach to assess the channel. A sand spit extending out on its northwestern side was the one barrier to using the channel for Olympic rowing and sculling. The committee requested City Manager Buck begin the process of dredging the sand spit to extend the channel to an International Rowing Federation regulation size of “2000 meters long and 225 feet wide, minimum width from side line to side line of floating buoys, with approximately 200 feet of water behind the starting line and approximately 600 feet of water beyond the finish line.”²⁶ Under this directive Long Beach would incur the costs of dredging to a minimum of 5 feet deep at lowest tide, adding a perimeter fence for the stadium, dam and tide gate, and any accompanying construction including the Colorado Street bridge between the lagoon and channel. In return for these expenditures, the Xth Olympiad Committee agreed to pay for the construction of grandstands, docks, starting platforms, buildings with attached dressing rooms, and supply necessary equipment with the promise of letting the City of Long Beach keep it

²⁶ Zack J. Farmer, Secretary Manager, to Mr. Charles H. Hunt, Coordinating Director of Municipal and Schools Recreation for the City of Long Beach, Correspondence, Long Beach City Manager Files, September 30, 1930, 1998.1930.114a, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives. NOTE: IRF metric regulations as follows—2,000 meters in length, 130 meters width, 2.5 meters depth

all after the Olympics for public use.²⁷ Farmer asked the City of Long Beach to approve such a deal in February of 1930 stating that the IOC might be more inclined to approve the location, which rested beyond the city limits of Los Angeles, if Long Beach managed and paid for the dredging project “without it being necessary for the Organizing Committee to accept the direct obligation for this expense.”²⁸ In addition, the following contractual assurances covering the period of the Olympic games in July and August of 1932, were requested of the City of Long Beach:

- 1- That this course, including the lands surrounding it, adjoining roadways, etc., will be fully and completely, available at no charge to the Organizing Committee;
- 2- That there will be no legal or other obstacle to prevent a charge for admission to the public to these premises;
- 3- That the Organizing Committee will have full control of the Olympic events in all of their aspects;
- 4- That the Organizing Committee will have full cooperation of the municipality of Long Beach to make the handling of the public and the staging of the events a success.²⁹

These four points gave the Xth Olympiad Committee full use and control of the channel for the Olympic events in all their entirety while guaranteeing the cooperation of the City of Long Beach. City Manager Buck accepted the contract and agreed to move it

²⁷ Xth Olympiade Committee, *The Games of the Xth Olympiad, Los Angeles 1932: Official Report* (Los Angeles: Xth Olympiade Committee of the Games of Los Angeles, U.S.A., 1932), [Digital Library of India Item 2015.211468](#), 71.

²⁸ Zack Farmer to George Buck, Correspondence, February 5, 1930, Long Beach City Manager Files, 1998.1930.114c, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

²⁹ Ibid.

to council for approval. Before the final agreement, the contract required a few assessments for legality and feasibility.

The land deed to the City of Long Beach in 1923 for the creation of Recreation Park was passed over with strict terms. City Attorney Nowland Reid recommended review of the leases for any potential violations that may arise from hosting the Olympics on property or alterations to the land. In cooperation with Mark Houghton at the City Engineer's office, the titles from the Alamitos Land and San Gabriel Improvement Companies were pulled out and reviewed. It was determined the lands were given exclusively for "park purposes" including "all kinds of aquatic sports, games and athletics" and "are therefore of the opinion that the title of the city in said property would not be jeopardized in any way by the improvements contemplated."³⁰ The land was legally cleared for use in the Xth Olympiad.

An ocean current assessment was also conducted by the Harbor Department in conjunction with the legal assessment. The Harbor Department sought to ensure that the channel carried no significant currents to affect watercraft. General Manager and Chief Engineer of the department, Roy McGlone found the maximum current in the channel to not be sufficient enough to interfere with boat racing.³¹ The City Council approved the creation of the Xth Olympiad's rowing stadium in line with the contractual obligations posed to the city by the committee. The initial approval from the City Council

³⁰ Nowland M. Reid, City Attorney, to Major R. G. McGlone, General Manager Harbor Department, Correspondence, Long Beach City Manager Files, February 13, 1930, 1998.1930.114e, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

³¹ Roy G. McGlone, General Manager and Chief Engineer Harbor Department, to George L. Buck, City Manager, Correspondence, Long Beach City Manager Files, February 18, 1930, 1998.1930.114e, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

came in March of 1930. The Xth Olympiad Committee felt confident in the City's assurances and took the plans to Berlin in May.

On May 23, 1930, Garland presented his reports including the plans for Long Beach's rowing stadium to the IOC. The stakes were high as the world had plunged into the depths of a global economic depression sparked by a stock market crash in October 1929. Historian Sean Dinces, argues "the 1932 Games exemplifies urban elites' turn to spectacles like international sporting events as tools for restoring growth and profitability in the face of economic instability."³² For city shakers in Los Angeles and Long Beach, the prospects of hosting the Olympics presented the cities an opportunity to revitalize a shocked economy and encourage growth by elevating the region's international recognition.

The majority of European delegates at the IOC thought hosting the Olympics thousands of miles away across ocean and continent sounded like a costly venture for all traveling parties, especially in the midst of a great depression. In response to these concerns, Garland and the Xth Olympiad Committee were able to negotiate travel costs with transportation companies to one-fourth of the price for officials and athletes of participating nations. Housing and food rates were also cut thanks to Zack Farmer's Olympic Village model. This temporary housing development built exclusively for the Olympics housed up to three thousand athletes at a cost of \$2 a day per athlete.³³ Los Angeles also boasted modern publicly-funded infrastructure that would be used in the

³² Dinces, 130.

³³ Siegel, 104.

Olympics, all but two Olympic venues were completed by 1930.³⁴ Further savings and investments made by public and private entities made the Olympics in Los Angeles accessible and affordable to participants. The thoughtful plans for navigating economic insecurity paved the way for the IOC's approval. Garland returned triumphantly to Los Angeles—the official host city of the 1932 Olympics.

Having received the knowledge of Los Angeles' successful bid alongside a positive review and formal approval of Recreation Park channel from International Rowing Federation President Rico Fioroni, Long Beach continued work on the preparations. By then the channel was more frequently referred to by Zack Farmer and the local press as "Marine Stadium." On June 24, 1931, Long Beach City Council approved a budget of \$77,000 to pay for the cost of dredging, the erection of the Colorado Street bridge, and related construction, and authorized City Manager Lewis to sign the formal contract with the Xth Olympiad Committee.³⁵

The contract was ceremoniously signed at City Hall on Friday June 26, 1931 in the presence of the committee, Long Beach City Officials, Long Beach Recreation Commissioners, and the press. Dredging of the sandspit and development of the Colorado Street Bridge started the previous year without formal budgetary or formal contractual approval, indicating the signing one year later was another opportunity to publicly promote the city's participation in the coming Olympics. By the time the contract was signed, much of the dredging and work on the bridge had been completed. The

³⁴ International Olympic Committee, "Los Angeles 1932: The City of Angels Makes its Olympic Debut," February 28, 2025, accessed March 28, 2025, <https://www.olympics.com/ioc/news/los-angeles-1932-the-city-of-angels-makes-its-olympic-debut-nov-2022>.

³⁵ "World Publicity for Long Beach Assured by Aquatic Stadium," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, Friday, June 26, 1931, 2011.1931.005, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives, pg. 19

dredged soil was used to fill land for the creation of the Colorado Street Bridge. The bridge was accompanied by tide gates to control any existing currents or wake in the lake when used for swimming and diving competitions.³⁶ Palm trees were planted in long rows on either side of Marine Stadium's length after the Xth Olympiad Committee pressed Recreation Director Charles Hunt to plant them in early 1930.³⁷ An estimated 30,000 palm trees were planted in the Greater Los Angeles Area to promote the region's Mediterranean appeal, resulting in the palm becoming synonymous with the city's character thereafter.³⁸ The signing of the contract in 1931 was, like the palm trees, another opportunity to promote the city and its image.

Apart from rowing at Marine Stadium, no contract was ever put forward or approved for other Olympic venues or events in Long Beach by either the City of Long Beach or the Xth Olympiad Committee. In March 1931, President of the Recreation Commission and Xth Olympiad committee member Clyde Doyle informed City Manager Lewis that the committee had moved forward with the creation of an Olympic Swim Stadium next to the Coliseum in Exposition Park, also known as Olympic Park.³⁹ Though the Recreation Park "lake," later known as the Colorado Lagoon, was proclaimed a premier facility at the A.A.U. championship one year before, and tide gates for controlling water currents were mentioned in the signed contract, it seems the committee was more

³⁶ "City Virtually Assured of Olympics: Long Beach Almost Certain Choice for Rowing and Sculling Contests," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, Thursday, February 6, 1930, 2011.1930.001, pg. 1, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

³⁷ Charles Hunt, Coordinating Director of Municipal and Schools Recreation for Long Beach, to Mr. C.C. Lewis, City Manager of Long Beach, Correspondence, October 17, 1930, Long Beach City Manager Files, 1998.1930.114a, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

³⁸ Mark Dryeson & Matthew Llewellyn, "Los Angeles is the Olympic City: Legacies of the 1932 and 1984 Olympic Games," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 25, no.14 (2008): 1992, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09523360802439007>.

³⁹ Clyde Doyle to Mr. C.C. Lewis, City Manager of Long Beach, Correspondence, Long Beach City Manager Files, March 16, 1931, 1998.1930.114a, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

interested in a centralized swimming location closer to the Olympic hub. The new Olympic Swim Stadium would also host the water polo competitions. There is no evidence indicating local officials, citizens, or media, made specific efforts to bring the sport to Long Beach in 1932. Similarly, yachting was left out of Long Beach's bidding process. Promotional materials for the Olympics and Long Beach of the era define the city as "yachting headquarters for the 1932 Olympic games," but no facilities or contracts were signed indicating the city's involvement in the execution of sport.⁴⁰ News reports covering yachting during the Olympics often referred to the area of competition as the "Long Beach-Los Angeles Harbor." The location as described in the *Xth Olympiad Official Report*, is stated as "directly off the Port of Los Angeles" with spectator viewing offered "from the Point Fermin headlands."⁴¹ Rowing was therefore the only sport officially hosted by the City of Long Beach in cooperation with the Xth Olympiad Committee in 1932.

Marine Stadium's dredging was fully completed in early 1932 allowing for the finishing touches to commence. In March, the City of Long Beach began the bidding process for a vender of portable bleachers. The portable bleachers were to be paid for by the committee, but the process to acquire them was legally handled by the City of Long Beach Recreation Commission. J.W. Miller Fixture Manufacturing Company was awarded the contract in April 1932, but their portable bleacher design was found to be an infringement upon the bleacher patents held by Newcastle Products, Inc. City

⁴⁰ Municipal Convention and Publicity Bureau, *1932 Souvenir of Long Beach California* (Long Beach, CA: Long Beach Chamber of Commerce, 1932), 2012.044.001, 11.

⁴¹ Xth Olympiade Committee, *The Games of the Xth Olympiad, Los Angeles 1932*, 600.

Attorney Nowland Reid and City Manager Edward Dobbin advised Mayor Asa Fickling and City Council to drop the bid.

A second notice inviting bids was sent out on April 22, 1932. Spinner-Deist was awarded the bid at \$5,442.50 with a bid bond of \$650.00 to manufacture bleachers totaling 6,300 seats to be delivered to the Athletic Field of Woodrow Wilson High School by June.⁴² Temporary seating was also brought in exclusively for the games, bringing the stadium's total seating capacity to approximately 17,000 seats.⁴³ The stadium also boasted approximately two miles of standing room along the course to accommodate a total stadium capacity of 100,000 persons.⁴⁴ In April of the same year construction began on the corner of Nieto Avenue and Colorado Street for a large boathouse able to accommodate the storage of 60 rowing shells. By July all construction was completed including a dressing room, judge stand, scoreboard, landing float, and starting bridge at an estimate cost to the committee of \$100,000.⁴⁵

Marine Stadium was officially dedicated on July 23, 1932 to great fanfare and a crowd of 90,000 including William Garland, IOC President Count de Baillet-Latour, Acting President of the International Rowing Federation Admiral Earl Luigi Di Sambuy of Italy, and Long Beach Mayor Fickling. At the ceremony Count de Baillet-Latour spoke to the citizens of the Long Beach in the crowd, "here you have the world's finest course for one of the world's greatest sports...I congratulate you on the perfection of this stadium.

⁴² E.S. Dobbin, City Manager, to Nowland M. Reid, City Attorney, Correspondence, May 6, 1932, Long Beach City Manager Files, 1998.1930.036, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

⁴³ Xth Olympiade Committee, *The Games of the Xth Olympiad, Los Angeles 1932*, 70.

⁴⁴ "Ground Broken at Site for Water Sports," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, Thursday, April 7, 1932, 2011.1932.004, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives, pg. 25.

⁴⁵ "City to Finish Preparations by New Year," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, Friday, July 24, 1931, 2011.1931.004, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives, pg. 17.

Never have I seen its equal.”⁴⁶ The event was accompanied by a boat parade showcasing the flags of participating nations and a pageant dedicated to the mythical sea god, Neptune. Long Beach was officially ready to welcome the world.

1931-1932 City Budget—Olympic Advertising

Long Beach worked to bring tourism and attention to the city since its inception in 1888, and the Olympics provided the city with another means to garner international attention. Members from the city government saw the opportunity that the Olympics presented and found ways to further promote the city. Correspondence between Clyde Doyle and Art Oliger, the Secretary of the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce, showcases some of the ways the city boosted their public image.

A letter from March 13, 1931 from Doyle to Oliger, requested that the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce should promote and “sell” Long Beach as an Olympic participant. Doyle proposed that Long Beach use the United States mail as a promotional medium and create Olympic stamps. The letter discusses that individuals throughout Long Beach such as local businessmen, the city, and private organizations create a “...uniform stamp or designation on the outside of their envelopes (and possibly on their own stationery) advertising the fact that the Games were to be held here... The Post-Office itself will be glad to co-operate in the use of a uniform designation in this connection.”⁴⁷ The creation of a consistent stamp that could be used

⁴⁶ Art Cohn, “Colorful Pageant Marks Dedication of Rowing Course,” *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, Friday, July 24, 1932, 2011.1931.006, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives, pg. 1.

⁴⁷ Clyde Doyle to Mr. Art Oliger, Secretary to Long Beach Chamber of Commerce, Correspondence, Long Beach City Manager Files, March 13, 1931, 1998.1930.114a, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

across the city and mail provided Long Beach with another way to highlight the city's role in the 1932 Olympics.

The Chamber of Commerce was identified as an important city entity that would continue to play a crucial role in marketing Long Beach's participation in the Olympics. Long Beach City Recreation Commission played a large role in the development of the areas and facilities around Marine Stadium and in additional correspondence, Clyde Doyle notes that the logical city entity to work on promoting the Olympics was the Chamber of Commerce. Doyle acknowledges that it is not the primary role of the Recreation Commission to do so, but since the Commission and Chamber of Commerce already worked with the Xth Olympiad Committee and Los Angeles, they should be the city entity that continued to promote and build the international image of Long Beach.⁴⁸ Thus, the Chamber of Commerce continued to be a point of contact for Los Angeles and the Xth Olympiad Committee, a trend that actually continued during the 1984 Olympics. In another letter from the President of the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce, John H. Chamnes, to City Manager C.C. Lewis, the Convention-Publicity Committee recommended to the Board of Directors to approve the requested \$36,260 budget for the 1931-1932 year. The Board of Directors approved the budget of that sum with \$500 allocated to "Olympic Rowing Events Exploitation."⁴⁹ The Chamber of Commerce became the city entity that worked to advertise the 1932 Olympics because

⁴⁸ Clyde Doyle to Mr. Art Oliger, 1998.1930.114a.

⁴⁹ John H. Chamnes, Long Beach Chamber of Commerce President, to Mr. C.C. Lewis, City Manager of Long Beach, Correspondence, Long Beach City Manager Files, June 13, 1931, 1998.1930.063, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

of their previous work with the Xth Olympiad Committee and created a subdivision known as the Young Men's Division, which helped organize community events.

Local Public Prepares for the Olympics

The Long Beach Chamber of Commerce was identified as an important resource for the city to utilize in their preparations for the 1932 Olympics, and had a subgroup known as the Young Men's Division, which raised funds and planned civic events. Some of the events that the group organized were dinners and galas, which would draw in Long Beach residents, press, Olympians, and Olympic officials. One of these dinners hosted by the Young Men's Division occurred on May 19, 1931 at the Pacific Coast Club and featured special entertainment and music. This event also attracted reporters from large newspapers such as the *Times* and *Examiner*, with notable reporters Mark Kelly and Paul Lawry in attendance.⁵⁰ This event served as promotion for the city and for the Olympics.

In addition to galas, larger promotional pieces such as films were created to excite international audiences for the Los Angeles Olympics. The Xth Olympiad Committee produced a film that would be shared with the IOC and later be displayed in the United States to further advertise the investments and preparations for the 1932 games. William Garland invited Long Beach's City Manager, George L. Buck, to attend a special motion picture preview on April 29th, 1930 in the Exposition Building at Exposition Park. The film depicted Los Angeles' preparations for the 1932 Olympics and was created by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios in collaboration with the Xth Olympiad

⁵⁰ Clare McCord to Mr. C.C. Lewis, Long Beach Chamber of Commerce Young Men's Division, Correspondence, Long Beach City Manager Files, May 14, 1931, 1998.1930.063, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

Committee.⁵¹ “The film was made...to graphically portray the splendid conditions and facilities in existence and the extensive preparations that are being made in this city for the presentation of the world Olympic Games here in 1932. You will no doubt be particularly interested in the fine view presented of the Olympic Rowing course at Long Beach. The picture will be shown to the International Olympic Committee and the other sports governing bodies in session in Berlin, comprising the Olympic Congress...the picture will be shown to the public as a feature of the State Building exhibits.”⁵² The film served as a promotional tool for the Olympics and for the cities of Los Angeles and Long Beach. The circulation of the film nationally and internationally showcased the changes made to the Southern California landscape in preparations for the international event. Furthermore, the attention to Long Beach and Marine Stadium provided the city with free publicity and increased international recognition.

The *Press-Telegram* also collaborated with city organizations, such as the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce’s Young Men’s Division, to host Olympic community events, a trend that continued for the 1984 Olympics. One of the events that the *Press-Telegram* organized was the *Press-Telegram* Marathon and dinner. The dinner took place on May 23, 1931 at Hotel LaFayette and was for the committeemen and contestants in the Pre-Olympic Marathon. The event also served as an award ceremony for the officials and contests who participated in the Marathon.⁵³ This pre-Olympic

⁵¹ William Garland, President of Xth Olympiade Committee, to George L. Buck, City Manager of Long Beach, Correspondence, Long Beach City Manager Files, April 22, 1930, 1998.1930.114c, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Geo. L. Craig II, Chairman of Marathon Committee Young Men’s Division, to Committeemen Long Beach Press-Telegram Marathon, Correspondence, May 21, 1931, Long Beach City Manager Files, 1998.1930.147, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

sports event was another means to garner public excitement surrounding the Olympics. As previously mentioned, Long Beach organized several aquatic sporting events to draw in local and international audiences, and this Pre-Olympic Marathon and dinner served a similar purpose. The involvement of the local newspaper in organizing the event also shows the collaboration between city entities and the press to sell Long Beach.

Not only did Long Beach host pre-Olympic events, they also created Olympic souvenirs that would provide aid to unemployed residents. Since the Olympics occurred during the height of the Great Depression, the Xth Olympiad Committee and Long Beach sought ways to sell affordable Olympic memorabilia. Correspondence between the Long Beach City Manager, E.S. Dobbin, and member of the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce, A.A. Miller, allowed for the sale of official Olympic stickers.

The official sticker features the Olympic logo, dates of the 1932 games, and a partial world map. The Long Beach Chamber of Commerce created these Olympic stickers and sold them for 10 cents each. Additionally, the Chamber of Commerce worked with the Long Beach Unemployment Bureau to temporarily provide employment opportunities to unemployed Long Beach residents. Raymond J. Moore was in charge of the sticker program and hired individuals to sell the Olympic stickers. The sticker sellers would receive 5 cents per sticker sold, and on average they would earn between \$1.50, \$2.50, and \$5 a day. The Chamber of Commerce did not profit from the sticker sales; the sales profit went to help the unemployed in Long Beach. A.A. Miller, the Secretary of the Citizen's Unemployment Relief Committee notes that "...it would be a revelation to you to hear the stories they tell us how this sticker sale campaign has

aided and assisted them buy food and other necessities.”⁵⁴ Miller also advocated for the Olympic sticker sales to continue even after the Olympics ended to keep people employed, albeit temporarily, and stated, “We feel, as a result of this campaign, that we are aiding the many unemployed and at the same time giving the public a souvenir they want of the Games.”⁵⁵ The Olympic sticker program was another city resource that benefited Long Beach residents and served as advertisement. The Xth Olympiad Committee and Long Beach sought ways to make the Olympics affordable for the everyday person, and create souvenirs to commemorate the historic event, despite the Great Depression.

The Long Beach community found other ways to get involved and spark Olympic enthusiasm, with individuals across the city participating in the Olympic Beautification project. The community worked with the city to decorate areas in Long Beach that would experience higher foot traffic during the games. One Long Beach resident, Ben C. Hunt, owner of Hunt’s Flower Shop located on 651 Atlantic Ave., requested a permit from Long Beach City Council to display a large Olympic arrangement. Hunt created a boat floral arrangement that represented the Olympics and requested to display the piece in the parking area in front of his store. The permit was accepted by city council and Hunt displayed the floral boat between July 30 to August 13, 1932.”⁵⁶ Flowers and landscaping were a focal point in Long Beach’s Olympic Beautification project, and the city participated in and won a Los Angeles County floral show. The Long Beach

⁵⁴ E.S. Dobbin, City Manager, to A.A. Miller, Secretary Citizen’s Unemployment Relief Committee, Correspondence, July 29, 1932, Long Beach City Manager Files, 1998.1935.742, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ E.S. Dobbin, City Manager, to Ben C. Hunt, Correspondence, Long Beach City Manager Files, July 2, 1932, 1998.1935.742, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

Chamber of Commerce also had a subcommittee known as the Olympic Beautification Committee, which focused on making the city Olympic ready. Long Beach submitted a Zinnia Display and “Long Beach captured sweepstake prizes at the County Olympic Flower Show at the Chamber of Commerce in Los Angeles in competition with twenty other cities.”⁵⁷ The Zinnias were grown on the Olympic flower lot between Fourth Place and Ocean Boulevard under Harry L. Bateson, Supervisor of Olympic Beautification. Long Beach was not only recognized for this award, but also for having the “...best beautification program in the Southwest.”⁵⁸ The award-winning Zinnias were put on display at the Chamber of Commerce and brought further attention to Long Beach as an Olympic site.

The award-winning Zinnia display was part of a larger Olympic Beautification Project in Long Beach. A few days before the Olympics, A. Sherman Hoyt, a world-recognized horticulturist and botanist, visited the city and honored the efforts of Long Beach residents in beautifying the city for the 1932 Olympics. Hoyt was a United States representative for Olympic beautification who brought twenty-five women horticulturists representing different nations, and provided a tour of Long Beach while delivering the ribbon awards. Long Beach designated lots for the Olympic Beautification project and the individuals caring for these gardens received awards for their work. Some of the gardens that received awards were: Olympic vacant lot mixed flowers, Olympic water gardens, Miniature display of cactus, Best group of Olympic vacant lots worked by the county unemployed, Arrangements of Olympic flowers, and Outstanding tree planting of

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ “Long Beach Wins Olympic Flower Exhibit Honors,” *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, Wednesday, July 27, 1932, 2011.1932.007, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives, p. 20.

streets and boulevards for Olympic beautification.⁵⁹ This project helped make Long Beach greener and more beautiful for the residents and Olympic visitors and provided the city additional local/international recognition.

In addition to the Olympic Beautification project, Long Beach community members also decorated the city with Olympic regalia. Long Beach Mayor, A.E. Fickling, called for the decoration of residential and downtown areas with Olympic and national colors. "...in order that our city might receive and retain the full benefit of the coming of this great international event of good will."⁶⁰ Mayor Fickling urged for Long Beach residents to have Olympic and American colors on display by July 30, 1932, in time for Olympic opening day.

Mayor Fickling noted the importance of preparing the city to receive international and local guests, the Olympic would provide Long Beach with the opportunity to showcase the prospering city and promote tourism.⁶¹ "Civic organizations, churches, newspapers, and individuals have all co-operated to put Long Beach in her finest dress for the occasion. Gradually the atmosphere became surcharged with the spirit of the Olympiad. Then delegations of athletes began arriving. There was a whirl of festivities and many rounds of social activities in honor of the visitors from foreign lands..."⁶² The Long Beach community worked together to prepare the city for an international audience. Community members worked for years to promote the city, organizing

⁵⁹ "Beautification Awards Given Local Gardeners," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, Sunday, August 7, 1932, 2011.1932.008, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives, pg. 13.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ "Proclamation Asks Display of Colors of Olympic Games," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, Thursday, July 20, 1932, 2011.1932.007, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives, pg. 11.

⁶² "Aquatic Contests of Tenth Olympiad Draw Vast Crowd," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, Tuesday, August 9, 1932, 2011.1932.008, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives, pg. 11.

activities from amateur athletic competitions, galas, dinners, and marathons to draw in visitors. Long Beach spent years developing infrastructure and programs that would ensure that the city was ready for the Olympics.

The Games: August 9-13, 1932

The 1932 Olympic Games occurred between July 30 and August 14, 1932 with the opening ceremony held at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. While the celebrations and some of the Olympic events were hosted in the center of Los Angeles, other events would take place in other areas such as Long Beach, Pasadena, and Elysian Park. One of the concerns that Olympic officials and the Xth Olympiad Committee had was providing affordable transportation to the Olympic events across the greater Los Angeles area.

The Olympic Committee set up a transportation system that would be cost effective for spectators and free for Olympic athletes and Olympic officials. The system comprised of a bus system with pick-up and drop-off points and with the ability to connect to the regular street-car transportation.⁶³ In order to ensure that the Olympic transportation system would run smoothly, the Xth Olympiad Committee began utilizing buses to move Olympic athletes to and from the Olympic village during their training period. The buses arrived at all thirty of the Olympic training facilities and offered periodic rides. This transportation system provided athletes with a free and convenient way to travel thanks to the work of the Olympic Committee. The transportation system was put to the ultimate test on Opening Day Ceremony, July 30, 1932, with

⁶³ Xth Olympiade Committee, *The Games of the Xth Olympiad, Los Angeles 1932*, 315-317.

approximately two thousand Olympians and officials traveling in sixty-eight buses to the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum.⁶⁴

The athletic training period provided the Olympic Committee with a trial run of the transportation system and was successful in moving athletes to the opening ceremony on time. The Olympic Committee also organized an official, public, and semi-public transportation system. Additionally, there was a special bus service in downtown Los Angeles between Pershing Square and Olympic Park which would transport individuals from the IOC, National Olympic Committees and Sports Federations, Juries, Attaches, and press representatives.

The Xth Olympiad Committee also arranged for the buses to work with the railroads to make Olympic venues such as Marine Stadium more accessible for Olympic officials and members of the press.⁶⁵ Pacific Electric Station had a special schedule during the duration of the Olympics and provided Long Beach and Los Angeles locals with another means to get to and from the games. Long Beach also utilized their own public transportation to accommodate Olympics programming. On opening day, around one thousand individuals from Long Beach attended the opening ceremony festivities on the Pacific Electric Railroad, with special trains that left Long Beach at 1:05 PM during the Olympics.⁶⁶

With concerns over attendance because of the Great Depression, the Olympic Committee prioritized on making transportation and tickets to the 1932 Olympics

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 318.

⁶⁶ "Thousand at Games Opening from This City," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, Saturday, July 30, 1932, 2011.1932.007, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives, pg. 10.

affordable for spectators and Olympians. The Olympic Committee provided different ticket options for viewers and officials that would ensure people from various socioeconomic backgrounds could attend the games. There were five distinct ticket types for the Olympic games and were: Official Passes, Press Passes, Olympic Stadium Passes, Season Ticket Coupon Books for specific sports, Single Admission with reserved seats, and General Admission Tickets.⁶⁷

In addition to the different ticket types, there were also adult and children's tickets with corresponding prices. The children's tickets for the Olympic games were available to children under the age of sixteen and cost twenty-five cents, and adult tickets ranged between fifty cents and three dollars, depending on the time and day of the event. Season tickets for specific Olympic events were popular even though they were more expensive.

Season tickets for Rowing at Marine Stadium were fourteen dollars for adult passes and seven dollars for children season tickets. The total ticket purchases for Rowing at Marine Stadium there were 2,745 season tickets, 87,918 day tickets issued, and a total of 94,863 admissions. There were 70,146 adult single-day tickets sold and 11,199 child single-day tickets sold for Rowing, for a grand total of 76,719 adult single day tickets issued and 11,199 child single day tickets issued. The Xth Olympiad Committee's official report notes that the total ticket admissions include gifted tickets for athletes and are not reflective of total admissions to the Olympic events.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Xth Olympiade Committee, *The Games of the Xth Olympiad, Los Angeles 1932*, 129-147.

⁶⁸ Xth Olympiade Committee, *The Games of the Xth Olympiad, Los Angeles 1932*, 99-100, 110.

The Olympic Committee was able to successfully provide affordable tickets and efficient transportation, drawing large crowds across Olympic venues. Long Beach benefitted from the connections between the bus system and railroads, and admissions for Rowing at Marine Stadium highlight that the interest in attendance. The Rowing Competition occurred August 9-13, 1932, and provided Long Beach with the opportunity to showcase Marine Stadium and the city's claim as an aquatic sports capital.

Visitors arrived at the stadium as early as mid-July to inaugurate the Olympic venue and, based on accounts within the *Press-Telegram*, international tourists were impressed with Long Beach's Marine Stadium. One such account notes that "Long Beach has the best rowing course in the world. This is the verdict of Baron de Baillet-Latour, world-famous sportsman and President of the International Olympic Organization."⁶⁹ Medical care provided by city The United States Navy and the Coast Guard helped provide medical assistance and supervision for the Rowing and Yachting events. Los Angeles Fire Department provided some of the medical equipment on the ships. The Health Officer from the City of Long Beach in charge of the medical services at Marine Stadium.⁷⁰

The Rowing Competition consisted of seven different events: Single Sculls, Double Sculls, Two with Cox-Swain, Two without Cox-Swain, Four with Cox-Swain, Four without Cox-Swain, and Eights. Marine Stadium was designed to fit four teams and the events took place in the afternoon. The participating countries in the Rowing competitions were: Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Holland,

⁶⁹ K.P. Frederick, "Rowing Course Here Called the World's Best by Olympic Officials," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Thursday, August 11, 1932, 2011.1932.008, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives, pg. 13.

⁷⁰ Xth Olympiade Committee, *The Games of the Xth Olympiad, Los Angeles 1932*, 198.

Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Poland, United States, and Uruguay. While the list of total participating countries is expansive, not all of the countries participated in every single event within the larger Rowing competition. Early on, the United States was predicted to do well, and the United States Rowing team won gold in Double Sculls and Two Oar with Coxswain.⁷¹ The various Rowing events drew in large crowds, but the highlight of the competition would be Eights.

The competition was between the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and Italy. The Italian crew started off strong and initially took the lead, but the United States team caught up and nearly won the gold medal. The competition was so close that there are contradicting accounts over who won, with some sources attributing the win to Italy while others the United States. *The Games of the Xth Olympiad Official Report* noted that the United States team "...won by the margin of a few feet."⁷² The *Press-Telegram* also shared an electrifying recap of the competition and described how the United States team was able to win. "A desperate lunge, born in desperation when America's defeat seemed inevitable, sent the Golden Bears hurtling across the finish line one-fifth of a second or slightly less than two feet ahead of a valiant Italian eight from the blue Mediterranean."⁷³ The United States team successfully defeated the Italian team, who had been projected to take home the gold medal. In total, the United States Men's Rowing team won three gold medals and one silver medal.

⁷¹ Ibid., 687-688.

⁷² Ibid., 688.

⁷³ Art Cohn, "America Wins Eight-Oared Classic," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Sunday, August 14, 1932, 2011.1932.008, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives, pg. 1.

Since the 1920s, Long Beach worked towards becoming an aquatic sports capital and invested in bringing sports to the city. Long Beach has a long history and legacy of sports and athleticism, with several locals participating in the 1932 Olympics. Through archival research and community outreach, the Historical Society of Long Beach obtained a limited-edition Long Beach 908 Olympian Issue. The issue contains an extensive list of past Long Beach Olympians and interviews with a select few.⁷⁴ The complete interviews with the Olympians are available on the 908 website. For the sake of brevity, this report will not feature athlete profiles, but rather will list the Long Beach athletes that participated and/or placed during the 1932 Games. For more information regarding individual athletes please see the attached issue or visit www.lb908.com. With the permission of John Grossi, the following Long Beach athletes participated in the 1932 Olympics:

- Charles Harold McCallister, Water Polo, Bronze Medal
- Dick Barber, Long Jump and Relay
- F. Calvert Strong, Water Polo, Bronze Medal ⁷⁵

Legacy of the Xth Olympiad and Marine Stadium

Long Beach's own 1932 Olympic story parallels much of Los Angeles—Long Beach wanted to improve its growth through international recognition and saw the Olympics as the perfect event to showcase the city. The local and international bid to host the

⁷⁴ The issue features an extensive list of Long Beach athletes and Olympians. The 908 specifies that the Olympians listed either lived in or trained in Long Beach. The issue by no means claims that the individuals listed are the only athletes, but rather, the list is a beginning point and can be expanded upon.

⁷⁵ “Olympian Issue: 25 Long Beach Olympians Remember Their Journeys,” Long Beach 908, 13, accessed May 21, 2025, [bc8a21_4f543c06f964459abbc58ce033ad4b03.pdf](https://www.lb908.com/olympian-issue/25-long-beach-olympians-remember-their-journeys).; “Los Angeles 1932 Athletes,” Olympic Games Los Angeles 1932, accessed June 9, 2025, <https://www.olympics.com/en/olympic-games/los-angeles-1932/athletes>.

Olympics depended upon robust structural change to accommodate the games. William May Garland and other local city boosters advocated for the Olympics to come to the United States, and were involved in both Los Angeles' and Long Beach's transformations throughout the mid-1920s into the early 1930s. Both Los Angeles and Long Beach had to show the International Olympic Committee (IOC) that they had the capabilities to host such a large-scale event. Because of this, there is a significant importance of civic investments and building out infrastructure not only for the city, but also for the Olympics. The focus on developing the city and using the Olympics as a means to bolster international and national attention is a trend that continued in the 1984 Olympics.

Both Los Angeles and Long Beach constructed large facilities that would become major Olympic venues/sites and become part of Southern California's Olympic legacy. Long Beach invested a large sum of money to construct Marine Stadium and the agreement between Long Beach and the Xth Olympiad Committee was mutually beneficial. "In return for expenditures by the City of Long Beach in fulfilling its part of the contract, the Committee agrees to make all construction substantial and to give it all to the city at the conclusion of the Games. As a result, Long Beach now has a permanent Rowing Stadium."⁷⁶ Marine Stadium was a large investment, but the exposure that the venue provided the city outweighed the initial cost.

The 1932 Olympics were the first games in Olympic history which turned a profit. It is estimated that the 1932 Olympics made a \$1,200,000 profit, and \$100,000 should

⁷⁶ Xth Olympiade Committee, *The Games of the Xth Olympiad, Los Angeles 1932*, 71.

have been divided between Los Angeles County and the city of Los Angeles. Despite the large role that Long Beach played in securing the 1932 Olympics, the city was not offered repayment for Marine Stadium. Between 1935 to 1936, the City of Long Beach requested to be refunded \$12,000, which was the cost of putting up fencing around Marine Stadium by Los Angeles County. The Los Angeles Chief Deputy Counsel J.H. O'Connor notified Long Beach City Council and the Recreation Commission that the city would not receive any of the \$100,000 given to Los Angeles County and to further discuss the issue with the Olympic Committee.⁷⁷ Clyde Doyle, President of Long Beach's Recreation Commission, stated that Long Beach spent \$30,000 and had not been repaid. City officials argued that a large portion of Los Angeles County residents utilize the facilities in Long Beach, and so, Long Beach was entitled to some of the Olympics moneys.⁷⁸ A legal battle ensued over Long Beach receiving money from the Olympics surplus to repay some of the investments made to host the games. The State Supreme Court found that Long Beach could be entitled to some of the money because a large part of the city's facilities are used by Los Angeles county.⁷⁹

The city sent a follow-up letter to the Los Angeles County Supervisors asking them to allot the \$50,000.00 previously requested to the Long Beach Recreation Commission. In total, the Long Beach City Council and Recreation Commission paid:

Dredging \$24,478.43

(1) Steel fence around entire area \$11,803.68

⁷⁷ "Olympics Fund Part Denied to City," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, Monday, March 5, 1934, 2011.1934.003, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives, pg. 13.

⁷⁸ "Advanced sum of \$50,000 in Legal Tangle," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, Wednesday, June 12, 1935, 2011.1935.005, Historical Society of Long Beach, pg. 15.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

(2) Dam across the west end of course \$19,583.20

(3) Tide gate and other construction \$2,990.72

TOTAL \$58,856.03

*Item (2) was paid from the Recreation Commission budget. Other amounts were paid from the Oil fund of the city—not the General Fund.”⁸⁰ The city argued that since the money was used for recreational facilities, it was necessary for Long Beach to be paid back and use the money to improve the facilities. Consequently, Long Beach City Council passed a resolution April 9, 1935, which requested that \$50,000 be paid to the city.⁸¹ Although Long Beach city officials made numerous attempts to be paid back, it is unclear if the city secured the money from Los Angeles County.

The construction of Marine Stadium and Long Beach’s participation in the 1932 Olympics built lasting infrastructure that promoted Long Beach’s claim to the aquatic capital of the United States. The construction of Marine Stadium played a crucial role in bringing the 1932 Olympics to Los Angeles. The desire to bring the 1932 Games to Los Angeles provided additional incentive for a developing Southern California to invest and expand its infrastructure. Local city officials knew that the stadium would not only provide Long Beach with the capabilities of hosting the Olympic event, but would become a permanent asset for the city, with the potential to host future events. In a 1930 letter addressed to Long Beach City Manager, George Buck, it is stated that “...I

⁸⁰ Walter Scott, Coordinating Director of Municipal and School Recreation, to R.M. Dorton, City Manager, Correspondence, Long Beach City Manager Files, April 22, 1936, 1998.1935.296, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

⁸¹ Ibid.

am certain can result [sic] in the City of Long Beach having one of the finest rowing courses in the world, if not the best, resulting in your city becoming the center of rowing, sculling, and aquatic sports in this state and country.”⁸² International and local visitors were impressed with the investments in both Long Beach and Los Angeles and the construction of different arenas solidified the two cities as world sports capitals.

Immediately following the Olympics, there was interest in hosting other water sport competitions in Long Beach. In 1932, the Executive Committee of the National Association of Amateur Oarsmen unanimously voted to host the 1934 regatta at Marine Stadium. The 1933 national regatta was scheduled for Chicago and part of the World’s Fair attraction, but the unanimous vote to bring the national regatta to Long Beach marked a change in the tradition of the event. Previously, the regatta was always held on the east coast. The 1934 regatta marked the first time that the event was held on the Pacific Coast. Long Beach’s involvement in the 1932 Olympics effectively solidified the city’s place as the aquatic capital of the United States. Marine Stadium continued and continues to be used long after games for various local, national, and international competitions.⁸³ The 1932 Olympics marked an important change in Olympic history, with the games expanding to other parts of the world, not just Europe. The infrastructure and investments across Southern California provided the region with facilities to be used by the community, but also were crucial for Los Angeles to secure the 1984 Olympics.

⁸² Zack Farmer to George Buck, 1998.1930.114c.

⁸³ “Stadium Site of National Regatta,” *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Tuesday, November 1, 1932, 2011.1932.011, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives, pg. 10.

1984 OLYMPIC GAMES RETURN TO LONG BEACH



Olympic mascot Sam the Eagle yachting across the Long Beach harbor, with the marina and shoreline in the background

By Victoria Roa

Los Angeles' Olympic Bids, 1939-1978

The 1932 Los Angeles Olympic Games successfully placed Los Angeles on the map as a premier destination and were the first Olympics which turned a profit. The newfound attention to Los Angeles, and Southern California as a whole, led city boosters and local elites to continuously advocate for the return of the Olympics. Beginning in the late 1930s, local community and government leaders created organizations focused on organizing efforts to bring the games back to the west coast. In 1939, locals created the Southern California Committee for the Olympic Games (SCCOG), whose primary goal was to secure a second Los Angeles Olympics. The SCCOG also sponsored different amateur athletic events throughout the Los Angeles

area, fundraising for the United States Olympic Fund, and most importantly, maintained communication with the International Olympic Committee (IOC).⁸⁴ The creation of the SCCOG and the increase in sporting events in Los Angeles and neighboring cities, such as Long Beach, kept the idea of the Olympics alive in Southern California and the United States. Shortly after the creation of the SCCOG, committee members began their work to organize a Los Angeles Olympic bid for the 1940 games. The IOC ultimately cancelled the 1940 games because of the escalating World War. The global war may have delayed the Olympics, but it did not deter Los Angeles businessmen, government officials, and civic leaders from organizing a future bid. The SCCOG shifted their focus on the 1948 games, but ultimately lost the bid to London.

Throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the SCCOG continued to lobby the IOC for a chance at hosting another Olympiad. While Los Angeles and the SCCOG held on to the Olympic fervor, the success of the games led other major United States cities to show interest and bid for the chance to host the event. The increasing competition amongst United States cities came to a head in the bidding for the 1956 Olympiad. Since multiple U.S. cities were interested in hosting the event, the USOC created a new rule which vetted potential host cities. This change streamlined Olympic bids within the country and would narrow down which cities had the capabilities and infrastructure to host an international event. After the USOC selected one city, representatives from the city could then present their Olympic bid to the IOC. Following this change, Los Angeles lost traction as the preferred city to host the games, with Detroit being selected four

⁸⁴ Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, *Official Report of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad Los Angeles, 1984 Volume 1 Organization and Planning* (Los Angeles, Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, 1985), 2002.24.02a, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives, 6.

times as the bidding U.S. city. Despite this, Los Angeles and the SCCOG continued to fight for the chance to host the Olympics once more and unsuccessfully bid on the 1948, 1952, 1956, 1976, and 1980 games.⁸⁵ The 1976 bid was the closest that Los Angeles got to hosting the Olympics prior to the winning bid for the 1984 games.

Although the Los Angeles Olympic movement was unsuccessful for much of the mid twentieth century, two Los Angeles mayors were instrumental in bringing the games back to Los Angeles: Mayor Sam Yorty and Mayor Tom Bradley. Beginning in 1967, Mayor Yorty created a new Olympic organization known as the Los Angeles 1976 Olympic Committee (LA76), whose sole purpose was to campaign for the 1976 games. Mayor Yorty selected John Kilroy, a yachtsmen and businessman, as chair of the LA76 Committee. As a businessman, Kilroy proposed the possibility of the Olympics being financed privately rather than through public or government funds. This marked a significant turn from previous Olympics, since previously the government was the largest funder of the event. Another major development in the 1976 bid, was the proposition of selling television rights as a means to pay for the Olympics. The LA76 worked on a detailed plan which would support their vision of using private money to finance the games. For the first time in years, Los Angeles won the USOC nomination and in 1969 Kilroy and additional representatives from the LA76 Committee presented their Olympic bid to the IOC in Yugoslavia. The 1969 bid was unsuccessful, with the IOC selecting Montreal as the host for the 1976 Olympics, but this bid fundamentally

⁸⁵ Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, *Official Report of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad Los Angeles, 1984 Volume 1 Organization and Planning*, 2002.24.02a, 6-7.; Stephen R. Wenn and Robert K. Barney, "Los Angeles, 1984," in *The Gold in the Rings: The People and Events That Transformed the Olympic Games* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2020), 99.

changed the idea that the government should be the sole funder for the Olympics.⁸⁶

Scholars such as Umberto Tulli argue that the 1984 Olympics marked the beginning of a new era for the Games. The commercialization and privatization of the event allowed for the Olympics to be the incredibly profitable and international spectacle that we know today.⁸⁷ While Mayor Yorty, John Kilroy, and the LA76 introduced the idea of private funding, it was the SCCOG, Mayor Tom Bradley, the Los Angeles City Council, and eventually the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee who secured the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic bid.

Negotiating Funding: Who is Paying for the Olympics?

Despite the LA76 taking the lead on the 1976 bid, the SCCOG was still heavily involved in Olympic organizing and in 1972, John Argue became president of the organization. Argue continued the legacy of pursuing the games and found an ally in Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley. In 1977, the USOC sent out a call for U.S. cities interested in hosting the games and Mayor Bradley was the only mayor of a major U.S. city to express interest. In 1974, Mayor Bradley and Argue went to Vienna to propose a bid for the 1980 games, but they are awarded to Moscow. Despite losing the bid again, Mayor Bradley and the SCCOG remained steadfast in their journey to securing the Olympics.⁸⁸ Throughout the late 1960s into the 1970s, there was an international decline in cities interested in hosting the Olympiad. The increasingly politicized nature of

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Umberto Tulli, ““They used Americana, all painted and polished, to make the enormous impression they did”: selling the Reagan revolution through the 1984 Games,” in *Sport and Diplomacy: Games within Games*, ed. J. Simon Rofe (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 223.

⁸⁸ Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, *Official Report of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad Los Angeles, 1984 Volume 1 Organization and Planning*, 2002.24.02a, 7-9.

the games, threat of terrorist attacks, and the exorbitant costs led to a decline in international interest. Los Angeles' continuous interest and previous bids for the Olympics put the city in a preferable position to be selected as host city in 1984.⁸⁹

Scholars such as Mark L. Brace note growing international concerns over the cost of hosting the Olympics, which became a focal point of the 1976 Montreal games. Before securing the games, Montreal's Mayor Jean Drapeau had agreed that their Olympic committee would not build new venues and instead use existing facilities to keep costs to a minimum. However, once Montreal was confirmed as the host city, Mayor Drapeau focused on building grand venues for the events, leaving the city \$1 billion in debt. The citizens of Montreal took on the brunt of this debt through taxes, something that Los Angeles wanted to avoid in their upcoming bid. In October 1975, The Los Angeles City Council requested that the city administrative officer amend the previous cost revenue study done for the 1976 Olympic bid and update it for the 1984 bid. The cost revenue study would determine the economic feasibility of hosting the games and provide estimates of the total expenses and debt that would be accrued. Los Angeles residents had shown interest in hosting the games in previous years, but expressed that they did not want an increase in state and city taxes to pay for the event. Because of this, the SCCOG and Los Angeles officials prioritized the use of existing infrastructure and venues to keep costs at a minimum.⁹⁰ The Los Angeles Organizing Committee Official Report notes that:

⁸⁹ Mark L. Brace, "Revisiting Los Angeles: A Financial Look at the XXIIIrd Olympiad," *Southern California Quarterly* 83, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 161-162, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41172069>.

⁹⁰ Brace, 161-167.

“The basic Los Angeles Olympic proposal had...come to include the idea that the Olympic Games should not cost the taxpayers any money. Voters wanted absolute, binding legal safeguards which would ensure that they and their children would not be taxed to hold the Games. In 1970, such an idea may have been too revolutionary, but by 1978, following the fiscal problems of Montreal, the idea could no longer be easily dismissed.”⁹¹

Supporters of the games thus focused on minimizing costs and knew that in order to do so, they would need the support of the local government and residents. In April 1977, John Argue reached out to Mayor Bradley for support in the SCCOG’s upcoming bid for the 1984 Olympics. It was crucial that the mayor and city council supported the Olympic bid because “The IOC Charter required that a contract to host the Games be signed with a city government, so Council support was crucial to the bid process.”⁹² Since Mayor Bradley also wanted to host the games, he urged the Los Angeles City Council to support the SCCOG’s Olympic bid, despite the City Administrative Officer later finding that the Olympics would amass a large debt. Argue’s and Mayor Bradley’s efforts proved successful, and on May 12, 1977, the city council unanimously voted to move forward with Olympic bid. On May 18, 1977, Mayor Bradley sent the official request to USOC, however the new rules required that the prospective host city provide proof that the city’s residents wanted the games. A questionnaire was conducted and found that out of the Los Angeles residents polled, 70% of participants were in favor of hosting the games while only 35% were in favor of the games if public money was used. With the

⁹¹ Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, *Official Report of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad Los Angeles, 1984 Volume 1 Organization and Planning*, 2002.24.02a, 7.

⁹² Ibid.

public largely favoring hosting the Olympics, the USOC awarded Los Angeles the U.S. city to place a bid to the IOC in September 1977.⁹³ Olympic historians such as Craig Lawson highlight that the 1984 games were successful because of the collaboration between the government and the private organization the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, despite much of 1984 Olympic scholarship arguing that the private funding of the games allowed them to be successful. Examining the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee's official report corroborates that federal, state, and local governments needed to work together in order to fund the games in some capacity.⁹⁴ For example, the "IOC...voted at its 1977 session meeting...to require that future city and federal governments both contractually commit themselves to assume all financial liability arising out of their organization of an Olympic Games so that the IOC would not be responsible for any potential cost overruns."⁹⁵ Because of the massive debt from the 1976 Montreal Games, the IOC wanted to avoid future financial disasters, and so, the United States Federal and State governments were involved in the funding of the games, albeit from behind the scenes.

Los Angeles may have had competition from other U.S. cities to host the Olympics, but international interest was at an all-time low. When Los Angeles placed their official bid in 1977, the only other city that had a bid for the 1984 games was Tehran. However, in that same year, Tehran retracted their bid, and so, Los Angeles was the only city interested in hosting the Olympics. With the work of local leaders and the

⁹³ Ibid., 7-9.

⁹⁴ Craig Lawson, "Intergovernmental Challenges of the 1984 Olympic Games," *Publius* 15, No. 3 (Summer 1985): 127, 139, <https://www.jstor.org/3329982>; Ibid.

⁹⁵ Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, *Official Report of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad Los Angeles, 1984 Volume 1 Organization and Planning*, 2002.24.02a, 9.

SCCOG, it appeared that the games finally would return to Los Angeles. Negotiations would continue for another year before Los Angeles officially became the host city.⁹⁶

Creation of the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (LAOOC) and Closing the Deal

Despite being the only city interested in hosting the games, it would take an additional year for Los Angeles to officially become the host city for 1984. Increasing tensions between the IOC and the city brewed over the cost of hosting this “spartan” event. The IOC made it clear to Los Angeles leadership that the city would be financially responsible for the Olympics. Los Angeles City Council had to move fast if they wanted to secure a deal with the IOC. In April 1978, the council pushed forward a ballot measure which would limit the costs of Olympics and would require private funding to be used for the games. The measure passed in November 1978, and it became apparent that the state and federal governments were not interested in financing the Olympic endeavor. Mayor Bradley focused on convincing the IOC of a privately funded Olympics. The two parties agreed to the creation of a private organizing committee, which would later become the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee. By May 1978, the IOC and Los Angeles were closer to reaching an agreement, thus, the 1984 Olympics were tentatively awarded to the city. The tentative agreement came with a condition, the IOC and Los Angeles would need to sign the final agreement by July 31, 1978, otherwise the Olympics would be hosted elsewhere.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Ibid., 10-11.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 9-12.

With Mayor Bradley and the IOC unable to come to an agreement, there was growing concern that the bid would not be secured in time, and so, local leaders pushed to create a private negotiating committee. The new committee, the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (LAOOC), consisted of seven men: John Argue, Rodney Rood, David Wolper, Howard Allen, Justin Dart, William Robertson, and Paul Ziffren, all of whom worked on the Los Angeles 1984 Olympic bid. The LAOOC, a private organization, would show the IOC that the Los Angeles Olympics could be entirely privately funded.

The LAOOC met with the USOC in June 1978 and developed a revised Olympic bid which named the LAOOC as the responsible party for funding the games. The USOC also agreed to help cover costs for hosting the Olympics in the case that the LAOOC required financial aid. The LAOOC and the USOC presented their updated bid to the IOC, and after further deliberation, the IOC decided to move forward with Los Angeles. As previously mentioned, the IOC amended the Olympics Charter and required that the international body and local government sign an Olympics contract. Following the acceptance of the updated bid, the IOC and city council met to negotiate a contract. The Los Angeles City Council and IOC came to an agreement, and the official Olympic contract was signed on October 20, 1978 by Mayor Bradley and IOC President Lord Killanin in Washington DC.⁹⁸ After nearly forty years of organizing, the Olympics would return to Los Angeles.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 10-12.

Preparing for the Olympics: Bringing the Games to Long Beach

Once Los Angeles was awarded the 1984 Olympiad, preparations for the games began almost immediately. One of the biggest concerns over hosting the games was the cost and possible effects on taxpayers. As previously discussed, a crucial component of the bid for the 1984 games was keeping the cost to a minimum. In accordance, the LAOOC focused on utilizing existing venues and infrastructure. The organization used the “Approach to Management” which were guidelines that the LAOOC created to help manage and organize the games, and was informed by discussions with previous Olympic committees. A crucial tenet from these guidelines was that no new buildings or venues would be constructed for the 1984 games, unless it was necessary. Instead, the LAOOC, Los Angeles, and other local cities, such as Long Beach, worked together to use existing spaces and refurbish venues to meet the Olympic requirements. Even though there was push to use what was already in place, there were some instances in which new facilities and venues would need to be built, in which case the new facility would be gifted to the community for use after the games ended.⁹⁹ In Long Beach, much of the future Olympic sites were constructed during the late 1960s into the 1970s as part of the Long Beach Redevelopment Agency’s project areas. Long Beach had an array of potential sites for the LAOOC to choose from when it came time for selecting venues for the 1984 Olympics.

⁹⁹ Brace, 164-166.

Structural Changes to the City Landscapes: The Importance of Redevelopment in Creating Olympic Venues

The Long Beach Redevelopment Agency (RDA) was created in 1964 and aimed to "...eliminate blight from an area, and to revitalize an area plagued by social, economic, and physical conditions which act as a barrier to new investment."¹⁰⁰

Long Beach had seven distinct project areas that the RDA redeveloped throughout the 1960s into the 2000s. One of these project areas was the Long Beach Downtown area and waterfront, which would see changes from the 1960s into the 1990s. Long Beach faced economic decline during the 1960s with changes in the local economy, increased suburbanization, and loss of federal funding. City leadership aimed to revitalize Long Beach and bolster the economy through sports, cultural events, tourism, and bringing businesses to the downtown area.

The RDA played a pivotal role in not only reshaping the Long Beach downtown area into the metropolitan business corridor that it is today, but also in building the facilities used for the 1984 Olympics. One of the major projects constructed in the downtown area was the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center. Construction of the Arena began in 1962, and by 1978 the entire Entertainment Center was completed. The Entertainment Center consisted of three different parts, a Sports Arena, the Terrace Theater, and Exhibition Hall; all of which would later be used for the Olympics. The Arena was the first facility built in the larger complex and hosted different

¹⁰⁰ Long Beach Redevelopment Agency, "What is Redevelopment?," Transparency Slide, Long Beach Redevelopment Agency Collection, Box 15D, 1990-1995, 2017.029.456, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

sporting events and competitions prior to the Olympics. The Exhibition Hall and Terrace Theater were built in 1977 and the entirety of the Entertainment Center was finished in 1978. In total, the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center cost approximately \$51.5 million and featured a 100,000 square foot Exhibition Hall and Terrace Theater which had 3,141 seats and 862 seats in the Center Theater.¹⁰¹ The decade long project provided Long Beach a "...nucleus for cultural and entertainment events..." and the city hosted concerts, sports, and theater performances in the Entertainment Center.¹⁰²

The construction of this massive project was possible because of the leadership of individuals such as Phil Brubaker. Brubaker was the City Tidelands Agency Director and under his leadership the agency utilized Long Beach's oil revenues to transform the downtown waterfront area into a tourist and entertainment center. The City Tidelands Agency was created in 1977 and oversaw the city's various waterfront projects and oil production. Through his efforts, Brubaker revitalized the declining downtown area and was responsible for the Convention Center, Long Beach Marina, and the overall development of the shoreline. These projects were partially financed by tideland oil revenues and were instrumental to Long Beach hosting four Olympic events.¹⁰³ It is unclear if the city built the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment with the future intent of hosting Olympic events, however, the construction of this complex provided

¹⁰¹ Long Beach Redevelopment Agency, *Development Summary Downtown Redevelopment Project* (Long Beach, Long Beach Redevelopment Agency Community Development Department, August 1981) Report, Ephemera Collection, Redevelopment 1964-1984 Box, xx.172.010, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

¹⁰² Long Beach Chamber of Commerce, *1981 Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce Membership Directory and Buyer's Guide* (Long Beach, Long Beach Chamber of Commerce, 1981) Directory, Periodicals and Guides Collection, 2016.035.027, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives, 24.

¹⁰³ Andrew Ross, "Tidelands Chief Accepts Olympic Post," *Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, August 12, 1982, 2013.1982.020, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

Long Beach with the capability to host large scale entertainment and sporting events and boost the local economy. The Entertainment Center was part of the larger redevelopment of the Long Beach downtown waterfront, with the city expanding the project into the marina, the future Olympic harbor.

The Downtown Shoreline Marina was another RDA project which began in June 1980 and was completed in May 1982. The Downtown Marina and Aquatic Park extended the shoreline from the Convention Center area and also featured a recreational park. The construction of the marina was possible through a \$34,500,000 bond revenue.¹⁰⁴ Work on the Downtown Shoreline Marina began a few months after the city and the LAOOC signed a contract to use the area for Olympic yachting events. Based on the sources, it is unclear if the city already planned on building the marina, or if it was built with the specific intention of bringing the Olympics back to Long Beach. While this is unclear, it is evident that the construction of both the marina and the Convention Center revitalized the declining downtown area and later became the center of the Olympics in Long Beach.

Press Releases Announce Long Beach Agreements

The LAOOC began their work in securing Olympic venues between 1979 to 1981, with the goal to have all venues contracted by March 1, 1981. Much of 1984 Olympics scholarship highlights the extensive attempts by Los Angeles to bring back the games. Long Beach also advocated for the 1984 Olympics and worked with Los Angeles to secure the Olympic bid. As previously discussed, Mayor Bradley was a

¹⁰⁴ Long Beach Redevelopment Agency, *Development Summary Downtown Redevelopment Project*, xx.172.010.

fervent Olympic supporter and reached out to Long Beach for further support. Based on city documents, there was correspondence between Mayor Bradley and the Long Beach city government. In one City Council meeting, agenda item 53 states, “Mayor Tom Bradley, City of Los Angeles, attaching copy of resolution adopted by Co. Board of Supervisors, endorsing their bid for the 1984 Olympic Games; requesting adoption of similar resolution by Long Beach.”¹⁰⁵

It is evident that there were conversations between Los Angeles and Long Beach city governments regarding hosting the 1984 Olympics, and the capabilities of Long Beach in hosting certain Olympic events. In additional documents such as Resolution C-22807, 1979 Oct 2, the Long Beach City Council proposed to the city of Los Angeles the use of the Long Beach Marina in Alamitos Bay to host the yachting competition for the 1984 Olympics. Within the same document, the city council notes that Long Beach has the infrastructure, climate, and legacy to host aquatic sports, making the city an ideal candidate to host the Olympic event.¹⁰⁶ Long Beach’s developing infrastructure played a crucial role in securing the 1932 Olympics and the redevelopment of the city beginning in the 1960s helped contribute towards Los Angeles acquiring the 1984 Olympics.

The transformation of the Downtown Shoreline and the future development of the Shoreline Marina provided Long Beach with the means to negotiate for an Olympic venue contract. During the latter half 1979, the Long Beach City Council, the LAOOC, and the City Tidelands Agency Director worked on bringing the Olympics back to Long

¹⁰⁵ “City Council Agenda,” Long Beach City Council, Council, Agenda, City Clerk Files, June 28, 1977, 2025.500.008, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

¹⁰⁶ “Resolution No. C-22807 A Resolution Requesting the City of Long Beach to be the Site for Yachting During the 1984 Summer Olympic Games,” Long Beach City Council, City Resolution, City Clerk Files, October 2, 1979, 2025.500.007, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

Beach. After a few months, Long Beach became the first city to sign a venue contract with the LAOOC. According to a press release put forth by the LAOOC, the contract was signed by the City of Long Beach, the LAOOC, and the Southern California Yachting Association (SCYA) on March 24, 1980. The press release states that “A resolution requesting that the Olympic yachting facility be located in Long Beach was passed by the City Council last October 3...Phil Brubaker, General Manager of the Long Beach Tidelands Agency was designated by the City to negotiate the contract...”¹⁰⁷ Because of the requirements of the IOC, approval of an Olympic contract by local government was required. The city council and Tidelands Agency worked with the LAOOC to negotiate a contract to utilize Long Beach’s facilities. Based on the press releases, there is little information regarding the length of the contractual negotiations and if requests to use multiple Long Beach venues were proposed initially.

On the day that the first contract was signed, there were representatives from each respective entity; the LAOOC President Peter V. Ueberroth, Long Beach Councilwoman Jan Hall, and SYCA Staff Commodore Ted Hinshaw. The Olympic contract stated “...for all Olympic yachting events to be conducted in the waters off Long Beach, with support facilities at the Long Beach Marina.”¹⁰⁸ Additionally, the contract laid out the responsibilities of the LAOOC, the City of Long Beach, and the Southern California Yachting Association (SYCA). The LAOOC would provide the “administrative and technical support” needed to host the yachting events, while the city would provide

¹⁰⁷ Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, “FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: L.A.O.O.C. ANNOUNCES FIRST MAJOR 1984 OLYMPIC SITE IN AGREEMENT WITH LONG BEACH AND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA YACHTING ASSOCIATION,” Press Release, March 20, 1980, 2023.019.013, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

land and water use, support staff, and utilities. The SYCA would provide boating equipment and logistical support during the yachting events.¹⁰⁹ The Long Beach Downtown Shoreline Marina became known as the “Olympic Harbor” and the city worked alongside the LAOOC to make further improvements to the newly constructed marina even after the project was completed in 1982.

LAOOC officials visited the marina in 1983 and noted that the only facilities at the venue were bleachers and an information booth. The facilities in place were insufficient for several pre-Olympic events. An Olympic Classes Regatta would take place in October 1983 and the event would require additional facilities to accommodate an international audience. Prior to the Regatta, the LAOOC created a site plan for the marina following a visit of the area and partially implemented some of the changes for the summer event.

Based on the issues and success of the Regatta, an outside design firm worked on the final master plans for the yachting venue which would improve its functionality for the Olympics. Some of the improvements made to the marina were a permanent boat hoist, which the LAOOC paid for, and the installation of AstroTurf on part of the beach to ease the movement of the boats and equipment. In addition to this, the city and LAOOC installed twenty-six trailers for venue operations in the parking lot. Other additions were competition facilities, which were either tents or trailers, the LAOOC also provided

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

containers to store yachting equipment, and installed temporary bleachers for the yachting opening and closing ceremonies.¹¹⁰

The construction of the marina and the add-ons provided by the LAOOC ensured that the Long Beach Downtown Shoreline would be ready to host the Olympic yachting events and that the facilities were functional for athletes, staff, and visitors. While city officials secured the yachting contract they also pushed for volleyball, fencing, and judo to be hosted at the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center.¹¹¹

The second Olympic contract between the City of Long Beach and the LAOOC was for archery and was signed on May 29, 1980, making the El Dorado Park an Olympic venue according to a second press release issued by the LAOOC. The day that the contract was signed both Mayor Tom Clark and Phil Brubaker, Director of the Long Beach Tidelands Agency, were present. As noted earlier, Brubaker was instrumental in negotiating the yachting contract signed earlier in 1980, though it is unclear to what extent, if any, he was involved in negotiating the other Olympic contracts. Mayor Clark's presence is important to note since the IOC required cooperation between the LAOOC and local governments. Through the archival research, it is unclear if Mayor Clark had a larger role in bringing Olympic events to Long Beach, however, it is important to note his support in these public events.

The El Dorado Park and Archery range was constructed in 1972 by the Long Beach Recreation Department, and was one of the only archery ranges of its kind in

¹¹⁰ Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, *Official Report of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad Los Angeles, 1984 Volume 1 Organization and Planning*, 2002.24.02a, 156.

¹¹¹ Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: L.A.O.O.C. ANNOUNCES FIRST MAJOR 1984 OLYMPIC SITE IN AGREEMENT WITH LONG BEACH AND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA YACHTING ASSOCIATION," 2023.019.013.

Southern California. The archery range already met the Olympic requirements as mentioned by the International Archery Federation. Any changes needed would be limited to guest services and seating. The contract laid out that the city would provide access to the facility, public services, and parking. The LAOOC would provide any administrative and technical support needed to host the game.¹¹² The contract also stated that the city would be required to manage and oversee food concessions. The LAOOC would provide press and hospitality tents and temporary bleachers.¹¹³

Similar to the tour of the marina, LAOOC officials toured the El Dorado Park to assess the feasibility of hosting archery and determine if any refurbishments were needed. James Easton, the Commissioner of archery for LAOOC, toured the park and later commented that the venue would require an additional four thousand seat bleachers for the archery range and minor cosmetic changes.¹¹⁴ Between May 1984 and August 1984 construction of additional facilities and cosmetic changes requested by the LAOOC were completed in time for the archery events.¹¹⁵ The first two contracts that Long Beach signed with the LAOOC put the city in a favorable position to bring more Olympic events to the golden shore. Long Beach officials were interested in using the newly completed Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center to host additional events, and were able to secure both volleyball and fencing.

¹¹² Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES CONTRACT WITH CITY OF LONG BEACH FOR 1984 ARCHERY VENUE Agreement Third Signed by LAOOC in Recent Weeks," Press Release, May 29, 1980, 2023, 019.013, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

¹¹³ Alix Riley, "El Dorado Park Chosen for '84 Olympic archery," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, May 30, 1980, 2013.1980.015, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

¹¹⁴ Richard Bornstein, "Archery at El Dorado: The Target is the Olympics," *Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, February 3, 1982, 2023.019.017, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

¹¹⁵ Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, *Official Report of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad Los Angeles, 1984 Volume 1 Organization and Planning*, 2002.24.02a. 94.

On July 10, 1980, the LAOOC and the City of Long Beach announced that Olympic Volleyball would be hosted at the Long Beach Arena. Although it is not listed in the volleyball press release, on the same day Long Beach and the LAOOC also signed to use the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center to host fencing. Volleyball would be hosted in the Arena and Fencing would be in the Exhibition Hall and Terrace Theater.¹¹⁶ The contract stated that the city would provide the LAOOC with a percentage of income generated from food and beverage sales, pay for a portion of staffing costs per session, and all utilities. The LAOOC would pay for use of the Exhibition Hall and would allow the city to keep all revenue generated from parking.¹¹⁷ Since the Arena previously hosted other sporting events, minimal construction and additions were required to get the venue ready for the Olympics. Flooring was installed to get the Arena ready to host volleyball and was laid over the existing floors. There were temporary additions made to the facilities such as installing short-term tents and dividing up the locker room space to accommodate athletes and staff.¹¹⁸

Long Beach would now host four Olympic sports, making the city the largest Olympic center outside of Los Angeles. The city and community began Olympic preparations soon after finalizing the last two contracts. The Long Beach Chamber of Commerce and community members created their own iteration of an Olympic

¹¹⁶ Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, *Official Report of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad Los Angeles, 1984 Volume 1 Organization and Planning*, 2002.24.02a, 28.

¹¹⁷ Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 1984 VOLLEYBALL COMPETITION SCHEDULED FOR LONG BEACH ARENA," Press Release, July 10, 1980, 2023.019.013, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

¹¹⁸ Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, *Official Report of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad Los Angeles, 1984 Volume 1 Organization and Planning*, 2002.24.02a, 123.

Committee, the Long Beach 1984 Committee, which would help prepare Long Beach for the games.

Long Beach Signs Olympic Contract Permits

Official permits between representatives from the City of Long Beach and representatives from the LAOOC began in 1983. These permits outline specific dates, times, and boundaries of each location, who was allowed to be on premise during these dates/times, personnel and staffing including security protocols, space use/purpose details, rental agreements, costs and repayments, which entity was responsible for sales (tickets, programs/souvenirs, merchandise), branding, advertising, photography/video/audio concerns, broadcasting, concessions, parking, traffic plan, security (police, fire, medical), alterations/improvements/modifications and removal of, utilities (electricity, water, refuse), indemnification and insurance, and property maintenance.

The following provision exists in each permit, documenting a chain-of-command for further negotiations:

“All notices, payments required or other communications required or permitted to be given under this permit are required to be in writing and shall be deemed given when personally delivered or sent by telegram, telex or the United States mail, certified, return receipt requested, postage pre-paid and addressed as follows:

TO LAOOC: Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, Los Angeles, California
90084

Attention: Harry L. Usher, Executive Vice President/General Manager

TO CITY: City of Long Beach 333 W. Ocean Boulevard, Long Beach, California 90802

Attention: City Manager

Either party may from time to time change the address to which such notices, payments, or other communications may be sent by giving the other party written notice of such change.”

The permits further recognize that all Long Beach municipal codes, laws, and regulations must be followed. Permits for building/construction must be obtained with reasonable attention from the City Manager or representative, however, broadcasters are exempt from permits. The City Manager ultimately makes any decisions on cost/staffing overages such as police security via written request. The City Manager decides if alterations made by LAOOC or representative entities must be removed at the culmination of the Olympic events, or stay for the good of the City. The City of Long Beach was not required to cover pre-existing imagery or City branding that could be captured in photography or video.

Permits provided by the Office of the City Manager Tom Modica, courtesy of the Office of the City Clerk Monique De La Garza in 2025:

Permit 15492-006: Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center – Volleyball and Fencing Events

Signed: City Auditor, City Accountant 1983 JUL 21; Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (Harry L. Usher and associate) 1983 JUL 11; Facility Management Incorporated of Southern California (Manager George G. Manson and David M. Meek) 1983 JUL 14

Permit 16765-000: El Dorado Park East – Archery

Signed: City Auditor, City Accountant 1983 JUL 21; City of Long Beach Director of Recreation and Human Resources (Joseph W. Helper) 1983 JUL 14; Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (Harry L. Usher and associate) 1983 JUL 11; Approved by City Attorney Senior Deputy (Einar C. Petersen) 1983 JUL 14

Amendment 1: Extended use, Event

Signed: City Auditor, City Accountant 1983 OCT 25; LAOOC (Harry L. Usher) 1983 OCT 3; City of Long Beach Director of Recreation and Human Resources (acting) 1983 OCT 3; Notary (Rosemary Cockle) 1983 OCT 3; Approved by City Attorney Senior Deputy (Einar C. Petersen) 1983 OCT 3

Amendment 2: Extended use, Parking

Signed: City Auditor, City Accountant 1983 NOV 15; LAOOC (Harry L. Usher) 1983 NOV 15; City of Long Beach Director of Recreation and Human Resources (Joseph W. Helper) 1983 NOV 15; Approved by City Attorney Senior Deputy (Einar C. Petersen) 1983 OCT 3

Permit 16769-000: Downtown Shoreline Marina – Yachting (includes location map)

Signed: City Auditor, City Accountant 1983 JUL 21; Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (Harry L. Usher and associate) 1983 JUL 11; City Manager (John E. Dever) 1983 JUL 14; Approved by City Attorney Senior Deputy (Einar C. Petersen) 1983 JUL 12; Notary (Rosemary Cockle) 1983 JUL 11

Permit 17652: Security Supplement to Permits for City of Long Beach

Signed: City Auditor, City Accountant 1984 DEC 4; Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (Harry L. Usher) 1984 APR 17; City of Long Beach City Manager (John E. Dever) 1984 APR 17; Approved by City Attorney (Robert W. Parkin) 1984 APR 17

Government Role: Key Individuals and Organizations

The support of Long Beach City Council and mayors such as Eunice Sato, Tom Clark, and Ernie Kell were important to get the city to host the four Olympic events, but other community members also played a major role in preparing Long Beach for the 1984 Olympics. City Manager John Dever is mentioned as a person who was given permission by City Council to negotiate contracts for the Olympics. Documents from the office of the Long Beach City Clerk provide evidence that office was primarily focused on negotiating infrastructure for the day-to-day business of the city, as well as alterations, improvements, and modifications of Olympic spaces.

As previously mentioned, Phil Brubaker, the City Tidelands Agency Director, was instrumental in negotiating some of the Olympic contracts between the LAOOC and the city. Brubaker's role within Long Beach and his contributions towards the expansion of the downtown area and marina caught the eye of the LAOOC. In 1982, Brubaker resigned from his city position, accepted a position within the LAOOC, and became the Vice President of Olympic Village Operations. Brubaker was the second individual from Long Beach city government to leave his position to work for the LAOOC.¹¹⁹ Long Beach's Director of Finance, Carl V. Husby Jr., was instrumental in shifting the city's

¹¹⁹ Ross, "Tidelands chief accepts Olympic post," 2013.1982.020.

economy and under his leadership the city began to “operate on its own capital.”¹²⁰ Husby also resigned his position to work for the LAOOC and became the Chief Financial Officer for the committee.¹²¹ Both Husby and Brubaker drastically affected the economy and structure of Long Beach and their departure to the LAOOC emphasizes the working relationship between the committee and venue cities.

The Long Beach Chamber of Commerce and the Long Beach community worked together to bring Olympic spirit to the city. In 1981, the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce created the Long Beach 1984 Committee. Long Beach’s committee operated before the creation of the Olympic Neighborhood program and was funded by community members with their \$19.84 registration fee.¹²² The LAOOC created an Olympic Neighborhood program, which aimed to inform communities located near Olympic venues and Olympic villages about news and events that directly impacted the neighborhoods.

The Long Beach 1984 Committee operated outside of the official program for two years and were a testament to community excitement for the Olympics. The President of the Long Beach 1984 Committee, Donna Cole shared that the committee’s main purpose was to “...promote the City of Long Beach to Olympic visitors and to increase the community’s awareness of the four Olympic events that will take place here...”¹²³

¹²⁰ “Olympic staff hires Husby,” *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, February 20, 1982, 2013.1982.041, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Joe Ponepinto, “LB ’84 Olympic Committee winds down successfully,” *Grunion Gazette*, vol. 7 no. 28, Historic Newspaper, Gazettes Collection, July 19, 1984, 2022.023.0348, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.; Joe Ponepinto “Chamber group spreads Olympic information in L.B.,” *Grunion Gazette*, vol. 7 no. 8, Historic Newspaper, Gazettes Collection, February 23, 1984, 2022.023.0328, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

¹²³ “Profile: Donna Cole,” *Long Beach 1984 Committee News Olympic Neighbor* vol. 1, no. 1, Historic Newsletter, 1984 Olympics Box, July 22, 1983, 2023.019.024a, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

The 1984 committee was set to coordinate and participate in various civic events to engage the Long Beach community such as the International Festival and Sand Sculpture Contest.¹²⁴ Events such as the Sand Sculpture Contest were a way for the committee to fundraise and get Long Beach and neighboring communities excited for the Olympics. In addition to community events, the Long Beach committee also ran a monthly newsletter which provided the city with upcoming Olympic events and served as an informational resource.¹²⁵

On May 17, 1983 the Long Beach 1984 Committee was officially recognized as an Olympic Neighbor by the LAOOC, even though the organization had been functioning and supporting the Olympic Neighbor mission since 1981. The Long Beach Committee also served as a mediator between the city and the LAOOC, and the two organizations worked together to put on pre-Olympic events for the city.¹²⁶

Preview to the Olympics

The Long Beach 1984 Committee, the city, and the LAOOC hosted an array of events in 1983 that showcased Long Beach's Olympic venues. From October 14 to October 30, the city held an international archery competition, sailing, and volleyball events at the future Olympic sites. The first event hosted in the fall preview was the International Women's Volleyball Tournament in the Long Beach Arena. The competition was also known as the "Big Four Volleyball Challenge," and was a tournament among the United States, Russia, Cuba, and Japan. The competition occurred from October 14

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ponopinto, "LB '84 Olympic Committee winds down successfully, 2022.023.0348.

¹²⁶ Margy Fetting, "The LAOOC and The Olympic Neighbor Program," *Long Beach 1984 Committee News Olympic Neighbor* vol. 1, no. 1, Historic Newsletter, 1984 Olympics Box, July 22, 1983, 2023.019.024a, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

to October 16. This event was not sponsored by the LAOOC. However, the media encouraged individuals who wanted to volunteer for the Olympics to volunteer at this event and use this as an opportunity to gain experience.¹²⁷

Following the volleyball competition was the XXXII World Archery Championship from October 19 to October 22. The competition took place at El Dorado Park and served as a preview to the 1984 Olympic Archery. Unlike the volleyball tournament, the archery championship was hosted by the LAOOC, and was the first world championship hosted by the organization. In total, forty countries competed and the event showcased El Dorado Park and the capabilities of the LAOOC.¹²⁸ The facilities impressed countries such as Korea, who then had their women's archery team stay in Long Beach to practice and prepare for the Olympics.

The final event from the Olympic preview was a large-scale boating show in 1983. The Long Beach Boat Show took place between October 21 to October 30, 1983 and provided the public with the opportunity to see the newly finished Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center, in addition to the Downtown Shoreline Marina.¹²⁹ These events attracted locals and people from neighboring cities as well. Aside from serving as a sneak peek of the Olympic events, these competitions also provided Long Beach and the LAOOC with a trial run of the different venues. Based on how the events went, the LAOOC and city worked together to make site plans and modify the venues

¹²⁷ "Volleyball," *Long Beach 1984 Committee News Olympic Neighbor* vol. 1, no. 3, Historic Newsletter, 1984 Olympics Box, September 20, 1983, 2023.019.024c, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

¹²⁸ "World Archery Championships," *Long Beach 1984 Committee News Olympic Neighbor* vol. 1, no. 3, Historic Newsletter, September 20, 1983, 2023.019.024c, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.; "World is coming to L.B., and it's bringing its arrows," *Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, October 12, 1983, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

¹²⁹ "Long Beach Boat Show," *Long Beach 1984 Committee News Olympic Neighbor* vol. 1, no. 3, Historic Newsletter, September 20, 1983, 2023.019.024c, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

and facilities to ensure that future Olympic events would run smoothly. These events were just one way that the city and the LAOOC worked together to bring attention to Long Beach, but there were also attempts to bring the international press to the city.

The LAOOC created an Olympics press tour that provided the international press the opportunity to tour various Olympic venues and cities. The LAOOC offered five different cities for the press tour and the selected cities organized an eight-hour tour for the international press. The Long Beach tours took place between July 16 to July 26 in 1984, and hosted over 4,000 international news correspondents. The Long Beach city tour was sponsored by the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce, the Port of Long Beach, and the Long Beach Redevelopment Agency. The Long Beach tour featured iconic sites such as the Queen Mary, Spruce Goose, the Olympic venues, and the Long Beach Harbor and downtown Redevelopment areas.¹³⁰ This tour provided Long Beach additional opportunities to showcase the Olympic venues and garner international attention. The fall showcase and the press tour continued to highlight Long Beach's investments, infrastructure, and community efforts to bring Olympic enthusiasm to the city.

Community Engagement

In an effort to engage local youth with the Olympic Yachting events, the LAOOC and the City of Long Beach entered into Agreement 15834 signed by the offices of City Auditor and City Accountant 1982 MAY 18; Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (Harry L. Usher) 1982 APR 22; City Manager (John E. Dever) 1982 MAY 6; approved by

¹³⁰ Julie Rees, "L.B. picked for tour stop by world's Olympic press," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, June 2, 1984, 2013.1984.016, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

City Attorney Deputy 1982 MAY 6. The LAOOC donated 10 Naples Sabot boats and one 15-foot Boston Whaler to the City's Department of Recreation and Human Services. The LAOOC also donated the funding to expand the City of Long Beach's existing sailing, swimming, and related aquatic programming from May 1, 1982 through August 31, 1984 for people aged 7-17.

Long Beach residents and businesses also took initiatives to bring Olympic excitement to the city. Individuals like Ambrose Torres started business projects specifically for the return of the Olympics to Long Beach. In 1983, Torres started the Los Angeles Information Center in Downtown Long Beach which focused on promoting local businesses and provided tourists with information. Torres compiled a repository of accommodations, churches, restaurants, and Olympics information for tourists.¹³¹

Other residents such as David Lund, who was the head of the Community Development Department, worked on creating an information center for Olympic visitors. This information center was located in downtown Long Beach in the World Trade Center and was an Olympic and city resource. The center provided visitors with city maps, local entertainment, and hotels and restaurants. Promotional materials were created for the information center and Lund also hosted executives from the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) and showed the Olympic venues.¹³² These businesses and information center were another way that Long Beach community members

¹³¹ Bob Zeller, "His business hopes tied to Olympics Information center is located in Long Beach," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, March 5, 1984, 2013.1984.028, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

¹³² John Zappe, "L.B. plans for Olympic Info Center City officials seeking television exposure," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, March 26, 1984, 2013.1984.026, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

prepared for the Olympics, and there were additional efforts from the 1984 committee to engage the community.

The Long Beach 1984 Committee and community members continued to push for additional pre-Olympic events to promote the upcoming games. The LAOOC played a role in some pre-Olympic events in Long Beach, but there were instances in which there were tensions between Long Beach and the LAOOC.

For example, the LAOOC organized an Olympics Arts Festival that occurred early in 1984 and served as a way to engage with Olympic neighborhoods and attract tourism. Cities who wanted to participate submitted an art project proposal that adhered to the LAOOC guidelines and the approved pieces would be featured as a destination in the Olympics Arts Festival. Since Long Beach was the city with the most events outside of Los Angeles and wanted to attract further attention, the city submitted two art project proposals through the Long Beach Museum of Art (LBMA) and the University Art Museum at California State University of Long Beach. Long Beach's projects were rejected by the LAOOC to the dismay of the LBMA's curator, Kathy Huffman, and other community members. The rejection was a snub to the city since they were such a large host city. Project planners with the LBMA petitioned the rejection but were notified that the LAOOC would not change their decision, the LAOOC instead offered the museum \$1,500 as compensation. The Olympics Arts Festival occurred from June 1 to August 12, featuring 22 exhibitions throughout Southern California and 407 different arts

performances.¹³³ Despite not being a part of the Olympics Arts Festival, the Long Beach community found other ways to prepare the city for the Olympics.

The Long Beach 1984 Committee and local government worked on beautifying the city before the Olympics arrived in Long Beach. One of these projects was the Long Beach Alamitos Bay Beautification Project, which was a collaborative project between Long Beach residents and the boating community to beautify and landscape the Alamitos Bay Marina. This project focused on adding plants and greenery to make a “garden setting” for the 1984 Olympics. The Tidelands Agency and Marine Bureau of City of Long Beach hosted the project/competition in which boat-owners decorated their planters near the marina for a cash prize. The competition both engaged the community and beautified the marina.¹³⁴

The city had additional projects which beautified the city in time for the Olympics, such as “Operation Facelift.” This program fell under the Long Beach Department of Public Works and used existing funds to address issues in the city and to make Long Beach Olympics ready. Public works employees worked on the months-long project and landscaped, painted, and spruced up the city in time for the Olympics. The Long Beach Redevelopment Agency and Downtown Long Beach Association combined funds and secured Olympic decorations such as banners and pennants for the downtown area of

¹³³ Bob Zeller, “L.B.’s only project rejected for Olympics Arts Festival,” *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, January 13, 1984, 2013.1984.036, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.; Bob Zeller, “Olympic Arts Festival shuns CSULB museum,” *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, January 21, 1984, 2013.1984.036, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

¹³⁴ Margy Fetting, “Alamitos Bay Beautification Project Prepares for the 1984 Games,” *Long Beach 1984 Committee News Olympic Neighbor* vol. 1, no. 4, Historic Newsletter, October 12, 1983, 2023.019.024d, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

the city. The city also waived the fees for local businesses and homes to be able to display Olympic banners.¹³⁵

The Long Beach Redevelopment Agency continued to play a large role in bringing Olympic tourism to the city with an Olympics concert series. The RDA hosted free celebrity performances from July 28 to August 18, the duration of the Olympics, offering an array of concerts for the public. The series occurred throughout Long Beach such as the Long Beach Amphitheater (on First Street between Long Beach Boulevard and Pine Avenue) and El Dorado Park. Performances by the Long Beach Municipal Band, Rosemary Clooney, Ernie Andrews, and Ildefonso “Poncho” Sanchez were some of the featured artists that performed during these weeks.¹³⁶ This concert series was another way that Long Beach further promoted the Olympics and attracted both residents and tourists to engage in the community and local economy.

The Long Beach 1984 Committee and the *Press-Telegram* worked together to get the Olympic torch relay to come through Long Beach and got residents to participate. The 1984 Committee held raffles which would provide members with the opportunity to carry the Olympic torch through the city, and the *Press-Telegram* held an essay contest where the winner would get to carry the torch through Long Beach. Several Long Beach residents such as David King, Julia Thuente, Ron Dulan, and Audrey Langslet won the privilege to be a part of this historic event.¹³⁷ While Long

¹³⁵ John Zappe, “City looks spiffy for Olympics,” *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, July 25, 1984, 2013.1984.011, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

¹³⁶ Bob Andrew, “L.B. offers free celebrity concerts during Games,” *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, July 20, 1984, 2013.1984.011, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

¹³⁷ Susan Pack, “L.B. pair win right to carry Olympic torch,” *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, March 7, 1984, 2013.1984.028, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

Beach organizations and businesses worked to bring Olympic fun to the city, the LAOOC continued to be challenging. The Olympic torch relay nearly did not pass through Long Beach because of a meager \$25 parade permit that would be required through the city. LAOOC representatives did not want to pay the fee and argued that the Olympic torch was going through too many cities and stated and that Long Beach should waive the special event fee. But Long Beach officials, such as Deputy City Manager J. Edward Tewes, did not want to waive the fee since residents had to pay special event fees to host smaller events, such as Olympic block parties. Despite this standoff, there was an anonymous donor who paid the fee, and so, the Olympic torch passed through Long Beach. The torch arrived to Long Beach on July 26, 1984 at approximately midnight and passed through the Second and PCH and ended their portion of the relay at the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center. Business associations in the Naples and Belmont Shore area hosted Olympic parties on the evening of the torch relay to celebrate the return of the Olympics.¹³⁸

The LAOOC and the city also worked together to bring in components of Festive Federalism to Long Beach and the Olympic venues. Festive Federalism was the term coined for the 1984 Olympics “look” conceived by designers from Jerde and Sussman/Prejza & Co. in 1982. The overall look rejected visual markers of Americana and instead opted to evoke a sense of internationalism and multiculturalism. The designers chose bright colors: magenta, chrome yellow, aqua, vermillion, light blue,

¹³⁸ Susan Pack, “Torch Relay won’t detour around L.B.,” *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, June 26, 1984, 2013.1984.014, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.; Susan Pack, “Tentative L.B. torch route is announced,” *Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, June 28, 1984, 2013. 1984. 014, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.; Joe Ponepinto, “Olympic torch lights up shore tonight,” *Grunion Gazette*, vol. 7 no. 28, Historic Newspaper, Gazettes Collection, July 26, 1984, 2022.023.0349 Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

green, lavender, information yellow, pink, dark blue, and violet.¹³⁹ This color palette is now quintessential of the 1984 Olympics and was used throughout Olympics décor in Southern California.

Beginning in early 1984, Long Beach began preparing the Olympic venues with the help of the LAOOC's "look coordinator" Michael Russell. Russell was tasked with decorating Long Beach's four Olympic venues with the Olympics' Festive Federalism looks and specifically designed elements and decorations for each site. Notable items such as "whirligigs," or large pinwheels were made, as well as large scaffolding structure for yachting and large banners for the Terrace Theater.¹⁴⁰ The decorations made specifically for each venue sought to replicate elements of the Olympic sport and create a sense of cohesion across the Olympic sites.

Long Beach and the LAOOC spent nearly four years collaborating and preparing for the 1984 Olympics and their efforts were met with success. The years of preparations, promotion, community engagement, and cooperation between the City of Long Beach and the LAOOC led to a successful and profitable Olympics. By June 12, 1984, all Long Beach Olympic event tickets were sold out. There were nine ticket centers total in Los Angeles, Orange County, and Long Beach and the public had the option to purchase tickets in person at one of the nine ticketing centers or via mail order. Based on the mail-in orders, spectators were most eager to see Olympic Volleyball and

¹³⁹ Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, *Official Report of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad Los Angeles, 1984 Volume 1 Organization and Planning*, 2002.24.02a, 252-253.

¹⁴⁰ Valerie Takahama, "Dressing up Long Beach Games sites," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, April 6, 1984, 2013.1984.024, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

Fencing, as those were the sports to sell out first and through mail.¹⁴¹ With all available tickets to the Long Beach Olympic events sold out over a month before the games, it is evident that promotional efforts and the work of the LAOOC and the city were successful. Long Beach was ready for the Olympics.

Games in Long Beach

The Los Angeles 1984 Olympics kicked off in Long Beach on July 29, 1984, with Olympic volleyball at the Long Beach Arena. Volleyball was hosted at the Arena, part of the larger entertainment center, from July 29 to August 11, 1984. In total, there were eight countries competing for women's volleyball and ten countries for men's volleyball.¹⁴² The first match was between the U.S. men's volleyball team and Argentina, with the U.S. volleyball team defeating the Argentinian team three to one.

The Arena was decorated with the neon Festive Federalism palette and was full of Olympic spectators from all over the world.¹⁴³ The U.S. men's team played again on July 31 and beat the Tunisian team three to zero, continuing to dominate throughout the preliminaries. The U.S. team beat Korea on August 2 and Brazil on August 6 earning a spot in the semifinals. The U.S. men's volleyball defeated Canada in the semifinals and made it to the finals defeating Brazil three to zero.¹⁴⁴ The U.S. men's team win marked

¹⁴¹ "All L.B. events are sold out," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, June 12, 1984, 2013.1984.016, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

¹⁴² Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, *Official Report of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad Los Angeles, 1984 Volume 2 Competition Summary and Results* (Los Angeles Organizing Committee, 1985), 2002.24.02b, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives, 591.

¹⁴³ Susan Pack, "Volleyball fans see U.S. win, L.B. Arena draws a full house for opening day of competition," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, July 30, 1984, 2013.1984.011, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

¹⁴⁴ Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, *Official Report of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad Los Angeles, 1984 Volume 2 Competition Summary and Results*, 2002.24.02b, 600-607.

the first time that the U.S. won gold for Olympic volleyball. The U.S. men's volleyball team and Long Beach made history with this win.

The U.S. women's volleyball team also performed well and qualified in the preliminary pool on July 30, 1984, defeating the Federal Republic of Germany's team three to zero. The U.S. women's team continued to perform and beat Brazil's women's team on August 1, 1984, three to two.¹⁴⁵ Projected to be a top contender, the U.S. women's volleyball team continued to advance and on August 3, 1984, they beat the undefeated Chinese women's volleyball team three to one, earning their place in the Olympics semifinals. The U.S. and Peru's women's volleyball teams competed on August 5 in the semifinals for a chance to win Olympic gold, with the U.S. team winning three to zero.¹⁴⁶ The U.S. women's team faced the Chinese team once more in the finals on August 7 and lost the gold medal with a final score of zero to three.¹⁴⁷ Despite the upsetting loss, the U.S. women's team won the silver medal, a first for the U.S. women's volleyball team.

The Olympic Yachting competitions took place from July 31 to August 11, 1984. In total there were eight countries competing in the Women's Boardsailing event. The men's competition was more expansive, with up to thirty-eight countries competing in a single event. Unlike the women's competition, the Men's Yachting events were broken up into eight different events: Windglider, Soling, Flying Dutchman, Star, Finn, Tornado,

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 594-595

¹⁴⁶ Dave Cunningham, "Volley triumph follows U.S. win," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, August 4, 1984, 2013.1984.010, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

¹⁴⁷ Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, *Official Report of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad Los Angeles, 1984 Volume 2 Competition Summary and Results*, 2002.24.02b, 594-599.

470, and Boardsailing/Planche à voile.¹⁴⁸ Yachting also differed from the other Long Beach events in that it was a non-spectator sport. Many residents and Olympic spectators tried to catch a glimpse of the competitions from the Downtown Shoreline Marina but were disappointed that they could not see anything from the beach. The *Press-Telegram* notes that the public was largely unaware the yachting course was between "...half a mile and three miles out."¹⁴⁹ Volunteers working the marina Olympics information booth suggested would-be spectators to try Belmont Shore or Bluff Park to better view the yachting events.¹⁵⁰ Over the course of the almost two-week long event, the U.S. men's teams placed in every single class. The total medal count for the U.S. Men's Yachting were three gold medals and four silver medals. The U.S. Women's Boardsailing also brought the U.S. more victories, with two U.S. women winning silver and bronze medals.¹⁵¹

The Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center hosted Olympic Fencing from August 1 through August 11, 1984, in the Exhibition Hall and the Terrace Theater. The preliminary rounds were hosted in the Exhibition Hall, the first time that this space was used for any sporting event. Following the preliminary rounds, the Fencing finals took place in the Terrace Theater.¹⁵² Similar to the other Olympic events the women's and men's categories differed, with the men's competition entailing more categories.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 634.

¹⁴⁹ Susan Pack, "Yacht watch: so near and yet so far," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, August 1, 1984, 2013.1984.010, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Don Borst, "American sailors do it all-go 7-for 7 'Uncle Sam's boys win 3 golds, 4 silvers'," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, August 9, 1984, 2013.1984.010, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.; Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, *Official Report of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad Los Angeles, 1984 Volume 2 Competition Summary and Results*, 2002.24.02b, 653.

¹⁵² Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, *Official Report of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad Los Angeles, 1984 Volume 1 Organization and Planning*, 2002.24.02a, 123.

Women's Fencing consisted of two categories: Foil Individual and Foil Team, with a total of twenty-eight countries competing between the two categories. The Men's Fencing competition consisted of six distinct categories: Foil Individual, Sabre Individual, Epee Individual, Foil Team, Sabre Team, and Epee Team. There was a total of 331 men and 86 women competing in Fencing.¹⁵³ The women's competitions took place from August 2 to August 7, 1984. Unfortunately, none of the U.S. competitors placed in the two women's categories. The Men's Fencing events took place from August 1 to August 11, 1984. Across the different categories the U.S. men only placed in the Sabre Individual.¹⁵⁴ Despite the U.S. competitors not performing as well in Fencing, the events showcased Long Beach's newly completed Entertainment Center and the space's capabilities to host an array of events.

Olympic Archery took place at El Dorado Park's Archery Range from August 8 to August 11, 1984.¹⁵⁵ The Women's Archery competition had 47 competitors representing 24 countries and the Men's Archery competition had 62 competitors representing 25 nations. The first round was held on August 8, 1984 and featured the 70m Women's and 90m Men's competitions. Followed by the 50m Women's and 50m Men's competitions on August 9, 1984. The second round of the 70m Women's and 90m Men's competitions were held on August 10, 1984. The final day of Archery was August 11, 1984, and two separate events were held: the 50m Women and 50m Men and the 30m

¹⁵³ Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, *Official Report of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad Los Angeles, 1984 Volume 2 Competition Summary and Results*, 2002.24.02b, 388.

¹⁵⁴ Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, *Official Report of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad Los Angeles, 1984 Volume 2 Competition Summary and Results*, 2002.24.02b, 403-416.; "Los Angeles Fencing Results," Olympic Games Los Angeles 1984, accessed May 20, 2025, <https://www.olympics.com/en/olympic-games/los-angeles-1984/results/fencing>.

¹⁵⁵ Robert Hinch, "Olympic archery organizers take aim," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, July 6, 1984, 2013.1984.012, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

Women and 30m Men.¹⁵⁶ In the end, two men representing the U.S. took home gold and silver medals.¹⁵⁷ Similar to Yachting, Archery was not a well-received Olympic event, with the public complaining about the sport being “boring.” Interviews in the *Press-Telegram* note that spectators did not enjoy watching the sport, but in several instances said that El Dorado Archery Range and Park were beautiful and peaceful spaces.¹⁵⁸ Again, Long Beach showcased the success of their investments in infrastructure.

The Olympics came to a close on August 12, 1984 at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum with an array of performances from various organizations including members from the Long Beach International Children’s Choir. Days before the closing ceremony, Choir Director Irene Bayless received a request from the LAOOC to have six diverse children from the choir participate in the closing ceremony. The children who participated were: TeaJea James, Aaron Matthews, Michelle Moore, Frank Martin, Cissy Tubbs, and Fabian Mark. The children selected to participate presented the Olympic flag to children from South Korea, symbolizing the end of the Olympic games in Los Angeles and recognizing South Korea as the successive host nation.¹⁵⁹ The closing ceremony marked the end of the 1984 games, but marked a new era for the Olympic games. Before the 1984 Olympics, there was declining interest in hosting the games

¹⁵⁶ U.S. Olympic Committee, “The Schedule,” *Official Olympic Souvenir Program Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad Los Angeles 1984* (Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, 1984), Program, Olympics Collection, 2025.013.005, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives, 50-62.

¹⁵⁷ “Los Angeles Archery Results,” Olympic Games Los Angeles 1984, accessed May 20, 2025, <https://www.olympics.com/en/olympic-games/los-angeles-1984/results/archery>.

¹⁵⁸ Susan Pack, “No need for Super Slo Mo at archery range debut,” *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, August 9, 1984, 2013.1984.010, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

¹⁵⁹ Rachel D’Oro, “Long Beach choir children will help close Olympics,” *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, August 10, 1984, 2013.1984.010, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

because of the increasing fear of terrorism, boycotts, debt, and infrastructure problems. However, the organization of the 1984 Olympics and the creation of the LAOOC, Los Angeles "...redesigned and revitalized the Olympic movement at a crucial time."¹⁶⁰ Rather than seeing a decline in interest, which had previously occurred in the mid twentieth century, there were six cities who bid for the 1988 games.¹⁶¹

Los Angeles and Long Beach had effectively shown the world that the Olympics could turn a profit. Private and public entities could work together to organize a successful Olympiad.

Notable Winners

Long Beach has a longstanding legacy of producing star athletes and there were numerous athletes from Long Beach who participated and placed in the 1984 Olympics. Although there were four different Olympic events hosted in Long Beach, only a handful of Long Beach athletes participated and placed in either Archery, Fencing, Volleyball, and Yachting. Through archival research and community outreach, the Historical Society of Long Beach obtained a limited-edition Long Beach 908 Olympian Issue. The issue contains an extensive list of past Long Beach Olympians and interviews with a select few.¹⁶² The complete interviews with the Olympians are available on the 908 website. For the sake of brevity, the report will not feature athlete profiles, but rather will list the Long Beach athletes that participated and/or placed during the 1984 Games. For

¹⁶⁰ Matthew P. Llewellyn, Toby C. Rider, John Gleaves, "The Golden Games: The 1984 Los Angeles Olympics," in *LA Sports: Play, Games, and Community in the City of Angeles*, ed. Wayne Wilson and David K. Wiggins (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2018), 201.

¹⁶¹ Matthew P. Llewellyn, Toby C. Rider, John Gleaves, 217.

¹⁶² The issue features an extensive list of Long Beach athletes and Olympians. The 908 specifies that the Olympians listed either lived in or trained in Long Beach. The issue by no means claims that the individuals listed are the only athletes, but rather, the list is a beginning point and can be expanded upon.

more information regarding individual athletes please visit www.lb908.com. With the permission of John Grossi, the following Long Beach athletes participated in the 1984 Olympics:

- Valeria Brisco, Track and Field, Gold Medal
- Jody Campbell, Water Polo, Silver Medal
- Kelly McCormick, Diving, Silver Medal
- Debbie Green, Volleyball, Silver Medal
- Pat McDonough, Cycling, Silver Medal
- Steve Hegg, Cycling, Gold Medal
- Pat Etem, Rowing
- John Siman, Water Polo, Silver Medal
- Denise Curry, Basketball, Gold Medal
- Natalie Williams, Basketball
- John Shadden, Sailing, Bronze Medal ¹⁶³

Olympic Legacy

Since hosting the first Olympics in 1932, Los Angeles officials like William May Garland created and sold the idea of Los Angeles and Southern California as a sunny paradise and cultural capital. The success, both financial and cultural, of the first Los Angeles games led civic boosters and leaders to continuously push for the Olympics to return to Southern California.¹⁶⁴ The Olympics almost did not return to Los Angeles

¹⁶³ “Olympian Issue: 25 Long Beach Olympians Remember Their Journeys,” Long Beach 908, 13, accessed May 21, 2025, [bc8a21_4f543c06f964459abbc58ce033ad4b03.pdf](https://www.lb908.com/olympian-issue-25-long-beach-olympians-remember-their-journeys/).; “Los Angeles 1984 Results,” Olympic Games Los Angeles 1984, accessed May 21, 2025, <https://www.olympics.com/en/olympic-games/los-angeles-1984/results>.

¹⁶⁴ Matthew P. Llewellyn, Toby C. Rider, John Gleaves, 203-204.

because of disagreements over public and private funding of the games. Los Angeles leadership was able to convince the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the U.S.O.C. (United States Olympic Committee) that the creation of a private organizing committee would allow for a successful and profitable games, and were able to host the first privately funded Olympics. “The city of Los Angeles, the capital of the world’s popular culture industry, redesigned and revitalized the Olympic movement at a crucial time.”¹⁶⁵ Los Angeles effectively changed the course of future Olympic Games and reinvigorated international Olympic fervor.

The end of the 1984 Olympics brought an array of unforeseen positive economic and cultural impacts in Los Angeles and Long Beach. In total, Southern California made approximately \$3.3 billion. The Olympics created approximately 68,000 four-month jobs alone, excluding the jobs created to run the LAOOC and intergovernmental liaisons between 1979 and 1984. Both the state and local government (Los Angeles) saw increased earnings of \$179 million between 1984 and 1985. There were also long-term benefits to hosting the Olympics, such as cross-cultural interactions, growing international recognition, and local youth sports programming.¹⁶⁶ “The Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad proved that the Olympics can have a positive impact on the host city and can protect local taxpayers from direct financial liability.”¹⁶⁷

Once the Olympics were over, Long Beach moved to clean up the city, negotiate final details with the LAOOC, and assess Olympic profits and/or losses. The Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center manager, George Manson, arranged to

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 201.

¹⁶⁶ Lawson, 137-138.

¹⁶⁷ Lawson, 141.

keep some of the equipment and materials installed in the Arena and Exhibition Hall for the games.¹⁶⁸ In terms of economic impact, immediately following the Olympics, city officials noted that the final costs and revenues from the games would not be known until later. However, representatives from the Long Beach Visitors Council and the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce expressed confidence that the city turned a profit.

Long Beach Mayor Ernie Kell also shared that he was content with the outcome of hosting the events, and that tourists, Olympic athletes, and prospective businesses left with a positive image of Long Beach. One of the most successful pieces of Long Beach redevelopment, the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center saw an increase in revenue between July and August of 1984, with the city bringing in a \$275,000 profit. This center hosted two Olympic games and made approximately \$1.4 million between concessions, rental, and parking, as opposed to the usual \$700,000 revenue during the same two months years prior. While there was a notable profit, the city spent approximately \$500,000 to update the Long Beach Arena and another \$200,000 to paint the venue before the Olympics.¹⁶⁹ Additionally, the city used funds from the existing budget to carry out “Operation Facelift” and improved the areas around El Dorado Park, Downtown Shoreline Marina, and the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center. Long Beach also allocated a \$34,500 budget for the construction of an Olympic Information Center in the World Trade Center and \$3,000 for Olympic banners.

¹⁶⁸ Candy Cooper, “L.B. offers to swap labor for Olympic gear,” *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, August 11, 1984, 2013.1984.010, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

¹⁶⁹ Susan Pack, “L.B. happy with Games Dollar benefit not yet clear, city officials say,” *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, August 16, 1984, 2013.1984.009, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

The city spent a hefty sum investing in improving the facilities that would be utilized in the Olympics and their investments paid off. Long Beach had spent the previous twenty years investing in infrastructure through the Redevelopment Agency and changed the crumbling downtown area. These investments provided the city with the capabilities to host the Olympics and provided Long Beach with opportunity to showcase the city. Through the Olympics, Long Beach became known as an international convention and tourist location.¹⁷⁰

Since the 1984 Olympics was so profitable, the LAOOC used some of the surplus funds to sponsor youth sports activities in the subsequent years. In total, the LAOOC made a surplus of approximately \$223.5 million from the 1984 Olympics and the organization allocated approximately \$100 million to create the LA84 Foundation.

The LA84 Foundation was dedicated to youth sports, funded new sports facilities, and programmatic grants to provide support to young athletes.¹⁷¹ In 1985, the LAOOC hosted a “Summer Games ‘85” which utilized a \$2 million grant to keep parks and playgrounds open for extended summer hours. Long Beach was one of the sixteen cities selected by the LAOOC for this youth initiative. The program not only extended the time that children could use these facilities, but also hosted competitions in which the winners from these games would compete in a final tournament at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. The LAOOC worked with the Long Beach City Manager’s Office to provide \$94,500 for the city to participate in the Summer Games programming and fund the activities across four schools (Jordan, Poly, Wilson, and Millikan) and seventeen city

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Matthew P. Llewellyn, Toby C. Rider, John Gleaves, 217.

parks. LAOOC Board Chairman Paul Ziffren commented that the Summer Games programming was "...our way of repaying those communities for their participation."¹⁷² Long Beach became synonymous with athleticism and premier sports facilities. There were discussions amongst city officials that the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) was interested in hosting the Men's Volleyball final in 1987 at the Long Beach Arena.¹⁷³ Although Long Beach did not host the final, the city had made its mark in the sporting and Olympics community.

The 1984 Los Angeles Olympics provided Long Beach with the opportunity to expand their reach and influence internationally. There was already an economic and developmental renaissance occurring in Long Beach, and the Olympics further perpetuated this growth. Long Beach's involvement in the 1984 Olympics solidified the city as an aquatic and sporting capital and the city's Olympic legacy continues to grow in preparations for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

¹⁷² Bob Zeller, "Long Beach youth to participate in 'Summer Games '85," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Historic Newspaper, March 27, 1985, 2013.1985.019, Historical Society of Long Beach Archives.

¹⁷³ Pack, "L.B. happy with Games Dollar benefit not yet clear, city officials say," 1984, 2013.1984.009.

CONCLUSION

People in the early days of Long Beach enjoyed the aquatic amenities, both natural and constructed, well before there was a thought of bringing the Olympics to Southern California. Because the people so enjoyed aquatic pastimes, the leaders and citizenry supported bonds and construction of large-scale projects that brought major attention to the city. When it came time to begin bidding for a Los Angeles Olympiad, Long Beach was in a good position to offer event space that was already near Olympic standards, which meant extravagant monies would not need to be spent to host the Games, extremely important in the wake of great national and international tragedy such as the Great Depression, the Influenza pandemic, and World War I.

In the 1960s and 1970s Long Beach's aquatic Olympic legacy continued with the construction of the Belmont Plaza Pool, 1968 and 1976 U.S. Olympic Trials, and multiple Long Beach participants in the 1972 Games. During these years, turmoil both at home and abroad raged, but that did not diminish the spirit of Olympism. A student massacre in Mexico City (1968), hostages and death in Munich (1972), and an economically devastating Olympiad in Montreal (1976), made host cities re-think bidding the Games.

Once again in 1984, the necessity for a financially responsible Games made pre-existing event spaces such as those built in the 1960s and 1970s through Redevelopment Agency projects a necessity. The Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center (Long Beach Arena, Exhibition Halls, and Performing Arts Center) and the archery range in El Dorado Park were used to draw Volleyball, Fencing, and Archery. The Shoreline Marina was a project funded by Tideland Agency money, and

was the host for not only Yachting events of the 1984 Games, but also many other professional sailing events.

During the research and editing of this report, there were a few topics that required extra attention and explanation:

Recreation Park Lake/s, Colorado (Street) Lagoon/s



Example of language used to identify newly created features in the San Gabriel River estuary, Long Beach Press

As we found in the Historical Society of Long Beach's City Manager collection (1923-1953), the estuary was dredged to create two separate bodies of water connected by a slough: the channel, and the "lake." The reason the historian used varying language to describe the same body of water—what we now call Colorado Lagoon—is based on historical accuracy in the way the local City officials and newspapers named the area at the time. It was an area in flux, under construction, and going through many iterations in both shape, depth, and size between the years 1923 and 1932. Today's Colorado Lagoon, is indeed the place where the aquatic competitions, diving platforms, and swim lanes were created. Dredging, according to

City Manager files, carried on between 1924 and 1925, completed by 1925 with amenities in place to hold the first pre-Olympic water carnival in 1925.



Newspaper examples of changing language when referring to the area

The Role of City Manager John E. Dever

The Historical Society of Long Beach quickly searched the City Clerk's files, but does not have access to all the primary source contracts between the City of Long Beach and the LAOOC for the 1984 Olympiad.

In all of the materials in the HSLB archive pertaining to 1984 Olympic contracts, the City Tideland Agency manager Phil Brubaker is named as the primary negotiator, with the presence of various city officials such as Mayor Tom Clark and Councilwoman Jan Hall during contract signing. The press releases also name Brubaker, however HSLB found no physical contract to prove nor disprove these sources. What is certain, is that there were multiple contracts signed for the event spaces, and sub-contracts to provide things like security, concessions, construction, rentals, etc.

Newspaper reports also indicate that City Manager Dever was given the authority to negotiate by City Council through a vote, but HSLB cannot at this time confirm that he was the negotiator of any specific contracts. Permits provided by the office of the City Clerk reveal that City Manager John E. Dever signed two LAOOC and City permits.

Resources for further research suggested are the City Clerk files 1979-1984, and the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee records, 1978-1984 held at UCLA Special Collections.

The Traffic Circle



Proposed solution to ease traffic in Long Beach, Long Beach Press-Telegram, November 8, 1931

Although there is a possibility city officials used the traffic from the Olympic events of 1932 as talking point for creating the traffic circle, there is no direct evidence in the City Manager files or secondary sources to support the argument that the traffic circle was specifically commissioned for the Olympiad. In fact, the traffic circle did not open to traffic until 1935, with construction dates from 1932-1934.

Construction and planning were performed by the California Highway Commission: Werner Ruchti, designer; William J. Fox, Chief Engineer; Charles H. Diggs, Director of Planning (despite rumors, none of them were killed in the traffic circle). At times it was called the Alamitos Circle (1931 NOV 8), Cerritos traffic circle (1935 MAR 19), and original streets that combined were State Street, Ximeno Avenue, Cerritos Street, Hathaway Street, and Los Coyotes Diagonal (Roswell).

Originally conceived to ease the burden of traffic between cities south and north of Long Beach, as well as the extreme increase in Long Beach's population (fastest growing in the nation at one point), the traffic circle was engineered to combine the traffic from five streets and provide an outlet to each street without including the "dangerous" left-hand turn.

RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the goals of the Historical Society of Long Beach is to connect people to place, and place to history. The following recommendations celebrate Olympic events held in Long Beach, Olympic Legacy with historical reference, the extraordinary spaces of Long Beach, and the communities that made it possible.

From Natural Estuary to Aquatic Capital: Designation at Marine Stadium



PROPOSAL: A monumental piece of art, sizeable and impactful, able to be viewed from afar in 360-degree views and interpretive sign that contains historical context provided by Historical Society of Long Beach.

BACKGROUND: Currently, there is a sign in disrepair, triangular in shape, on the east side of the channel that stands approximately 15 feet tall with white signage and lettering "MARINE STADIUM" and the City of Long Beach Parks, Recreation, and Marine logo. There is also an in-ground State Department of Parks & Recreation Historical Landmark Number 1014 situated on the east side of the channel in a small

outcropping, only discoverable with GPS coordinates, extreme familiarity with the area, or completely by chance.

SUGGESTION: A monumental piece of art that aligns with the standards of the Arts Festival of Long Beach, 2028, be placed near or combined in some way with the large Marine Stadium sign. The structures referred to in the Arts Festival study on the CSULB campus evoke grandeur and durability—two of the cornerstones of Marine Stadium. A massive dredging created the channel, a solidarity of community and leadership provided the funding and people-power. A sculpture that celebrates the U.S. rowing victors of 1932 should be accompanied by lights for viewing at night along the waterfront, and interpretive sign that contains historical context provided by Historical Society of Long Beach.

A Yachting Legacy: Shoreline Marina to Marine Stadium

PROPOSAL: Create a dedicated historic path with informational signage along the pre-existing walking path on the beach. Add voiceover and a self-guided tour, possibly from Belmont pier to Marine Stadium. Explain what the different Yachting events are, and 2028 water events with a nod to Belmont Plaza and Olympic trials along the way. Signage can be in-ground style such as plaques and cement scoring at Rosie the Riveter Park, upright/above ground such as the interpretive signage at the El Dorado Nature Center, or a combination of the two.

Revitalizing A Downtown: The Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center



PROPOSAL: A monumental piece of art, sizeable and impactful, able to be viewed from afar and interpretive sign that contains historical context provided by Historical Society of Long Beach near the Belmont Pier and beach path.

BACKGROUND: This photo is taken in front of the Terrace Theater.

SUGGESTION: Build one structure located near the same space the original wayfinding system was erected. It should include Volleyball and Fencing representation, such as is shown in the above photograph, and include new events such as Sport Climbing or other 2028 events to be held in the area. Lighting, banners, and other objects can be combined to represent the events as well as the “Festive Federalism” of the 1984 Games. Depending on where the structure is located and its size, it could be seen from as far away as Ocean Boulevard and Shoreline Drive. Historical narrative from HSLB should accompany the structure.

Breathe Shoot Repeat: El Dorado Park's Archery Range Stands the Test of Time



PROPOSAL: Grand signage over the entrance to El Dorado Park, Area II, a monumental piece of art, sizeable and impactful, able to be viewed from 360 degrees, and interpretive sign that contains historical context provided by Historical Society of Long Beach.

BACKGROUND: El Dorado Park is unique among municipal parks in the nation, but truly one-of-a-kind with the addition of this range. Spectators were incredibly impressed with the beauty of the park, and surprised at how boring the archery events were. Perhaps the most interesting thing to happen was the skunk under the concession stands that held up the games.

SUGGESTION: With the 2028 Olympics on the horizon and most of the upcoming events located closer to the Downtown/Shoreline area, adding another space for visitors to explore that ties to past Olympics can help provide respite to travelers. By introducing a large inviting sign and historically relevant Olympic facts through above-ground signage, people can enjoy the city from another important aspect of Long Beach—open green space.

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APPENDIX 1: TIMELINE

Olympic Timeline 1888-1985

1888	Long Beach first incorporation, build-up of township
1896	The modern Olympic Games revives in Athens, Greece
1902	The Pacific Electric railway between Los Angeles and Long Beach is completed, easing travel between L.A. and Long Beach
1902	Col. Charles Drake recognizes the potential of Long Beach attributes such as temperate climate and natural sandy beaches with easy ocean access; helps create an “amusement zone” that includes the bath house and Pike to draw tourists and residents to the beach and water
1906	Pacific Electric railway to Newport-Balboa completed; Pacific Electric rail lines follow the coastline, an eventual promotional point for Long Beach and the Olympic Games
1907	Naples Regatta: First recognized rowing event in Long Beach, Alamitos Bay; first four-oared race on the Pacific
1909	OCT 22: Virginia Hotel partners announce the lease of 175 acres of land from the Alamitos Land Company for 10 years at \$100/month and build a clubhouse, stables, and garages
1910	According to the U.S. Census, Long Beach is the fastest growing city in the nation
1910	Virginia Country Club signs another lease: 116 acres for the golf course
1920	Los Angeles realtor and businessman William May Garland and his recently incorporated group, the Community Development Association, pitch first Olympic bid (not accepted), using the Los Angeles Coliseum plans as a draw; Garland becomes part of the International Olympic Committee (IOC)
1921	AUG 31: A new Virginia Country Club is dedicated near the old Rancho Los Cerritos adobe
1923	City buys land for the proposed public Recreation Park “for almost every popular outdoor game or sport” including boating, swimming, and fishing
1924	Dredging begins to remove approximately 2,000,000 cubic yards of earth from the San Gabriel estuary. The process created a small lake (later named Colorado Lagoon) and one long channel that later became part of Marine Stadium
1924-1925	Promotion of Long Beach as part of an L.A. Olympic bid begins
1925	Fist Pre-Olympic Water Carnival of Southern California held on Labor Day at Alamitos Bay, swimming, aquaplaning, high diving, and horse swimming races; created by Long Beach Chamber of Commerce and the Aquatic Sports Committee, held until 1931; promoted vigorously by local AAU Commissioner Howard Cleveland
1925	16-year-old Bud Lyndon, Polytechnic High School student, wins the Pine-Belmont Pier swim sponsored by the Press-Telegram and the Recreation Department
1925	Long Beach Aquatic Sports Committee member and President of the Surf and Bay Club, M.R. Marston fight to bring the Olympics to the area to promote the city

1927	Los Angeles Xth Olympiad Committee formed by the Community Development Association
1929-1932	Long Beach City Managers work to bring Olympic events to the city: George L. Buck (1929-1930); Claude C. Lewis (1931); Edward S. Dobbin (1932)
1930	Legality of land use regulations for Recreation Park approved by Long Beach City Attorney Nowland Reid; assessment by General Manager and Chief Engineer of the Harbor Department, Roy McGlone, clears the Rec Park channel for boat racing
1930	Recreation Director Charles Hunt agrees to plant Palm trees around Marine Stadium as part of the Greater Los Angeles area's "look" and Mediterranean appeal
1930	Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios create a film showing preparations for the 1932 Olympiad, featuring the rowing course in Long Beach; show to IOC and Olympic Congress, national and international public circulation
1930 (MAR)	Long Beach City Council approves motion, construction and dredging commence at future site of Marine Stadium
1930 (MAY)	Garland sends final bid to IOC, IOC sends representatives to Long Beach to assess channel for rowing and sculling, Garland's bid is accepted; International Rowing Federation President Rico Fioroni approves channel
1930 (JUL)	More than 105,000 people attend the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) Swimming and Diving Championships held at Colorado Lagoon, with eight lanes and a high diving platform installed to Olympic standards
1931-1932	Recreation Commission President and Xth Olympiad committee member Clyde Doyle and Secretary of the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce Art Olinger work to promote Long Beach through the Olympics to build an international image, use U.S. Postal Service and uniform ink blot stamps; Chamber of Commerce President John H. Chamnes suggests \$36,260 budget approved for the Convention Publicity Committee,
1931	MAY 19: The Young Men's Division of the Chamber of Commerce hosts a gala at the Pacific Coast Club to promote Long Beach and the Olympics
1931	JUN 24: Long Beach City Council formally approves \$77,000 budget for dredging and building the Colorado Street Bridge (construction already in progress) JUN 26: Contract between the city and the Xth Olympiad Committee signed at Long Beach City Hall
1932	JUL 23: Marine Stadium is officially dedicated before a crowd of 90,000 including William Garland, IOC President Count de Baillet-Latour, Acting President of the International Rowing Federation Admiral Luigi Sambuy of Italy, and Long Beach Mayor A.E. Fickling
1932	JUL 30: Olympic Opening Ceremonies
1932	Olympic souvenir stickers created to help off-set effects of the Great Depression; A.A. Miller, Secretary of the Citizen's Unemployment Relief Committee, Raymond J. Moore, Chamber of Commerce, and the Long Beach Unemployment Bureau work together to devise a sticker selling/profit-sharing plan for unemployed Long Beach residents
1934-1935	Clyde Doyle battles for a share of the Olympic profits to cover construction costs; State Supreme Court rules in favor of Long Beach

1934	National Association of Amateur Oarsman hosts annual regatta at Marine Stadium, the first time to be held anywhere other than the east coast
1939	The Southern California Committee for the Olympic Games forms (SCCOG)
1940	Olympic Games cancelled
1944	Olympic Games cancelled
1948-1980	Los Angeles Olympic bids are unsuccessful, coming closest in 1976; because of the interest of so many U.S. cities during this time, the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) forms to vet bids before sending a formal bid to the IOC
1954	Construction on the J.H. Davies bridge approved to cross over Marine Stadium, shortening the usable length of the channel; opens to traffic after many years of delay in 1959
1962	Construction begins on what will become the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center, Long Beach Arena opens
1964	The Redevelopment Agency (RDA) forms, constructing some spaces that are used as Olympic venues
1967	LA76 created; Under the direction of Los Angeles Mayor Sam Yorty, the official committee to bring back the Olympics forms to campaign for a Los Angeles Olympiad in 1976; businessman and yachtsman John Kilroy named President, first bid to suggest private funding and selling viewing rights to fund the Games
1968	JUL 14-SEP 3: Olympic Trials are held in Long Beach; Men's and Women's Diving (Belmont Plaza Olympic Pool), Women's Volleyball (California State College at Long Beach), Women's Gymnastics (Long Beach Arena), Men's Swimming (Belmont Plaza Olympic Pool), Pairs and Fours Rowing (Marine Stadium), Men's and Women's Canoeing (Maine Stadium), Water Polo (Belmont Plaza Olympic Pool)
1972	John Argue named president of the SCCOG; Argue and L.A. Mayor Tom Bradley work to secure the 1984 Olympic bid
1972	El Dorado Park and archery range is built, securing a green space for Long Beach and thwarting efforts to bring Angel Stadium to the city
1977	City Tidelands Agency (Long Beach) created to oversee various waterfront projects and oil production in the harbor, Director Phil Brubaker prepares for Olympics; Exhibition Hall and Terrace Theater are completed
1977	MAY 12: L.A. City Council votes to move forward with the 1984 bid
1977	MAY 18: Mayor Tom Bradley sends the official request to the USOC
1977-1978	Los Angeles residents are surveyed by Field Research Company: approve Olympic Games in L.A., reject using tax dollars or public funding; Los Angeles City Council Charter Amendment "N" prevented city from using tax revenues to fund L.A. Olympics
1978	Los Angeles officials and IOC meet to negotiate conditions for bid; private organizing committee to be created by L.A. and USOC, the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (LAOOC)
1978 (JUN)	LAOOC assures USOC the games and infrastructure will be funded privately, no taxes, and without government assistance; USOC presents bid to IOC; L.A. is the only city to express interest besides Tehran, who later rescinds bid

1978	OCT 20: Mayor Bradley and IOC President Lord Killanin (Sir Michael Morris) sign the agreement allowing Los Angeles to host the 1984 Olympic Summer Games
1978	The Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center is completed
1979 (OCT)	Long Beach City Council votes to proceed with Yachting contract
1980-1984	Mayors Eunice Sato (1980-1982), Tom Clark (1982-1984), and Ernie Kell (1984-1994) work with the LAOOC
1980	MAR 24: First Olympic contract signed to hold Yachting events in Long Beach, LAOOC President Peter Ueberroth, Long Beach City Councilwoman Jan Hall, and Commodore Tim Hinshaw from the Southern California Yachting Association; MAY 29: Contract to hold Olympic Archery events at El Dorado Park signed; JUL 10: Contract to hold Olympic Volleyball events at the Long Beach Arena signed; Contract to hold Olympic Fencing events at the Exhibition Hall and Terrace Theater signed
1981	The Long Beach 1984 Committee, made up of Chamber of Commerce, community members, with Donna Cole as president, forms to prepare for and promote the 1984 games
1982 (MAY)	The Shoreline (Downtown) Marina and Aquatic Park project is completed
1982 (AUG)	Phil Brubaker (City Tidelands Agency Director) takes job as VP of Olympic Village Operations
1982	Construction and renovations begin in El Dorado Park for the 1983 World Archery competition
1983	MAY 17: Long Beach is formally recognized by the LAOOC as an "Olympic Neighbor"
1983	JUL 22: First issue of the Long Beach 1984 Committee News is published; committee creates the Olympic Neighborhood Program with a price tag of \$19.84 to join, and hosted other fundraising events such as the International Festival and Sand Sculpture Contest
1983 (JUL-AUG)	Olympic Class Sailing Regatta, National Archery Championships, International Men's Volleyball Tournament
1983	OCT 14-30: Pre-Olympic events showcasing Long Beach venues including International Women's Volleyball Tournament, the XXXII World Archery Championship, the Long Beach Boat Show
1984	"Operation Facelift" (directed by the Department of Public Works) and the Long Beach Alamitos Bay Beautification Project (Marine Bureau) inspires the community to landscape, update, paint, and decorate before the Olympic events; the Redevelopment Agency and Downtown Long Beach Business Alliance decorate the city with banners, bunting, pennants; Michael Russel serves as the LAOOC Look Coordinator for Long Beach
1984 (JUL)	Olympic Press Tour of Long Beach features the Queen Mary, the Spruce Goose, the Olympic venues, Long Beach Harbor, and the downtown RDA project areas
1984	JUL 26: After settling a parade permit fee dispute of \$25, the Olympic torch passed by Second Street and Pacific Coast Highway at approximately midnight, ending the relay at the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center

1984	JUL 28- AUG 18: Free concert series hosted by the RDA, including Rosemary Clooney, Ernie Andrews, Ildefonso "Pancho" Sanchez, and the Long Beach Municipal Band
1984	JUL 29: The first Olympic event, Volleyball, opens at the Long Beach Arena

APPENDIX 2: GALLERY EXHIBITION

Exhibition: Olympics on the Golden Shore

Includes: Ultraboard panels, 30x20 (6), 20x30 (4), 14x11 (5); Fabric, curved wall, double-sided 120x89x29; Fabric, hanging banner, single-sided 48x36, 36x42, 72x36; Vinyl, hanging banner, double-sided 72x36; Fabric, tension stands, double-sided 36x90 (4)

Artifacts do not travel, reproductions may travel; all design files will be available to the project funder

Dedicated digital page: <https://hslb.org/olympics-on-the-golden-shore/>

The Historical Society of Long Beach proudly presents Olympics on the Golden Shore part of our Olympic Legacy project supported by the City of Long Beach as we look ahead to the 2028 Los Angeles Games. To understand this legacy, we traced over a century of the Olympic movement from international origins to local implementation, revealing how the Games put Long Beach on the world's stage. Drawing from our archival collections, academic research, and journalistic accounts, we discovered gaps in our artifact holdings. A community call yielded invaluable items that now anchor our exhibition, bringing authentic voices and tangible history to visitors. Carefully selected photographs, graphics, and artifacts illuminate Long Beach's Olympic journey.

We highlight milestones in the 50-year campaign that secured the 1984 Games and showcase our city's contributions to Olympic trials, athletics, and aquatics competitions. For deeper exploration of athlete biographies and additional historical details, we encourage visitors to connect with the LA84 Foundation, *LB908* magazine, and the Long Beach Century Club—each offers unique perspectives and extensive resources about our Olympic legacy.

This exhibition illustrates the strategic planning and community spirit that made Long Beach an integral part of Olympic history.

GALLERY SPACE

Front of gallery, view through front window from the sidewalk

PHOTOGRAPH



DESCRIPTION

Tension stands (2), hanging banner (1); Newspaper article and photographs (archery, diving) **TRAVEL**

Inside front window, on riser



Back sides of above-mentioned tension stands and hanging banner; Subjects include: 1984 torch run and welcome, yachting (sailing); diving instructional; 1932 rowing,

Front of gallery,
south



Original artifact;
Sonotube
donated, part of
the Festive
Federalism
wayfinding
system of 1984
NO TRAVEL

Front of gallery,
south



Mixed artifact
and replica;
photographs
and flyers
calling for
community
participation in
pre-Olympic
and Olympic
events

Front of gallery,
middle



BACKGROUND
(right): Figure
dressed in a full
volunteer
uniform, jacket,
t-shirt, pants
with a souvenir
photobook
NO TRAVEL

Tension stands
(2), FRONT:
introduction to
the Olympic
project and
legacy (left),
locations of
Olympic events
of 1932 and
1984 (right)
TRAVEL



BACK:
Summary
panels of
chapters one
and two of the
Olympic Legacy
Report, 1984
on left and
1932 on right

Front wall of exhibition, north



Framed reprint of child's art project; decal of HSLB exhibition and research team

Middle gallery, north wall



North wall: Informational panels (5); maps and photographs, Pre-Olympic and Olympic 1932

TRAVEL

Center: Double sided curved wall (10 feet), 1932 Rowing (shown), 1984 Yachting (not shown)

TRAVEL

North wall,
insert



Artifact and
reproduction;
official Levi's
volunteer uniform
t-shirt

NO TRAVEL

framed article from
community
member about
attending both the
1932 and 1984
Olympics

East wall



Fabric banners (3),
hanging; Marine
Stadium aerial,
1932; worker
installing
decorations in the
Long Beach
Arena, 1984;
Aerial and
description of the
Convention and
Entertainment
Center, 1984

TRAVEL

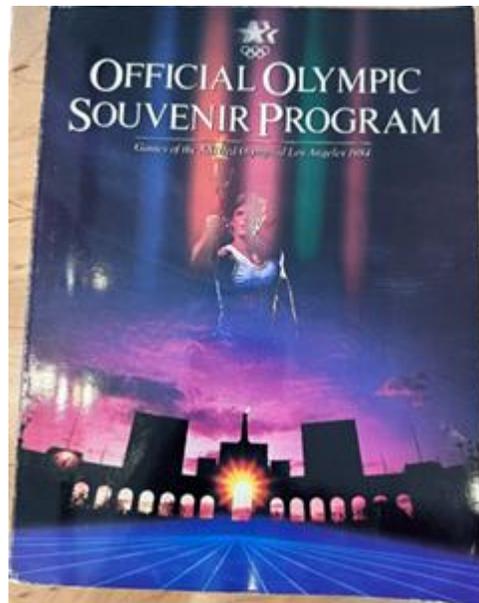
South wall



Artifacts; hanging banners (2); podium case with Sam the Eagle, official mascot of the 1984 Games and a reproduction press release
NO TRAVEL

Informational panels (2), 1984
TRAVEL

East counter



Book; program includes all official events, athlete biographies, biographical articles, and more
TRAVEL

South wall



Artifacts; Display cases, specialty items from 1932 and 1984 Olympic memorabilia; Pictured: Program, 1932; USPS envelopes used as promotional materials, 1932 and 1984; official letterhead (reproduction)
NO TRAVEL



Souvenir wine, unopened; vinyl record with the official music of the 1984 Olympics

Not pictured: coins, pins, crystal medallion, travel pass, tickets, flags, other memorabilia

NO TRAVEL

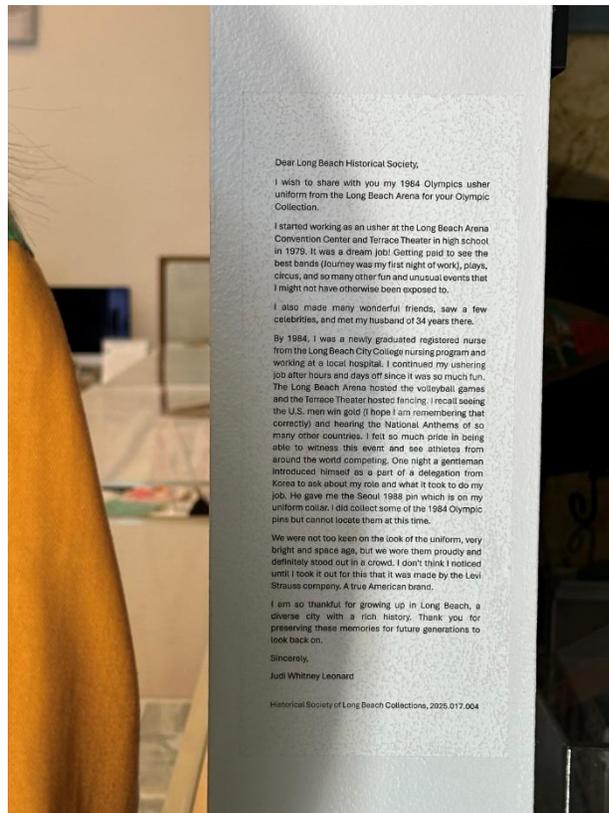
South wall



Informational panels (4), 1984;
TRAVEL

Display case, artifacts; souvenir programs, signed plate, bathing suit, athlete biographical, patches, mug, stickers, newspaper clippings
NO TRAVEL

South wall



Decal;
Correspondence from the donor of the volunteer uniform (partially pictured to the left, shown in background above)

Dear Long Beach Historical Society,

I wish to share with you my 1984 Olympics usher uniform from the Long Beach Arena for your Olympic Collection.

I started working as an usher at the Long Beach Arena Convention Center and Terrace Theater in high school in 1973. It was a dream job! Getting paid to see the best bands (Journey was my first night of work), plays, circus, and so many other fun and unusual events that I might not have otherwise been exposed to.

I also made many wonderful friends, saw a few celebrities, and met my husband of 34 years there.

By 1984, I was a newly graduated registered nurse from the Long Beach City College nursing program and working at a local hospital. I continued my ushering job after hours and days off since it was so much fun. The Long Beach Arena hosted the volleyball games and the Terrace Theater hosted fencing. I recall seeing the U.S. men win gold (I hope I am remembering that correctly) and hearing the National Anthems of so many other countries. I felt so much pride in being able to witness this event and see athletes from around the world competing. One night a gentleman introduced himself as a part of a delegation from Korea to ask about my role and what it took to do my job. He gave me the Seoul 1988 pin which is on my uniform collar. I did collect some of the 1984 Olympic pins but cannot locate them at this time.

We were not too keen on the look of the uniform, very bright and space age, but we wore them proudly and definitely stood out in a crowd. I don't think I noticed until I took it out for this that it was made by the Levi Strauss company. A true American brand.

I am so thankful for growing up in Long Beach, a diverse city with a rich history. Thank you for preserving these memories for future generations to look back on.

Sincerely,
Judith Whitney Leonard

Historical Society of Long Beach Collections, 2025.017.004



32



Advancing Our Olympic Legacy

Presented by the Historical Society of Long Beach
Julie Bartolotto, Executive Director
Jen Malone, Deputy Director and Archivist



84

PURPOSE & SCOPE

LONG BEACH'S ROLE IN SECURING THE 1932 AND 1984 OLYMPIC GAMES

DELIVERABLE 1: Long Beach Olympic Legacy Report

TITLE: ADVANCING OUR OLYMPIC LEGACY IN THE CITY OF LONG BEACH OLYMPIC LEGACY REPORT

The report is available on the Long Beach city website and at hslb.org

DELIVERABLE 2: Long-Term Commemorative Olympic Installation Recommendations

DELIVERABLE 3: Preview to LA 2028 in Long Beach, An Exhibition

TITLE: Olympics on the Golden Shore

24 TOTAL TRAVELING PIECES

- 1 10ft curved fabric display, double-sided
- 2 6x3ft hanging banners
- 2 3x6ft hanging banners
- 4 3x7.5ft tension fabric stands, double-sided
- 15 Sintra board text and graphic panels

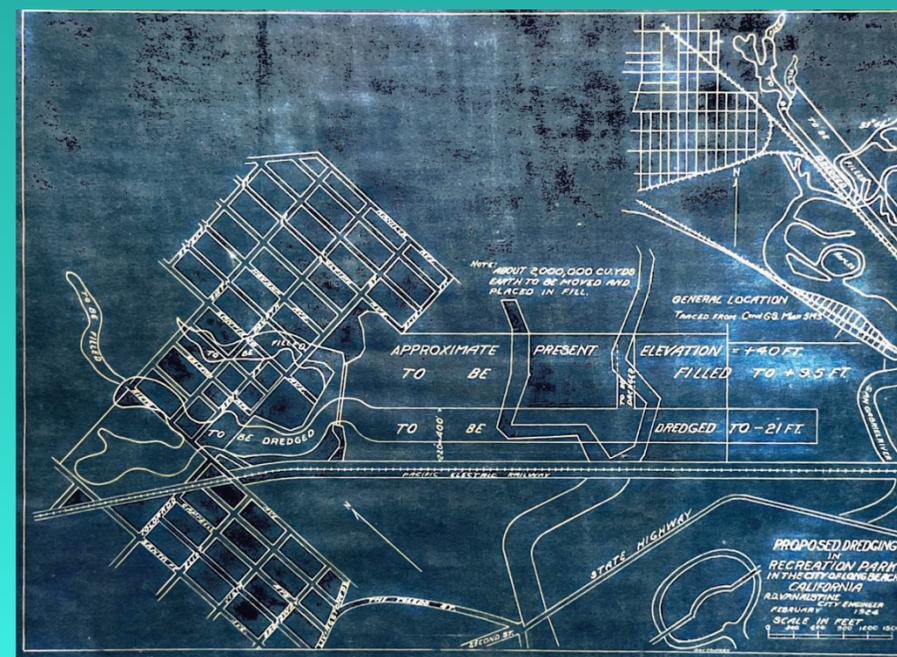


1932 Olympics in Long Beach

CHAPTER 1: 1932 OLYMPICS IN LONG BEACH

- Olympic Event: Rowing
- Marine Stadium: “Here you have the world’s finest course for one of the world’s greatest sports...I congratulate you on the perfection of this stadium. Never have I seen its equal.”

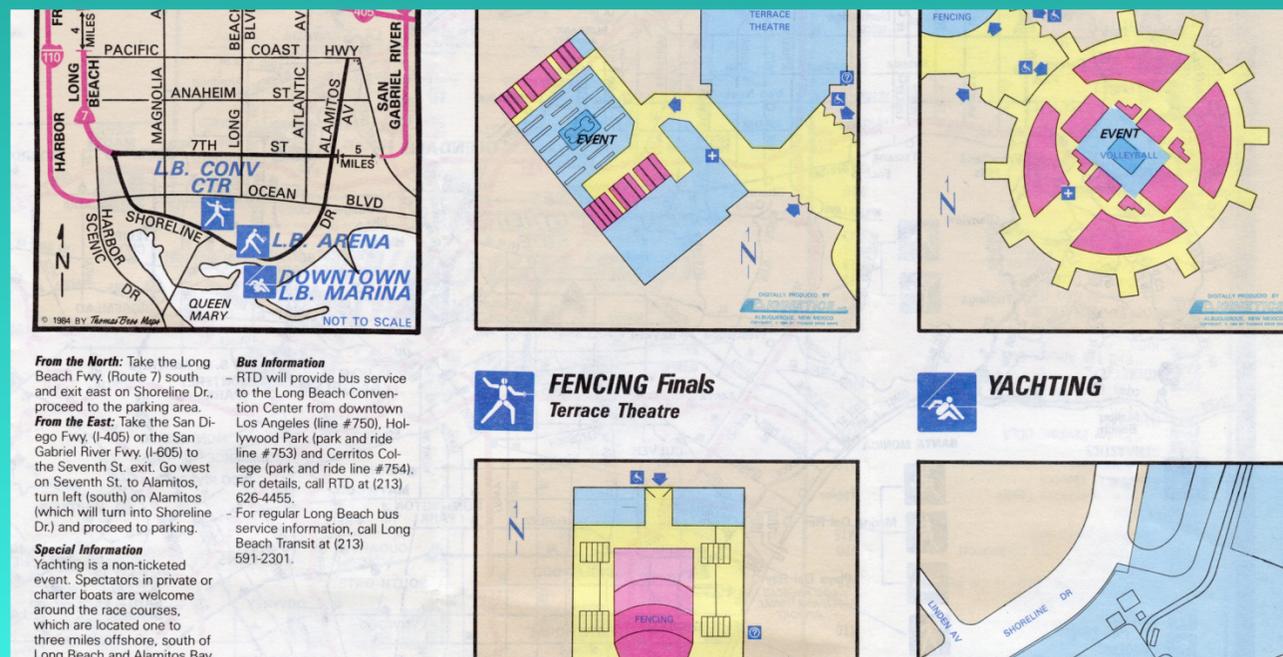
IOC President Count de Baillet-Latour



1984 Olympic Games in Long Beach

CHAPTER 2: OLYMPIC GAMES RETURN TO LONG BEACH

- Archery at El Dorado Park's Archery Range August 8-11 (Permit 16765)
- Fencing at the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center Exhibition Hall and Terrace Theater, August 1-11 (Permit 15492-006, 007)
- Volleyball at Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center, July 29-August 11 (Permit 15492-006, 007)
- Yachting in the harbor with dedicated facilities in the Downtown Shoreline Marina, July 31-August 11 (Permit 16769)

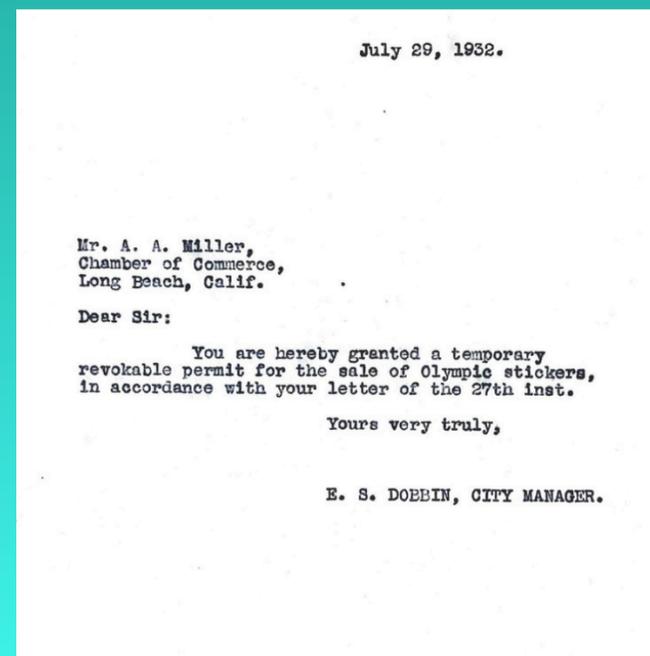


Leadership and Engagement

CITY OFFICIALS, REGIONAL PARTNERS, COMMUNITY

1932

City Officials: Long Beach City Managers George L. Buck, Claude C. Lewis, Edward S. Dobbin; City Attorney Nowland Reid; Harbor Dept. Chief Engineer Roy McGlone; Recreation Director Charles Hunt; Long Beach City Council; Clyde Doyle and Art Olinger; Long Beach Mayor A.E. Fickling;
Regional Partners: William May Garland/Community Development Association/Los Angeles Xth Olympiad Committee; MGM Studios;
Community Partners: Long Beach Chamber of Commerce; M.R. Marston/Long Beach Aquatic Sports Committee; A.A. Miller and Raymond J. Moore

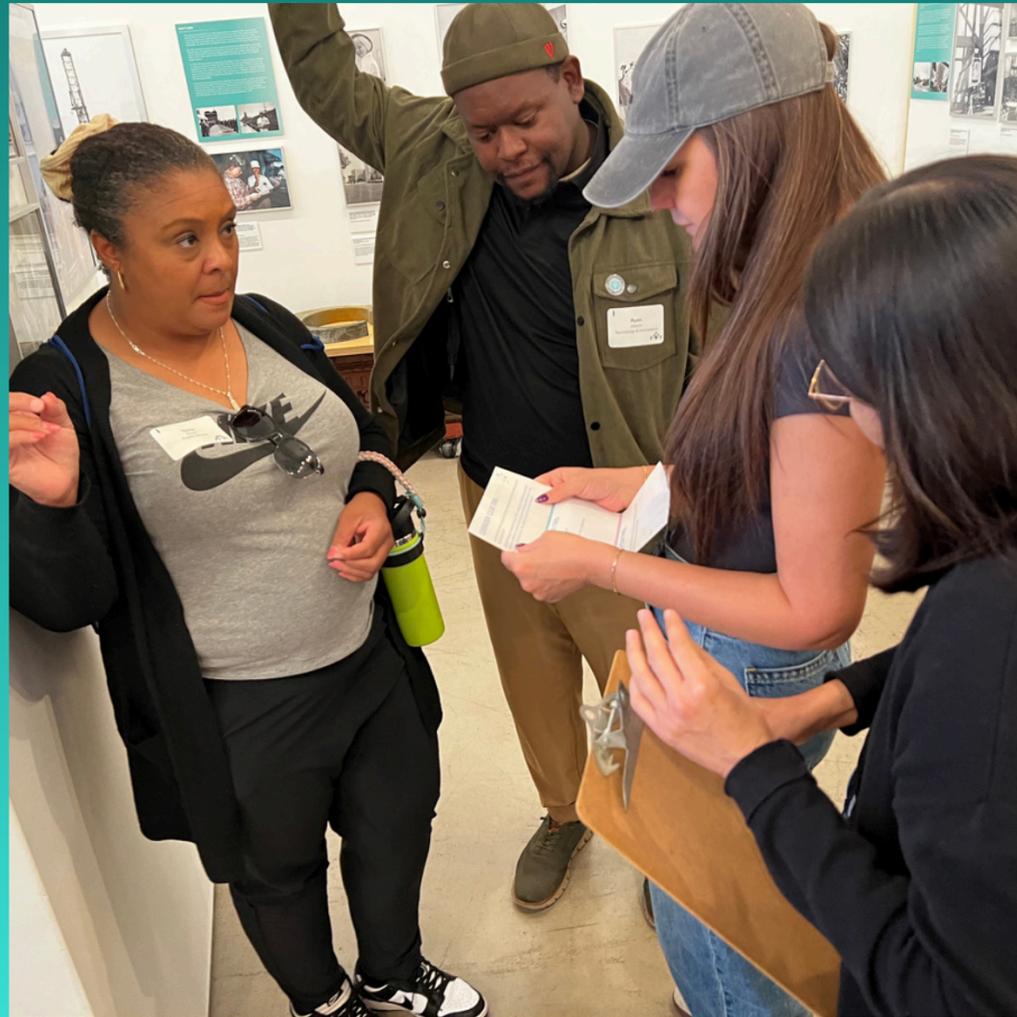


1984

City Officials: City Tidelands Agency, Director Phil Brubaker; City Manager John Dever; Long Beach City Council, Councilmember Jan Hall; Long Beach Mayors Eunice Sato, Tom Clark, Ernie Kell; "Operation Facelift," Department of Public Works; Alamitos Bay Beautification Project, Marine Bureau;
Regional Partners: Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley; John Argue/Southern California Committee for the Olympic Games (SCCOG); LAOOC President Peter Ueberroth;
Community Partners: Tim Hinshaw/So Cal Yachting Association; Long Beach 1984 Committee (Chamber of Commerce), Donna Cole, Olympic Neighborhood Program; RDA and Downtown Long Beach Business Alliance; Look Coordinator Michael Russel; concert series and press tour



Why this history was documented



ACCURATE

ACCESSIBLE

INCLUSIVE

INFORMATIVE

THIS MAP SHOWS HOW TO REACH MARINE STADIUM

Eighteen Cities to Participate in Floral Exposition

Entries for Dahlia Show Are Reported Coming in From Southland.

Eighteen cities of Southern California will be represented in the annual exhibit of the Long Beach Dahlia and Floral Society at the Municipal Auditorium September 8 and 9, it was stated by Gilbert W. Arnold, President, and manager of the show. Reservations for space received today indicate that the exhibit will be an all-Southland affair, with entries from as far north as Santa Barbara and as far south as Encinitas.

Among the cities represented to date are Torrance, Montebello, Ontario, San Bernardino, Pasadena,

ROUTES TO OLYMPIC ROWING RACES AND OFFICIAL STAFF OF WATERWAY.

Study the Above Map Carefully and Save Delay and Confusion in Reaching the Marine Stadium This Week. Holders of North Side Tickets Should Enter From the North Side and South Side Ticket Holders From the South. This is Important as Crossing Inside the Stadium Will Be Extremely Difficult. Shown Below is W. W. Monahan, Manager of the Rowing Races, and His Official Family. Left to Right, They Are W. W. Monahan, Manager; Miss Marjorie Greer, Secretary; W. W. Bell, Personnel Superintendent; Gordon Van Hook, Maintenance Superintendent; Miss Harriett Hermann, Secretary; W. H. Wilde, Assistant Manager; O. S. Thomas, Captain of Course Patrol, and N. M. Murray Jr., Boathouse Manager.

Visit the Historical Society of Long Beach



Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 1-5 PM
Thursday 1-7 PM
Saturday 11 AM -5 PM

www.HSLB.org

4260 Atlantic Ave
Long Beach 90807