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# RISE

Cross-Sector Collaboration  
to Chart DTLA's Resilient Future

CCA  
CENTRAL CITY  
ASSOCIATION  
OF LOS ANGELES



# Acknowledgements

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**R** Reinvigorate  
The Public Realm

**I** Incubate  
Economic Opportunities

**S** Strengthen  
Public Safety And Wellness

**E** Envision  
Downtown’s Vibrant Future

Downtown Los Angeles (DTLA) is the heart of the city, a vibrant hub of culture, commerce, and community. The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented economic and employment challenges, changing daily life in ways never previously imagined. Hybrid/remote work became the new norm, and an uptick in both the number of individuals experiencing homelessness and crime rates dramatically altered the landscape of our city center.

In the face of this new reality, Central City Association (CCA) launched the RISE DTLA Task Force to respond to rising concerns among stakeholders about public safety, community wellness, and worrying economic conditions. The Task Force – comprised of a cross-section of the Downtown community including property owners, business leaders, heads of Business Improvement Districts, and non-profit organizations – met over the course of six months to examine strategies that would advance DTLA’s economic and community recovery. The group engaged directly with public sector leaders to augment these discussions with their respective expertise and to shape actionable next steps.

Presented here, the work of the Task Force contributed to CCA developing a set of near-term policy recommendations and action items that will lay the groundwork for DTLA’s recovery.

**Outlined by four main pillars, this framework will guide CCA’s immediate efforts to ensure DTLA’s continued growth and vitality while maintaining focus on a long-term vision for the heart of the city.**

# Reinvigorate The Public Realm



Great public spaces are the cornerstone of a thriving community. They are the backdrop where celebrations are held, where social connections take place, and where employees and community members go to unwind and enjoy themselves. Particularly in this new post-pandemic era, well-activated urban places foster and enhance a city’s civic life, bringing the public together socially, economically, and culturally. They can also be a key driver to aid recovery by revitalizing the public realm for walking, gathering, and commercial activity.

## Actions

- Bolster the work of member organizations and partners who provide ongoing programming that activates public spaces.
- Continue Downtown Works’ CULTURE BREAK series which provides arts and culture experiences to key DTLA demographics (e.g., employees, Metro riders, families, residents, and visitors).
- Preserve and plan for future park development adjacent to Gloria Molina Grand Park to enhance civic engagement and increase access to usable open space.
- Build on Downtown Works’ research about how the City of Los Angeles can leverage public-private partnerships (P3s) to deliver world-class, signature urban parks and open spaces in its city center.
- Support the renovation of Pershing Square, advocating for the project to meet project timelines and milestones to ensure this important public space is renovated to better serve Angelenos.
- Champion efforts to reimagine Gil Lindsey Plaza, a public plaza in front of the Convention Center, into a modernized, open public space.
- Continue to advocate for clean, safe, and inviting entries to Downtown Metro stations and bus stops.

# Incubate Economic Opportunities



An economically resilient DTLA is one that is defined by multifunctionality and use diversity. Vibrant downtowns contain an ideal mix of residential, commercial, civic, and cultural uses that bring people into the city center for different reasons at varied times of day and week. Moving forward, the support of traditional office-using industries in Downtown should be supplemented with strategic growth in industries that drive in-person foot traffic and economic activity. Tourism and higher education are two such examples. The influx of tourism activity in our city center coupled with the collective action of students, faculty, researchers, and administrators into Downtown jump-starts business activity, increases patronage within the food and beverage sector, and helps build a diversified foundation for long-term sustained growth.<sup>1</sup>

## Actions

- Support efforts to increase foot traffic and pedestrian activity in Downtown.
- Coalesce member organizations and strategic partners to incentivize in-person work in DTLA.
- Advocate for consistent in-person work protocols in government departments.
- Bolster effective return-to-office strategies targeted towards hybrid and remote workers.
- Conduct an economic assessment of Downtown’s impact on the City of Los Angeles budget and the greater Southern California region.
- Finalize the expansion and modernization of the Los Angeles Convention Center to ensure LA remains competitive with other cities across the country and that conventions continue to provide direct economic benefits to the DTLA ecosystem.
- Support the development of additional hotel rooms within walking distance of the Convention Center to accommodate future need and achieve the City’s 8,000 room goal.
- Prepare Downtown and educate stakeholders around the opportunities and needs for major international events such as the 2026 World Cup and 2028 Olympics and Paralympics.
- Provide continued support to the tourism industry as it rebounds from the pandemic.
- Build upon the success of higher-education institutions in DTLA (e.g., UCLA, USC, ASU, Cal State Los Angeles) and grow its presence in the urban core.

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- > Partner with economic development entities to support the long-term success of Downtown by incubating key growth industries, building a robust workforce, and providing direct business assistance.
- > Foster strategic partnerships and initiatives to prioritize filling vacant commercial spaces and retail storefronts.
- > Ensure effective implementation of the Restaurant Beverage Program (RBP) in DTLA, leveraging input from members in the food and beverage industry.
- > Advocate for the permanent implementation of the Los Angeles Department of Transportation’s Al Fresco outdoor dining policy.



<sup>1</sup>Downtown Los Angeles welcomed 17 million visitors from around the world last year, helping drive in over \$34.5 billion in spending in the County. Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board, *Discover Los Angeles website*, September 2023, **LOS ANGELES TOURISM ANNOUNCES TOURISM INDUSTRY GENERATED \$34.5 BILLION IN TOTAL BUSINESS SALES IN 2022, IMPACTING MORE THAN 528,200 TOURISM-RELATED CAREERS AND \$3 BILLION IN TAX REVENUES** | *Discover Los Angeles*

# Strengthen Public Safety And Wellness



DTLA has serious and distinct public safety and wellness challenges compared with other parts of the city, necessitating an approach that applies proactive, proven solutions to account for our dynamic mix of uses and attractions. Additionally, given the concentration in Downtown, our solutions factor must in homelessness and mental health issues. Recovery, public safety and wellness go hand-in-hand in our city center as perceptions are crucial in bringing back workers and visitors that activate our streets and support our businesses.

## Actions

- Partner with members and key stakeholders to develop a replacement strategy for Measure H that includes additional guardrails for accountability, transparency, and performance metrics.
- Support improved data collection and accountability measures to ensure existing funding streams, services and programming dedicated to homelessness are meeting expectations.
- Champion proven policies and programs that demonstrate a successful track record of reducing homelessness.
- Work with the public sector to establish an ecosystem of alternative response models to meet mental and behavioral health needs of the community.
- Advocate for the continued expansion of the CIRCLE program and measure its ability to respond to non-violent 911 emergency calls.
- Strengthen police accountability reform efforts such as the Alternative Composition of Board of Rights that would repeal and replace Measure C.
- Explore additional partnerships with LAPD to develop a comprehensive public safety plan specific to Downtown’s unique needs, especially in preparation for major international events such as the 2026 World Cup and 2028 Olympics and Paralympics.
- Work with LAPD leadership and advocate for the additional deployment of foot beat officers in DTLA to deter crime and facilitate enhanced relationship-building between officers and the community.
- Support and promote ongoing recruitment/retention strategies for officers at all experience levels to fill the 9,700 authorized LAPD positions.
- Build on public safety and customer experience improvements to the 7th Street/Metro Center Station in a manner similar the Westlake/MacArthur Station (additional Metro Ambassadors, dedicated Metro custodians, improved station lighting, extra fencing, etc.).

# Envision Downtown’s Vibrant Future



The recent adoption of the DTLA 2040 Community Plan Update (DTLA 2040) was a major milestone in a nearly decade-long process to create a long-range land use plan and guiding policy document that will further advance Downtown’s vibrancy and growth. It will serve as a blueprint for Downtown’s development future and will be an essential tool to help sustain our continued recovery. Together with continued efforts to reform the land use/development process and streamline adaptive reuse, the next phase of Downtown’s revitalization will focus on unlocking more housing opportunities, promoting sustainable development, and prioritizing livability.

## Actions

- > Ensure the DTLA 2040 Community Plan update is finalized and implemented efficiently to sustain long-term development and economic growth.
- > Push for regular updates to community/specific plans to help guide future decisions on zoning, development, and infrastructure investments.
- > Collaborate with members, key stakeholders, and city leadership to develop a practical citywide adaptive reuse ordinance.
- > Bolster incentives for conversion so that commercial vacancies can be transformed into much-needed housing, education, life science, medical office, or other viable uses.
- > Advocate for development reform to prioritize efficiency, modernization, and streamlined procedures across all relevant city departments.
- > Continue calling for the depoliticization of the land use approval process by setting hard limits for project review and deeming projects automatically approved upon a failure to act by City Council.
- > Support new spending to modernize public works infrastructure, increase reliability, and accommodate future growth.
- > Encourage the development of housing at all income levels to increase supply and facilitate smart growth.