



Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

Hearing Date: September 12, 2022

OUTPOST STUDIOS

Application No.: LBR-2021-22-012
Business Name: Outpost Studios, Inc.
Business Address: 950 Battery Street
District: District 3
Applicant: David E. Nelson, CEO
Nomination Letter Date: January 20, 2022
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Outpost Studios, Inc. is an independent post-production and recording studio for audio and film, originally opened by David Nelson with Josh Rosen and Joe Bini as "Outpost Film Center" in October of 1996. Outpost Studios was born from a desire to have a space for artists of all media, including audio, music, and film, to be able to affordably access recording and editing services. In addition to offering a variety of post-production media services, the business is well-known in the independent filmmaking and audio engineering industries. Its founders have helped advance audio engineering technology, working with larger well-known audio technology companies to refine new digital audio tools. Outpost Studios is currently located at 950 Battery Street and has been continuously owned by David Nelson since 1996.

Outpost Studios first opened in the South of Market neighborhood at 880 Folsom Street, with David Nelson focusing on sound engineering and technology and Rosen and Bini focusing on visual technology, but all with the common goal of completing projects that utilized the latest in film and sound technology. The business subsequently moved to 69 Green Street in the Waterfront area of North Beach in 2012 and remained there for 10 years. Outpost Studios lost their lease at 69 Green Street in April 2022 and moved around the block to 950 Battery Street. The business is still in the process of building out its new space as of the date of this Staff Summary, including soundproofing the recording rooms.

Media such as music, podcasts, audiobooks, TV, and film, are all able to be recorded and edited professionally at Outpost Studios. Further, it has the only Foley stage in San Francisco. Foley is the reproduction of everyday sound effects that are then added to films, videos, and other media in post-production. To increase postproduction and recording efficiency for their clients, Outpost Studios has also remained committed to working with major audio technology companies such as Dolby, Avid, Audible, Nvidia, Bias, and Euphonix, to advance audio editing and recording digital software. By helping to simplify and streamline post-production digital technology, it has been able to remain affordable to independent artists and other creatives who may not be able to afford expensive recording and editing hardware themselves.

Outpost Studios' clients are primarily Bay Area independent film, music, and other media artists, groups, students and actors. It has also had clients of national and international renown, including, but not limited to, Danny Glover, Joe Talbot, Sofia and Roman Coppola, Werner Herzog, Cheech Marin, and Kamala Harris. The business Studios continues to give back to the communities it serves, particularly San Francisco's and the Bay Area's local and independent film and musician communities.

Legacy Business Program
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San Francisco, CA 94102
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CRITERION 1

Has the applicant operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?

No, the applicant has not operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years.

880 Folsom Street from 1996 to 2011 (15 years)
69 Green Street from 2012 to 2022 (10 years)
950 Battery Street from 2022 to Present (6 months)

PER CRITERION 1: Has the business operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, had no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included in the Registry, face a significant risk of displacement?

Yes, Outpost Studios has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, has significantly contributed to the history and identity of the Embarcadero neighborhood and, if not included on the Registry, would face a significant risk of displacement.

CRITERION 2

Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

Yes, Outpost Studios, Inc. has contributed to the history and identity of the Embarcadero neighborhood and San Francisco.

The Historic Preservation Commission recommended the applicant as qualifying, noting the following ways the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community:

- The business' primary location, located at 950 Battery Street, is in a three-story reinforced-concrete Category A (Historic Resource Present) building built in 1932. The subject property is within the Article 10 Northeast Waterfront Landmark District. The property was included in the Foundation For San Francisco Architectural Heritage Historic Survey (1978), where it received a survey rating of "D" (minor or no importance).
- Outpost Studios has been featured in a number of local and national publications and articles. Outpost Studios has been in SF Gate, the San Francisco Examiner, Mission Local, and the San Francisco Business Times. Outpost Studios has also been featured in industry magazines, such as CineSOURCE, Post, and newsletters for the Film Arts Foundation. Outpost Studios was also featured on a TV segment for local KPIX 5 called "Outrageous Jobs."

CRITERION 3

Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

Yes, Outpost Studios, Inc. is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that Outpost Studios, Inc. qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) and recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions.

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Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Audio recording and post-production studio (including, but not limited to, recording and editing services for film, music, and non-music audio such as voice-overs, advertisements, podcasts, and audiobooks).
- Professional staff of music and audio producers and engineers.
- Creative hub for audio technology developers.
- Foley stage.
- Engagement with the San Francisco independent filmmaker and music communities.

CORE PHYSICAL FEATURE OR TRADITION THAT DEFINES THE BUSINESS

Following is the core physical feature or tradition that defines the business that would be required for maintenance of the business on the Legacy Business Registry.

- Recording studio.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include Outpost Studios, Inc. currently located at 950 Battery Street in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
Legacy Business Program

Legacy Business Program

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Small Business Commission

Resolution No. _____

September 12, 2022

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Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for Outpost Studios, Inc., currently located at 950 Battery St.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; or

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, has had no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, has significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included on the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on September 12, 2022, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission hereby includes Outpost Studios in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission recommends safeguarding the below listed physical features and traditions at Outpost Studios.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Audio recording and post-production studio (including, but not limited to, recording and editing services for film, music, and non-music audio such as voice-overs, advertisements, podcasts, and audiobooks).
- Professional staff of music and audio producers and engineers.
- Creative hub for audio technology developers.
- Foley stage.
- Engagement with the San Francisco independent filmmaker and music communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain Business on the Legacy Business Registry:

- Recording studio.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on September 12, 2022.

Katy Tang
Director

RESOLUTION NO. _____

Ayes –
Nays –
Abstained –
Absent –

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Legacy Business Registry

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2021-22-012
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CRITERION 1: Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?
_____ Yes _____ ☒ No

880 Folsom Street from 1996 to 2011 (15 years)
69 Green Street from 2012 to 2022 (10 years)
950 Battery Street from 2022 to Present (6 months)

PER CRITERION 1: Has the business operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included in the Registry, face a significant risk of displacement?
_____ ☒ Yes _____ No

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?
_____ ☒ Yes _____ No

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?
_____ ☒ Yes _____ No

NOTES: In January 2022, Outpost Studios was served a notice to vacate 69 Green Street after 10 years in that location. Although the business has found at new location at 950 Battery Street it still faces a significant risk of displacement if not included on the Legacy Business Registry due to the cost of building out the new space. The rooms have to be acoustically designed, and great lengths have to be taken to make each room soundproof. Getting listed on the Registry could potentially help Outpost Studios procure additional funds through the Legacy Business Program's Rent Stabilization Grant.

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Member, Board of Supervisors
District 3



City and County of San Francisco

AARON PESKIN

January 20, 2022

Director Katy Tang
San Francisco Office of Small Business
City Hall, Room 110
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Director Tang:

It is my honor and privilege to nominate Outpost Studios for inclusion on the Legacy Business Registry.

For over 25 years, Outpost Studios, a family-owned business, has been a landmark in San Francisco's North Beach and citywide offering affordable post-production services for all forms of media, including music, podcasts, audiobooks, television shows, and films.

Outpost Studios has been at the forefront of digital audio technology since its inception including their premiere work for the owner of Oasis and director Marc Smolowitz, as well as actors Danny Glover and Connie Nielsen. Outpost's unique innovative approach to digital media production has opened the doors for many filmmakers such as Werner Herzog's "Little Dieter Needs to Fly" in 1997 and Barbara Sonnenborn's "Regret to Inform" in 1998.

I hope for its continued success and hereby recommend it for inclusion on the Legacy Business Registry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aaron Peskin". The signature is stylized with a large, flowing "A" and a cursive "P".

Aaron Peskin

Section One:

Business / Applicant Information.

Please provide the following information:

- The name, mailing address and other contact information of the business;
- The name of the person who owns the business. For businesses with multiple owners, identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business;
- The name, title and contact information of the applicant;
- The business's San Francisco Business Account Number and entity number with the Secretary of State, if applicable.

NAME OF BUSINESS:	
Outpost Studios, Inc.	
BUSINESS OWNER(S) (Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business):	
David E. Nelson	
CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE NUMBER:
950 Battery St., San Francisco, CA 94111	(415) 977-1818
	EMAIL ADDRESS:
MAILING ADDRESS – STREET ADDRESS:	MAILING ADDRESS – CITY AND STATE:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Same as Business Address	
	MAILING ADDRESS – ZIP CODE:
WEBSITE ADDRESS:	
https://outpostfilm.com/	
FACEBOOK PAGE:	
https://www.facebook.com/OutpostStudiosInc	
TWITTER NAME:	
APPLICANT'S NAME:	APPLICANT'S TELEPHONE NUMBER:
David E. Nelson	
APPLICANT'S TITLE:	APPLICANT'S EMAIL ADDRESS:
CEO	
SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:	
0474860	
SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (If applicable):	
C2277592	

Section Two:

Business Location(s).

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business. If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address. For businesses with more than one location, list the additional locations in section three of the narrative.

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS	ZIP CODE	START DATE OF BUSINESS
880 Folsom St	94107	10/1/1996
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATION 10/1/1996 - 12/31/2011

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
69 Green St	94111	Start: 1/1/2012 End: 3/31/2022

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
950 Battery St	94111	Start: 4/1/2022 End: Present

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

Section Three:

Disclosure Statement.

San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified. A business deemed not current with all San Francisco taxes, business registration and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for grants through the Legacy Business Program.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

- ☒ I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- ☒ I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- ☒ I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- ☒ I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- ☒ I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- ☒ I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- ☒ I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

David E. Nelson

1/24/2022

Dave Nelson

Digitally signed by Dave
Nelson
Date: 2022.01.24 12:02:02
-08'00'

Name (Print):

Date:

Signature:

OUTPOST STUDIOS

Section 4: Written Historical Narrative

CRITERION 1

a. Provide a short history of the business from the date the business opened in San Francisco to the present day, including the ownership history. For businesses with multiple locations, include the history of the original location in San Francisco (including whether it was the business's founding and or headquartered location) and the opening dates and locations of all other locations.

Since October 1, 1996, Outpost Studios (“Outpost”) has been a landmark of the San Francisco independent film community. This family-owned recording studio offers affordable post-production services for all forms of media, including music, podcasts, audiobooks, television shows, and films. Outpost Studios is located at 950 Battery Street along the Embarcadero.

Outpost owner David Nelson first began working with “Pro Tools” audio technology in 1989. Avid Audio’s Pro Tools is now the global leader in studio recording and mixing technology and has been for the last decade. But in 1989, when Digidesign embarked on the creation of Pro Tools (Digidesign was purchased by Avid Audio in 1995), there was no personal-computer-based technology capable of recording and editing audio and video.

A proficient multi-instrumentalist, Dave pioneered “World Beat” music with his acclaimed Seattle band Upepo from 1972 to 1982. As their main composer, Dave led the band through live performances as well as recording sessions. As his talent for engineering and sound design became more apparent, he focused his energies on studio projects. In 1982, he moved to San Francisco with Leonard Marcel and was instrumental in founding a multimedia band called Autotom. This was truly one of the first bands of its kind using slide projection and digitally pre-recorded samples, tracks, and loops as part of its show.

In 1985, Dave formed Poolside Studios with Leonard producer Mitch Stein. Working with sound pioneers Donny Blank and Doug Murray, Dave developed an experimental and improvisational sound design style and gained experience in dialogue and music editing. Joining together with Josh Rosen from Digidesign, they began to create using some of this new technology. Josh proposed that Digidesign would install their experimental hardware and software at the Poolside location if he could work with Dave to test and refine the system’s functionality and design. While working with Pro-Tools (Edition 001), Poolside also acquired the first digitally controlled console from a new Palo Alto company, Euphonix. This was a groundbreaking combination of technology and creative minds in San Francisco for music and film sound. The first Crescendo system was delivered to Poolside Studios in San Francisco in 1990.

Dave and Josh connected with editor Joe Bini and decided to create Outpost Film Center. Dave raised the funds, and construction began at 880 Folsom in 1993. Dave focused on the sound side while Joe and Josh created the visual component. Werner Herzog was one of the first clients. In 1996, Dave began doing business as Outpost Studios. It was the beginning of the next three decades of incredibly valuable work for the entire audio industry.

In January 2022, Outpost Studios was served a notice to vacate 69 Green Street after 10 years in that location. Although the business has found a new location at 950 Battery Street it still faces a significant risk of displacement if not included on the Legacy Business Registry due to the cost of building out the new space. The rooms have to be acoustically designed, and great lengths have to be taken to make each room soundproof. Getting listed on the Registry could potentially help Outpost Studios procure additional funds through the Legacy Business Program's Rent Stabilization Grant.

Today, Outpost Studios is at the center of an exciting new era of filmmaking, post-production, games, and music production. Digital film and new technologies are having a lasting effect on their business, increasing the amount of local and international projects being produced. Outpost strives to provide quality sound regardless of the size of the project or the medium. Outpost Studios has the successful credits to back up their philosophy of friendly, professional, on-time and on-budget services.

b. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for more than six months?

Outpost Studios has not ceased operations for more than six months since its genesis.

c. Is the business a family-owned business? If so, give the generational history of the business.

Yes, the business is owned by David Nelson and his son, Karl Force, will be the future owner and operator. Dave is the CEO, as well as the studio's lead sound designer and re-recording mixer. Karl is an engineer, composer, editor, post production coordinator, and music producer at Outpost with his music degree from San Francisco State University.

d. Describe the ownership history when the business ownership is not the original owner or a family-owned business.

The ownership history of Outpost Studios is as follows:

1996 to Present: David Nelson

e. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years, the applicant will need to provide documentation of the existence of the business prior to current ownership to verify it has been in operation for 30+ years. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

Documentation of the existence of the business verifying it has been in operation since 1996 is provided in this Legacy Business Registry application.

f. Note any other special features of the business location, such as, if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.

Outpost Studios recently relocated to 950 Battery Street. The historic resource status of the building is classified by the Planning Department as Category A, Historic Resource Present. The building is a contributor to the Eligible Northeast Waterfront Historic District.

CRITERION 2

a. Describe the business's contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community or San Francisco.

At a time when most audio engineers were reliant on expensive tape machines and analog consoles, Outpost Studios worked directly with tech companies (like Avid, Euphonix, and Dolby) to develop new tools for sound and media production. Dave Nelson and Outpost offered digital audio services that cost far less money than their analog counterparts, allowing the highest quality post production sound in a digital format for the first time so directors could create films and music more affordably, efficiently, and creatively than ever before. Outpost's innovations in digital media production have opened the doors for many filmmakers and artists who otherwise would not have been able to afford audio post-production at all.

This contribution is part of the ongoing motivation behind Outpost's team. Without major fame or any financial abundance, Outpost continuously serves its community of creators to survive the changing economic climate of San Francisco. It was the creative community that helped build the business, support the business, and innovate together in collaboration that allowed Outpost Studios thrive and survive to this point. Outpost's connection to the city is one of gratitude and reciprocated support, through sound, music, and film.

b. Is the business (or has been) associated with significant events in the neighborhood, the city, or the business industry?

Outpost has been key to the final production processes of countless historical documentaries and feature films that highlight the many contributions of San Francisco Bay Area culture and beyond. Some have been nominated and won awards in film festivals with far reaching influence to international communities who will recognize the city and Outpost as a beacon of quality and creativity.

Some of Outpost's early achievements were the following:

- Academy Award-nominated "Forever Activists: Stories from the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade" (1990) and "When Abortion Was Illegal: Untold Stories" (1992) and by Dorothy Fadiman.
- "Fun," a 1994 Sundance Film Festival Best Actress Award Winner – dialog and music editing, ADR¹, foley², and sound design.

¹ <https://tophollywoodactingcoach.com/2014/01/voiceover-terms-whats-vo-adr-looping/>, "ADR is an abbreviation for Automated Dialogue Replacement or Additional dialogue Recording, in which the original actor re-records their dialogue and dubs over their lines for improvement in audio quality. ADR happens in post-production, after the actors have already been filmed."

² <https://usv.edu/blog/the-foley-artist/>, "Foley is a unique sound effect technique that involves creating and "performing" everyday sounds for movies and television shows. Foley artists create these sounds in a recording studio during post-production, in synchrony with the picture, to enhance the quality of the audio."

- Jon Jost's "The Bed You Sleep In" (1993) and "Frameup" (1993) – effects editing, Dolby surround mixing, foley, ADR, dialog editing, and sound design.
- Recordings for a number of Cuban and world beat CDs by David Nelson and Latin Jazz producer Greg Landau, two of which with Patato Valdez were nominated for Grammys.

Some other credits include the following, all local artists that opened the door for many filmmakers that followed:

- Werner Herzog's "Little Dieter Needs to Fly" (1997), "Wings of Hope" (1998), and "My Best Fiend: Klaus Kinski" (1999)
- Finn Taylor's "Dream with the Fishes" (1997)
- Lynn Hershman Leeson's "Conceiving Ada" (1997)
- Gabe Wisert's "Fishing with Gandhi" (1998) and "Cow Monkey" (2001)
- Jules Beesley's "Radio Free Steve" (2000)
- Erica Jordan's "In the Wake Big Love" (2001)
- Robert Saitzyk's "After the Flood" (2001)
- The Residents' DVD "Icky Flix" (2005)

Outpost was pleased to record the ADR voice recording for Nash Bridges for two years, working closely with Don Johnson and Cheech Marin.

Outpost Studios is one of two studios that adopted SAG-AFTRA's Safety Protocols for Voiceover Recording during the Coronavirus pandemic. This allowed the studio to remain open while supporting the artist/actor film community with very high safety standards.

Outpost Studios has become the 'test and innovation hub' for other technology developers (Euphonix, Macromedia, Bias, Dolby, Audible, Nvidia). This is the digital audio revolution, and Outpost represents an important role in the fundamental shift in the way all media is made.

c. Has the business ever been referenced in an historical context? Such as in a business trade publication, media, or historical documents?

Outpost Studios has been referenced in many publications and media including, but not limited to, the following:

- Electronic Musician, vol. 13. (1997). United States: Polyphony Publishing Company.
- Rubin, Sylvia (1998, October 29). Herzog film captures ex-POW's optimism / Bay Area subject tells tale of capture, Escape. SFGATE. Retrieved January 25, 2022, from <https://www.sfgate.com/entertainment/article/Herzog-Film-Captures-Ex-POW-s-Optimism-Bay-Area-2982359.php>
- Release Print: Newsletter of Film Arts Foundation, the Bay Area Organization of Independent Film and Videomakers, vol. 28. (2005). United States: Film Arts Foundation.
- Grippi, T. (2005, October 28). Outpost Gives Clients the Right Sounds. The San Francisco Examiner, p. 25.
- 129th Audio Engineering Society convention (2010): <https://www.aes.org/events/129/tours/?ID=2530>

- A Media. (2011). The Loop Feb 11. CineSOURCE Magazine. Retrieved January 25, 2022, from https://cinesourcemagazine.com/index.php?%2Fsite%2Fcolumns_item
- “Outrageous Jobs” (2011, February). Eye on the Bay. KPIX 5, San Francisco. Television.
- Walden, J. (2012, February). Unsung Audio Gear. Post Magazine, p. 34–36.
- Rodriguez, A. (2020, September 29). Mission native's short film 'Static' set to Get City debut at another hole in the head film festival. Mission Local. Retrieved January 25, 2022, from <https://missionlocal.org/2019/12/mission-natives-short-film-static-set-to-get-city-debut-at-another-hole-in-the-head-film-festival/>
- Fong-Torres, Ben. (2021, February 10). Fears for Tears: Turning a Memoir into an Audiobook. Asian Connections. Retrieved January 25, 2022, from <https://www.asianconnections.com/item/42>
- Wikipedia. Euphonix. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euphonix_wikipedia

d. Is the business associated with a significant or historical person?

Outpost’s notable clients include:

- **Danny Glover**, actor in “The Last Black Man in San Francisco” (2019); The HistoryMakers 20@2020 20th Anniversary Virtual Convening & Celebration; Poor People's Campaign – “A National Call for Moral Revival”
- **Joe Talbot**, director of “The Last Black Man in San Francisco”
- **Jimmie Fails, Jamal Trulove**, and **Jonathan Majors**, actors in “The Last Black Man in San Francisco” – voice over
- **D’Arcy Drollinger**, director of “Sh*t & Champagne” (2020) – foley, mix
- **Lynn Hershman Leeson**, director of “Conceiving Ada” (1997) – foley, ADR, dialog and music editing
- **Sofia Coppola**, director of “Lost in Translation” (2003) – foley
- **Roman Coppola**, “The Godfather Podcast” (2021)
- **Werner Herzog**, “Wings of Hope”; “Little Dieter Needs to Fly”; “Kinski”; “Wheel of Time”
- **Don Johnson** and **Cheech Marin**, actors in “Nash Bridges” (1996-2001)
- **David Plouffe** – MSNBC Political Analyst
- **Steph Curry, Klay Thompson**, and **Stephen Kerr** – The Golden State Warriors
- **Boots Riley**, writer and director of “Sorry to Bother You” (2018) – ADR
- **Kamala Harris**, Vice President of the United States – voice over

e. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?

For over 25 years, Outpost Studio’s goal has been providing low-cost, high-quality sound to artists struggling to keep up with San Francisco’s rising cost-of-living. Many of these filmmakers have had their works nominated for awards at the Sundance Film Festival, South by Southwest Film Festival, San Francisco International Film Festival, and the Academy Awards, as well as film festivals like Frameline and SF IndieFest. Outpost has also demonstrated its commitment to social movements, working with activists whose films shed light on issues relating to gender equality, racial justice, and LGBTQ+ rights.

f. Provide a description of the community the business serves.

The community Outpost Studios serves consists of filmmakers, musicians, activist groups, authors, voice over artists, students, actors, independent producers, and much more.

g. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building/structure/site/object/interior?

Outpost's new location at 950 Battery Street is now a hub of creative film companies, including San Francisco Media Group, Color A-GoGo, and film editor Kirk Goldberg. The building is now an all-in-one film stage, color corrections studio, and full audio post production house / recording studio. The other businesses here have their own extensive history in the city. Collectively they employ many locals in one building and support each other.

Outpost has the only foley stage in San Francisco and has worked with many of the Bay Area's leading foley artists such as Jennifer Myers, Jana Vance, Marnie Moore, and Ronni Brown.

h. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?

If Outpost Studios were to close, the San Francisco community would lose a core piece of history in the world of audio, music, and film sound. Outpost's purpose by nature is uplifting and amplifying the quality of work of all creators, actors, students, and clients with whom they come in contact. Not only have countless projects come through Outpost Studios, but there is a responsibility to uphold the legacy of a diverse creative artistic community.

CRITERION 3

a. Describe the business and the essential features that define its character.

Outpost Studios is primarily an audio post-production house and voice recording studio. The core members of Outpost began their careers in music performance and production and have all grown into film industry audio. Today, Outpost continues its endeavors in film scoring, mixing music, and film, recording instrumentalists and vocalists alike, but it also maintains a focus in independent film sound. Dave at Outpost still explores the latest audio innovations to help artists achieve better and better audio quality in film and music. With a small experienced team, Outpost Studios has become the premier audio facility in San Francisco, always looking to assist with improving the quality of every project that comes through its doors. High end sound is Outpost's focus, and offering a friendly and professional environment to accomplish that is a key trait of the business.

b. How does the business demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the historical traditions that define the business, and which of these traditions should not be changed in order to retain the businesses historical character? (e.g., business model, goods and services, craft, culinary, or art forms)

Outpost Studios is committed to offering local filmmakers an education and world class services in a recording studio that they can afford.

c. How has the business demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the special physical features that define the business? Describe any special exterior and interior physical characteristics of the space occupied by the business (e.g. signage, murals, architectural details, neon signs, etc.).

Since January 2022, the Outpost team has been working to build a new state-of-the-art recording studio in the Northeast Waterfront Historic District. Many artists are volunteering their services in creating a hub of film and sound entertainment. The level of commitment that the Outpost team is demonstrating is making all the difference in maintaining the sustained positive impact the studio plans to put forward for the foreseeable future. The extensive buildout is beyond the normal budget of the business, but Outpost is confident that their efforts will be supported by its community. The new location and Outpost's vision are an entirely revamped, structurally creative endeavor in a beautiful space for a new chapter for the business.

d. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years; the applicant will need to provide documentation that demonstrates the current owner has maintained the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

Documentation that demonstrates the business has been a recording studio for its entire existence is included in this Legacy Business Registry application.





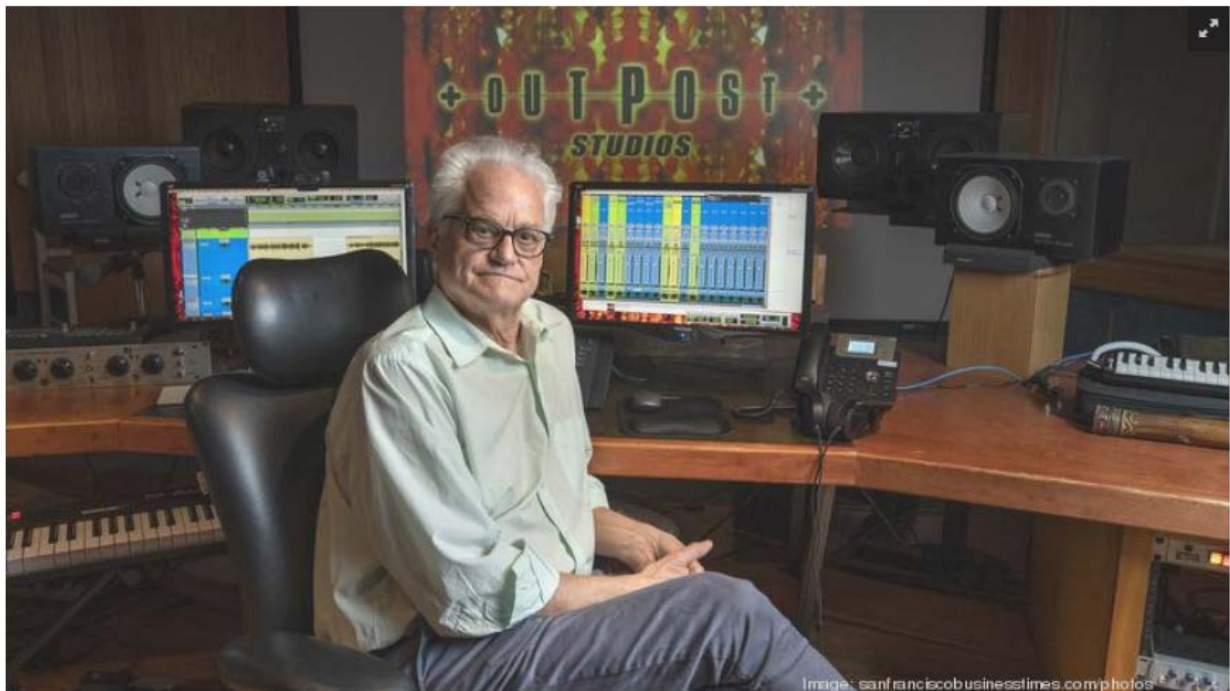




Commercial Real Estate

Two recording studios have called this small waterfront building home for years. That's about to change.

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Dave Nelson, supervising sound editor at Outpost Studios

LIPO CHING | SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS TIMES



By **Laura Waxmann** – Staff Reporter, San Francisco Business Times
Feb 16, 2022

Actor Danny Glover and German filmmaker Werner Herzog are on the list of clients who have frequented Outpost Studio, a 30-year-old recording and mixing studio that for the better part of a decade has been housed in a four-story building near the city's Embarcadero.

But Outpost's days at 69 Green St. are numbered. Bullock Capital purchased the 12,800-square-foot building in December for \$6.5 million, and the company plans to renovate it and add a roof deck for new office tenants.

Bullock served him the building's four other tenants with notices to vacate by April 1, Outpost Sound Editor Dave Nelson said, lamenting the effect the loss of the facility will have on the city's film and recording ecosystem.

"This has been a 20-year hub for San Francisco film;" Nelson said. "We know they bought the building, but they didn't share any of their plans with us or whether we were going to be able to stay. And then they gave us a three-month order to vacate:"

Ben Bullock, the real estate firm's founder and CEO, told me Tuesday that he has been in contact with the building's master tenant, recording studio Polarity Post Production, which has been leasing the space on a month-to-month basis since its lease expired in November 2019. It subleases space to Outpost, a video duplication service called Digital Revolution and a nonprofit focused on adolescent mental health issues.

"When we pursued the opportunity at the end of last year we were open about our business plan:" he said. "We gave them a notice with more than 70 days to move out, which we thought was accommodating:"

Polarity Post Production, founded by Patrick Fitzgerald, took over the master lease at 69 Green in 2003, after previous tenant Music Annex went out of business. Fitzgerald said he was in discussions with the building's previous owner regarding a five-year lease extension, but those discussions were scuttled when the pandemic hit. In light of the uncertainty, he agreed to a month-to-month lease.

He said the biggest issue he and Outpost face in losing their recording studio space is the cost of building it out. The two studios have now found new space, but it is not built out for studio use.

"The buildout is very precise and expensive:" Fitzgerald said. "The rooms have to be acoustically designed. Great lengths have to be taken to make each room soundproof. That is one of the most difficult parts about this for myself and Dave Nelson:"

"We just had a brutal year -we barely survived Covid-19. We got a little bit of PPE money - \$24,000 total -which barely allowed us to hang on. We fell behind five months on rent but managed to make it back," said Nelson. "In the last six months we finally had a really great year. So to go through all of that, and now an eviction, is tough."

Recording studios are considered production, distribution and repair (PDR) businesses, which are protected in certain parts of the city. The protections do not extend to the Waterfront District, where the property is located.

Fitzgerald said he is surprised that his new owner is planning for office space, given the number of buildings in the neighborhood currently unoccupied.

"Right next door there is a brand new office building that has been sitting empty for two years:" he said.

Despite the city's historically high office vacancy rate as a result of the pandemic, Bullock said his firm remains bullish on office space in the city.

"We believe in the reemergence of San Francisco and that people will want to come back to work:" he said.

"Since 1997, I have done post-production of my last seven films at Outpost in San Francisco, including LITTLE DIETER NEEDS TO FLY, MY BEST FRIEND, WINGS OF HOPE, INVINCIBLE, THE LORD AND THE LADEN, and most recently WHEEL OF TIME (not released yet). Through this work, I have been in a close working relationship with David Nelson who designed and mixed the sound of all these films (with the exception of "Invincible" which had - for reasons of an English co-production - to be mixed in London).

Mr Nelson's technical professionalism is beyond doubt, and I have found this high standard elsewhere in the world, but what attracted me to Outpost was the all-pervading climate of creativity which inspired me from the moment I walked in. Mr Nelson was the epicenter of this creativity. He was much more than a technical collaborator. I owe him, for the example, the most improbable of all musical solutions for the end of LITTLE DIETER where he proposed to use an utterly obscure traditional recording from Madagascar of the 1930s which now illuminates the end of my film.

*If Mr Nelson is under consideration for work which reaches far beyond mere technical professionalism, I highly recommend him." - [**Werner Herzog**](#)*



LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEARING DATE: AUGUST 17, 2022

Filing Date: July 20, 2022
Case No.: **2022-007222LBR**
Business Name: Outpost Studios, Inc.
Business Address: 950 Battery Street
Zoning: C-2 (Community Business) Zoning District
65-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0136/006
Applicant: David E. Nelson
950 Battery Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin
Located In: District 3
Staff Contact: Gretel Gunther – 628-652-7607
gretel.gunther@sfgov.org

Recommendation: Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

Business Description

Outpost Studios, Inc. is an independent post-production and recording studio for audio and film, originally opened by David Nelson with Josh Rosen and Joe Bini as “Outpost Film Center” at 880 Folsom Street in October of 1996. Outpost Studios was born from a desire to have a space for artists of all media, including audio, music, and film, to be able to affordably access recording and editing services. Outpost Studios, in addition to offering a variety of post-production media services, is well-known in the independent filmmaking and audio engineering industries. Its founders have helped advance audio engineering technology, working with larger well-known audio technology companies to refine new digital audio tools. Outpost Studios is currently located at 950 Battery Street and has been continuously owned by David Nelson since 1996.

Outpost Studios first opened in 1996 in the South of Market neighborhood at 880 Folsom Street, with David Nelson focusing on sound engineering and technology and Rosen and Bini focusing on visual technology, but all with the common goal of completing projects that utilized the latest in film and sound technology. The business subsequently moved to 69 Green Street in the Waterfront area of North Beach in 2012 and remained there for 10

years. Outpost Studios lost their lease at 69 Green Street in April 2022, and moved around the block to 950 Battery Street, where the business has been for the past four months. Outpost Studios is still in the process of building out its new space as of the date of this Executive Summary, including soundproofing the recording rooms. Though new, 950 Battery Street was a good new location for Outpost Studios, as several other media production and editing businesses are in the same building, making it a one-stop-shop for audio and film recording and editing.

Regardless of location, Outpost Studios has continuously offered high-quality, yet affordable, recording and post-production services, including audio mixing, mastering, editing, and scoring, for a variety of different media types. Media such as music, podcasts, audiobooks, TV, and film, are all able to be recorded and edited professionally at Outpost Studios. Further, Outpost Studios has the only Foley stage in San Francisco. Foley is the reproduction of everyday sound effects that are then added to films, videos, and other media in post-production. To increase post-production and recording efficiency for their clients, Outpost Studios has also remained committed to working with major audio technology companies such as Dolby, Avid, Audible, Nvidia, Bias, and Euphonix, to advance audio editing and recording digital software. By helping to simplify and streamline post-production digital technology, Outpost Studios has been able to remain affordable to independent artists and other creatives who may not be able to afford expensive recording and editing hardware themselves.

Outpost Studios' clients are primarily Bay Area independent film, music, and other media artists, groups, students and actors. Outpost Studios has also had clients of national and international renown, including, but not limited to, Danny Glover, Joe Talbot, Sofia and Roman Coppola, Werner Herzog, Cheech Marin, and Kamala Harris. Clients who have recorded and edited their projects at Outpost Studios have had their works featured in both major and independent film festivals such as the Sundance Film Festival, South by Southwest Film Festival, the San Francisco International Film Festival, Frameline, SF IndieFest, and even the Academy Awards.

Outpost Studios continues to give back to the communities it serves, particularly San Francisco's and the Bay Area's local and independent film and musician communities. Outpost Studios has continuously offered affordable prices for its high-level recording, producing, and mixing services, remaining an essential resource for independent filmmakers and musicians in the Bay Area. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, Outpost Studios adopted industry-standard safety protocols for voiceover recording and was only one of two studios to do so. Without Outpost Studios, the independent media community of the San Francisco Bay Area would lose a crucial, niche business that has been a local anchor in post-production services for all forms of media.

The business's primary location at 950 Battery Street is a Category A (Historic Resource Present) structure on the east side of Battery Street between Vallejo and Green Streets in the North Beach neighborhood. It is within a C-2 (Community Business) Zoning District and a 65-X Height and Bulk District. It is also located within the Waterfront 3 Special Use District. 950 Battery Street is also subject to the Northeast Waterfront Planning Area.

Staff Analysis

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*

The business was founded in 1996.

2. *Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?*

Yes. Outpost Studios, Inc. qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- a. Outpost Studios, Inc. has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included in the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement.
- b. Outpost Studios, Inc. has contributed to the history and identity of the North Beach neighborhood and San Francisco.
- c. Outpost Studios, Inc. is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

3. *Is the business associated with a culturally significant art/craft/cuisine/tradition?*

No.

4. *Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and/or architecture?*

Yes. The business's location, the building located at 950 Battery Street, is a Category A (Historic Resource Present) building built in 1932. 950 Battery Street was included in the Foundation For San Francisco Architectural Heritage Historic Survey (1978), where it received a survey rating of "D" (minor or no importance).

5. *Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?*

Yes. The business' primary location, located at 950 Battery Street, is in a three-story reinforced-concrete Category A (Historic Resource Present) building. The subject property is within the Article 10 Northeast Waterfront Landmark District.

6. *Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?*

No, not as of the date of this Executive Summary.

7. *Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?*

Yes. Outpost Studios has been featured in a number of local and national publications and articles. Outpost Studios has been in *SF Gate*, the *San Francisco Examiner*, *Mission Local*, and the *San Francisco Business Times*. Outpost Studios has also been featured in industry magazines, such as *CineSOURCE*, *Post*, and newsletters for the Film Arts Foundation. Outpost Studios was also featured on a TV segment for local KPIX 5 called "Outrageous Jobs".

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

Current Locations:

- 950 Battery Street (2022 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- 880 Folsom Street (1996 – 2011)
- 69 Green Street (2012 - 2022)

Recommended by Applicant

- Audio recording and post-production studio (including, but not limited to, recording and editing services for film, music, and non-music audio such as voice-overs, advertisements, podcasts, and audiobooks).
- Professional staff of music and audio producers and engineers.
- Creative hub for audio technology developers.

Additional Recommended by Staff

- Foley stage.
- Engagement with the San Francisco independent filmmaker and music communities.

Basis for Recommendation

The Department recommends the Historic Preservation Commission adopt a resolution recommending the business listed above be adopted by the Small Business Commission to the Legacy Business Registry.

ATTACHMENTS

Draft Resolution

Legacy Business Registry Application:

- Application Review Sheet
- Section 1 – Business / Applicant Information
- Section 2 – Business Location(s)
- Section 3 – Disclosure Statement
- Section 4 – Written Historical Narrative
 - Criterion 1 – History and Description of Business
 - Criterion 2 – Contribution to Local History
 - Criterion 3 – Business Characteristics
- Contextual Photographs and Background Documentation



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 1260

HEARING DATE: AUGUST 17, 2022

Case No.: **2022-007222LBR**
Business Name: Outpost Studios, Inc.
Business Address: 950 Battery Street
Zoning: C-2 (Community Business) Zoning District
65-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0136/006
Applicant: David Nelson
950 Battery Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin
Located In: District 3
Staff Contact: Gretel Gunther – 628-652-7607
gretel.gunther@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR OUTPOST STUDIOS, INC. CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 950 BATTERY STREET, BLOCK/LOT 0136/006.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included in the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the City's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on August 17, 2022, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends that Outpost Studios, Inc. qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included in the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for Outpost Studios, Inc.

Location(s):

Current Locations:

- 950 Battery Street (2022 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- 880 Folsom Street (1996 – 2011)
- 69 Green Street (2012 - 2022)

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Audio recording and post-production studio (including, but not limited to, recording and editing services for film, music, and non-music audio such as voice-overs, advertisements, podcasts, and audiobooks).
- Professional staff of music and audio producers and engineers.
- Creative hub for audio technology developers.
- Foley stage.
- Engagement with the San Francisco independent filmmaker and music communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission's findings and recommendations are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file 2022-007222LBR to the Office of Small Business on August 17, 2022.



Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES: Wright, Black, Foley, So, Nageswaran, Matsuda

NOES: None

ABSENT: Johns

ADOPTED: August 17, 2022