LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT
Steven J. Galasso

The Little Italy Association is a public benefit corporation, and the Board of Directors represents all segments of the community including large and small property owners, businesses, residents, Washington Elementary school and Our Lady of the Rosary Church. Our Board is a committed group of volunteers, numbering almost 30 people. Many Board members were born and raised in Little Italy, and they are the foundation for our district management corporation, serving as local visionaries to attract newcomers.

Over the past year, the Board of Directors and its Staff, New City America, have worked diligently to bring San Diego’s Little Italy to the forefront of local and national recognition with its public space developments, pilot programs and partnerships. The Association and its various Committees are moving forward on multiple fronts to make this neighborhood one of the most dynamic places in Southern California. Our successes can be measured by a new Little Italy Dog Park; public restrooms at Amici Park; the Piazza Famiglia, the new “Bookends” – a No-Railings Outdoor Seating pilot program; the interactive & historic mobile app; a new mobile-responsive website, and more!

Our location adjacent to the Bay, and most recently to the newly-opened grand County Park, makes this community the most sought after location for investment, living, work and enjoyment. We have attracted many new businesses, resulting in tens of thousands of new visitors, hundreds of new residents and hundreds of new employees. Little Italy residents now enjoy excellent restaurants, old and new, but at the end of the evening, they want to keep their windows open and enjoy their sleep – which provides the challenge of balancing new businesses with residents in the same area.

Though much of the community appears as a construction zone these days, the impact of the new projects and developments will have a long term positive affect on the growth of the neighborhood and a dramatic economic impact to the City as a whole.

The Little Italy Association’s events support and reinforce our mission to promote and preserve our historic neighborhood, created by the sweat and success of generations of Italian and Portuguese immigrants. Our efforts are tributes to their achievements, and the Association is building upon that foundation to establish our own legacy for the next generation.
We have mastered the art of celebrating the old and the new, merging this historic neighborhood with the latest technology to tell a story to residents and visitors alike. After being approached by Guru, a local state-of-the-art app developer, the Association embarked on a new venture to share the history of San Diego’s Little Italy with the public. The new, and free, Little Italy San Diego app was developed for the iTunes and Google Play Stores. It gives users a rich resource to navigate Little Italy’s businesses, special events, and points of interests, alongside special features like neighborhood service requests, augmented reality at four locations and interactive/video historical tours for all ages. San Diego’s Little Italy is the first neighborhood to have an advanced technology app of this kind and has proven, in just under a month, to be a winner for over 1,000 downloaders.

To keep up with advancements in web development and design trends, the Little Italy Board of Directors authorized staff to work with a nationally recognized site developer, GeoCentric, to develop a new face and interactive mobile-responsive website. The new website will showcase Little Italy businesses in a fresh new way with images, bios, and social media links - all while being an additional resource on special events, points of interests, and more. We are only as good as the input we receive from the Community, the resources we are able to generate, and the revenues we are able to raise. We are fortunate that we can combine vision, leadership and the advantage of time and place to create and enjoy this wonderful place we call Little Italy San Diego.

Steven J. Galasso
President
Little Italy Association

THE NEW PIAZZA FAMIGLIA

In November 2014, the HG Fenton company broke ground in the center of the community at India and Date Streets. After a one year negotiation with the Fenton Company, the City of San Diego and the Downtown Redevelopment Agency, the Association and Fenton designed, and are now building, our new central Piazza, the Piazza Famiglia, which will formalize the new town center of Little Italy.

The Piazza Famiglia will be a 10,000 square foot open plaza anchored by movable tables and chairs, a large fountain, and a permanent Christmas tree to be lit each year after Thanksgiving. The Piazza will become the main Piazza in Little Italy, supported by many smaller Piazzas throughout the community. This public space will be an international attraction and the 2 million dollar price tag on this public improvement will come from Development Impact Fees, approved by the San Diego City Council, and aggressive fundraising efforts by the Association’s Legacy Committee.

The Piazza will be built over 50 public parking spaces, similar to Yerba Buena Gardens in San Francisco and Post Office Square in Boston. The Piazza will also include 5 to 6 new restaurants which will face the Piazza and its multitude of new activities to be held nearly every weekend. The Piazza will be managed by the Little Italy Association and is scheduled to open in the Spring of 2017.
The Little Italy Mercato Farmers’ Market continues to thrive on five blocks of West Cedar Street stretching from Kettner Boulevard to Front Street, bringing food fresh from the farm to the streets of the city. Thousands of downtown residents shop each week for local meats, just picked fruits and vegetables, pastured eggs and bread fresh from the oven. They also enjoy interacting with their neighbors to the strains of live music.

Visitors from around the world include the Little Italy Mercato on their lists of things to see, encouraged by USA Today, the Toronto (Canada) Star, Japanese travel shows and Cooking Channel celebrities. They slurp sea urchin harvested from San Diego Bay, sample award winning local honey, and take home works of local artists and crafters. After the market they spill into the district’s restaurants. Mercato revenues help the Little Italy Association continue to improve San Diego’s finest neighborhood.

SOCIAL MEDIA SNAPSHOT & NEW LITTLE ITALY SAN DIEGO APP

San Diego’s Little Italy is making a big splash in the real and virtual world. Since the implementation of the contract of with Little Italy’s PR firm, Olive PR Solutions, Little Italy’s social media presence has grown tremendously and more than tripled on the various platforms.

In an effort to keep our neighborhood fresh and innovative, we have partnered with Guru, to create a new Little Italy San Diego app. The new app features:

- Exclusive Offers
- Interactive History Tours
- Augmented Reality
- Business Listings
- Parking
- Events
- Scavenger Hunt and more

Search Little Italy San Diego in iTunes and Google Play stores and download, for free, today.
NO LONGER CAGED TO DRINK OUTDOORS

For over 5 years, the Association has been working with the State of California ABC, SDPD Vice and elected officials to create a new pilot program in San Diego that allows restaurants to serve in an ABC-approved outdoor patio with bookends, no railings, and an approved delineation on the sidewalk. With the assistance of Assemblymember Marty Block and his staff, the Association was granted a case-by-case basis pilot program. The first business to have the program implemented is Little Italy’s newest vegan restaurant - Cafe Gratitude.

AMICI PARK’S NEW FUTURE

In early 2011, the Association’s Chief Executive Administrator, Marco Li Mandri, approached San Diego Unified School District’s Board Member, Scott Barnett, to resolve the ongoing problem of the children of Washington Elementary School and residents using the same playfield as a playground and dog run.

After 3 years of work, the Association entered into a 66-year lease to manage all of the peripheral areas of the school with the Unified School District Board of Directors. The Association Board, a public benefit corporation, was thereby authorized to design, fund and build improvements at Amici Park and the surrounding school grounds which include:

- The creation of a new no-leash dog run (opened Sept. 2015);
- Installation of new restrooms in the park, managed by the Association with a historic home donated by the H.G. Fenton Co. (opened in Nov. 2015);
- Upgrade of the basketball courts (scheduled for 2016);
- Upgrade of the lighting at Amici Park and improvements to the Bocce Ball courts;
- Creation of a new amphitheatre centered around the Piazza Stefano Grancini;
- Expansion of the hardscape of the park area on W. Date and State Streets;
- Creation of new public spaces surrounding the school where parents can wait for children leaving the school.

All and all, it has been a great partnership that has many decades of promise ahead. We want to thank Board Member Scott Barnett for his leadership in this effort, current Board President, Dr. Mike McQuary, for his ongoing support, Superintendent Cindy Marten for her leadership in this effort and the Boards of the Unified School District and the Little Italy Association for bringing this idea to fruition.

LITTLE ITALY RAISES MONEY FOR NEW DOG PARK

Years of negotiations and efforts, by the Little Italy Association staff and board, to create a dedicated off-leash dog park came to fruition this year.

An Indiegogo crowd funding campaign is projected to launch in the Spring of 2016. It will provide residents and dog lovers the opportunity to support the 2015 achievements. Donor perks will include dog portraits to obedience training sessions to permanent charms that will line the park fence with the names of supporters and their furry friends. But the real reward will be a first-class dog park equal to the level of the other amenities and services found in San Diego’s finest neighborhood.
DID YOU KNOW?!

LITTLE ITALY HAS...
14 Maintenance Employees
2 Pressure Washing Employees
that maintain the
48 Square-Blocks,
67 Acres, & 7 1/2 Miles of Frontage in
Little Italy

3 Landscaping Employees
that maintain
60 Hanging Baskets,
167 Corner Pots, & 1,100 Trees

15 Parking/Valet Employees

641,650 Dog Bags Used
that cost the Association
$10,944 a Year

44,154 Trash Bags Used
that cost the Association
$8,314 a Year

1,478 Graffiti Pieces Removed

THERE ARE...
2,123 Parcels

1,858 Property Owners

1,753 Condos

1,113 Apartment Units
510+ New Apartments Under Construction

Approx. 5,000 Residents

476 Business Licenses

944,969 SqFt of
Commercial Office Space

1,092 Hotel Rooms

166 Motel Rooms

27 B&B Rooms

LITTLE ITALY ASSOCIATION STAFF

The Little Italy Association contracts its administration to New City America, a leading firm in district management nationwide. New City America manages the cleaning and beautification; piazza development and management; land-use oversight; parking and transportation; relations with the City and County; and serves as staff to the Board and its committees. Little Italy Administrative Staff is as follows:

Marco Li Mandri
Chief Executive Administrator

Christopher Gomez
District Manager

Rosie DeLuca
Financial Manager

Shirley Zawadzki
Chief Operations Officer

Laura Li Mandri
Grants & Admin.

Monica Montes
Parking Program Mgr. & Admin.

Lici Martinez
MAD & Parking Personnel Mgr.

John Li Mandri
Public Space Design & Systems

**LITTLE ITALY CUMULATIVE RESIDENTIAL GROWTH**

*Projected Cumulative Residential Unit Growth by 2020: 3,809*

**LITTLE ITALY SALES TAX ACTUALS**
LITTLE ITALY EVENTS
EVERY SATURDAY
Little Italy Mercato
APRIL
10 / Gran Fondo San Diego
30 / Mission Federal ArtWalk
MAY
1 / Mission Federal ArtWalk
JUNE
11 / Washington Elementary VanGo!
17 / Taste of Little Italy
JULY
Every Saturday
Little Italy Summer Film Festival
27 / Little Italy State of the Neighborhood
AUGUST
Every Saturday
Little Italy Summer Film Festival
6 / Marine Band San Diego Summer Concert
SEPTEMBER
3-5 / Labor Day Stickball Tournament
OCTOBER
1 / Our Lady of the Rosary Mass & Procession
9 / Little Italy FESTA!
22 / The Bulls of St. Agata Charge Little Italy
28 / Trick-or-Treat on India Street
NOVEMBER
26 / Small Business Saturday
DECEMBER
3 / Little Italy Tree Lighting & Christmas Village
In the last year, San Diego’s Little Italy made it big in national news. The neighborhood has been recognized as a top travel destination, one of the best cultural neighborhoods in the U.S., a model neighborhood for creating a safe-urban community and home to some of the top events in the country on a regional, national and international level. The neighborhood has been featured in USA Today, Forbes, Wall Street Journal, Cooking Light, Storage Wars, Associated Press, NBC National News, Southwest Airlines, AFAR Travel Magazine, Toronto Sun, National Geographic, Los Angeles Times, examiner.com and more.


The Little Italy Association’s cohesive integrating public relations efforts and strong social media campaigns have successfully increased brand awareness of the Little Italy Association being the leaders behind San Diego’s Little Italy. With the growth of media exposure and a social media presence, San Diego’s Little Italy is considered the number one Little Italy neighborhood in the nation.

50+ MAGAZINE HITS
AAA Fall Travel
Modern Luxury
Ranch & Coast
Riviera
San Diego Magazine (Cover) ...and more!

60+ PRINT HITS
El Diario/La Prensa NY
San Diego Daily Transcript
San Diego Union Tribune
San Diego Union Tribune N&D
Los Angeles Times 
...and more!

45+ TV/Radio SEGMENTS
A&E: Storage Wars
National Geographic: Smart Cities
NBC 7/39
Rudy Maxxa Radio Show
Southwest Airlines
...and more!

215+ ONLINE MEDIA HITS
Alaska Air
Food Republic
Red Tricycle
Urbanist
USA Today - 10 Best
...and more!
LITTLE ITALY IS STILL GROWING WITH NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Since the kick-off of the revitalization of Little Italy in 1996, we have not slowed in growth and development; there was no difference to that statement in 2015. With several projects, large and small, underway and several new projects projected to break-ground/open in 2016, Little Italy is still making room for new residents and businesses.

On the horizon in 2016, we will see the following developers: H.G. Fenton Company, McMillan, CityMark Development, and others, there will be an additional 510+ residential units available for rent. Within a majority of these developments, the residential units will be accompanied by commercial space on the ground floor.

The Little Italy Association’s Project Review Committee is very focused during the review of these projects to ensure that they fit within the community and create more character for the neighborhood. The Committee reviews materials, landscaping, facade break-up, public space, and more.

If you are interested in these projects or future developments, please email our District Manager, Chris Gomez, at chris@littleitalysd.com or call the Office at 619-233-3898.