

Local Group Proposes Cambodia Town Designation For Stretch Of Anaheim Street

Long Beach Has Largest Expatriate Cambodian Population In The World

By Gil Cohen
Staff Writer

A local group is proposing a commercial stretch of Anaheim Street in Central Long Beach be officially designated 'Cambodia Town' in

honor of the city's Cambodian residents, who make up the largest expatriate Cambodian community in the world.

It's estimated that from 30,000 to 50,000 Long Beach residents are of Cambodian origin - most of them having fled their war-ravaged homeland between 1978 and 1985, or being the children or grandchildren of refugees.

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'Cambodia Town' Designation Sought

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According to Pasin Chanou of the Cambodia Town Initiative Task Force, nearly 70 percent of the businesses located on the segment of Anaheim Street between Atlantic Avenue and Junipero Avenue are Cambodian-owned. Although some Cambodians have moved out of the working-class neighborhood over the years, many remain there, he said.

Having a Cambodia Town would "be a great honor to the Cambodian community in Long Beach, which represents close to 10 percent of the population in Long Beach," Chanou said.

Another objective of the designation, he said, is to attract tourists and others who don't normally frequent the area and, in turn, help the street's businesses. Chanou has said that he and others have spoken with the Long Beach Redevelopment Agency about potential help to revitalize the area.

Chanou also believes that Cambodia Town could create a positive image for Cambodian youth in the city.

The proposed Cambodia Town is split between Long Beach's 4th and 6th City Council Districts. Chanou said that 6th District Councilmember Laura Richardson is a strong supporter in the city government for creating Cambodia Town, adding that

CAMBODIA TOWN

		Pacific Coast Hwy		
	Bldg	Ave	Ave	Ave
Long Beach		Atlantic Ave	Ave Anaheim St	Junipero Ave
		Alamitos	7th St	Cherry

The thick, dark line along Anaheim Street represents the area proposed to be recognized as Cambodia Town. (Map not to scale)

1st District Councilmember Bonnie Lowenthal, whose district borders the segment's Atlantic Avenue end, is also very supportive. Lowenthal has "always been a good friend of the Cambodian community," Chanou said.

His task force is working with the Cambodian-American Chamber of Commerce to try to convince the city council to officially adopt the designation. Richer San, also of the Cambodia Town Initiative Task Force, and a board-member of the Cambodian-American Chamber of Commerce, said last week that the two groups will wait until after today's (April 13) city council elections to further promote their cause to the council. Certain candidates running for the 4th and 8th district seats are expected to support the Cambodia Town initiative, San said, and if they win, he believes that the initiative could garner the five-vote

council majority that it needs to become official.

According to Chanou, the task force has collected about 2,000 signatures from local business owners and residents, including Latinos and African-Americans, in support of the Cambodia Town initiative.

Chanou, the task force member, conceded that some opposition exists from non-Cambodian business owners in the area to naming the area Cambodia Town. Such opposition has helped impede the initiative in the past.

"Some Hispanic business owners have said: 'I'm not Cambodian; does that mean you guys are going to kick me out of this Cambodia Town?'" Chanou said. "We certainly don't have that kind of thought at all. Cambodia Town is just a symbolic name and that could include Hispanic businesses in that area. We have no intention of kicking anybody out; we don't have any legal authority to do that. It's just a symbolic name for marketing purposes. I could draw business to that area and certainly we hope that everyone in that region would benefit from that, including Hispanics or African-Americans or whites or [anybody else]."

Chanou also acknowledged that concerns have been raised about some members of the Cambodia Town Initiative Task Force who don't even live in the city.

"Some members in our group do not live in Long Beach," said Chanou, himself a Long Beach resident since 1979. "These [people] started in Long Beach, but as they became more successful, they could afford to move out of [Central] Long Beach to better areas . . . When they became successful, they bought houses in Cerritos and so on. [But] they still have a lot of friends and family living in Long Beach."

Chanou's group was formed in 2001. Asked why a Cambodia Town initiative wasn't introduced years before that, as the Cambodian community has been a feature of Long Beach for many years now, Chanou said that he believes the community had to start "maturing" first.

"We all came as refugees," he said. "We had a lot of learning to do."

He added that there is no precedent in Long Beach for a designated cultural enclave, such as Chinatown or Thai Town in Los Angeles.

"It makes the job a lot harder because we

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NEWSWATCH

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From left to right are: Kenneth T. So; Richer San; Rosana Chanou; her husband, Pasin Chanou; and Danny Vong, all members of the Cambodia Town Initiative Task Force, posing in front of Vong's business, Kirirrom Jewelry, on a stretch of Anaheim Street in Central Long Beach which the group is trying to convince the city council to officially designate 'Cambodia Town.' According to the task force, nearly 70 percent of the businesses on Anaheim Street between Atlantic and Junipero avenues are owned by residents of Cambodian descent. San and Vong are also members of the Cambodian-American Chamber of Commerce, which is working with the task force to further the cause of the proposed Cambodia Town. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Adam Faure)

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are the first group to try to do that [in Long Beach]," he said.

Chanou said that the Long Beach Cambodian community probably started with a group of Cambodians who went to California State University, Long Beach in the 1960s. The community grew rapidly as these students' familiarity with Long Beach helped make the city a magnet for Cambodians fleeing the "killing fields" of the Pol Pot regime in the late 1970s. Vietnam opposed Pol Pot; Vietnamese troops occupied Cambodia in 1978-1979, ousting Pol Pot and his ruling party, the Khmer Rouge, and installing a puppet government. In the chaos that followed as the Khmer Rouge fought to regain its power, more refugees streamed out of Cambodia, with many ending up in Vietnam, Thailand, Australia and the U.S.

release before the city embarks on a series of budget workshops next month, according to Deputy City Manager Suzanne Mason. The survey compares compensation of Long Beach municipal employees to those of other California cities and to the salaries of comparable workers in the private sector.

City staffers have been poring over the report's numbers, verifying the report's accuracy and consistency, Mason said. The survey was undertaken for the city by Sacramento-based CPS Human Resources. The City of Long Beach commissioned the survey in the wake of its budget crisis.

Long Beach BUSINESS JOURNAL

តមកពីទំព័រទី ៣៩



ជីវិតក្នុង Cambodia Town

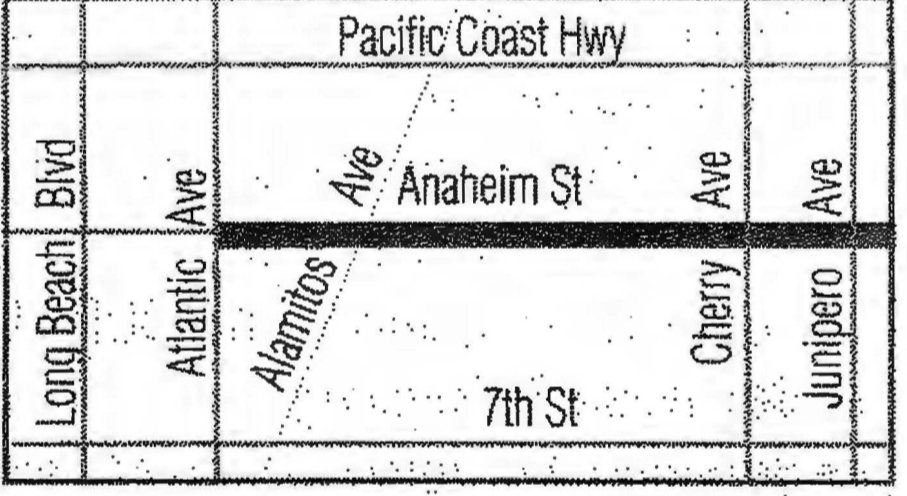
ប្រតិបត្តិការនៅក្រុងស្រុកកំណើតវិញ

រឿងទាំងឡាយនៅទីក្រុងប៊ិច ឬរឿងដ៏ចម្លែកមួយនេះទើបតែចុះនៅសារពត៌មាន Long Beach Business Journal, Marc 30-April 12, ដែលបង្ហាញអំពីសមាសភាពពលករកម្ពុជាដែលសម្រាប់ដួងរូបរបស់វាដែលបង្ហាញមកនេះ ធ្វើឲ្យយើងភ្ញាក់ផ្អើលជាខ្លាំង តើពួកនេះជាគ្រូកុំឬម៉ែ? ម្នាក់រស់នៅត្រង់ទៅស្រុកខ្មែររាប់ឆ្នាំ បែបអស់ផ្លូវដើរស្រាប់មកស្រលាញ់ខ្មែរឡើងវិញជាអ្នករស់នៅទីក្រុងប៊ិចរាប់ឆ្នាំ ម្នាក់ទៀតមានស្នាមមាត់ក្រអួតមួយហើយមិនទាំងឡាយទើបទៅនៅទីក្រុងប៊ិចផង...នេះគឺស្រលាញ់ខ្មែរយូរមែនដែរ! បើទាក់ទងគ្រាន់តែព្រះនាមស្តាប់ទៅស្មានតែជាកូនស្តេចម៉ែ...ហ្នឹងគឺស្រលាញ់ខ្មែរផ្តាច់...ជីវិត។



From left to right are: Kenneth T. So; Richer San; Rosana Chanou; her husband, Pasin Chanou; and Janny Vong, all members of the Cambodia Town Initiative Task Force, posing in front of Vong's business.

បានជាដូច្នោះ ដំណើរទាមទារឲ្យសាលាក្រុងប៊ិចទទួលស្គាល់ផ្លូវអាណាហ៍មថាជាកូនខ្មែរនេះ បើលោកតែបានសំរេចទៅវិញ នោះកូនខ្មែរចាំតែទទួលបានសំណើពីក្រុមហ៊ុនសាសន៍ដទៃទៅ ។ តើយើងមានសំណើអ្វីខ្លះដែលថ្មីមួយយើងជំពាសមេឃទាមទារទឹកខ្មែរមួយ ដែលជនជាតិខ្មែរ ឡា-ទីណូ សាសន៍ស្បែកស ហ្នឹងពិណ្ណ រស់នៅទីនេះមិនក្រោម១០០ឆ្នាំមកហើយនោះ? តើហានពាណិជ្ជកម្មតាមផ្លូវអាណាហ៍មដែលពេញទៅដោយសាសន៍គេផ្សេងៗទៀត ដូចជា ស្ប៉ាទីស្ត, យូន, ចិន, កូរ៉េ, ថៃ គេយល់ថាម៉េចដែរ? ដូចសំណើពាណិជ្ជករស្ប៉ាទីស្ត ម្នាក់ដែលសួរថា "បើនេះជាស្រុកខ្មែរ គឺអ្នកឯងនឹងដេញខ្ញុំចេញមែនទេ?" ដូច្នោះសាសន៍ដទៃមិនអាចទ្រាំទ្រ ទទួលបានការអានយ៉ាងឬក្រអឺតក្រមពីសំណាក់សាសន៍មួយទៀតបានទេ ។



ក្នុងរយៈពេល១៥ឆ្នាំកន្លងមកនេះ ក្នុងពេលដែលកូនខ្មែររាប់សិបនាក់ត្រូវរកជាញឹកញយហាត់រើសមុខ ហើយដែលអាជ្ញាធរព្រៃឈើយកឆ្នើមមិនរកមុខយាតករឲ្យផងនោះ តើអ្នកស្នេហាខ្មែរឡើងវិញទាំងអស់នេះ មានដែលបានស្រែកទាមទារយុត្តិធម៌ឲ្យកូនខ្មែរទាំងនេះទេ? ឬក៏អ្នកទាំងនេះជាប់រាល់ហាត់យុទ្ធសិល្ប៍វិទ្យុបច្ចុប្បន្នឲ្យមឡើម ឬក៏អ្នកទាំងនេះដេកក្នុង ខ្ទម (coma) រស់ក៏មិនរស់ស្លាប់ក៏មិនស្លាប់?

យើងមិនដែលឃើញសកម្មភាពព្រហ្មទណ្ឌរបស់មនុស្សមួយក្រុមដែលអាចធ្វើឲ្យមានគ្រោះកម្រិតដល់មនុស្សមួយនាក់រៀបរយទេ ហើយយើងក៏មិនដែលឃើញអាកប្បកិរិយា ក្រអឺតក្រមរបស់មនុស្សស្រុកកំណើតពេញមាត់ អាចម៍ដទៃមួយក្រុមដែលធ្វើសកម្មភាពរួមដោយគ្មានការចូលរួមដៃគ្នា ពិភាក្សាគ្នាអំពីផលវិបាក (negative consequence) ដែលអាចកើតមានឡើងពីសកម្មភាពនោះ។ ក្រៅពីហត្ថលេខាពីរពាន់នាក់ និងការគាំទ្រពីសមាគមពាណិជ្ជកម្មខ្មែរ និងចៅសង្កាត់ស៊ីតៃខ្មែរពីររូប ខ្មែរមួយនាក់គឺគ្មាននរណាបានដឹងរឿងនេះបានច្បាស់លាស់ទាល់តែសោះ។ បើអ្នកនាំអាចបង្កើតរឿងនេះបានក៏វាពីបរិក្ខារ Redevelopment Agency ក៏ខ្មែរ

មួយនាក់នេះអាចបានដឹង (ត្រូវតែអ្វីនៅក្នុងអតិថិភាព លោកម៉ាបាស់ ប៉ែន បុក អុកណាន់ដា បានប្រើយុទ្ធសិល្ប៍កំលែមនេះម្តងហើយ)... បើសាសន៍ដទៃមានគំរោងការណ៍ដើម្បីបំផ្លិចបំផ្លាញខ្មែរដោយឥតវិសមុខ ក៏ខ្មែរមួយនាក់នេះនៅតែអត់បានដឹង... ពីព្រោះថាក្នុងសណ្ឋានចិត្តខ្មែរទៅគឺគ្រាន់តែចង់រស់នៅសន្តិសុខជា មួយអ្នកជិតខាង ចង់បានឃើញកូនចៅរស់នៅដោយគ្មានកម្រិតពីសំណាក់ក្រុមហ៊ុនប៉ុណ្ណោះ ។ ម្ចាស់គ្រឹះកំណែប្រែ...សូមឲ្យសេចក្តីស្នេហាខ្មែរឡើងវិញដំឡើងរបស់ញោម ពោរពេញទៅដោយកំណប់ទ្រព្យចូលច្រឡំច្រឡំ ទិចញោមកុំបីអាក់ខានឡើយ ។
