

# Playhouse District **PROPERTY PULSE**



**MARCH 2018**

## Business Feature

### EL PORTAL MEXICAN AND YUCATAN RESTAURANT

El Portal Restaurant's 24 years is a lifetime in the restaurant industry, and reflects how a positive business environment can support growth. Offering traditional and innovative Mexican and regional Yucatan food, El Portal is a landmark in the Playhouse District. Abel Ramirez, the founder/owner of El Portal, says, "As one of the founders of The Playhouse District Association (PDA), I have very happily seen growth in this area I never dreamed of in such a short time! Our restaurant's success is due to our location, offering honest to goodness fresh & authentic food at competitive prices, and definitely our continuous involvement with the Pasadena community which benefits many in various ways."



Abel notes the presence of what visitors and residents would need on a daily basis, including art, theatre, fine shops, and, of course, restaurants. "Our district of Culture, Commerce and Community is truly that. Potential investors will not want to miss the opportunity to be part of us, of a continually progressing District."

On April 6th & 7th, the restaurant will be celebrating with its customers its 24th anniversary! And also remember to visit Vanessa's and Yahaira's Cafe's located in the same Arcade Lane building.

695 E. Green St., Pasadena, CA 91101 | (626) 795-8553

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**CONGELATO ARTISAN ITALIAN GELATO**

A good sign of a vibrant business area is not only the presence of long-term anchors, but where new business are hatching.

Congelato Artisan Italian Gelato, celebrating only its second month in the Playhouse District, serves Italian gelato, gourmet coffee, cakes and pastries. Husband and wife owners Roberto & Catiuscia Toppi arrived from Rome, Italy 10 years ago with their young children and have been Pasadenans since. So they know their gelato and coffee - you can taste it!



*“We really feel this is the best area of Pasadena. We love Colorado Boulevard, the Rose Parade, and the many friendly people who walk here. The area feels alive. It’s the best for our type of business.”*

From Rome, Italy, that’s saying something!

Congelato Artisan is located on Colorado Boulevard directly across from the Target store.

748 E. Colorado Blvd, Pasadena, CA 91101 | (626) 345-5733

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## Property Market Insights

## RECENT TRANSACTIONS & OPENINGS



Kitchen United located at 561 E. Green Street, is available to be used by food and restaurant brands to produce fresh food solely for takeout, catering and delivery. They also provide kitchen space that can be rented by the hour to food truck operators, catering firms, restaurants in need of licensed preparation space, and entrepreneurs seeking to develop new food products or restaurant concepts.

Miso Robotics recently also moved in at 561 E. Green Street. Their mission is to revolutionize the restaurant and prepared food industries with innovative robotics and artificial intelligence (AI)

solutions, such as robotic kitchen assistants. "Flippy", one of their robotic kitchen assistants which has gotten international attention, is being used at Pasadena's Cali Burger restaurant.

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## LEASING & INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### 911 E. Colorado Blvd.

The historic 1926 Lieberg Building has 5300sf of prime space on the 1st floor available. Uniquely located both in the Playhouse District & financial area of Pasadena! Leasing: Cody Chiarella of CBRE (818) 502-6730 [cody.chiarella@cbre.com](mailto:cody.chiarella@cbre.com)



### 600 E. Colorado Blvd

Originally a United Artists Theatre, this historic 1932 art-deco building is seeking new creative office and/or retail tenants. 13,435 - 14,460 sf available. Near very popular restaurants such as Urth Caffe and Tender Greens.

For office use contact: Andrew Berk (323) 603-5075 or Chase Gordon (323) 603-5045 of [Avison Young](mailto:Avison Young) (323) 851-6666

For retail use contact Linnard Lane of Empire Realty Group: (310) 806-9380 [600ecolorado@gmail.com](mailto:600ecolorado@gmail.com)



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## PDA Activities on Behalf of Property Owners

## VISION FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION

As reported in the January 2018 issue of the Property Pulse, the PDA Board of Directors adopted a [Vision Framework document](#) after a nine-month public process to solicit ideas for catalytic projects and longer term/district-wide strategies to address opportunities and spur additional economic development activity. To help implement key ideas in the Vision Framework, the PDA Board at its March 28 meeting authorized to retain a team of consultants who will advise the PDA on strategic short-term decisions/opportunities and create detailed plans for various parts of the district. An initial focus will be to analyze parking demands and financing options along with design concepts to arrive at a preferred recommendation on the Union/El Molino - Banner Bank site (see more info, below). Additionally, other catalytic sites and a broader look at Playhouse District open spaces, paseos and streets will help inform future public investment decisions and direct input into the City's update of the Central District Specific Plan. Various events and milestones will be reported here and notified by email or other means as the work unfolds in the coming weeks.

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## Issues and Advocacy Updates

### UNION/EL MOLINO - BANNER BANK SITE

The City of Pasadena closed escrow recently on the purchase of the Banner Bank property on the northwest corner of Union and Oak Knoll and held a community meeting on February 22 to discuss the desirability for a new public open space on that site and possibly all or portions of the adjacent Union/El Molino municipal parking lot. Playhouse District businesses, property owners and residents



shared a range of opinions, with many expressing the recognition that the needs for open space along with parking should be addressed during the planning effort. As referenced above, the PDA is embarking on a research and design effort to determine the amount and configuration of parking needed to support economic vitality while balancing the recognized need and value of a new public space that could be transformative for the Playhouse District. The PDA anticipates preparing a recommendation by late June that could be delivered to City Council to help shape the public decision-making on this critical site.

### RALPH'S RECYCLING CENTER

After contributing comments and documentation of the conditions along Mentor Avenue near the recycling center behind Ralph's, the application to continue operation of the facility was denied at a public hearing, and the recycling center has since closed. After operating for over 17 years, the facility's closure signifies tremendous progress for a notoriously rubbish-filled corner of the Playhouse District, and has already reaped benefits for nearby property owners and visitors to the many important venues and establishments on Mentor Avenue. PDA Ambassador Guides continue their daily patrols throughout the area to ensure the newly clean conditions are maintained.

### UNION STREET CYCLE TRACK

The City of Pasadena will hold its initial public meeting on the design of the proposed Union Street Cycle Track on Wednesday, May 9 at 6:30 pm at Pasadena Presbyterian Church. You are encouraged to attend and share your concerns and preferences with the design team as they attempt to satisfy ambitions within the City's adopted General Plan Mobility Element with realities of driveway access, impacts to parking, pedestrian conflicts, and opportunities to capitalize on greater cycling access to the Playhouse District.

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Thanks to Mike Pashistorian for contributing content and research to this issue.



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