

Long Beach

BUSINESS JOURNAL

December 7-20, 2010

A Conversation With . . .

City Of Long Beach Mobility Coordinator Charles Gandy



Long Beach Mobility Coordinator Charles Gandy assisted in the green bike "sharrow" lane project on 2nd Street in Belmont Shore. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Thomas McConville)

Long Beach Mobility Coordinator Charles Gandy gets around. The consultant, speaker and lecturer on active living and livability is slowly transforming the International City into a bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly community through the political will of the city council, the culture change associated with sustainability efforts and his own drive to achieve the city's vision.

Gandy came to Long Beach from a life split between Colorado and Texas. He earned a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Texas, Austin, in 1980 and began his work in mobility advocacy and community design after short stint in the Texas House of Representatives. Gandy, who calls himself a "recovering politician," became the first executive director of the Texas Bicycle Coalition, now called Bike Texas, from 1990 to 1994. His work with the coalition led him to advocate on a national platform through the Bicycle Federation of America, where he became the director of advocacy programs from 1994 to 1998. He traveled the U.S., launching citizen-based advocacy groups, trained advocates in all 50 states and became a certified Safe Routes to School instructor.

He spent a significant portion of the 1990s in California, and found the state to be a good fit for a guy who says he thrives on innovation and change. Gandy started his own private livability consulting business in 1998, through which he worked for government agencies, community organizations, design firms and media outlets nationwide.

As the mobility coordinator, Gandy has been a leader of the city's Bike Long Beach program over the past 18 months. Projects he has worked on include the award-winning "sharrow" experiment, bike safety and education for elementary and middle school kids, pedestrian safety courses for older adults, installing bike racks all across the city and the "protected bike lane" pilot program. He currently serves on the board of the California Bike Coalition, which advocates for bike education and safer conditions for bicyclists in the state.

Gandy sat down with the Business Journal Publisher George Economides and Staff Writer Tiffany Rider to talk about the opportunities Long Beach has to become one of the most walkable and bicycle-friendly cities in America.

LBBJ: How did you land in Long Beach?

Gandy: I was looking for another big adventure and proverbial mountain to climb. When Long Beach said that it wanted to be one of the great bike cities in America, and at that time had raised \$12 million from outside Long Beach sources to do that and they were looking for help to invest that money wisely, I saw that as a provocative opportunity. I wanted to get to California from Austin, Texas. I lived in Colorado and Texas all my life. Having done a national gig for a few years in the '90s, I was out here a lot. I found California to be an exciting place to be for guys like me who thrive on innovation and change. It looked like a good fit, so my response to them was if you're serious about this political commitment, I'm interested in helping you achieve your vision...I've been here for a year and a half.

LBBJ: Had you been here before?

Gandy: I was here two weeks after the Bikestation opened in '96. That put Long Beach on the map as a city that was looking at things differently. Then, [one] year, I was out in California 11 times So yes, I had been out here and saw Long Beach as a military base in its previous iterations and then in my own research about Long Beach from friends around Los Angeles and in California. They said it would be a good fit for me.

LBBJ: What were you doing at the time the position came up?

Gandy: I'm a social entrepreneur. I have owned travel agencies, I've owned consulting practices, I have served in political office and I'm a recovering politician. At that time, 2005 through 2008, I had moved back to Colorado and had bought a lodge at 9,200 feet close to Aspen. But, over a two-year period, I decided that was not a good fit for me. So I started looking back around at the business that I had been in and saw this opportunity.

LBBJ: This is out of Texas primarily?

Gandy: In Austin from 1990 to '94 and then from 1994 to '98 I was doing it for a nonprofit organization based in Washington traveling around the country. From 1998 to 2005 I was consulting from Austin all over the country as a private enterprise.

LBBJ: Austin is a booming city, isn't it?

Gandy: Yes, it is, and there are many lessons for Long Beach to learn from Austin. That's part of the reason why I got selected for this gig. . . . [For example], in attracting business to locate there, the Austin Chamber of Commerce was quite savvy. . . . First they sold business on the quality of life. That tracks. . . . We make emotional decisions and then we adopt a set of facts to support those. I don't care if you are an engineer or a CEO or a nurse – that's the way we think. So in Austin they showed trails, they showed great neighborhoods, they showed healthy active people and that was attractive to these CEOs who were looking for a great place to raise their family and to carry on their lifestyle.

LBBJ: We've read it's a booming city with a lot of opportunities, and it's very clean.

Gandy: And it's vibrant. It attracts eccentrics and people who are authoring their lives in unique ways. It creates, therefore, a culture. It plays up to its slogan of 'Keep Austin Weird.' That is the official slogan of Austin. It used to be. I don't know if it still is. It was the official slogan also of the chamber of commerce. They didn't want to be Dallas and they didn't want to be a junior Houston. They wanted to be something different in Texas and to some degree that's what Long Beach wants to be. It doesn't want to be a miniature Los Angeles.

LBBJ: So there are similarities.

Gandy: That's what I'm drawing on in my campaign.

LBBJ: But they don't have an ocean.

Gandy: Well they do have a lake, and a river that runs through it, though.

LBBJ: Doesn't it help us, being on the beach? Don't people

like riding their bike and walking on the beach? You can't do that in Austin.

Gandy: That's true. Long Beach has a lot of advantages over Austin. I just see it as in a different cycle from where Austin was. I think Long Beach is in a position to capitalize on some amazing assets.

LBBJ: Define mobility coordinator.

Gandy: It means that I am a catalyst for change within the City of Long Beach on the way that we look at public space. That ranges from bicycling and walking to the movement of automobiles and transit, but looking at it from a different point of view. That is one from an active living point of view, one from an urban point of view and a slightly different lifestyle than what we have seen here in the past. So my role is to bring some fresh ideas into town and to work with people within the city and work with citizen groups and individuals within the city to evolve the conversation. I have no position of power, so to speak.

LBBJ: How does the structure work?

Gandy: I am assigned to public works transportation services. Sumire Gant is the person who has raised the money that we are using and she is the one I report to.

LBBJ: Are you funded strictly through grants – no General Fund dollars?

Gandy: Correct. It's a three-year grant that ends next June.

LBBJ: How receptive have city officials been to what you have proposed in the past 18 months?

Gandy: Universally supportive, with minor exceptions. The political will was established to do this stuff before I got here. As an implementor of these projects, we're getting very positive feedback from neighborhoods that like the fact that some of the stuff we do makes it much safer as motorists to interact with bicyclists and for bicyclists to see a place on the street for them.

They see the fact that we've got \$500,000 for bicycle education and we're teaching people how to ride bikes for the first time comprehensively in Long Beach as a step in the right direction. And they see the attention that we are getting outside of Long Beach on this agenda as something that is very positive because it is serving as a catalyst for new money coming in not only from the government side but also from a private side. People are starting to invest in Long Beach as a consequence partially of the bike program that we are doing right now.

They're not interested in being identified yet, but we have an international company that is testing their products in Long Beach in preparation for a national roll out in about a year to a year and a half. They are doing that because Long Beach had the audacity and the political will and the ability to coalesce around a big idea. That is that Long Beach can be a great bike city and we're going to move in that direction and give people a chance to respond. In this case, we have this company responding in a very positive way. Not only is that going to mean, once they've become public on this, sales of their products here, but it also puts us on the map as an incubator city. That same thing is happening with new bike shops opening, doubling the number of people riding bikes . . .

LBBJ: You're talking about in Long Beach or the nation?

Gandy: I'm talking about just Long Beach.

LBBJ: Do you work with Long Beach Transit as well?

Gandy: Yeah, all the time.

LBBJ: Do you have any input as far as the movement of cars or recommending one-way streets?

Gandy: I'm in on those conversations. I work with Dave Roseman and the other traffic engineers to evaluate those ideas. Yes.

LBBJ: Isn't it also helpful that both the city manager and assistant city manager are bicycle enthusiasts?



As the city's mobility coordinator, Charles Gandy has been instrumental in helping Long Beach work toward its goal of becoming one of the most bicycle friendly cities in the nation. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Thomas McConville)

Gandy: And the mayor.

LBBJ: Well the mayor just recently . . .

Gandy: I want you to know something. Here is an economic success story. Our dear mayor went from 'You think you're going to get me in Lycra [bike attire] on a bike with a keg-sized belly?'

LBBJ: We'd better not use that. He may not like that.

Gandy: I have a punch line at the end that makes all of this go away. He bought himself a \$400 hybrid and he started riding that 30 to 50 miles a week with [Long Beach Bike Ambassador] Tony Cruz and other fast-y skinny boys around town. He then led our Tour de Long Beach [last spring], which we thought our first year we could save face if we got a couple hundred riders. But when he said 'I'm going to lead that and promote it,' we went to 1,000 riders. I rode with him for about half of that, and then after that he caught the bug.

Then he started riding with [City Manager] Pat West and others and realized he didn't have the mechanical advantage they had. He bought a \$2,500 bike from Jones Bicycle. He is riding now 50 to 100 miles a week. He is losing weight and is evangelical about his bike experience. The punch line here is that I asked the mayor, 'Are you OK with me telling this story to the world and inviting people here?' He said, 'Yeah, have those people bring their #%*@ [wimpish] mayors down here. I'll show them what a great bike town works like.'

LBBJ: So you can't ask for more in your position having the mayor, the city manager, the assistant city manager, all supportive

of what you want to do and of moving the city in that direction. Obviously it's a clean industry. It sounds like it's creating some jobs and attracting some attention from outside the area.

Gandy: Positive feedback from others who are taking that on . . . We have a very small grant, \$72,000 over a two-year period, to do a thing called Bike-Friendly Retail Districts. That is Bixby Knolls, East Village, 4th Street and Cambodia Town. Over these next couple years, we're buying them cargo bikes out of this grant and we're attempting to change behavior within a 1-mile range of those retail districts. Those are called "Bike Friendly Districts."

We're rolling it out right now. These BIDs that we're partnering with love this stuff because it's about localism. It's about people within a mile spending their money locally and showing them that it's actually in many ways much easier to ride your bike to Trader Joe's and have rock star parking right up front, get your stuff and put it in your saddlebags and take it up. Or you're going to be able to pay . . .

LBBJ: Saddlebags?

Gandy: Paniers we call them in the Lycra crowd.

LBBJ: You must have been one heck of a speaker in the legislature. Do you have a bit of Davy Crockett in you?

Gandy: I was born in a log condominium. Actually I had a brief tenure. I got elected when I was 22 years old and got run out of office when I was 25.

LBBJ: Why?

Gandy: I was a Democrat in a Republican state. It was the year, for those of you who were born then, when Ronald Reagan beat

Walter Mondale real bad. He gave him a spanking. They call it a shellacking now. So everybody with a D went down.

LBBJ: So you served one term?

Gandy: Yeah. After that I went to work for the governor, Mark White at the time.

LBBJ: So, as mobility coordinator, do you have a set of goals?

Gandy: Yes. I'm happy to share all that with you. We have stuff that shows all the projects that we're doing and current status, how we're investing this money and to some degree, yes, we have some broad goals although it's not always as crystal clear. They've been in, frankly, response mode. We're doing the low-hanging fruit here and moving it as fast as we've got the resources to do that.

LBBJ: What's the reception been like from the general public? We hear complaints about 2nd Street, that bicycles are in the way, but slowing down traffic along a business corridor has to be great for business.

Gandy: That's part of the seminar that I do in terms of talking to people about healthy retail districts. That is if you want to kill a retail district, speed up cars. And the inverse is true. If you notice, along 2nd Street that it works more like a parking lot than a high-speed thoroughfare. It was the business community that over a period of years put in 15 traffic signals out of 17 intersections from Livingston Drive to Bay Shore Avenue. That was done to manage the flow of traffic through there and to make it safe to get across, so it wasn't a death-defying feat to cross the street. Customers are sensitive, and if safety is not taken care of up front they won't come there.

Next is convenience. Third is the shopping stuff. Anyway, they've done a good job on that and I use Belmont Shore as an example of how in that case they have privileged the local businesses and they have privileged local customers to the detriment, to some degree, of the 35,000 cars that are going through there every day. That is a choice that communities get to make. You don't have to do any of this stuff, but if you want a vibrant, healthy retail district, you need to consider that.

LBBJ: So the feedback has been very positive.

Gandy: Well, it's been mixed. Just as you are alluding to, when you do anything new you get those who are pleased that you moved in that direction and others who question why you moved in that direction and others still who are opposed to it just because you moved. We take those who have questions and are supportive and take care of them, and we acknowledge those who are disrupted. Their routine is disrupted as a consequence of some change.

LBBJ: Where did the word sharrows come from?

Gandy: It's not that old of a tool. They were pioneered by a friend of mine in Denver in the early '90s as a way to communicate a place on the street where, generally speaking, there isn't enough room for a bike lane where motorists and cyclists are legally sharing the space to communicate to both that it's a shared space. That's where it came from, and it has helped us as a learning tool with motorists and bicyclists more than any pamphlet that we've done in a long time.

That green lane in Belmont Shore has communicated to many people for the first time – I'm talking about bicyclists and motorists – that bicycles have a legal right to the road and motorists have a legal responsibility to share the road with them. In fact, we did that in response to the business associations' concerns about the bicyclists hitting their customers as pedestrians on the sidewalk. In direct response to the business association saying, 'Help us solve this problem,' came that green sharrow lane.

LBBJ: Where else would they fit?

Gandy: Green sharrow lanes?

LBBJ: Yes.

Gandy: Well, let's take away the green part for a moment and talk about sharrows. I won't get into the weeds on legal, I'll just tell you in general. They work and we'll use them where we don't have room to put a bike lane in and we need to communicate that the outside lane is a shared space. So on arterials and collector streets that we don't have bike lanes on, you'll see sharrow lanes.

LBBJ: What about Retro Row area on 4th Street. Is it possible there?

Gandy: It's quite possible there.

LBBJ: What about on Atlantic Avenue in Bixby Knolls?

Gandy: Could be. But while many of the businesses are interested for the same reasons we find in Belmont Shore, we have a different configuration. Traffic speeds are higher on Atlantic. The blocks are longer. So I haven't studied it enough yet to form an opinion.

LBBJ: They've been talking for 35 years about slowing traffic on Atlantic Avenue but it's mostly lip service. Slowing down cars and lots of patio dining is what's needed.

Gandy: Again, I haven't studied this, but my notion, my thought is that Long Beach Boulevard could handle some of that traffic if they chose to do something different in and around the Bixby/Carson area on Atlantic Avenue. It's important that we take a holistic view when we consider these options, but yes, I think we ought to take a closer look at Bixby Knolls.

LBBJ: Are you able to tell if there is an increase in ridership in Long Beach?

Gandy: On bikes?

LBBJ: Yes.

Gandy: I'm not just making this stuff up. We had 400 bicycles a day before we put that green lane [sharrow] in because we counted. After that, a year later, we have 800 a day using it. Those numbers hold up, generally speaking, all over the city. That is, when we put a bike lane in we get more bicycles out there immediately. Think about it. It makes all kinds of sense. For those of us who are experienced cyclists and skilled and daring, we don't need a bike lane or anything else to mix it up with cars, but we represent maybe 5 percent of the bicycling population. Of the other 95 percent, if they don't see a bike lane out there – and most of them are women by the way – they won't get out on a bike. The inverse is true. If they see a bike lane out there, they see a communication to motorists that they should be here and communication to cyclists that they should be here. There's nothing absolute about it, but it makes sense and it lowers the risk threshold for another large portion of the population that would ride a bike if they saw it as safe.

LBBJ: Did Long Beach have bicyclist or pedestrian safety education or training programs before you got here?

Gandy: No, there wasn't, with the exception of bike rodeos occasionally put on by the police or the fire department. It was generally speaking nonexistent.

LBBJ: Do you go into the schools?

Gandy: In the next two years, we have \$500,000 to reach every elementary and middle school kid in Long Beach through the schools.

LBBJ: Do you have a vision that says something like, 'In five years, this is where I want to see Long Beach'?

Gandy: Yes. First of all, I used this number a year ago and I'm not as optimistic about it now but I'm in range. That is the whole deal here has been that we can do in three years what it took Portland 15 to do because they were a pioneer and we are learning and continue to learn from their successes and failures. We are adding 100 percent more bike lanes and bike facilities over a couple-year period. We are doing the training we were talking about. We are seeing the number of cyclists increase. Whether we will achieve that parity with Portland in three years remains to be seen.

LBBJ: Do you see any increase amongst ethnic groups? Have

you spoken to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce or the Cambodian community?

Gandy: Cambodians, yes. The Hispanic Chamber, no. I just haven't gotten around to it. But yes, we're seeing, particularly in lots of our poorer neighborhoods, lots more people out on bikes. It's basic transportation for these people. Metro is full of people with bikes because they're finding it an excellent tool to stretch the reach of transport. Long Beach Transit is seeing record numbers of bikes, and they have bike racks on all of their buses. It adds to their reach as well. So yes, in the ethnic neighborhoods, let's just say it's no different. In fact, it's probably more so in the increase in numbers of people riding bikes.

LBBJ: Let's go back to the original question – where is Long Beach five years down the road?

Gandy: I think Long Beach has the potential of being among the great bike cities in the nation. We've got the momentum and the political will is holding to keep moving in that direction.

LBBJ: What would you do if you had unlimited resources to really move Long Beach beyond where it is right now?

Gandy: I would finish out the engineering program that we have. In essence, communicating to motorists and cyclists on every street what right use is. I would enhance and double up on the education and promotional campaigns that we have right now. I would be scandalously provocative with the messaging because I want to get people's attention. I would dwell on the European model of a bicycle as a smart, urban transportation tool. I would focus all this on people living in Long Beach less than 35 years of age, because those are the early adopters. Those are the ones who are most likely, one, aren't invested in a lifestyle that requires an automobile, and two, are healthy enough to and would be interested enough in rebelling against my generation to adopt it.

You know what? That's a great question because we almost have that. We almost have everything that we need to do that. If there's one thing that I could use, it is those who are anxious about change to let down their guard a little bit and go take a look at some of these great bike cities in the United States or in Europe before you think this is a foreign concept.

LBBJ: Have you ever thought about taking a group on a tour?

Gandy: I would love to take 20 people from Long Beach . . . who are in powerful positions to Portland, New York, San Francisco. We don't have to go very far to see real excellence and real adoption of this stuff. If we extended that and went to Paris, Amsterdam and a couple cities in Germany we would see that there are good reasons to look at this in Long Beach.

LBBJ: Have you gone to shopping centers in Long Beach to encourage bicycle racks and things like that?

Gandy: Actually, we're in response mode. The councilmembers are directing them toward us. We've got some 2,000 racks that we need to plant...

The fact is we're getting requests to put in bike racks and corals in front of coffee shops and in front of ice cream stores and other places where bicycles are piling up. That's exactly what our bike to the retail districts is about. We're taking those four districts and . . . we're populating them with racks. We're doing maps that show from a 360-degree range how to get there by bike. We're offering discounts to people who show up on bikes. When they get there, there's a bike rack and rock star parking right in front of their favorite coffee shop. . . . So in our campaign, our low-hanging fruit are these locally owned businesses that we can drive people from within a mile to get to.

LBBJ: Just imagine if you had 100 bicyclists instead of cars a day coming to a shopping center...



Long Beach Mobility Coordinator Charles Gandy has helped get the first specialized bike signals and protected bike lane installed in Downtown Long Beach at 3rd Street and Broadway. The project is expected to be completed by March 1. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Thomas McConville)

Gandy: Better yet, if those 100 people are living within a mile or so of you then those are your natural allies.

LBBJ: Your repeat customers.

Gandy: That's right. . . . That's the energy we have around this bike thing. Bikes cut across the spectrum. It's so wide. Everything from people riding their bikes to church to this stuff to kids and all of the things we know about, our first bike ride and how that expands our horizons and all that stuff.

LBBJ: Do you feel you have good support from elected officials, councilmembers primarily?

Gandy: Yes. Of course they are all interested in making sure they get their fair share of the deal, which they should. Some more than others press us hard on this stuff. I may have something to learn, but to my knowledge they are all supportive of what we are up to.

LBBJ: Do you have a program similar to Tour de Long Beach in each district?

Gandy: Actually it's part of our Bike Master Plan update. I'm going to be leading bike tours with councilmembers in all the districts before those meetings. So in essence we're going to be doing a survey of those districts by bike this spring.

LBBJ: Beyond bikes, what else are you looking at?

Gandy: We're looking at better use of the public space downtown, infill development that would attract people back into downtown in terms of places to live, shop and so forth.

LBBJ: Would you like to see more people living in the downtown area?

Gandy: Oh absolutely. That's the key to rejuvenating downtown. It comes back to us doing a project on Broadway and 3rd Street that will be completed in a couple months that is creating a protected bike lane along those two routes. That's the sort of stuff that is giving people a fresh look at downtown. It's about creating a more interesting place to live and work and shop and so forth.

Kerstin Kansteiner with Portfolio Coffeehouse, one of the reasons she is investing in that place at 4th Street and Linden Avenue is because we are doing the bike facility on 3rd Street and Broadway. Being part of Long Beach's emerging and winning formula, we're interested in selling this to tourists. My buddy Steve Goodling [head of the Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau] shocked me about two months ago when he said, 'We went out to our top 800 customers and told them about this bike stuff going on and the prospect of bike share in our downtown.' He said, 'We were surprised by their response, because that is some bling that they can't get anywhere and they are embracing it.'

So the idea now of us having 500 or so bikes in the downtown that, again, is all funded through grants from the outside, so that you could go to a conference and then hop on a bike and ride it over to Belmont Shore and have a nice meal and come back along the beach. That's exciting to the people in Belmont Shore, that's exciting to me as a guy who is interested in attracting healthy active living and people who want to experience that from far and wide, and spending their tourist dollars here.

LBBJ: You mentioned earlier that you give seminars. Do you also go to community associations or community groups?

Gandy: Almost every other week I'm talking. I talked to the Willmore City Neighborhood Association last week. Usually it's related to a specific project that we have coming their way. Sometimes it's just general.

LBBJ: Do you work with the police department also on bike safety issues?

Gandy: Absolutely. We're about to publish a training film with the police department that will be partially focused on how we enforce the laws here and partially communicating to bicyclists what they should expect from Long Beach.

LBBJ: Speaking of the law, your bike has to be registered, right?

Gandy: I understand that Councilman [Robert] Garcia is about to come forth with a proposal to make that voluntary, and I think that is a step in the right direction.

LBBJ: But primarily you want to register your bike because if it gets stolen it's easier to find?

Gandy: That has been the claim but we don't have a very good track record.

LBBJ: So it's more of a bike count?

Gandy: It's an antiquated system, actually. There's an actual bike registry now that for a couple bucks you can register your bike and if it's stolen the police can access that via computer so they don't have to keep their own separate database. It's an antiquated system that we are, my guess is, going to be phasing out. Our first step is to make it voluntary. Some people still want to register their bikes and have that sense of insurance.

LBBJ: It seems you have an ideal background for what you are doing here.

Gandy: It's a good fit.

LBBJ: You are obviously very positive about the direction the city is going in. Is there any one concern you have that could make this whole thing fall apart?

Gandy: We could lose our political will to do this. We could get distracted by something else or decide that we only want to do things halfway, which oftentimes means that we are really not maximizing the opportunity. And, you know, there's always backlash. There's always, in public projects, the enthusiasts, curmudgeons and people who want to pull the city in a different direction. So it's an evolving conversation always and in my opinion as a student of this, it's a test of political leadership and their willingness to stay the course when there is a little bit of turbulence. So far I think that there have been tests, and they have chosen to stay the course and it's working for them.

LBBJ: Even when the fire trucks can't get through the roundabouts on Vista?

Gandy: [Laughing] that's not true.

LBBJ: [Laughing] whose idea was it to have four yield signs?

Gandy: Let's just say there are learning pains associated with new stuff. Fortunately it's a city that is not so headstrong that we're not listening. So we are listening and we are adjusting.

LBBJ: You had mentioned earlier that there is a spectrum of different people on bikes. There are different groups in the city like the Pedal Movement who are promoting bike culture, but do you ever see – related to the recent Critical Mass event where individuals had their bikes impounded and were cited for breaking traffic laws – a clash between promoting bike culture and also promoting bike safety?

Gandy: I don't see it as a clash. It's sometimes incoherent and counter-productive political theatre. In this case, it's unfortunate that the communication was so poor that the police felt provoked and needed to respond. The good news is we've moved beyond that and all parties are looking to make that a constructive enterprise. That's why many of these things are coming out of that – a rethink about our bike registration program, a rethink about the necessity of confiscating bikes. It's a learning event. It's a teachable moment for us in the city. The Pedal Movement people are the reasons that we have the bike hub now. They are active in this conversation in a very constructive way. But in that case, it was lots of misunderstandings that resulted in that conflict. It is serving as a teachable moment.

LBBJ: Is there anything else you would like to talk about?

Gandy: Let me just reinforce something. While the city is doing this, the most rewarding thing about it is so many people are taking this on and expressing themselves in this culture. So for me, as a student of community change, it's fun to watch mothers deciding to ride with their kids to school and having a positive experience. It's fun to watch young entrepreneurs find ways to make a living doing this stuff. It's fun to watch political leaders get positive reinforcement from doing new things and then their appetite is enhanced and they want to do more of this. I find it very rewarding, and I can tell you I've worked in a bunch of backwater places. The thing about Long Beach and the reason I'm enthused about it is that we have some courageous people here. Southern California has been a hotbed of innovation for a long time. This is innovation in today's world. It's an exciting place to be. ■