



Revive DTLA

An Urgent Recovery Plan for the Heart of Los Angeles

September 2025

Downtown Matters

Downtown Los Angeles (DTLA) is our City's beating heart—the civic, cultural, and historic center of Los Angeles. Here, all levels of government converge alongside our leading museums, music and sports venues, galleries and restaurants, as well as the largest concentration of major corporate and manufacturing employers.

Though it accounts for less than 1% of the City's land area, DTLA generates 30% of the City's business, parking, and transient occupancy tax (TOT) revenues. Since the start of the 21st century, its population has tripled—now matching that of Santa Monica—and in the last decade, nearly a quarter of all new housing in Los Angeles has been built in DTLA.

Simply put: L.A. cannot thrive unless DTLA thrives. This is a challenging moment for Los Angeles, but with targeted investments in DTLA, we can breathe new life into our budgets and economy with benefits reaching from Woodland Hills to Wilmington and everywhere in between.

DTLA is home to two overlapping populations: a permanent community of 90,000 residents and a daytime population of workers and visitors that swells to 400,000—comparable to the size of Long Beach. This dynamic means our government must take a strategic approach that supports everyone, from the 9-to-5 office worker and bedtime dog walker to the weekday museum-goer and weekend diner.

Downtown faces existential challenges. The pandemic, homelessness, ongoing immigration raids, and other crises have hit DTLA harder than other communities. Coupled with its disproportionate civic, cultural, historic and economic role, the time for swift, precise, and bold action is now, before we reach a tipping point where forward progress becomes nearly impossible.

The action plan outlined in this document is not just a plan for DTLA—it's for all of Los Angeles. Time and again, we've come together to achieve big things during difficult moments. Downtown has proven its resilience, but immediate action is essential.

Let's help Downtown thrive so we all can.



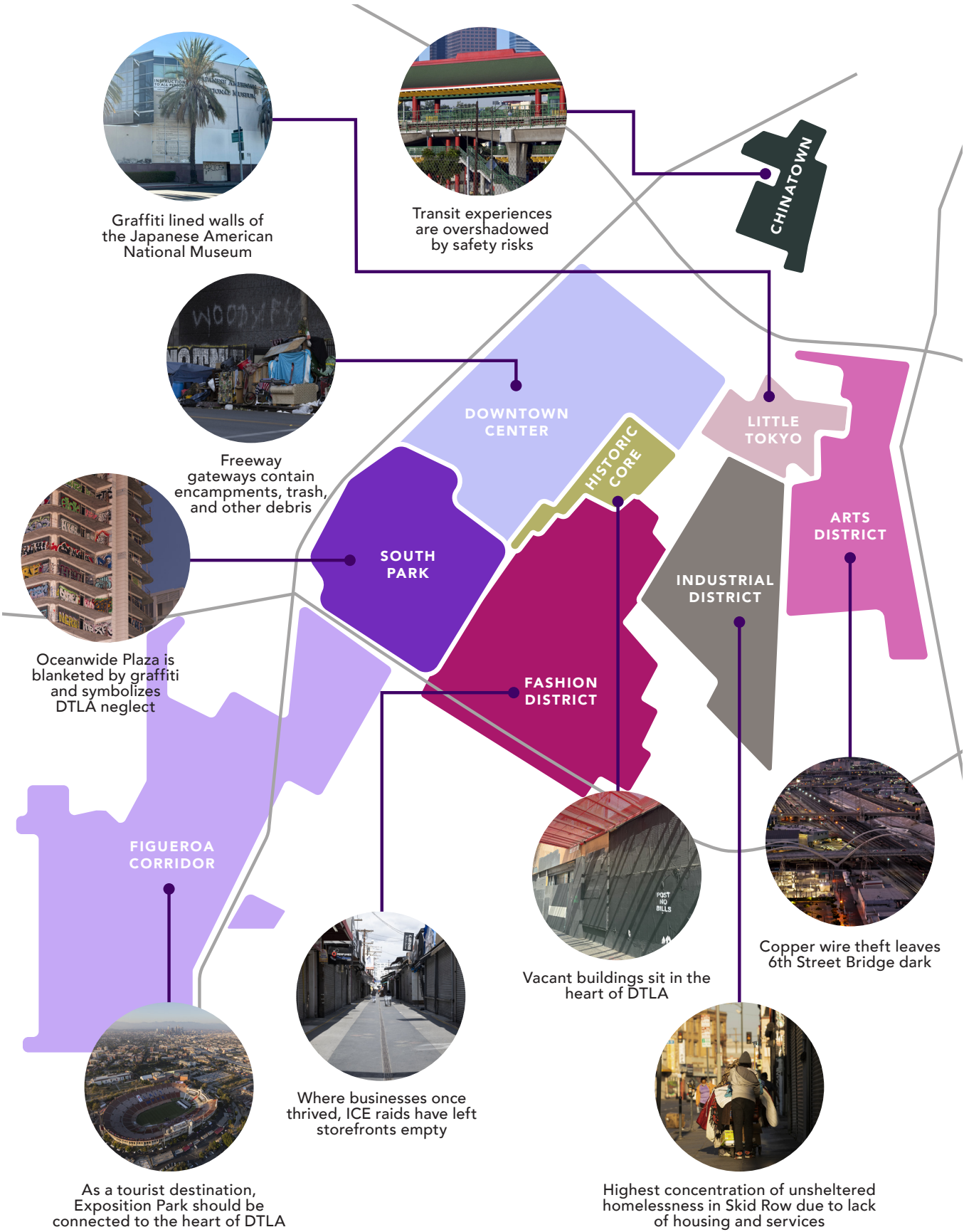
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President & CEO, CCA

DTLA FACTS

- 4.5 square miles
- Less than 1% of city land
- 90,000 residents
- Size of the City of Santa Monica
- 400,000 daytime population
- Generates 30% of business, parking, and TOT citywide

Business Improvement District Territories and Key Landmarks



Practical, Immediate, and Achievable

Today, DTLA is home to more than 90,000 residents, over 6,000 retail and food & beverage businesses, and generates \$5 billion in annual retail sales. Residents, workers, and visitors together sustain Downtown’s distinctive daytime and nighttime economies. And yet, Downtown is nowhere near its full potential.

Beginning in July 2025, the Central City Association of Los Angeles (CCA) engaged over 100 members through interviews and roundtable discussions to develop a Rapid Economic Recovery Action Plan for Downtown Los Angeles, focused on practical, immediate, and achievable actions.

Our plan centers on three simple goals: making Downtown feel clean and safe, helping local businesses thrive, and ensuring residents and visitors can fully enjoy the heart of our City.

Informed by best practices from other urban centers, these priorities provide the foundation for restoring private investment and economic vitality through specific interventions. While many industry- and location-specific challenges remain, this plan emphasizes pilot programs that can be deployed within 90 days and scaled once proven effective.

Although long-term economic development remains essential, the current crisis demands swift action with visible results within 90 days. Protecting public safety, maintaining clean and welcoming public spaces, and supporting local businesses are critical to sustaining Downtown’s vibrancy and accelerating its economic recovery.

This document outlines short-term, implementable actions that leaders across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors can take to stabilize and strengthen DTLA’s economy and cultural vitality.



Safety

Although DTLA covers less than 1% of the City's land area and just over 2% of its population, it accounts for more than 9% of all Part I Crimes (crimes against persons), highlighting the disproportionate concentration of public safety challenges. Public perception of safety is largely shaped by visible mental health crises, open-air drug use, and a sense that laws are inconsistently enforced. Sustained government inattention has left much of the responsibility to private and nonprofit organizations. Currently, Downtown Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) contribute more than \$20 million annually toward public safety. This figure does not include the significant funding that major employers provide for private security in key DTLA neighborhoods.

BIDs contribute more than **\$20m** annually towards public safety

DTLA COVERS

less than **1%** of the City's land area

just over **2%** of its population

more than **9%** of all Part 1 Crimes

Increase LAPD Presence

A consistent, visible safety presence is essential to rebuilding public trust. Pilot programs at specific locations should focus on fair enforcement, deterring harmful activity, and creating a welcoming, safe environment for everyone in DTLA.

Launch Dedicated Footbeat Patrols

Encourage LAPD to deploy a dedicated footbeat to key areas within DTLA. This would require no additional positions or funding and would create a visible presence that matches local needs.

Deploy Bike Patrol Units

Utilizing existing personnel, create a bike patrol unit to increase visibility and reduce response times along high-impact corridors. Additional funding may be needed for training and equipment.

Establish Police Substation or "Drop In" Pilots

CCA will coordinate with private property owners to identify vacant, visible, and low- or no-cost substations for officers to deploy from during the 90-day pilot. These facilities would activate the street, provide reporting and community meeting space for officers, offer basic public facilities, and anchor patrol presence.

Restore and Enhance Street Lighting

Well-lit streets are critical to both real and perceived safety. Lighting improvements are among the fastest, most visible ways to restore confidence and support nighttime activity.

Repair streetlights in prominent corridors within 30 days, prioritizing areas affected by copper theft.

Fast-track B-permits and approve temporary power for café and string lighting to improve safety and placemaking along key commercial corridors.

CCA will continue to coordinate with the BIDs and our members on utilizing private sector tools to increase lighting in DTLA. However, City and County resources must address key corridors and infrastructure (e.g. 6th Street Bridge) to deter crime and project a safe and welcoming environment for all.

Prioritize Prosecution of DTLA Crimes

The City Attorney and District Attorney must publicly commit to prosecuting disruptive crimes—from petty theft and disorderly conduct to more serious offenses. The City Attorney's Figueroa Human Trafficking Initiative should be expanded to other locations in DTLA.

We understand that we all play a role in maintaining safe streets and healthy communities. CCA will ensure that all BID safety ambassadors and private security improve coordination through strategies like joint morning roll-calls and midday check-ins to improve resource alignment and deployment efficiency. Briefings can be hosted at proposed substations or other privately donated spaces.

Address Homelessness and Addiction Issues Through Expanded Shelter and Services

Mental health crises significantly affect safety in DTLA. Between 19% and 24% of the City's shelter beds, permanent supportive housing, and affordable housing are located in DTLA, and services should reflect this concentration. Targeted actions are needed to provide comprehensive support for DTLA's unhoused population.

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Increase the number of Inside Safe operations in DTLA, with CCA coordinating members to help the City identify locations. Since the program's inception, over 90 encampments have been addressed citywide, with thousands of people moved indoors. Only three Inside Safe operations have taken place in DTLA, despite it having the highest concentration of people experiencing homelessness in the City. Expanding this successful program in DTLA, and prioritizing unhoused DTLA neighbors with Inside Safe spots, would be welcomed by all stakeholders.

Audit CARE Courts and Create Improved Referral System. Since the program's inception, Los Angeles County has received the highest number of referrals in the state, yet not a single graduate has completed the program. These flaws must be addressed by creating a functional referral system and piloting a program that links newly constructed recuperative care beds near USC with eligible individuals in DTLA.

Increase and Expand Existing Programs Across DTLA. Call for the CIRCLE (Crisis and Incident Response through Community-led Engagement) program to be expanded across the full DTLA territory. This unarmed response model addresses calls involving unhoused individuals, loitering, noise disturbances, substance use, and indecent exposure. Increase the presence of public resources in vacant storefronts, including L.A. County-provided workforce development and healthcare facilities.

Enforce Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 41.18 in key corridors, which prohibits people from sitting, lying, sleeping, or storing personal property in designated areas, particularly schools, parks, daycare centers, and other sensitive-use facilities.

Revisit Plans to Create a Care First Treatment Campus. While CCA supported the expansion of the Men's Central Jail, plans for a mental health and addiction treatment center have stalled. We urge renewed focus on establishing the Care First Treatment Center as a true model for delivering essential care in our community.

Support AB 543 and Implement a Concentration of Funding to DTLA. Assembly Bill 543 would enable field medicine teams to directly connect unhoused individuals with Medi-Cal-covered services, cutting red tape and improving access to care. Additional resources for transitional housing and street medicine should be prioritized where they are most needed: DTLA.

Addressing our housing, homelessness, addiction, and mental health crises requires everyone to step up. As the private sector continues to build and expand housing and supportive services, government must close gaps between existing programs and expand those that are demonstrating results. CCA will ensure that BIDs, private companies, nonprofit members, outreach teams, and healthcare providers coordinate more effectively with each other and with government programs. At the same time, we should establish a true pilot program in DTLA using all available tools. CCA will support this effort and help direct private funding toward effective philanthropic activities.

Cleanliness and Beautification

In 2024, there were 34,258 calls to 3-1-1 in DTLA. Visitors, residents, and workers judge Downtown not only by what they see, but also by what they smell and encounter underfoot. Dirty sidewalks, lingering odors, graffiti, boarded-up buildings, and deteriorating infrastructure all undermine Downtown’s appeal. While the City has underinvested in basic maintenance, Downtown’s nine Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) have stepped up, contributing more than \$10 million toward basic maintenance in 2025 alone. This figure does not include the significant funding that major employers provide for cleaning and beautification efforts in key DTLA neighborhoods.

34,258
3-1-1 calls to DTLA in 2024

BIDs contributed more than **\$10M**
towards basic maintenance in 2025.

Launch a Visible Daily Cleaning Surge

Clean During Daylight Hours

Cleaning should be consistent and visible during daytime hours to reinforce that DTLA is being cared for. Key corridors should receive daily sweeping, power-washing, graffiti removal, and surface wipe-downs (street furniture, poles, signage). Given current capacity limitations, StreetsLA should allocate one-time funds to local nonprofits already equipped for this work. For example, \$150,000 could support a six-person crew providing trash and graffiti removal five days per week for 90 days.

Assign an Overnight City Crew for Deep Cleaning

The L.A. Department of Sanitation should deploy overnight crews to power-wash and sanitize high-traffic areas—bus stops, Metro stations, the Convention Center, and pedestrian corridors—four to five nights per week when foot traffic is low.

Deploy a City-Led Graffiti and Beautification Blitz

The Office of Community Beautification (OCB) should **lead concentrated graffiti removal across DTLA**, targeting chronic locations such as the Police Headquarters parking garage and the 2nd and 3rd Street tunnels, as well as visible remnants from the June 2025 ICE protests.

Waive permitting requirements for façade restoration

to expedite repairs and encourage property owners to act quickly. Seek additional legislative remedies to incentivize public art and beautification efforts.

Clean DTLA’s Gateways

First and last impressions matter. Resources should focus on major entry and exit points into Downtown:

Execute a City and County MOU with Caltrans to clear graffiti, trash, and debris from freeway off-ramps and transition points at least weekly (e.g. along the 110 and 101 corridors near 3rd, 4th, 6th, Wilshire, 8th, and 9th Street exits). An MOU will provide local agencies with additional resources.

Address encampments on gateway streets through Inside Safe and other available resources.

Enforce “pedestrian in the roadway” laws to deter panhandling and car-window washing at intersections.

Improve the experience of exiting and entering Metro stations by coordinating with Metro, LAPD, BIDs, building owners, and private security teams to increase cleaning, upgrade lighting, and enforce codes of conduct to prevent loitering or blocked access. This effort should focus especially on the 7th Street/Metro Center station, utilizing Metro’s recently formed Station Experience Team.

Maintaining clean and beautiful public spaces requires collaboration across sectors. CCA will continue to support the removal of visual blight on private buildings, including eliminating boarded windows, fencing, and other visible signs of abandonment—especially those left from the 2020 and 2025 protest periods. CCA will also partner with cultural institutions to install permanent murals that reflect community character, turning blighted areas into community-driven art.

Activating Downtown

DTLA has suffered significant economic losses from the exodus of office tenants and the shift to remote work, particularly among government and corporate employees. Business closures, reduced foot traffic, and negative headlines about the loss of historic institutions have discouraged both patronage and new investment. Currently, there are more than 100 vacant storefronts in the once-booming Historic Core alone, and with nearly one-third of commercial space unoccupied, DTLA has a higher vacancy rate than Detroit. To jumpstart recovery, Downtown must bring back customers, attract new businesses, and reposition itself as a distinctive destination. We must showcase the cultural and economic assets unique to DTLA and send a clear message: Downtown Los Angeles is open for business.

more than **100** vacant storefronts in Historic Core

1/3 of commercial space unoccupied

WE HAVE A HIGHER VACANCY RATE THAN DETROIT

Require “Return-to-Office” for Government Workers

City and County employees should align with State and Federal requirements by working on-site in DTLA at least four days per week. Public employees provide a critical source of foot traffic and daily spending that sustains retail, services, and dining establishments.

Take Immediate Action on the Oceanwide Plaza Towers

Begin condemnation proceedings and announce a clear path forward for this high-profile, blighted site. Transfer the property to a capable owner or institution with the capital and expertise to restore the project and initiate visible rehabilitation. CCA will ensure the private sector steps up to support action taken by the public sector. A solution must be realized before major events—and the world’s visitors—flood Downtown in the years ahead.

Fill Vacant Storefronts

Implement a coordinated set of policies to accelerate occupancy and activation of ground-floor spaces:

Fast-track permits and inspections for new DTLA businesses, prioritizing pending applications under the declared fiscal emergency. Currently, more than 1,300 permits remain pending in DTLA, 84% of which were initiated before 2025.

Establish a City-funded Vacant Retail Activation Fund to subsidize commercial rents in key corridors. Administered by a local nonprofit, typical programs

provide up to 50% of the monthly rent (capped at a maximum of \$2,000 per month for 12 months) with a multi-year lease requirement.

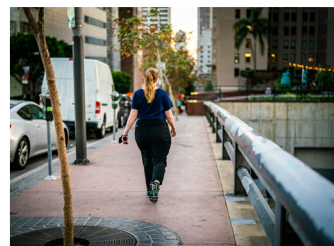
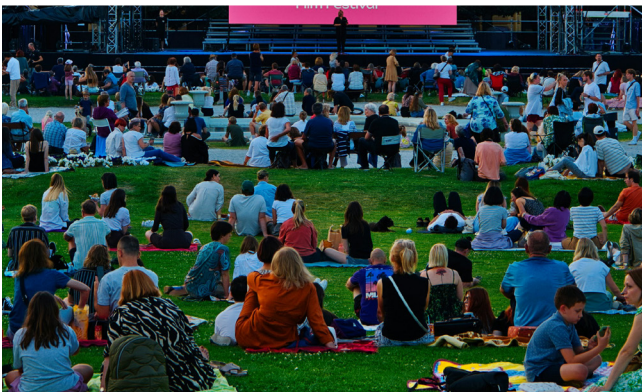
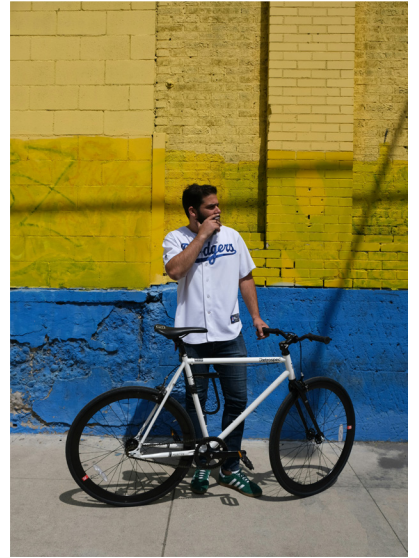
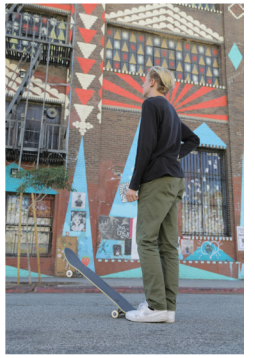
Expand LA County’s Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) tenant improvement grants to support ground-floor small businesses in targeted areas.

Pilot a nonprofit master lease model to activate vacant storefronts with rotating pop-up businesses, drawing on successful programs in San Francisco, Denver, and Pittsburgh.

Fund Cultural Programming that Draws Crowds

Dedicate Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) funding to events, installations, and performances in Downtown public spaces. Since DTLA generates approximately 30% of DCA’s revenue via the transient occupancy tax, reinvestment here is both fair and strategic. Programming should focus on drawing visitors and creating memorable, high-quality experiences.

Join us in launching a coordinated campaign to showcase Downtown’s successes, cultural assets, and opportunities. This partnership is essential to rebuild confidence, attract investment, and reshape the public narrative. The spotlight has been shining on DTLA—and not on what makes the core of our City magical. We must come together to enact these changes and celebrate this community. Signature events like CicLAvia, Grand Performances, and shopping small and local for the holidays are around the corner. Let’s get to work and celebrate these key milestones.



Conclusion

The last five years have clearly demonstrated how a lack of representation and focused support can shift the trajectory of a neighborhood. As residents, workers, and civic leaders of DTLA, we have—and will continue—to do our part to support our community. But this is our call to action for government to join us in executing solutions that are practical, immediate, and achievable.

With the newly passed Convention Center Expansion and Modernization project, now is the time to act, so that when the ribbon is cut, we can exceed visitor and spending projections.

The challenges of a struggling urban core are not unique to Los Angeles. What sets our City apart is the indifference of some elected leaders to see Main Street as their Main Street. What happens on Los Angeles Street and on Broadway reflects the health and vitality of the entire City. Civic and elected leaders across the U.S. are coming together to implement solutions in their hometowns. Now, it is our turn.

Implementation must be collaborative, transparent, and accountable. With urgency and coordination, DTLA can become the vibrant, welcoming, and economically resilient core that Los Angeles needs.

Let's continue to protect our immigrant neighbors and the thriving businesses they create. Let's celebrate our cultural institutions and what makes L.A. the entertainment capital of the world. And let's invest in the infrastructure that allows us to properly welcome businesses and the world to DTLA.

