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Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council

Community Update - June 2009

A Letter from the President: In Response to the City Budget Crisis:

Community Engagement is the Solution
Ten years ago, Los Angeles was in crisis because its residents felt that the city was out of touch, did not listen, and was dysfunctional. More importantly, the leadership of Los Angeles and the City Council did not seem to care. Significant parts of the city were asking for a divorce. Secession was a real threat.

Today, we are revisiting the solutions to that dilemma and changing those solutions. Your decision today will tell us in this room (City Hall) and all members of the neighborhood council movement, but more importantly the entire community, whether the City of LA has learned any lessons. It will tell us whether active, grassroots, volunteer, unpaid time, effort, and voice matter to you.

The Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council, in partnership with others, has helped transform downtown into an amazing neighborhood that can reach consensus and works together. We provide services and opportunities that the city itself is unable to provide. On a grassroots level, I see daily that the BIDS, Neighborhood Council, and community organizations are what hold a huge part of downtown together.

The Neighborhood Council has helped create Gallery Row, with 40 galleries that attract 6,000 people a month downtown to fill its restaurants, hospitality venues, apartments and condos. The Neighborhood Council has provided LAPD with laptops, cameras, a horse, and other supplies while sponsoring Skid Row 3-on-3 Basketball, Pershing Square movies, Park[ing] Day LA, and other community initiatives from composting to the development of a community greening strategy.

The neighborhood councils are your partners in bettering the parks, schools, LAPD, and neighborhoods. The questions should not be how much do we cut - but should be why is the value of that grassroots activity honored so insignificantly?

J. Russell Brown
President
Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council

Upcoming Meetings & Events

Public participation encouraged.

June 9 6:30pm	Neighborhood Council Board of Directors Meeting Los Angeles Theater (615 S. Broadway)
June 10 6:30pm	Rooftop Container & Composting Project Kick-Off Meeting Spring Arts Tower (453 S. Spring Street)
June 11	ArtWalk
June 16 6:30pm	PLUC The Exchange (115 W. Fifth Street)
June 17 5:45pm	Affordable Housing & Social Services Committee (115 E. Fifth Street)
June 17 7:00pm	Arts Committee Pharmaka (101 W. Fifth Street)
June 22 6:30pm	Community Tree Planting Launch Central Public Library (630 W. 5th Street)
June 23 6:30pm	Economic Development Committee 1100 Wilshire (Community Room)
June 26 10:00am	Community Tree Planting Survey Day downtownsustainability.com
July 6 6:00pm	PROS Committee NC Office (453 S. Spring, Suite 1020)
July 7 6:30pm	Sustainability Committee NC Office (453 S. Spring, Suite 1020)
July 8 6:00pm	Public Safety & Health Committee Stillwell Hotel (838 S. Grand Avenue)
July 19 12:00pm	Education Committee Parent Meet & Greet Event The Exchange (115 W. Fifth Street)

Committee Reports

Our committees are open to the public and address a broad range of community issues.

Affordable Housing & Social Services

The committee has been busy working on several projects the last few months. The most active project is the Neighbors Helping Neighbors event. This project is an effort to collect donated television converter box coupons for our neighbors who live in SRO buildings. The committee and DLANC received national attention from the Department of Commerce and was commended in a press release by Congresswoman Roybal-Allard. Nearly 100 coupons have been collected so far and on June 6th the committee will hold an event to give out coupons to the first 100 people who signed up for them in late December. If you haven't ordered a coupon to donate please go to the committee's blog and follow the easy instructions listed there.

The committee is also beginning work on its mapping project-TCA Architecture is donating its time and personnel to create an easy to read, user-friendly map of critical services in the Skid Row area. The maps will be available later this summer to service providers and residents alike.

Contact: Shannon Parker (Director, Social Services)
shannon.parker@dlanc.com
<http://affordabledowntown.blogspot.com>

Arts As the result of a presentation on the historical importance of Fance to the literature, arts, and history of Los Angeles, the Arts Committee voted to recommend a new name in honor of Fance at the intersection of 5th and Grand. Richard Schave, the new director of ArtWalk on second Thursdays, reviewed event updates and plans to seek more community partnerships and sponsorships. Committee chair, Mark Walsh, provided an update on the planning efforts for a Pershing Square exhibition and a fundraiser for the Downtown Artists Project is planned for Fall 2009. The Arts Committee is looking for marketing strategies concerning Gallery Row and ArtWalk.

Contact: Shane Guffogg (Director, Arts, Culture & Education)
shane.guffogg@dlanc.com

Economic Development At the last ED Committee meeting, the group discussed DLANC participation for a Fashion Walk map, the residential housing market, and a survey to better understand what would attract residential populations downtown. The Committee is investigating ways to bring more grant money, such as the CEDS program, into the community and would like to support the SDAT planning process as a resource for economic development.

The ED Committee is also working to develop community action and outreach regarding two proposed City West boundary expansions. Let us know if you would like to get involved.

Contact: David Hurtado (Director, Business)
david.hurtado@dlanc.com

Education The Education Committee has introduced a list of projects, both ongoing and new, for the upcoming next fiscal year (July 1, 2009). The committee discussed the pending city budget crisis and how it would impact its support for community initiatives such as literacy programs; creative thinking and art projects; a new partnership with the 9th Street Elementary School. Chair Danielle Duran is working with the committee to develop educational resources, volunteer opportunities, and potential community partnerships.

Contact: Danielle Duran (Director, Arts, Culture & Education)
danielle.duran@dlanc.com
<http://downtowneducation.blogspot.com>



The Neighborhood Council supports healthy year-round recreation downtown such as the Skid Row 3-on-3 Basketball League at Gladys Park.

Planning & Land Use (PLUC) Every month the Planning & Land Use Committee reviews projects for downtown - from permits to construction. Here is a quick list of projects that the committee recommended to the Board of Directors for support in June 2009:

1. Continuation of CUB for Orpheum Theater (842 S. Broadway; ZA-2008-4621-CUB)
2. CUB/CUX application for proposed basement bar/lounge, ground floor restaurant and rooftop bar/lounge (488 S. Hill St.; ZA-2009-979-CUB-CUX-ZV)
3. CUB application for proposed restaurant (412 S. Main St.; ZA-2008-4438-CE)
4. CUB/CUZ application for off-site beer and wine sales from gasoline service station (1690 Alameda St.; ZA-2008-4348-CUB)
5. CUB application for off-site beer and wine sales from Shell station (504 W. Olympic Blvd. ZA-2008-4313-CUB)

In addition, PLUC has requested more information from the neighborhood regarding a zone variance for a recycling center at 2181 East 10th Street (ZA-2008-3819-ZV).

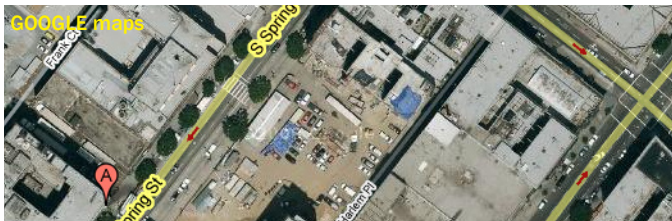
Contact: James Doizaki (Director, Business)
james.doizaki@dlanc.com
<http://www.dlanc.com/planning>

Parks, Recreation & Open Space (PROS)

The Spring Street Gardens are planned for the lot between 4th and 5th, adjacent to the Rowan and El Dorado Lofts. The PROS reports "negotiations are over and the purchase should be out of escrow in the near future. When the purchase is complete, we will start Town Hall Meetings to engage the community about the new Park. We will need a lot of help with these meetings and anyone interested should contact Chair Patti Berman.

The new Palm Court at Pershing Square is coming along and there will be more to report soon on the pet accommodation area. There are also preliminary talks at Pershing Square about a new restaurant in the park - the PROS Committee will keep you up-to-date.

Contact: Patti Berman (Director, Resident)
patti.berman@dlanc.com



Public Health & Safety

This year the Public Health & Safety Committee is planning to purchase an emergency backpack for the Neighborhood Council office at the Spring Arts Tower. There is a program under development by the City of LA Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) to create a universal emergency kit for Neighborhood Councils to make available to their community as this is a critical issue citywide. For more information, check out DONE's website: <http://www.lacityneighborhoods.com>

Contact: Gary Jacoby (Public Stakeholder)
gary.jacoby@ladwp.com

Sustainability

The Committee has launched its project meetings for the 2009 initiatives. The SDAT (Sustainable Design Assessment Team) project team met for the first time and a full report is available online. The Tree Planting Project also met for the first time - a pilot project is planned for Skid Row with plans for the entire neighborhood. The Rooftop Garden & Composting Project Team is meeting on Wednesday, June 10 at the Spring Arts Tower (453 S. Spring Street) for the first time - join us for this or any of our seven other project meetings.

The Sustainability Committee awaits an agreement between the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and the City Attorney for the \$15K national grant to develop a community greening strategy. We are also looking for more information from the City regarding our capacity to raise the \$5K community match required to get this planning process started.

Contact: Ashley Zarella (Director, Private Sector Workforce)
ashley.zarella@dlanc.com
<http://www.downtownsustainability.com>

Other Events & News

There is a great deal going on Downtown and our Neighborhood Council is working to advocate on your behalf, representing our diverse population to City Hall and beyond. Here's what we've been up to recently.

Logo Competition

The Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council recently hosted a logo competition. With 20 new members this past election, the Neighborhood Council is developing a new look - a new logo designed by stakeholders and a website to support the breadth of committee work underway. At the May ArtWalk, visitors to The Exchange voted for their top three favorite of the 34 submissions and a jury of community artists, professional designers, and marketing and brand experts reviewed the submissions, provided constructive feedback and evaluation to make their final recommendation to the Board of Directors. For more about the competition winners, go to <http://downtownlogo.blogspot.com>.

Welcome to the Neighborhood

Café 9 is "a divine place to eat at a café price" serving fresh, organic, and free trade menu items. Now open on the ninth floor of the Spring Arts Tower (453 S. Spring St.), Café 9 is open Monday-Friday from 8:30am-5:30pm. This new historiccorebusinesswasassisted by the Historic Downtown Retail Project with permit expediting and business consulting. The Historic Downtown Retail Project is created and funded by the City of Los Angeles Community Development Department, and administered by VEDC.



In Memoriam

In April, the Downtown community lost a dear friend and tireless volunteer Lesley Gilb Taplin (1946-2009). At a memorial service downtown, the program quoted Lesley: "To do what I can in the areas I've defined as ones I can contribute to for the betterment of this world, to stay as genuinely happy as possible, to help those nearest and dearest in need, to read a little and think a little and dream a little, and never give up on Love. And if I do that every day, then I will have done whatever I can to insure the best possible future for not only myself but those around me." The Lesley Taplin Fund has been established to support Art Share Los Angeles. Contact tracy@artsharela.org.

Neighbors helping Neighbors

The Neighborhood Council is asking for your support as we try to collect unused digital converter box coupons for residents of SRO (single resident occupancy) hotels on Skid Row. Go online and order up to two coupons. For complete program information, including how else we are advocating for change, please go to <http://affordabledowntown.blogspot.com>.

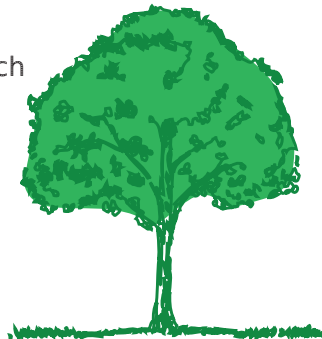
Mother's Day Event The Neighborhood Council sponsored a Mother's Day Event downtown to celebrate moms with music, art, and a day of park festivities in partnership with several community organizations. The event was "very successful" said Board Director Stanley Michaels who helped set-up sound equipment on loan from the Neighborhood Council.

Budget Crunch The Neighborhood Council is feeling the city's budget crunch as several staff members at the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment have been laid off in recent weeks. The total neighborhood impact of the city's financial crisis is not entirely clear but there is considerable debate about how the city should be adjusting to the current economic climate. For instance, some members of the community have been raising concerns about proposed cuts to the 3-1-1 service. "3-1-1 is one of the few things that connects all the different departments of the Los Angeles city government," says community member David Poffenberger. "Without it, navigating the city's bureaucracy would be like trying to navigate the internet without Google." More information on the status of this and other city services will be forthcoming. In the meantime, let us know what services are essential to you downtown.

2009 Planning Excellence Award for Grassroots Initiative: The Los Angeles Section of the American Planning Association has awarded the Sustainability Committee of the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council a 2009 Planning Excellence Award for Grassroots Initiative for its launch of a community greening strategy planning process and the development of a resource toolkit for stakeholders. The Sustainability Committee is working with community partners to identify our community's long-term goals and will work with the City to develop a plan to help guide sustainable growth downtown.

More Shade for Downtown: The 2009 Tree Planting Project will bring some much-needed shade to the streets of downtown. In partnership with LA Conservation Corps, the City of Los Angeles, the Morning Rotary Club and other local organizations, the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council and Sustainability Committee will host community information events, survey days, and fall planting days over the next coming months. Take a look at the sidewalk and see if there could be another tree to provide a cool refuge away from the midday sun. For more information or to sign-up as a volunteer, please email sustainability@dlanc.com

Tree Planting Project Launch
Central Public Library
(Meeting Room A)
June 22, 2009 @ 6:00pm



On Saturday June 6, members of the Affordable Housing Committee distributed tv converter box coupons to residents of SROs downtown as part of the ongoing Neighbor-to-Neighbor program (above). The Sustainability Committee looks for community feedback on public spaces downtown as it develops a community greening strategy (below).



Get involved

Attend a meeting, propose a project, or volunteer some time. Represent your neighborhood.

Contact President J. Russell Brown
DLANC.jr2brown@gmail.com

Visit us online

dlanc.com
affordabledowntown.blogspot.com
downtowneducation.blogspot.com
downtownsustainability.com

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