

Would You Believe

Application Review Sheet

Application Number: LBR-2024-25-064
Business Name: Would You Believe
Business Address: 4652 Geary Blvd.
District: District 1
Applicant: Alifa Wong, Partner
Nomination Date: May 28, 2025
Nominated By: Supervisor Connie Chan

Eligibility

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

Criterion 2

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

Yes

Criterion 3

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

Yes

Features or traditions

Bar

Notes

NA

Delivery date to the Historic Preservation Commission

March 18, 2026

Member, Board of Supervisors
District 1



City and County of San Francisco

CONNIE CHAN

陳詩敏

第一區市參事

May 28, 2025

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

Dear Director Tang:

I am writing to nominate *Would You Believe*, located at 4652 Geary Blvd., for inclusion in the Legacy Business Registry.

Since 1986, *Would You Believe* has served as a cherished neighborhood institution, first opened by the late John Fracchia and later stewarded by a succession of passionate community members. In 1997, Shirley Do took ownership after noticing *Would You Believe* on her daily commute and transformed the bar into a neighborhood institution where locals went to connect, share stories, and find community for almost three decades.

In 2024, Alfia Wong, along with Gordon Wong and Robert Vong, became the new caretakers after being longtime, loyal patrons of the establishment and has already begun the work to inject their shared history and love for the space, while still recognizing the bar's legacy.

Would You Believe is a legacy already set in motion, representing the best of San Francisco's neighborhood spirit — inclusive, resilient, and connections. The carryover of ownership from legacy owners to patrons perfectly epitomizes the goals and objectives of the San Francisco Legacy Business Registry.

On the special occasion of AAPI Heritage and Small Business Month in May, it is my honor to submit this Asian-owned establishment to be considered for the Legacy Business Registry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Connie Chan".

Connie Chan

Would You Believe

Application Form

Business information

Business name: Would You Believe
Business owner name(s): Alifa Wong
Current business address: 4652 Geary Blvd., San Francisco, CA 94118
Mailing address: Same as above
Business phone number: 415-571-8395
Business email: wouldjubelieve@gmail.com
Website: wouldyoubelievesf.com
Link to social media #1: facebook.com/profile.php?id=100066471145007
Link to social media #2:
Business Account Number: 1152012

Contact person information

Contact person name: Alifa Wong
Contact person title: Partner

Business locations

San Francisco address: 4652 Geary Blvd.
Dates at this location: May 30, 1986, to Present

Would You Believe

Historical Narrative

Introduction

a. Describe the business. What does it sell or provide?

Would You Believe is a neighborhood bar located in the Inner Richmond neighborhood serving a wide selection of alcoholic beverages and expertly crafted cocktails, all within a welcoming social atmosphere for locals and visitors. The bar also hosts private events and community gatherings.

b. Describe whom the business serves.

The bar serves neighborhood residents, workers, and regular patrons from across San Francisco, as well as tourists from around the country and globe. Would You Believe offers a local gathering place for casual drinks, socializing, and community connection.

c. In about 2-5 words (15-30 characters), describe what the business is known for.

Craft cocktails and local vibes.

Criterion 1:

The business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years.

a. Provide a short history of the business, including locations and owners.

Would You Believe first opened its doors on May 30, 1986, at 4652 Geary Blvd., its current location. It was founded by John B. Fracchia.

John was born in 1927 in San Francisco and graduated from Lowell High School in 1945. He loved the city and never left it. Per his daughter, Janet Fracchia, John purchased a bar named Ah-San-Pan and changed the name to Would You Believe after the television show Get Smart. "Would you believe" was a famous running gag from the 1960s sitcom Get Smart, used by secret agent Maxwell Smart (played by Don Adams). He would use this phrase to negotiate down from an exaggerated, unbelievable lie to a smaller, more plausible one after being challenged. According to Janet, her father John loved the bar and all the people who frequented it.

Tucked along a well-traveled route, the unique name Would You Believe caught the eye of countless passersby — one of them being Tan Yan Yi (Shirley) Do, a bartender who regularly passed the bar on her daily commute. The name sparked her curiosity, and eventually, she stepped inside. That first visit led to a friendship with John, and in 1997, Shirley became the

proud new owner of Would You Believe. Her husband, Tri Long Do, was officially a co-owner.

Shirley went on to open two additional successful establishments, Bottom's Up and Sippin'. As Shirley shifted her focus to these ventures, the reins of Would You Believe were ultimately passed on to new owners in 2023 – Alifa Wong and Robert Vong.

Alifa was hired by Shirley as a bartender at Would You Believe and ultimately became a close friend. Robert was a loyal patron during Shirley's ownership. Together, the two friends—along with the support of their spouses and families—stepped forward to continue the spirit Shirley created and carry Would You Believe into the future.

b. Provide the ownership history of the business in a consolidated year-to-year format.

1986 to 1997:	John B. Fracchia
1997 to 2023:	Tan Yan Yi Do; Tri Long Do
2023 to Present:	Ju LLC: Alifa Wong; Robert Vong

c. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for any significant length of time.

Not applicable

Criterion 2:

The business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community.

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

Would You Believe has been a fixture in the Inner Richmond since 1986. Before that, it was a bar called Ah-San-Pan. Its longstanding presence contributes to the history and identity of the neighborhood.

The bar provides a safe gathering place for all, whether you are a San Franciscan or a visitor. “Would You Believe is a quaint local pub that attracts a diverse crowd with its pool table, jukebox, and mixed drinks. This bar prides itself on serving creative and appealing drinks like liquid marijuana, tipsy bartenders, lavender Collins, Bahama mangos, and \$10 fishbowl margaritas at happy hour. Their happy hour is from 5:00 to 8:00 pm, giving working professionals plenty of time to change out of their corporate suits and head to the bar for a discounted drink or two.”¹

The business hosts parties and community celebrations where many friendships have blossomed. Would You Believe is the perfect venue for happy hour events, private parties,

¹ [10 Cool and Understated Watering Holes in Inner Richmond](#), by Dylan Hunter, Compass Realty.

or corporate events. The business personalizes private events to create an unforgettable experience. They make sure guests have an exceptional time with a mix of deliciously crafted cocktails, great company, and a vibrant atmosphere.

b. Is the business associated with significant people or events, either now or in the past?

The name of the business originates from the classic television series Get Smart. In the show, Maxwell Smart (Agent 86) frequently used the catchphrase "Would you believe...?" when his attempts to bluff or exaggerate were challenged by his enemies.

Maxwell Smart: *"At this very minute, seven Coast Guard cutters are converging on us. Would you believe it? Seven!"*

Villain: *"I find that hard to believe."*

Maxwell Smart: *"Would you believe six?"*

Villain: *"I don't think so."*

Maxwell Smart: *"How about two cops in a rowboat?"*²

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

The staff consists of local residents, many who live within close proximity to the business. Would You Believe has also created fundraisers for local organizations. In June 2025, they created a menu to show support for the LGBTQ+ community in which 10 percent from every Pride cocktail sold was donated to SF Pride.

d. Has the business ever been referenced in the media, business trade publication, and/or historical documents?

Would You Believe is mentioned in many websites online regarding iconic cocktail bars in San Francisco and things to do in the Inner Richmond. It has been mentioned in the media on occasion.

- [10 Cool and Understated Watering Holes in Inner Richmond](#)
Dylan Hunter, Compass Realty
- [Top 50 Dive Bars in San Francisco](#)
SF Weekly
September 14, 2016

e. Has the business ever received any awards, recognition, or political commendations?

Not applicable.

² [Get Smart Mr. Big Quotes](#), IMDB.

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

If the business were to close, there would be the loss of a beloved neighborhood social hub for long time customers, resulting in fewer community gathering spaces in the Inner Richmond.

Criterion 3:

The business is committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business.

a. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building, structure, object, signage, mural, architectural detail, neon sign, or any other special physical feature that defines the business?

The exterior of the business features a large blade sign that reads, "Would You Believe? COCKTAILS."

b. In a few words, describe the main business activity you commit to maintaining.

Neighborhood bar serving craft cocktails and community gatherings.

c. What is the plan to keep the business open in the long term beyond the current ownership?

The business recently signed a long-term lease with landlord of the building.

d. What challenges is the business facing today?

Following are challenges that the business is facing:

- Rising operational costs.
- Labor shortages; difficult staff scheduling demands.
- Rising regulatory compliance fees and costs.
- Competition from larger venues.
- Free outdoor events that allow alcohol sales compete with small businesses like Would You Believe.

Additional details:

a. Features or traditions that define the business and should be maintained for the business to remain on the Legacy Business Registry.

Bar.

b. 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 Planning Department Historic Resource Status of the building that houses Would You Believe is C - No Historic Resource Present.

Images of Would You Believe



Would you Believe?
COCKTAILS







Would You Believe

DRAFT Resolution of the Small Business Commission

Resolution information

Resolution number: 032-26-LBR
Resolution date: April 27, 2026

Business information

Application number: LBR-2024-25-064
Business name: Would You Believe
Business address: 4652 Geary Blvd.
District: District 1
Applicant: Alifa Wong, Partner
Nomination date: May 28, 2025
Nominated by: Supervisor Connie Chan

Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for Would You Believe, currently located at 4652 Geary Blvd.

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 April 27, 2026, 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 Would You Believe 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 Would You Believe.

Physical features or traditions that define the business:

- Identity as a bar.
- Exterior blade sign that reads, “Would You Believe? Cocktails.”

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

- Bar.

Executive Director certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on April 27, 2026.

Katy Tang
Executive Director

Small Business Commission action

Ayes –
Nays –
Abstained –
Absent –



LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEARING DATE: APRIL 15, 2026

Filing Date: March 18, 2026
Case No.: **2026-002482LBR**
Business Name: Would You Believe
Business Address: 4652 GEARY BLVD
Zoning: NCD (GEARY BOULEVARD NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT) Zoning District
50//85-R-4 Height and Bulk District
Cultural District: Not Applicable
Block/Lot: 1442/026
Applicant: Alifa Wong
4552 Geary Blvd
Nominated By: Supervisor Connie Chan
Located In: District 1
Staff Contact: Will McCallum - 628-652-7338
Will.Mccallum@sfgov.org

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

Business Description

Would You Believe is a neighborhood bar in the Inner Richmond neighborhood serving alcoholic beverages and cocktails. The bar has operated at 4652 Geary Boulevard since it was originally opened in 1986 by owner John B. Fracchia. John owned and operated Would You Believe until 1997, when Tan Yan Yi Do and Tri Long Do took over operation from 1997 until 2023. The current owners, Alifa Wong and Robert Vong, have operated the business since 2023. The bar is best known for its cocktails, juke box, and pool table. The name “Would You Believe” is a reference to a running gag from the television show “Get Smart” which was a popular comedy from the 1960s.

Would You Believe has been featured in several local publications, including an article “10 Cool and Understated Watering Holes in Inner Richmond” posted on the Compass Realty website, and “Top 50 Dive Bars in San Francisco” published by SF Weekly in 2016. The bar has existed in this same location and with the same name since 1986, serving as a longstanding presence in the local community and contributing to the

identity of the neighborhood. In 2025, Would You Believe created a special menu of drinks supporting the LGBTQ community where proceeds from the drinks was donated to SF Pride.

Staff Analysis

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*

The business was founded in 1986.

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

Yes. Would You Believe qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- a. Would You Believe has operated continuously in San Francisco for 40 years.
- b. Would You Believe has contributed to the history and identity of the Inner Richmond neighborhood and San Francisco.
- c. Would You Believe 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?*

Yes. The business is associated with the art of mixology, or cocktail making.

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

No.

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, not as of the date of this Executive Summary.

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

Yes. Would You Believe has been featured in several local publications, including an article “10 Cool and Understated Watering Holes in Inner Richmond” posted on the Compass Realty website, and “Top 50 Dive Bars in San Francisco” published by SF Weekly in 2016.

Racial and Social Equity Analysis

On July 15, 2020 the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission adopted [Resolution No. 1127](#) centering Preservation Planning on racial and social equity. Understanding the benefits, burdens, and opportunities to advance racial and social equity that proposed Preservation Planning documents provide is part of the Department's Racial and Social Equity Initiative. This is also consistent with the Mayor's Citywide Strategic Initiatives for equity and accountability and with the Office of Racial Equity, which required all Departments to conduct this analysis.

The Legacy Business Program is deeply intertwined with these goals. One of the primary purposes of the Legacy Business Program is to maintain San Francisco's cultural fabric and to foster civic engagement and pride by assisting long-operating businesses remain in the city. The Legacy Business Registry was established to recognize longstanding, community-serving businesses that are valuable cultural assets of the city. These businesses, ranging from restaurants to art galleries to tire shops to community shelters, are key to sustaining the racial and social diversity in San Francisco and adding to the identity and character of our city and the many communities within it.

Would You Believe is an Asian-owned business in the Inner Richmond where many Asian owned businesses serve the local community on Clement Street and Geary Boulevard.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

Current Locations:

- 4652 Geary Blvd. (1986 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- none

Recommended by Applicant

- Identity as a bar

Additional Recommended by Staff

- Exterior blade sign that reads "Would You Believe? Cocktails."

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 DRAFT RESOLUTION NO.

HEARING DATE: APRIL 15, 2026

Case No.: **2026-002482LBR**
Business Name: Would You Believe
Business Address: 4652 GEARY BLVD
Zoning: NCD (GEARY BOULEVARD NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT) Zoning District
 50//85-R-4 Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 1442/026
Applicant: Alifa Wong
 4552 Geary Blvd
Nominated By: Supervisor Connie Chan
Located In: District 1
Staff Contact: Will McCallum - 628-652-7338
Will.Mccallum@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR WOULD YOU BELIEVE CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 4652 GEARY BLVD, BLOCK/LOT 1442/026.

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 April 15, 2026, 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 Would You Believe 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 Would You Believe.

Location(s):

Current Locations:

- 4652 Geary Blvd. (1986 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- none

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Identity as a bar
- Exterior blade sign that reads “Would You Believe? Cocktails.”

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 to the Office of Small Business on April 15, 2026.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

RECUSE:

ADOPTED: April 15, 2026