



Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

Hearing Date: September 12, 2022

PO Plus

Application No.: LBR-2022-23-001
Business Name: PO Plus
Business Address: 584 Castro Street
District: District 8
Applicant: Stephen Martel, Owner
Nomination Letter Date: July 19, 2022
Nominated By: Supervisor Rafael Mandelman
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

PO Plus is a retail shipping, mailbox rental, and business services store opened by JD Larson at 584 Castro Street in 1982. For decades, customers have frequented the store to supplement their home offices, notarize important documents, pick up packages, and buy last minute gifts. As one of the oldest LGBTQ+ owned and operated businesses in the Castro, PO Plus not only provides essential neighborhood services, but also contributes to the sense of community and belonging in the area.

PO Plus is a certified Commercial Mail Receiving Agency of the U.S. Postal Service and receives mail for more than 2,000 private mailbox customers. As work-from-home has become increasingly common during the COVID-19 pandemic, customers have turned to PO Plus' suite of computers, printers, fax machines, scanners, and shredders to help conduct business. In recent years, PO Plus has also expanded its gift offerings and card selections to complement its core mail and shipping services.

Affectionately known as the "Gay Post Office," PO Plus has made significant contributions to San Francisco's LGBTQ+ community over its 40-year history. During its early years, because of the perceived stigma of maintaining a mailing address on Castro Street, PO Plus offered customers the option of sending their mail to a PO box on Bryant Street. Owner JD Larson would make the daily trek to retrieve the mail and bring it back to PO Plus so that customers could conveniently pick it up in the Castro. During the height of the AIDS epidemic, PO Plus offered free notary services to residents of Coming Home Hospice. To date, the business has also notarized more than 2,000 domestic partnerships.

PO Plus is an essential member of the Castro Street business community and a longtime supporter of numerous community-serving organizations, including the AIDS Emergency Fund, Castro Community Benefit District, and the Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy. The business employs a staff of eight people, provides employment opportunities for local high school and college students, and regularly hires from the Positive Resource Center and Castro Country Club.

CRITERION 1

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

Yes, PO Plus has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:

Legacy Business Program
Office of Small Business
City Hall Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-6680
legacybusiness@sfgov.org
www.legacybusiness.org





584 Castro Street from 1982 to Present (40 Years)

CRITERION 2

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

Yes, PO Plus has contributed to the history and identity of the Castro 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:

- 584 Castro Street is located within the boundaries of the California Register-eligible Castro Street Historic District. The district is significant under criterion A as an intact example of a late 19th century streetcar suburb and for its association with San Francisco's LGBTQ+ community in the 1970s.
- Although 584 Castro Street is not currently listed in historic resource registry, it is located in the California Register-eligible Castro Street Historic District.
- Although PO Plus is not explicitly mentioned in the Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ+ History, 584 Castro Street is identified as the founding location of BiPol, the first bisexual political organization.
- PO Plus has been featured numerous times in the Bay Area Reporter and has received accolades from politicians and organizations including the US Postal Inspection Service, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Merchants of Upper Market and Castro, Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, AIDs Emergency Fund, and former Mayor Gavin Newsom.

CRITERION 3

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

Yes, PO Plus is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that PO Plus 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.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Status as authorized Commercial Mail Receiving Agency of U.S. Postal Service.
- Retail shipping services.
- Business services, including computers, photocopiers, scanners, shredders, and fax machines.
- Notary services.
- Greeting card selection and small gift offerings.
- Historic features of Gilded-Age style building at 584 Castro Street.
- Hand-painted mural commemorating U.S. Postal Service Harvey Milk stamp

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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.

- Postal store.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include PO Plus currently located at 584 Castro 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

PO Plus

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Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for PO Plus, currently located at 584 Castro Street.

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 PO Plus 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 PO Plus.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Status as authorized Commercial Mail Receiving Agency of U.S. Postal Service.
- Retail shipping services.
- Business services, including computers, photocopiers, scanners, shredders, and fax machines.
- Notary services.
- Greeting card selection and small gift offerings.
- Historic features of Gilded-Age style building at 584 Castro Street.
- Hand-painted mural commemorating U.S. Postal Service Harvey Milk stamp.

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

- Postal store.

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-2021-23-001
Business Name: PO Plus
Business Address: 584 Castro Street
District: District 8
Applicant: Stephen Martel, Owner
Nomination Letter Date: July 19, 2022
Nominated By: Supervisor Rafael Mandelman

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

584 Castro Street from 1982 to Present (40 Years)

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: n/a

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: July 20, 2022

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
Legacy Business Program

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RAFAEL MANDELMAN

July 19, 2022

Re: Nomination of PO Plus to the Legacy Business Registry

Dear Director Tang,

I am writing to nominate PO Plus to the Legacy Business Registry. PO Plus has provided private mailbox services, retail shipping, and other business services for 40 years at 584 Castro Street. Since its inception, PO Plus has been affectionately known throughout the Castro community as "The Gay Post Office," and has contributed to the history of the Castro community by providing essential services to the neighborhood.

PO Plus first opened its doors in June 1982 and has operated continuously without interruption to the present day. The business was founded by JD Larson, who operated PO Plus until shortly before his death from AIDS in 1994, and subsequently owned by Paul Moffett, John Downey, and currently Stephen Martel.

In addition to providing exceptional mail, shipping, and business services, PO Plus makes significant culturally important contributions to the Castro by maintaining a historical storefront, where the first bisexual political organization, BiPol, was founded in the 1980s. 584 Castro is classified by the Planning Department as Category A, Historic Resource Present.

PO Plus has supported various community serving organizations over the past four decades including the AIDS Emergency Fund, California Democratic Victory Fund, Castro Community Benefit District, Coming Home Hospice, Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy, the Castro Merchants Association, Pets are Wonderful Support (PAWS), Positive Resource Center, and RealBad/GRGR West.

Given PO Plus' enduring presence in the Castro and their commitment to providing quality, community oriented services, I strongly believe that they would benefit from being a part of San Francisco's Legacy Business Registry, and I want to thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rafael Mandelman".

Rafael Mandelman
Member, San Francisco Board of Supervisors

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:	
Martel Industries DBA PO Plus	
BUSINESS OWNER(S) (Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business):	
Stephen Martel	
CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE NUMBER:
584 Castro Street	(415) 864-5888
	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://www.poplus.com/	
FACEBOOK PAGE:	
TWITTER NAME:	
APPLICANT'S NAME:	APPLICANT'S TELEPHONE NUMBER:
Stephen Martel	
APPLICANT'S TITLE:	APPLICANT'S EMAIL ADDRESS:
Owner	
SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:	
1057490	
SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (If applicable):	

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
584 Castro Street	94114	1982
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	1982 - 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:

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.

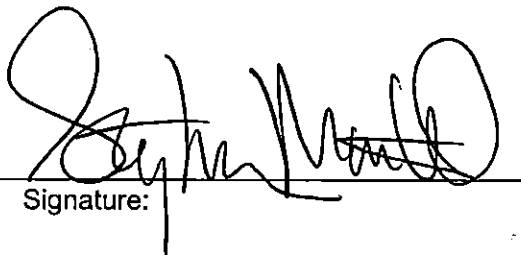
- ☒ I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- ☒ I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- ☒ I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- ☒ I attest that the Office of 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.

Stephen Martel

Name (Print):

3/4/2022

Date:



Signature:

PO PLUS

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.

PO Plus, located at 584 Castro Street in the Castro neighborhood, first opened its doors in June, 1982. The original owner, JD Larson, recognized that residents in the Castro needed a safe and reliable place to receive their mail. Mr. Larson operated the business until shortly before his death from AIDS in 1994.

In 1994, business partners Paul Moffett and John Downey purchased the business from the estate of JD Larson.

In 2002, Paul Moffett bought out his business partner, John Downey, and continued to run PO Plus until selling it to Stephen Martel on November 1, 2016. Stephen Martel is the current owner/operator of PO Plus.

PO Plus offers mailbox rentals, retail shipping services, package receiving, packing services, print services, computer rentals, virtual mail, shipping supplies, office supplies, secure shredding, greeting cards, and gift items. PO Plus is an authorized shipper for FedEx, UPS, DHL, and the U.S. Postal Service, which provides a variety of shipping options for its customers.

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

PO Plus has not ceased operations in San Francisco for more than six months.

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

The business is not family-owned.

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

The ownership history of PO Plus is as follows:

1982 to 1994:	JD Larson
1994 to 2002:	Paul Moffett and John Downey
2002 to 2016:	Paul Moffett
2016 to Present:	Stephen Martel

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 for 30+ years 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.

The historic resource status of the building at 584 Castro Street is classified by the Planning Department as Category A, Historic Resource Present. The building is a contributor to the Eligible Castro Street Historic District and has also been identified for its association with LGBTQ history.

The first bisexual political organization, BiPol, was founded here in the 1980s. “In her book *Bisexual Spaces*, Clare Hemmings describes the 1983 founding of the first bisexual political organization, BiPol (584 Castro Street, extant), as reflecting a shift in bisexual organizing away from the “revolutionary power of liberatory (bi) sexuality, and toward a more focused identity politics.” Viewing themselves as “the political arm of the community,” with an explicitly feminist agenda, BiPol sought to increase bisexual visibility and to challenge stereotypes about bisexuality.”¹

CRITERION 2

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

Since its inception, PO Plus has been affectionately known throughout the Castro community as “The Gay Post Office,” a nickname that has endured for nearly four decades. Some of their other taglines throughout the years include, “THE Address on Castro Street”; “Your Neighborhood Connection to the World,” and, most recently, “Handling Your Packages with Pride Since 1982.”

In the 1980s and 1990s, PO Plus contributed to the history of San Francisco’s Castro community by providing essential services to a neighborhood besieged by the AIDS pandemic **while simultaneously** leading the charge of the International Gay Rights movement. In the early days of PO Plus, there was a perceived stigma of having a mailing address on Castro Street. As a result, JD Larson, (the original owner of PO Plus) rented a PO Box at the Bryant Street post office and allowed customers to use either 584 Castro Street or the anonymous PO Box as their mailing address. During this time, many PO Plus customers chose the anonymous address, resulting in Mr. Larson driving to the Bryant Street post office every day to retrieve mail for his

¹ http://sfplanninggis.org/docs/Historical_Context_Statements/LGBTQ_HCS_October2015.pdf, Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ History in San Francisco, Donna J. Graves & Shayne E. Watson, October 2015, p 208.

PO Plus customers. The business still offers this service to several of their legacy customers, although the vast majority have migrated to their Castro Street mailing address.

PO Plus has been a general member of the Castro Merchants since 1994. Previous owner John Downy was active with the organization through the late 1990s, while previous owner Paul Moffett served on the Castro Merchants board from 2002 to 2008, including two years as President (2005 - 2007). Current owner Stephen Martel maintains an active presence for PO Plus at the Castro Merchants Association.

In a 2016 Certificate of Appreciation to PO Plus, the Castro Merchants Association wrote their appreciation for the “stewardship of one of the oldest LGBT owned and operated businesses in the Castro ... for assuring that we were served by the latest technology ... while retaining the valued traditions ... for prioritizing friendly, personalized customer care and first-name customer relations ... for guiding PO Plus through its current ownership transition, and for continuing community based ownership of the store in the Castro.”

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

PO Plus is a member of the Castro Merchants Association and participated in the organizing committee for the Castro Community Benefit District.

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

PO Plus has received a number of accolades from various nonprofit organizations and civic leaders, including the following:

- Certificate of Appreciation from US Postal Inspection Service, 2002;
- Certificate of Recognition from State Senator Mark Leno, 2007 and 2012;
- Grass Roots Gay Rights West Outstanding Sponsor Award;
- Board of Supervisors acknowledgment of dedication, commitment, and service to the community, 2007 and 2012;
- Multiple Certificates of Appreciation from Merchants of Upper Market and Castro;
- Certificate of Appreciation from The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence;
- “PO Plus Day” in San Francisco June 16, 2007;
- Certificate of Honor from Mayor Gavin Newsom, 2008;
- George Burgess Founders Award from AIDS Emergency Fund, 2008;
- Featured multiple times in the Bay Area Reporter newspaper

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

The ownership of PO Plus is not associated with a “significant” or historical person. However, the business does have a rich history of serving many noteworthy individuals/organizations involved with the LGBTQ rights movement and the HIV/AIDS political awareness movement.

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

Starting under the leadership of Paul Moffett and John Downey, PO Plus has become involved with many local LGBT and HIV/AIDS organizations within San Francisco. Through sponsorships, fundraising, and in-kind donations, PO Plus has been involved with the following organizations:

- AIDS Emergency Fund
- California Democratic Victory Fund
- Castro Community Benefit District
- Coming Home Hospice
- Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy
- Merchants of Upper Market and Castro (“Castro Merchants”)
- Pets are Wonderful Support (PAWS)
- Positive Resource Center
- RealBad / GRGR West

In addition to direct involvement with several specific organizations, many AIDS advocacy groups and gay rights organizations continue to rely on PO Plus for their mail and package receiving, notary services, and copy & print services.

To date, PO Plus has notarized over 2,000 domestic partnerships for our customers. At the height of the AIDS Pandemic, PO Plus offered free notary service to residents of Coming Home Hospice (located in the Castro).

In March 2020, PO Plus was recognized as an “essential business” and remained open throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic. From March 2020 to June 2022, PO Plus did not charge its annual price increase for mailbox rentals, nor did PO Plus deny mailbox services to any customers who could not afford to pay their mailbox rent.

Since February, 2022, PO Plus has collected more than \$2,000 in donations for LGBTQ rights organizations in Ukraine.

PO Plus regularly hires from the Positive Resource Center and the Castro Country Club. And PO Plus hires high school and college students for both summer and year-round work.

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

PO Plus primarily serves current and former residents of the Castro community. They also serve visitors/tourists to the neighborhood, many of whom rely on their domestic and international shipping options for sending souvenirs home. Additionally, to keep up with new technologies, PO Plus now offers “virtual mail,” which allows the business to serve customers from around the world.

Customers of PO Plus are as diverse as the city of San Francisco and the Castro neighborhood, many of whom are members of the LGBTQ community. The largest customer base comes from their nearly 2,000 mailbox customers. Within that group, PO Plus serves a broad mix of older

customers (those who opened a mailbox in the early 1980s), recent transplants to San Francisco, many HIV/AIDS and LGBTQ non-profit organizations, and a variety of small businesses. PO Plus' home office products attract a broad range of work-from-home customers who need the resources (fax, print, copy, etc.) that the business provides. The pack and ship customers vary from people sending out that last-minute birthday gift to folks on a business deadline and the package needs to arrive by 8:00 a.m. the next day.

In summary, it is challenging to give a general demographic of PO Plus' customer base. Over the past four decades, the demographics, needs, and habits of the Castro neighborhood have changed, and PO Plus has continually risen to meet those changing needs.

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

The structure that houses PO Plus is a turn of the century Victorian building that survived the 1906 earthquake. The building exterior currently features a large hand-painted mural commemorating the U.S. Postal Service Harvey Milk stamp.

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

If PO Plus were to close, their staff of eight would be without work, and many of their customers would be left without a safe, secure location to receive packages and mail. The neighborhood would have reduced options for retail shipping, and very limited options for local "work-from-home" support. The loss of their walk-in notary service would provide a challenge for Castro residents who need to have important documents notarized (e.g., civil unions, real estate transactions, estate planning, medical directives, etc.). Residents would also lose out on their carefully curated greeting card and gift selection.

Beyond the practical inconveniences mentioned above, PO Plus is considered by many to be similar to a bar without the alcohol, with their staff acting as bartenders. Just like the popular sitcom, "Cheers!", sometimes you want go where everybody knows your name ... and for many of their customers, PO Plus is that place. For some, PO Plus is just a business where they receive services; for many, however, PO Plus is a place where they come to see a friendly face to chat with about their day. Many of the "regular" customers incorporate a visit to PO Plus into their workday as a simple way to get out of the office for a few minutes to see familiar people (employees and customers) and catch up on the latest news. PO Plus also has plenty of customers who get dragged in by their eager dogs who know where they keep their dog treats, or their child drags them in to see what treasure awaits them in their "children's mailbox."

In short, PO Plus is more than just another mailbox store – its absence from the Castro community would be a significant loss in many ways.

CRITERION 3

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

Since its inception, PO Plus has been a Commercial Mail Receiving Agency of the U.S. Postal Service, which authorizes PO Plus to receive U.S. mail for its private mailbox (PMB) customers. PO Plus also receives documents and packages for its PMB customers through private carriers, including UPS, FedEx, DHL, Amazon, and other local couriers. As online shopping has gained in popularity, so too has their private mailbox services. Currently, PO Plus receives mail and packages for approximately 2,000 customers in the Castro neighborhood. As mail and package theft continues to rise in San Francisco, their PMB customers rely on PO Plus to provide a safe, trusted, and reliable location to receive important items.

In addition to their popular PMB service, PO Plus offers retail shipping services provided by the U.S. Postal Service, UPS, DHL, and UPS. Their customers appreciate the ability to select among a variety of shipping options to fit their personal and professional needs. PO Plus also offers pack and ship services, making it easy for customers to bring in unique items for their staff to safely pack for shipping or storage. PO Plus also serves as a convenient drop-off location for customers wishing to return items with pre-paid shipping labels from UPS, DHL, FedEx, Amazon, and the US Postal Service.

As the “work from home” movement continues to gain momentum during the COVID-19 pandemic, many Castro residents have come to rely upon PO Plus for the business services that they offer. Their self-serve computers, photocopiers, scanners, secure document shredders, and fax machine all help to supplement the home office needs for their neighbors who no longer travel to an office for work.

As one of the few businesses offering notary services in the neighborhood, their notaries are knowledgeable and busy. Prior to the legalization of same-sex marriage, PO Plus was the go-to location for members of the community to have their civil unions notarized. To date, more than 2,000 couples have used the notary service at PO Plus to finalize their civil union paperwork!

With the closing of several specialty greeting card stores in the Castro, PO Plus has expanded its greeting card selection and small gift offering. With an emphasis on unique and locally sourced products, PO Plus has become a go-to destination in the neighborhood for distinctive and quirky gifts for that hard-to-buy-for friend.

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)

PO Plus is committed to maintaining its historical tradition as a retail shipping and mailbox rental store.

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.).

PO Plus is committed to maintaining the historic Victorian building and the large hand-painted mural commemorating the U.S. Postal Service Harvey Milk stamp.

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.

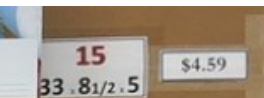
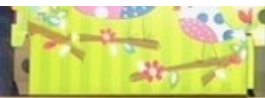
Documentation that demonstrates that PO Plus has been a retail shipping and mailbox rental business for 30+ years is included in this Legacy Business Registry application.







CUSTOM



02112/115/115
Gift Boxes
Small - \$3.79
Medium - \$5.19
Large/Gourmet \$6.09

15
33 - 8 1/2 x 5

\$4.59

0651
Mylar Photo DVD
Envelope
\$4.59

0650
Mylar CD
Envelope
\$4.09

0652
Mylar General Use
Envelope
\$5.29

0629
4 x 8
Bubble Envelope
\$1.39

0630
6 x 10
Bubble Envelope
\$2.29

0603
9.5 x 14.5
Bubble Envelope
\$2.09

0632
8.5 x 12
Bubble Envelope
\$3.09

0634
9.5 x 14
Bubble Envelope
\$3.59

0636
12.5 x 19
Bubble Envelope
\$5.79

0615
13 x 18
Bubble Envelope
\$3.79



1907/09
File Holders
Legal - \$3.20
Letter - \$1.15

PO
10 White 4-1/2 Labels
\$3.25



Complete Rental \$3.10
per calendar a year
Printing is \$0.25 per page
Color Printing is \$0.50 per page



Popcorn
1 Cubic Foot
\$4.99
(#2022)







Castro's P.O. Plus Has Officially Changed Hands



By [Shane Downing](#) - Published on November 01, 2016.

[San Francisco](#) [Castro](#)

Back in early October, Paul Moffett of Castro Street's [P.O. Plus](#) informed us that he was in the process of selling his shipping and mailing store to a new owner. As of this afternoon, the building's landlord has signed off, finalizing the transfer.

Originally opened in 1982, P.O. Plus is one of the neighborhood's oldest gay-owned and operated businesses. Moffett, who's owned it since 1994, says that legacy will continue under new owner Steve Martel.

Previously a medical sales rep, Martel has been a P.O. Plus customer for more than 12 years.

"I still remember how friendly everyone was," he says of his first visit to the store. "The guys who were working here, were very nice, and held my hand with whatever I needed. And that was the case every time I came back."



Moffett made the decision to sell P.O. Plus so that he can eventually be closer to his partner, who lives in Chicago. "I thought I'd test the waters, and see if there was any interest in having someone buy the store," he said.

Within a week, he'd received multiple offers. "My biggest desire was that we would keep the store in the community," he said, and as a longtime customer, Martel was an ideal fit.



Martel admits that he still has some learning to do when it comes to shipping and packaging. "The first thing I need to do is to learn our back-of-house operations," said Martel. "I'll slowly get behind the counter."

But Moffett, as well as the store's employees, will be there to help bridge the gap. "I'm not going anywhere for some time," said Moffett. "I'll be working closely with Steve to ensure that customer experience remains at the high level that customers expect. Everything will stay the same, except someone different will be signing the paychecks."

"Coming in here has always been a pleasant experience, no matter how short or long, that experience lasted in my day," said Martel, who says he'll work hard to maintain P.O. Plus' reputation for strong customer service.

"It's a huge responsibility to step into this position," he added. "P.O. Plus is a successful, well-known businesses that people use as a touchstone in their lives here in the Castro. To carry on the legacy that Paul has created is really exciting."





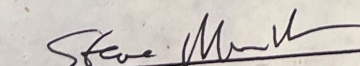
REAL BADTM
A GRGR/WEST PRODUCTION

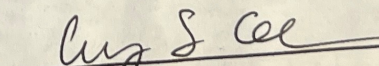
The GRGR/West Board of Directors and
The REAL BAD Working Group are proud to present our

Outstanding Sponsor Award

P.O. Plus

*In appreciation of your long-standing support of our event,
dedication to our beneficiaries, and service to our communities.*


Steve Mueller, GRGR/West Board President


Craig Cochran, REAL BAD XXIV Event Chair

Proclamation

City and County of San Francisco

WHEREAS, the City and County of San Francisco is proud to celebrate and recognize PO Plus for its 25 years of business and 25 years of giving in the Castro community; and

WHEREAS, PO Plus has been a contributing member of the Castro and a MUMC member for over 10 years – owner Paul Moffett most recently successfully served as MUMC President for two years; and

WHEREAS, small businesses positively contribute to the quality of life in San Francisco with their presence in and commitment to our diverse and unique neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, by providing a place to receive mail, socialize and exchange the latest gossip, PO Plus has served the Castro as an welcoming community center, making it an integral part of the Castro community; and

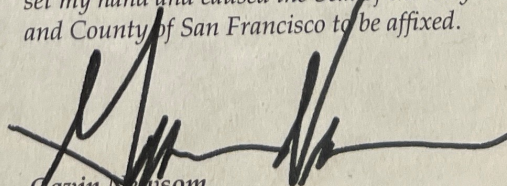
WHEREAS, many LGBT organizations and non-profits would not have a home on Castro Street without PO Plus serving as their official mailing address and postal service provider; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that I, Gavin Newsom, Mayor of the City and County of San Francisco, on the occasion of their 25th Anniversary, do hereby proclaim June 16, 2007 as...

PO PLUS DAY

In San Francisco!

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City and County of San Francisco to be affixed.


Gavin Newsom
Mayor



Certificate of Honor

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS City and County of San Francisco

The Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco hereby issues, and authorizes the execution of, this Certificate of Honor in appreciative public recognition of distinction and merit for outstanding service to a significant portion of the people of the City and County of San Francisco by:

P.O. PLUS

In celebration of P.O. Plus's 30th anniversary, the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco extends its highest commendation. With dedication and commitment, P.O. Plus provides an exemplary and outstanding service to the community.

Scott Wiener

Scott Wiener
Supervisor, District 8
June 16, 2012

Jan P. [Signature]

Melina Chen

David Ahn
Carole

Christina [Signature]

[Signature]



CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION

P.O. Plus

*Congratulations on the occasion of celebrating your 30th Anniversary!
I commend your commitment and dedication to providing our city with
invaluable services and contributions. It is the efforts of organizations
such as yours that make our community a brighter place for all.
Congratulations and thank you!*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Mark Leno". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" being more prominent than the last name "Leno".

MARK LENO
Senator, 3rd District
June 16th, 2012



CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

CASTRO MERCHANTS HONORS PAUL MOFFETT

Owner and Operator of The Castro's P.O. Plus at 584 Castro Street since 1994,
upon the occasion of your business sale and retirement.

FOR your stewardship of one of the oldest LGBT-owned
and operated businesses in The Castro;

FOR assuring that we were served by latest technology in shipping,
delivery, and related services, while retaining the valued traditions
of P.O. Plus's original 1982 founders;

FOR prioritizing friendly, personalized customer care and
fostering first-name customer relationships;

FOR guiding P.O. Plus through its current ownership transition; and

FOR continuing community-based ownership of the store in The Castro,

We express our deepest gratitude and appreciation.

We wish you health and happiness as you explore new life paths, along with
your husband, Brent, and P.O. Plus's Chief Greeter and Mascot, Tucker Pooch.

Presented this First Day of December, 2016
at San Francisco, California

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel Bergerac", is written over the printed name.

Daniel Bergerac

CASTRO MERCHANTS President



LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEARING DATE: AUGUST 17, 2022

Filing Date: July 20, 2022
Case No.: **2022-007218LBR**
Business Name: PO Plus
Business Address: 584 Castro Street
Zoning: NCD (Castro Street Neighborhood Commercial) Zoning District
40-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 2695/013A
Applicant: Stephen Martel
584 Castro Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Rafael Mandelman
Located In: District 8
Staff Contact: Alessandro Hall – (628) 652-7336
Alessandro.Hall@sfgov.org

Recommendation: Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

Business Description

PO Plus is a retail shipping, mailbox rental, and business services store opened by JD Larson at 584 Castro Street in 1982. For decades, customers have frequented the store to supplement their home offices, notarize important documents, pick up packages, and buy last minute gifts. As one of the oldest LGBTQ+ owned and operated businesses in the Castro, PO Plus not only provides essential neighborhood services, but also contributes to the sense of community and belonging in the area.

PO Plus is a certified Commercial Mail Receiving Agency of the U.S Postal Service and receives mail for more than 2,000 private mailbox customers. As work-from-home has become increasingly common during the COVID-19 pandemic, customers have turned to PO Plus's suite of computers, printers, fax machines, scanners, and shredders to help conduct business. In recent years, PO Plus has also expanded its gift offerings and card selections to complement its core mail and shipping services.

Affectionately known as the “Gay Post Office,” PO Plus has made significant contributions to San Francisco’s LGBTQ+ community over its forty-year history. During its early years, because of the perceived stigma of maintaining a mailing address on Castro Street, PO Plus offered customers the option of sending their mail to a PO box on Bryant Street. Owner JD Larson would make the daily trek to retrieve the mail and bring it back to PO Plus so that customers could conveniently pick it up in the Castro. During the height of the AIDS epidemic, PO Plus offered free notary services to residents of Coming Home Hospice. To date, the business has also notarized more than 2,000 domestic partnerships.

PO Plus is an essential member of the Castro Street business community and a longtime supporter of numerous community-serving organizations, including the AIDS Emergency Fund, Castro Community Benefit District, and the Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy. The business employs a staff of eight people, provides employment opportunities for local high school and college students, and regularly hires from the Positive Resource Center and Castro Country Club.

The business is located at 584 Castro Street in a Category A (Historic Resource Present) structure on the west side of Castro Street between 18th and 19th streets in the Castro/Upper Market neighborhood. It is within the NCD (Castro Street Neighborhood Commercial) Zoning District, a 40-X Height and Bulk District, the Castro Cultural District, and the California Register-eligible Castro Street Historic District.

Staff Analysis

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*

The business was founded in 1982.

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

Yes. PO Plus qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- a. PO Plus has operated continuously in San Francisco for 40 years.
- b. PO Plus has contributed to the history and identity of the Castro neighborhood and San Francisco.
- c. PO Plus 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. 584 Castro Street is located within the boundaries of the California Register-eligible Castro Street Historic District. The district is significant under criterion A as an intact example of a late 19th century streetcar suburb and for its association with San Francisco’s LGBTQ+ community in the 1970s.

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

No. Although 584 Castro Street is not currently listed in historic resource registry, it is located in the California Register-eligible Castro Street Historic District.

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

Although PO Plus is not explicitly mentioned in the Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ+ History, 584 Castro Street is identified as the founding location of BiPol, the first bisexual political organization.

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

Yes. PO Plus has been featured numerous times in the Bay Area Reporter and has received accolades from politicians and organizations including the US Postal Inspection Service, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Merchants of Upper Market and Castro, Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, AIDs Emergency Fund, and former Mayor Gavin Newsom.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

- 584 Castro Street (1982 – Present)

Recommended by Applicant

- Status as authorized Commercial Mail Receiving Agency of U.S. Postal Service
- Retail shipping services
- Business services, including computers, photocopiers, scanners, shredders, and fax machines
- Notary services
- Greeting card selection and small gift offerings
- Historic features of Gilded-Age style building at 584 Castro St.
- Hand-painted mural commemorating U.S. Postal Service Harvey Milk stamp

Additional Recommended by Staff

- None

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. 1261

HEARING DATE: AUGUST 17, 2022

Case No.: **2022-007218LBR**
Business Name: PO Plus
Business Address: 584 CASTRO STREET
Zoning: NCD (Castro Street Neighborhood Commercial) Zoning District
40-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 2695/013A
Applicant: Stephen Martel
584 Castro Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Rafael Mandelman
Located In: District 8
Staff Contact: Alessandro Hall – (628) 652-7336
Alessandro.hall@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR PO PLUS CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 584 CASTRO STREET, BLOCK/LOT 2695/013A;

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; 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 PO Plus qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for PO Plus.

Location(s):

Current Locations:

- 584 Castro Street (1982 – Present)

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

- Status as authorized Commercial Mail Receiving Agency of U.S. Postal Service
- Retail shipping services
- Business services, including computers, photocopiers, scanners, shredders, and fax machines
- Notary services
- Greeting card selection and small gift offerings
- Historic features of Gilded-Age style building at 584 Castro St.
- Hand-painted mural commemorating U.S. Postal Service Harvey Milk stamp

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 2022-007218LBR 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