

Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

HEARING DATE MAY 8, 2017

NORIEGA PRODUCE

Application No.: LBR-2016-17-076
Business Name: Noriega Produce
Business Address: 3821 Noriega Street
District: District 4
Applicant: Dimitri Vardakastanis
Nomination Date: March 14, 2017
Nominated By: Supervisor Katy Tang
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Founded in 1985 by the Vardakastanis family, Noriega Produce is a local, family-owned grocery store in the Outer Sunset neighborhood. Dimitri Vardakastanis immigrated with his brother to the United States in 1974 from the Greek island of Zakynthos and was eventually joined by his wife and children in San Francisco. Dimitri and his son, Konstantinos “Gus” Vardakastanis, worked at various grocery stores in the city until they were able to save enough money to open their own market, Haight Street Market, in 1981. Noriega Produce was their second store, which they opened in 1985 at 3749 Noriega Street. The store was relocated in 1996 to its current, larger location at 3821 Noriega Street. Noriega Produce celebrates its proximity to the beach with an exterior mural on the front exterior façade depicting a surfer sitting on a beach with his surfboard, admiring a setting sun. Images of fruits and vegetables echo the contents inside the store and on display in the fruit stand below. Signage on the interior adds to the “family-friendly, beachy vibe” of the store. A sign made of an actual surfboard features the Noriega Produce logo, which itself consists of an image of a breaking ocean wave. Gus and his wife, Georgia, eventually took over the business from Dimitri. Gus hand-selects the produce they sell from the San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market while Georgia prepares popular Greek food items like baklava and spanakopita for sale under their private, in-house label called “Gus’s.” Gus and Georgia’s two sons, Dimitri and Bobby, grew up in the family business and in 2001 assumed management of the Noriega store. The brothers added organic groceries and natural meats to the store’s offerings, which include a wide variety of products at different price points to accommodate all income levels. Open seven days a week, 365 days a year, Noriega Produce has been open every single day since its founding. It even opened for the afternoon on the day it moved from its old site to its current location, as well as for a few hours on the day a main water line burst at the property and flooded the store with water. The dedication to its customers on the part of the Vardakastanis family is further evidenced by its participation in efforts to improve the neighborhood and build community in the Outer Sunset. Family members are actively involved with the Outer Noriega Merchants Association, working to transform the Outer Noriega corridor through pedestrian safety efforts, landscaping improvements, and the annual Ocean Beach Music Festival. The business also supports neighborhood schools and community centers. Its script program has raised over \$20,000 annually for local schools by collecting five percent of customers’ total purchases and giving it back to their children’s school. One of the oldest businesses in the Outer Noriega corridor, Noriega Produce is now operated by the third generation of the Vardakastanis family and continues to function as a stable force in the business district.



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

3749 Noriega Street from 1985 to 1996 (11 years).
3821 Noriega Street from 1996 to Present (21 years).

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

Yes, the applicant has contributed to the Outer Sunset neighborhood's history and identity.

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:

- Noriega Produce is associated with the tradition of operating a neighborhood-serving grocery store.
- Noriega Produce has contributed to the history and identity of San Francisco's Outer Sunset neighborhood by continuously offering a wide selection of groceries including local produce and Greek food items from the Vardakastanis family's in-house brand, "Gus's." The business has become a fixture of the community through its leadership in neighborhood improvement efforts and community events, and its practice of giving back to local schools through a customer donation program.
- The property at 3821 Noriega Street is considered a "Category B Property." It was evaluated in the *draft Neighborhood Commercial Corridors Historic Resources Survey* and given a "C" rating, indicating it is not found to be significant for its architecture. This rating, however, should not be considered final, as the survey has not yet been adopted. It is included here for information only.
- The business has been cited in the following publications:
 - The Afar Guide to San Francisco, January/February 2012 Issue, "Noriega Produce."
 - San Francisco Chronicle, 10/28/2015, "How a neighborhood grocer beats the odds – on heart & soul," by Tara Duggan.
 - Hoodline, 2/15/2016, "Behind the Scenes with Dimitri Vardakastanis of Noriega Produce," by Stephen Jackson.

Noriega Produce also received a Certificate of Honor from Supervisor Carmen Chu during Small Business Week 2010, recognizing the business' significant contributions to the community. In 2015, the business received another Certificate of Honor from Supervisor Katy Tang recognizing Noriega Produce as the Small Business of the Year for District 4 during Small Business Month, in recognition for "working collaboratively with other merchants, advocating for neighborhood beautification, and hosting annual events" in addition to offering healthy food, good service, and friendship to Outer Sunset families.

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

Yes, Noriega Produce is committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define its tradition as a neighborhood-serving grocery store.





SAN FRANCISCO

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
EDWIN M. LEE, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that Noriega Produce 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:

- Function as a neighborhood-serving grocery store.
- Offering a variety of groceries at different price points to service all demographics in the neighborhood.
- Selling in-house product, "Gus's," that features Greek food items.
- Providing a friendly, comfortable atmosphere for neighbors to come to shop and meet others in the community.
- Working to raise funds for local schools and nonprofit community organizations.
- Characteristic signage, including sign featuring company logo on a real surfboard.
- Mural on front façade that incorporates beach themes such as a surfer with surfboard and a sun setting behind the ocean.
- Offering of local produce.

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.

- Grocery store.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include Noriega Produce currently located at 3821 Noriega Street in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo, Manager
Legacy Business Program



Small Business Commission Draft Resolution

HEARING DATE MAY 8, 2017

NORIEGA PRODUCE

LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY RESOLUTION NO. _____

Application No.: LBR-2016-17-076
Business Name: Noriega Produce
Business Address: 3821 Noriega Street
District: District 4
Applicant: Dimitri Vardakastanis
Nomination Date: March 14, 2017
Nominated By: Supervisor Katy Tang
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS APPROVING THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY APPLICATION FOR NORIEGA PRODUCE, CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 3821 NORIEGA 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 in 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 May 8, 2017, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore





SAN FRANCISCO

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
EDWIN M. LEE, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission recommends safeguarding the below listed physical features and traditions at Noriega Produce:

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Function as a neighborhood-serving grocery store.
Offering a variety of groceries at different price points to service all demographics in the neighborhood.
Selling in-house product, "Gus's," that features Greek food items.
Providing a friendly, comfortable atmosphere for neighbors to come to shop and meet others in the community.
Working to raise funds for local schools and nonprofit community organizations.
Characteristic signage, including sign featuring company logo on a real surfboard.
Mural on front facade that incorporates beach themes such as a surfer with surfboard and a sun setting behind the ocean.
Offering of local produce.

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

- Grocery store.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on May 8, 2017.

Regina Dick-Endrizzi
Director

RESOLUTION NO. _____

- Ayes -
Nays -
Abstained -
Absent -





SAN FRANCISCO

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
EDWIN M. LEE, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

**Legacy
Business
Registry**

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2016-17-076
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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

3749 Noriega Street from 1985 to 1996 (11 years).
3821 Noriega Street from 1996 to Present (21 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: NA

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: March 24, 2017

Richard Kurylo
Manager, Legacy Business Program





KATY TANG

March 14, 2017

Regina Dick-Endrizzi
Legacy Business Program
Office of Small Business
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 110
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Director Dick-Endrizzi,

I would like to nominate Noriega Produce for inclusion on San Francisco's Legacy Business Registry. The Vardakastanis family opened what is now a Sunset institution, Noriega Produce, in 1985 at 3821 Noriega Street. They are also proprietors of two other markets – one on Haight Street which opened in 1981 and another at 17th and Harrison which opened in 2015.

The Vardakastanis family embodies the spirit of small business in San Francisco. After immigrating here in 1974, Gus Vardakastanis opened the first of his three markets. His son, Dimitri, began working at their second market, Noriega Produce, at the age of 16. Since then, Dimitri has become a well-respected and well-loved member of our community. Always willing to fundraise for and donate to other members of our community such as our local schools, Dimitri is also a very active member of the Outer Noriega merchants. Together with his fellow business owners, he has worked tirelessly to transform the Outer Noriega corridor through pedestrian safety efforts, landscaping improvements, and hosting the annual Ocean Beach Music & Art Festival, which brings out hundreds of families to enjoy the Outer Sunset.

Over the past three decades, the Vardakastanis family has built a place that is more than a neighborhood grocery store – it is a place that nourishes our families and our community. The dedication and commitment of Dimtri and the entire Vardakastanis family to our community makes Noriega Produce an ideal business to be part of the Legacy Business Registry Program. If you have any further questions, please contact me at (415) 554-7460 or katy.tang@sfgov.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katy Tang".

Katy Tang
Supervisor, District 4
City and County of San Francisco

Section One:

Business / Applicant Information. 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:		
Noriega Produce		
BUSINESS OWNER(S) (identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business)		
Konstantinos Vardakastanis 33% Dimitri Vardakastanis 33% Bobby Vardakastanis 33%		
CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:		TELEPHONE:
3821 Noriega Street 94122		(415) 564-0370
		EMAIL:
		dimitri@gussmarket.com
WEBSITE:	FACEBOOK PAGE:	YELP PAGE
gussmarket.com		

APPLICANT'S NAME	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Same as Business	
APPLICANT'S TITLE	
APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE:
	()
	EMAIL:

SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:	SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (if applicable):
0459779	

OFFICIAL USE: Completed by OSB Staff	
NAME OF NOMINATOR:	DATE OF NOMINATION:

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
3749 Noriega Street	94122	June 1985
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATON	
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	June 1985 - September 1996	

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
3821 Noriega Street	94122	Start: September 1996
		End: Current

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 and a business deemed not current in 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 the Business Assistance Grant.

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.

Dimitri Vardakostas 3/24/17

Name (Print):

Date:

Signature:

NORIEGA PRODUCE

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.

Konstantinos (Gus) Vardakastanis has been working in San Francisco grocery stores since he was 16 after following his father (Dimitri Vardakastanis) and uncle to the United States. Gus's father and uncle had emigrated from the Greek island of Zakynthos in 1974, where they had farmed olives and tomatoes. Gus's mother and siblings soon followed. During a return visit to Zakynthos when Gus was 20, he met Georgia, then only 15. They married within a month and returned to San Francisco together.

Gus and his father Dimitri worked in various produce and grocery markets around the city and enjoyed the honest living of serving people their staples on a daily basis. So they saved money until they had the funding to open their own store.

Gus and his Dimitri opened Haight Street Market on Haight Street location in 1981. Four years later in 1985, they opened Noriega Produce at 3749 Noriega Street.

Noriega Produce was located in its original location from 1985 to 1996. It was only 1,500 square feet, so when the former Surf Pharmacy at 3821 Noriega Street closed due to the owner's retirement, Noriega Produce moved into the larger, 2,500-square-foot space that it occupies to this day.

In 2001, Gus's sons Dimitri and Bobby took over management of Noriega Produce, and the three became 1/3 owners of the business. They added organic groceries and natural meats to the hand-picked fresh produce that is the cornerstone of the family business.

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

Noriega Produce has not ceased operations in San Francisco since it was founded. We pride ourselves on serving our community 365 days per year.

Staying open during the transition from one location to another was challenging, but we still found a way to not close that day.

There was one day when our main water line burst, and the store filled with about 4 inches of water. People from the neighborhood helped sweep the water out of the store, and we managed to open to the public in the later part of the morning.

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

Noriega Produce is still owned and operated by the original family. Gus and his father Dimitri opened the business in 1985. The patriarch of the family, Dimitri, passed away in 1996. Gus's two sons, Dimitri and Bobby, are now in the business with their father. It's an honor to say that three generations have worked in our business.

Ownership history:

Dimitri Vardakastanis and Gus Vardakastanis	1985-1996
Gus Vardakastanis	1996-2001
Gus Vardakastanis, Dimitri Vardakastanis and Bobby Vardakastanis	2001 to Present

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

Not applicable.

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.

Not applicable.

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.

Unknown.

CRITERION 2

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

The Outer Sunset has undergone a significant amount of change with an influx of new businesses that have helped revitalize the Noriega corridor. Despite recent changes, the neighborhood has maintained its family-friendly, beachy vibe, which predates our business. As

one of the oldest operators on the street serving our customers to the best of our ability 7 days a week, Noriega Produce contributes to the history and stability of the business district, as well as the identity of the Outer Sunset as a family-friendly neighborhood.

We have been honored with Certificates of Honors by three different supervisors, including Supervisor Carmen Chu and Supervisor Katy Tang, for significant contributions to the community, working collaboratively with other merchants, advocating for neighborhood beatification, hosting annual events and inspiring others with our spirit and enthusiasm.

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

We helped organize the Ocean Beach Music Festival along with other merchants. The event started as a block party with live entertainment and food intended to celebrate the Outer Noriega corridor. The small size of the festival didn't last long. In its third year in 2016, the family-friendly festival expanded to a second block to accommodate the crowds and provide more booth spaces for local vendors. The event featured six stages, over 10 food vendors, two beer gardens, over 20 live music acts, live art installations, a kids' zone, a mobile petting zoo and a pumpkin patch. The event is organized by the Outer Noriega Merchants Association with which Noriega Produce has been involved since its inception. The event attracts many residents and visitors to the neighborhood.

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

Noriega Produce has been featured in numerous articles and publications including the San Francisco Chronicle, Hoodline, SF Examiner, AFAR Magazine, Eater SF and Edible Magazine.

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

No.

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

We work closely with our neighboring schools and community centers to help support each other through script and donation programs. Our script program raises over \$20,000 annually for local schools by sending back 5% of a customer's total purchases to their child's school. Customers can sign up for the program at the market, and an account number is created for them. We send the 5% donation to the local school of their choice monthly.

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

Noriega Produce serves the Outer Sunset, which is a melting pot of different people including surfers, students and families. Many of our customers view our market as an extension of their

pantry instead of the grocery store down the street. Patrons come in not just to find great products but to meet and socialize with their community; building and maintaining locally-driven traditions that our city was built on. Noriega Produce strives to service the community as a whole, from the short-term students attending San Francisco State University to the fifth generation families that can tell you about the days when Vicente Street at Great Highway used to be a goat farm.

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

No.

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

Having a grocery store in any neighborhood is central to providing neighbors not only with full access to groceries but a place to meet and get to know your surrounding members of the community. Without Noriega Produce, the neighborhood would lose one of its most necessary components to keeping the corridor alive. There are a lot of customers that treat the store as their refrigerator!

CRITERION 3

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

Noriega Produce is a full service grocery store offering a wide variety of goods at all price points. We offer specialty, locally-made products along with everyday staples to truly be a neighborhood store for everyone in the community.

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)

We are proud to say that the third generation is operating the business. The store has changed in the last 32 years but some things have remained constant:

- Customer service – Providing a friendly, comfortable atmosphere for neighbors to come not only to shop but have the opportunity to meet others in the community.
- Local schools – Working to raise funds for local school and different community organizations.
- Product mix – Offering a variety of groceries at different price point to service all the demographics in the neighborhood.

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.).

The Outer Sunset is a melting pot of different people from surfers to artists to manufacturers. In recognition of this diversity, we created a surfboard sign for the interior of the store, which features the Noriega Produce logo on an actual surfboard. There is also a mural on the façade of the building that incorporates a surfer and surfboard. Another distinctive physical feature is stained wood on the façade of the building.

Noriega Produce is committed to maintaining its tradition of being a grocery store.

d. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30years; 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.

Not applicable.

A
FULL LINE
OF
Organic
PRODUCE



Noriega Produce Market



DAIRY PRODUCTS
FROZEN FOODS
& GROCERIES



NORIEGA
PRODUCE

DAIRY PRODUCTS
FROZEN FOODS
& GROCERIES

HEALTH
FOODS

Noriega Produce Market

La Pasa
Tajueña

FRESH FLOWERS

NEED
SUPPLY



No Loitering, Litter
No Drinking
Alcoholic Beverages
Waiters are Subject
Ningun callejero
en desorden No
de los

MEXICAN
Price \$1.99

MANILA
Price \$1.99

USA PLUM
Price \$1.69

SATSUMA MANGO
Price \$2.49

WHITE PEACHES
Sale Price \$1.99
Price \$2.49

ORGANIC HIGH-PIPER PEPPERS
Price \$0.99

WHITE NECTARINES
Sale Price \$1.99
MEYER LEMONS
Price \$2.49

ORGANIC SWEET WHITE CORN
Price \$0.49

ORGANIC
Price \$1.99

ORGANIC
Price \$1.99

Premium Quality
Family Farms
California's Fresh Fruit

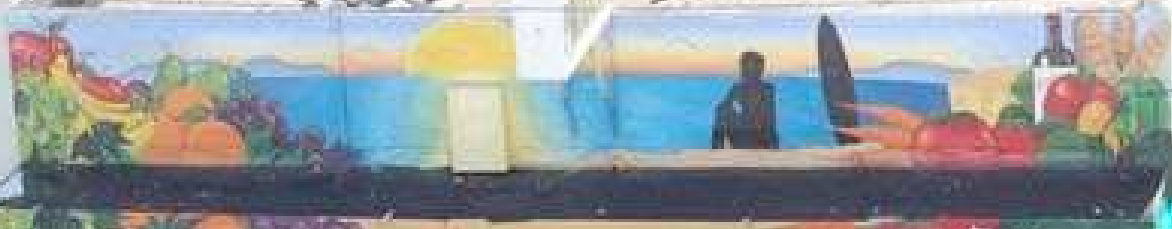
Grow for you by
TARKE
Family Tree Farms

WHITE CORN

RED GRAPEFRUIT
Price \$1.89







MAKING OF
Organic
PRODUCE

Noriega Produce Market

DAIRY PRODUCTS
FROZEN FOODS
& GROCERIES

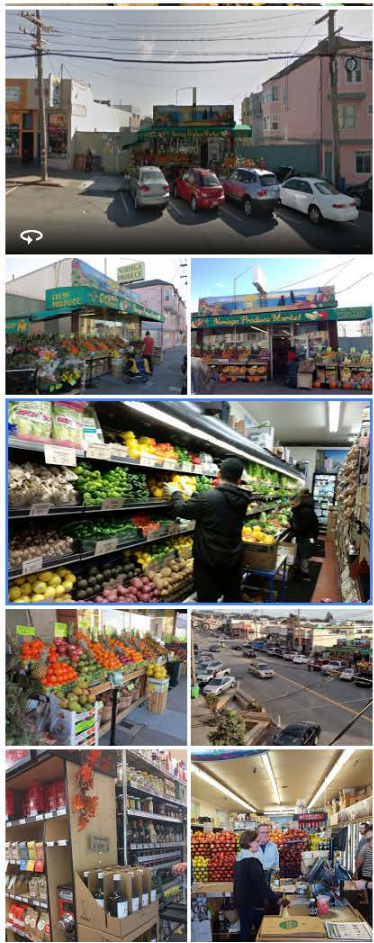
Noriega Produce

Noriega Produce
Shamir Colloff
OCT 2016



Noriega Produce

Great produce, great service!
DDuBay1750
JAN 2017



Noriega Produce



SERVING THE COMMUNITY SINCE 1985



NORIEGA PRODUCE

415.564.0370

3821 NORIEGA STREET
★
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94122



NORTEGA PRODUCE



SERVING THE COMMUNITY FOR OVER 20 YEARS

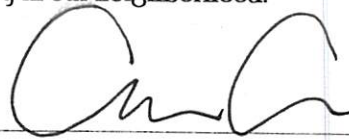
Certificate of Honor

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS City and County of San Francisco

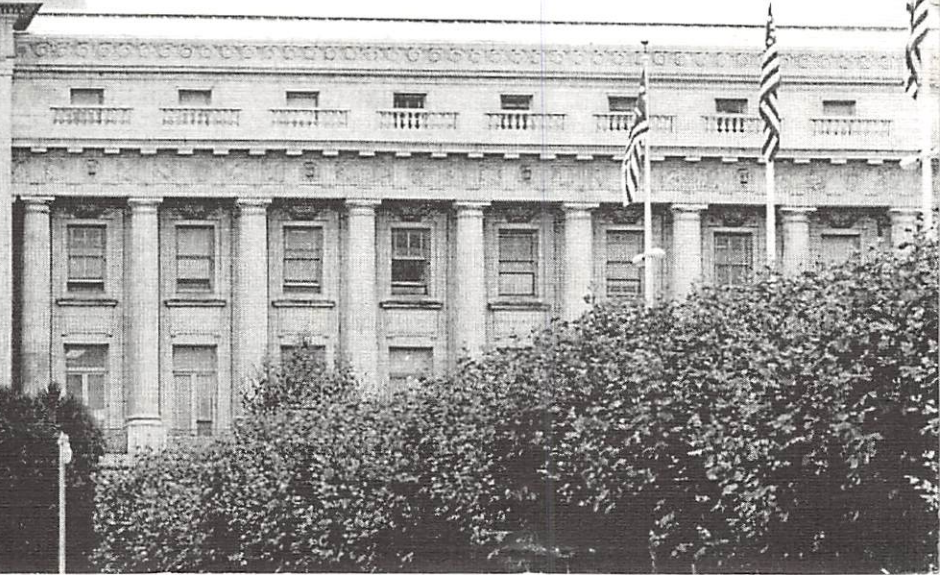
The Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco hereby issues, and authorizes the execution of, this Certificate of Honor in appreciative public recognition of distinction and merit for outstanding service to a significant portion of the people of the City and County of San Francisco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

NORIEGA PRODUCE

On the occasion of Small Business Week 2010, the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco would like to acknowledge your significant contributions to our community. We thank you for creating a vibrant business community in our neighborhood.



Supervisor Carmen Chu
Member, San Francisco Board of Supervisors
May 2010



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:

NORIEGA PRODUCE

SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR DISTRICT 4 HONOREE

In honor of Small Business Month, we celebrate your outstanding contributions and dedication to improving the Sunset neighborhood. You add life and energy to our community by working collaboratively with other merchants, advocating for neighborhood beautification, and hosting annual events. For 30 years, you have offered healthy food along with good service and friendship to the families of the Outer Sunset. Your spirit and enthusiasm are vital to our neighborhood and your work inspires others, and the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco extends to you its highest commendation.



Supervisor Katy Tang
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
May 19, 2015



THE AFAR GUIDE TO
SAN FRANCISCO

SAVE PLACE
PHOTOS (1)

Noriega Produce, San Francisco



Photo by Erin Kunkel

Noriega Produce, San Francisco

The proprietor, Dimitri, is like the mayor of the Sunset. He always has a smile and knows you by name. He and his family run the best little health-food market. It's tiny, but you don't need to go anywhere else. Plus they're Greek and they always have fresh baklava. 3821 Noriega St., (415) 564-0370

This story appeared in the January/February 2012 issue.

<http://www.sfchronicle.com/recipes/article/How-a-neighborhood-grocer-beats-the-odds-on-6596520.php>

San Francisco Chronicle

How a neighborhood grocer beats the odds — on heart & soul

By Tara Duggan

October 28, 2015

Updated: October 28, 2015



Photo: Connor Radnovich, The Chronicle

Gus Vardakastanis puts strawberries on display at Haight Street Market in San Francisco.

“You don’t like me?” Gus Vardakastanis asks Claro Mistica, with a grizzled, squinty 2:30 a.m. smile.

“I love you, that’s why I’m giving you that price,” answers Mistica, grinning back.

Produce buyer Vardakastanis and Mistica, a seller for Washington Vegetables, have been practicing this banter for at least 25 years, hashing out prices for limes, greens and artichokes in the middle of the night at the San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market. The owner of two San Francisco neighborhood grocery stores, Vardakastanis comes to the produce market four mornings a week to check on orders and make last-minute decisions. While the city sleeps, he wanders rows of stacked produce boxes that emit musty scents of tomatoes and bell peppers and stops to comb his fingers through a case of Brussels sprouts, jade green and glazed with water.

“Beauties,” he says.

Vardakastanis, 55, and his wife, Georgia, 50, have owned Haight Street Market and Noriega Produce since the early eighties, shortly after immigrating from Greece. When their sons, Dimitri and Bobby, took over management a dozen years ago, they added organic groceries and natural meats, responding to the changing tastes of customers. While Gus Vardakastanis’ hand-picked fresh produce is still the cornerstone of the family business, the family’s new Gus’s Community Market, a 12,000-square-foot store that will open in the Mission in the coming weeks, is aimed squarely at the 21st century city, complete with a full-service cafe, juice bar, craft beers on tap and whole-animal butcher shop.

With all the change happening in the city, their success keeps intact a part of the old San Francisco where a family-owned business can not only survive, but thrive.

Things didn't look so rosy four years ago when a Whole Foods was due to open four blocks away from the family's Haight Street store. The Vardakastanis' counterintuitive response to their megamart neighbor? Double down on their market and expand.

At the time, people warned the family against their plan to compete. The developer of the new Whole Foods property even filed an opposition against the expansion, according to San Francisco Planning Department records.

"Some people said we were dumb and wrong for putting so many resources into a store that would just die," says Dimitri, 34.

But they boldly went ahead and took over the space next door to make room for a full-service meat counter, deli and coffee bar. And ever since their Goliath arrived at Haight and Stanyan, both Haight Street Market and Noriega Produce have experienced steady growth, which has allowed them to open the new store in the Mission.

"It's that community and that human connection combined with good food," says Johanna St. Clair, who lives two blocks away from Noriega Produce, where she shops almost daily. As a busy parent and the co-owner of nearby Mollusk Surf Shop, she says, "I don't really want to spend my weekend at a big-box store. I basically consider their store an extension of my pantry."

Gus, whose given name is Konstantinos, has been working in San Francisco grocery stores since he was 16. That's when he followed his father and uncle here from the Greek island of Zakynthos, where they had farmed olives and tomatoes. His mother and siblings followed.

During a return visit to Zakynthos when Gus was 20, he met Georgia, then only 15. They married within a month, and his uncle sponsored their visas

when they returned here together and settled in San Francisco's Glen Park neighborhood, where they still live.

Gus, his father and his uncle bought Haight Street Market in 1981, the year Dimitri was born. Bobby was born less than two years later, and the family bought Noriega Produce in the Outer Sunset in 1985. Each were only 2,000 to 3,000 square feet. (Later, they moved the Haight store a block away, to its current location.)

When the boys were around the store, their parents scolded them not to go too far outside. Haight Street from the early '80s through the '90s was, as Gus says, "Not too nice. There were more punk rockers."

Dimitri agrees: "There are a lot of drugs on the street now, but there were more then."



Photo: Connor Radnovich, The Chronicle

Gus Vardakastanis puts strawberries on display at Haight Street Market in San Francisco, California, on Thursday, Oct. 22, 2015.

There was plenty of shoplifting, too. One day when their security guard was at lunch, a man sneaked in the back and ran out with a case of apples. Gus chased him down the street and got his apples back.

“There was a scuffle,” says Bobby, 32.

“On the bright side,” Dimitri quickly points out, “there’s always been a lot of people who have had support for what we are doing.”

Michaelynn Meyers watched the Vardakastanis boys grow up at the Haight Street Market, having shopped there since the 1980s. She and St. Clair both recall times they’ve asked for a specific product the store didn’t already carry — fresh bagels, aerosol whipped cream — and they’d find it on the shelf a few weeks later.

“They bring their heart and soul into the store,” says Meyers. “That caring they had for their kids and the kids had for the parents — that spilled out to the customers.”

The brothers both have a natural confidence they’ve developed from being reared in the family trade, although Dimitri is more chatty and outgoing, a hugger. Bobby is more guarded, like his father, pausing to respond to a joke before a smile starts in his eyes. Neither Gus nor Georgia pushed them into the business, they say. But the boys were eager to imitate the workers in the shop, and Gus started letting them help around age 10.



Photo: Connor Radnovich, The Chronicle

Dimitri Vardakastanis (center) and Bobby Vardakastanis (right) chat with Gary Camarda at the San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market.

“My dad would say,” Dimitri remembers, imitating his father’s soft accent, “If you’re not doing anything, grab the broom.”

By high school, both boys were fully involved in the business and both loved the work. After they each tried college “for a minute,” Dimitri took over management of Noriega Produce when he was 19, and Bobby took over the Haight Street location at 20. In addition to adding organic produce and beer and wine, they rented a warehouse so they can buy dry goods in bulk for both stores, to keep prices competitive. Those bargaining trips to the wholesale market also result in reasonable produce prices.

“It’s the return customer, that everyday customer, we want,” says Bobby.



Photo: Connor Radnovich, The Chronicle

Gus Vardakastanis puts strawberries on display at Haight Street Market in San Francisco.

Even though his sons are in charge of store operations, Gus says he will keep making his predawn trips to the wholesale produce market for five more years. Then again, that's something he said five years ago, notes Dimitri. Georgia, whose spanikopita (see accompanying [recipe](#)) is served in the store delis, spends more time now with their young grandchildren, whom Dimitri and Bobby, and their wives, are raising in the city. The family also owns property in Sonoma, where they make wine and honey that they sell at their stores.

Even though it will be family run, the new store won't be immune to gentrification critics. It's moving into what's been dubbed Mission Creek, a part of the Mission that's quickly converting from manufacturing to residential. In the market cafe, there will be a reclaimed-wood counter, Humphry Slocombe ice cream and the eight beers on tap will include a custom brew from Magnolia Brewing Co., an old neighbor from the Haight.

It will be a grocery store built for the modern age — and it’s nothing Gus and Georgia could have envisioned when they came here from Greece. Eventually, the family plans to rename the original two stores under the Gus’s Market brand, creating their own mini grocery dynasty.

Still, Bobby and Dimitri say a big reason they decided to open the new store was to give longtime employees new opportunities.

“We realized we’re responsible not only for our families,” Dimitri says, “but the families within our business.”

Tara Duggan is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer. E-mail: tduggan@sfchronicle.com Twitter: @taraduggan.

Markets from the Vardakastanis family

Haight Street Market. 1530 Haight St. (between Ashbury and Clayton streets). (415) 255-0643. Open 7 a.m.-9 p.m.

Noriega Produce. 3821 Noriega St. (between 45th and 46th avenues). (415) 564-0370. Open 7:30 a.m.-8 p.m.

Gus’s Community Market. 2111 Harrison St. (at 17th Street). gussmarket.com. Due to open in November; hours will be 7 a.m.-10 p.m.



Image 6 of 31

Gus Vardakastanis at the San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market in San Francisco, California, on Thursday, Oct. 22, 2015.

Photo: Connor Radnovich, The Chronicle



Image 19 of 31

Dimitri (left) and Bobby Vardakastanis at the San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market.

Photo: Connor Radnovich, The Chronicle

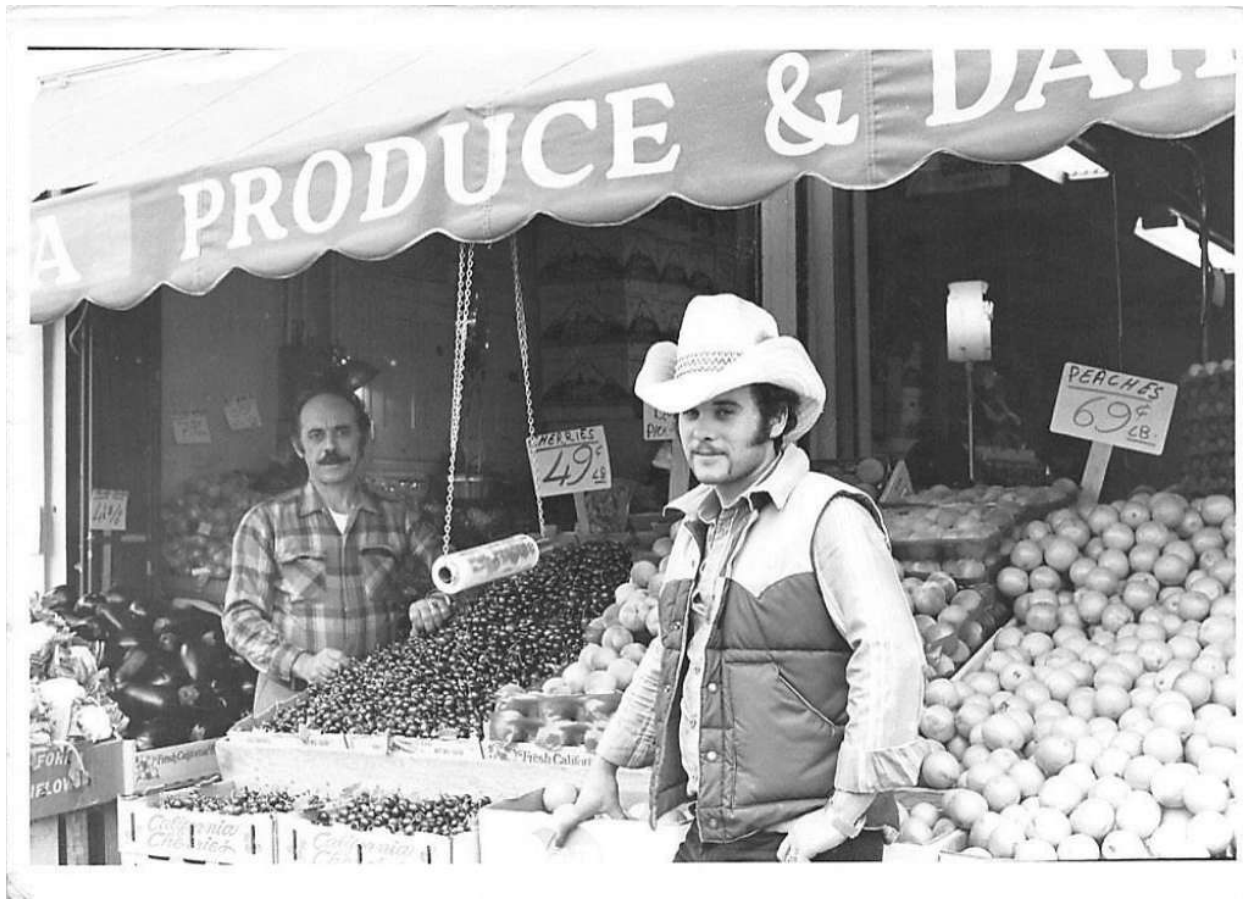


Image 31 of 31

Gus Vardakastanis (right) and his father, Dimitri, in front of their store Haight Street Market around 1981.

Photo: Courtesy Of Gus Market

<http://hoodline.com/2016/02/behind-the-scenes-with-dimitri-vardakastanis-of-noriega-produce>

Hoodline

Behind The Scenes With Dimitri Vardakastanis Of Noriega Produce

by Stephen Jackson
Mon. February 15, 2016, 9:03am



Photos: Stephen Jackson/Hoodline

Dimitri Vardakastanis is a sturdy man with a big smile and a knack for selling groceries that goes back three generations. His grandfather, also named Dimitri, moved from Greece to San Francisco in the early 1970s, and has been working as a grocer ever since. In 1981, the elder Dimitri and his son, Gus, opened Haight Street Market, followed by [Noriega Produce](#) in 1985.

This year, the family opened a third store, [Gus's Community Market](#), at 17th and Harrison in the Mission, with the goal of keeping the family's storekeeper tradition going well into the 21st century.



The Vardakastanis family plays an active role in the day-to-day operations of their three markets, said Dimitri, who is Gus' son. Although Gus still buys produce for all three stores and is very much the patriarch of the family business, Dimitri and his brother Bobby now run the majority of operations.

"It's a business I love," Dimitri said. "It's always changing, it never gets boring, and I love serving the neighborhood. Our motto is that we serve our customers every single day. Our customers are our billboards. The culture inside the business is to treat people the way you want to be treated."



An old family photo: Bobby, Dimitri, and the younger Dimitri.

For Vardakastanis, who grew up in Glen Park, The Sunset feels like home. He began working at both the Noriega and Haight markets when he was a little kid, but Noriega Produce has been his full-time home since he graduated from high school. Now 34, he seems more in his element than ever, recognizing seemingly every person who walked by during our interview.



A thriving neighborhood creates both opportunities and pitfalls for a small, family-run business, but Vardakastanis said his family's ability to adapt with the changing market keeps them ahead of the curve. For example, after a Whole Foods moved in just a few blocks away from their Haight-Ashbury store, [they completely revamped it.](#)

"As times changed, we changed too," he said. "We're always evolving to serve our clientele."



Noriega Produce has also adapted to serve customers in search of organic vegetables and natural products, but Vardakastanis said the store's roots in the community haven't changed. "When you walk into Noriega Produce, you're going to walk into a business with foundations and roots in the neighborhood," he told us. "We're an extension of the community. You meet people, you meet your neighbors. It's almost an extension of your refrigerator."



Employees Samantha Beutler, Sue Bajda, and Jules Fagelson.

He said his family's excited about their new venture in the Mission, which serves beer on tap. As part of the new opening, the family plans to add more items to their private in-house label, "Gus's," which is sold at all three stores.



In the midst of the expansion, however, it's clear that a huge part of Vardakastanis' heart is settled right here at Noriega Produce.

"I love the people and being involved in a neighborhood that has grown so much," he said. "It's been great to be part of something that has flourished, and to be working together to make it happen in a city where that's becoming harder and harder to do."

Noriega Produce is located at 3821 Noriega St., between 45th and 46th Aves. Hours are 7:30am-8:30pm daily.

Case No.: 2017-003815LBR
Business Name: Noriega Produce
Business Address: 3821 Noriega Street
Zoning: NC-1 (Neighborhood Commercial, Cluster)/
40-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 2082/001K
Applicant: Dimitri Vardakastanis
3821 Noriega Street
San Francisco, CA 94122
Nominated By: Supervisor Katy Tang, District 4
Staff Contact: Desiree Smith - (415) 575-9093
desiree.smith@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
tim.frye@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Founded in 1985 by the Vardakastanis family, Noriega Produce is a local, family-owned grocery store located on Noriega Street between 46th and 45th Avenues in the Outer Sunset neighborhood of San Francisco. Dimitri Vardakastanis immigrated with his brother to the United States in 1974 from the Greek island of Zakynthos and was eventually joined by his wife and children in San Francisco. Dimitri and his son, Konstantinos “Gus” Vardakastanis, worked at various grocery stores in the city until they were able to save enough money to open their own market, Haight Street Market, in 1981. Noriega Produce was their second store, which they opened in 1985 at 3749 Noriega Street. The store was relocated in 1996 to its current, larger location at 3821 Noriega Street.

Occupying a one-story utilitarian commercial building, Noriega Produce celebrates its proximity to the beach with an exterior mural on the front exterior façade depicting a surfer sitting on a beach with his surfboard, admiring a setting sun. Images of fruits and vegetables echo the contents inside the store and on display in the fruit stand below. Signage on the interior adds to the “family-friendly, beachy vibe” of the store. A sign made of an actual surfboard features the Noriega Produce logo, which itself consists of an image of a breaking ocean wave.

Gus and his wife, Georgia, eventually took over the business from Dimitri. Gus hand-selects the produce they sell from the San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market while Georgia prepares popular Greek food items like baklava and spanakopita for sale under their private, in-house label called “Gus’s.” Gus and Georgia’s two sons, Dimitri and Bobby, grew up in the family business and in 2001 assumed management of the Noriega store. The brothers added organic groceries and natural meats to the store’s offerings, which include a wide variety of products at different price points to accommodate all income levels.

Open seven days a week, 365 days a year, Noriega Produce has been open every single day since its founding. It even opened for the afternoon on the day it moved from its old site to its current location, as well as for a few hours on the day a main water line burst at the property and flooded the store with water. The dedication to its customers on the part of the Vardakastanis family is further evidenced by its participation in efforts to improve the neighborhood and build community in the Outer Sunset. Family members are actively involved with the Outer Noriega Merchants Association, working to transform the

Outer Noriega corridor through pedestrian safety efforts, landscaping improvements, and the annual Ocean Beach Music Festival. The business also supports neighborhood schools and community centers. Its script program has raised over \$20,000 annually for local schools by collecting five percent of customers' total purchases and giving it back to their children's school. One of the oldest businesses in the Outer Noriega corridor, Noriega Produce is now operated by the third generation of the Vardakastanis family and continues to function as a stable force in the business district.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*

1985.

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

Yes, Noriega Produce qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- i. Noriega Produce has operated for 32 years.
- ii. Noriega Produce has contributed to the history and identity of San Francisco's Outer Sunset neighborhood by continuously offering a wide selection of groceries including local produce and Greek food items from the Vardakastanis family's in-house brand, "Gus's." The business has become a fixture of the community through its leadership in neighborhood improvement efforts and community events, and its practice of giving back to local schools through a customer donation program.
- iii. Noriega Produce is committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define its tradition as a neighborhood-serving grocery store.

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

The business is associated with the tradition of operating a neighborhood-serving grocery store.

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

The property at 3821 Noriega Street is considered a "Category B Property." It was evaluated in the *draft Neighborhood Commercial Corridors Historic Resources Survey* and given a "C" rating, indicating it is not found to be significant for its architecture. This rating, however, should not be considered final, as the survey has not yet been adopted. It is included here for information only.

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

No.

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

No.

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

Yes. The Afar Guide to San Francisco, January/February 2012 Issue, "Noriega Produce"; San Francisco Chronicle, 10/28/2015, "How a neighborhood grocer beats the odds – on heart & soul," by Tara Duggan; Hoodline, 2/15/2016, "Behind the Scenes with Dimitri Vardakastanis of Noriega Produce," by Stephen Jackson.

Noriega Produce also received a Certificate of Honor from Supervisor Carmen Chu during Small Business Week 2010, recognizing the business' significant contributions to the community. In 2015, the business received another Certificate of Honor from Supervisor Katy Tang recognizing Noriega Produce as the Small Business of the Year for District 4 during Small Business Month, in recognition for "working collaboratively with other merchants, advocating for neighborhood beautification, and hosting annual events" in addition to offering healthy food, good service, and friendship to Outer Sunset families.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

- 3821 Noriega Street

Recommended by Applicant

- Function as a neighborhood-serving grocery store
- Offering a variety of groceries at different price points to service all demographics in the neighborhood
- Selling in-house product, "Gus's," that features Greek food items
- Providing a friendly, comfortable atmosphere for neighbors to come to shop and meet others in the community
- Working to raise funds for local schools and nonprofit community organizations
- Characteristic signage, including sign featuring company logo on a real surfboard
- Mural on front façade that incorporates beach themes such as a surfer with surfboard and a sun setting behind the ocean

Additional Recommended by Staff

- Offering of local produce



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Draft Resolution

HEARING DATE APRIL 19, 2017

Filing Date: March 24, 2017
Business Name: Noriega Produce
Business Address: 3821 Noriega Street
Zoning: NC-1 (Neighborhood Commercial, Cluster)/
40-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 2082/001K
Applicant: Dimitri Vardakastanis
3821 Noriega Street
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Nominated By: Supervisor Katy Tang, District 4
Staff Contact: Desiree Smith - (415) 575-9093
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Reviewed By: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
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ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR CHINESE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA, CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 3821 NORIEGA STREET (BLOCK/LOT 2082/001K).

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 identity of San Francisco's Outer Sunset neighborhood; 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 April 19, 2017, 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 Noriega Produce 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 Noriega Produce:

Location (if applicable)

- 3821 Noriega Street

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

- *Function as a neighborhood-serving grocery store*
- *Offering a variety of groceries at different price points to service all demographics in the neighborhood*
- *Selling in-house product, "Gus's," that features Greek food items*
- *Providing a friendly, comfortable atmosphere for neighbors to come to shop and meet others in the community*
- *Working to raise funds for local schools and nonprofit community organizations*
- *Characteristic signage, including sign featuring company logo on a real surfboard*
- *Mural on front façade that incorporates beach themes such as a surfer with surfboard and a sun setting behind the ocean*
- *Offering of local produce*

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 2017-003821LBR to the Office of Small Business.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Historic Preservation Commission on April 19, 2017.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT

ADOPTED: