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July 12, 2022

Eric Garcetti
Mayor

Kevin De León
Councilmember,
Council District 14

VIA EMAIL

RE: Request for Support for the revitalization of the historic Broadway Theater District

Mayor Garcetti and Councilmember De León:

At our regularly held public meeting on July 12, 2022, the Board of Directors of the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council (“DLANC”) voted to provide the following comments:

As you are certainly aware, the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically affected the economy of the historic Broadway Theater District in Downtown Los Angeles. The theaters, hotels, and associated small businesses along this corridor continue to suffer from reduced public access, which is due to several conditions that can be mitigated with the City’s support.

The Broadway Theater District, part of the National Register of Historic Places, is the heart of Downtown and the spine of its Historic Core. Broadway enjoys a rich history. Before Broadway became the birthplace of vaudeville and cinematic entertainment in Los Angeles, it was called Fort Street and served an alternative business route to and from El Pueblo, the 18th Century birthplace of Los Angeles. Today, Broadway is framed by an important collection of century-old architecture and features one of the largest concentrations of historic theatres in the world. With twelve distinctive theatres and 23 other historically significant buildings located within a nine-block span the Broadway Theater District uniquely reflects the breadth of LA’s cultural legacy and has enormous potential to fulfill LA’s biggest ambitions.

During the decade preceding the COVID-19 pandemic, effective public-private partnerships generated an enormous revitalization of the District defined by increased housing, jobs, and cultural activity for millions. Since 2007, more than \$2B has been invested in the revitalization of everything Downtown’s infrastructure and historic features to mobility and streetscaping. However, while great strides were made over the last decade, the pandemic interrupted

this momentum and has left DTLA businesses and residents with stalled projects and initiatives. Today, the theaters, commercial venues and the built environment suffer from a lack of coordinated rehabilitation efforts, which conspires to hamper quality of life for those who live and work in Downtown, and economic benefit for the entire city. Therefore, DLANC supports the resumption of the City’s efforts to revitalize the Broadway Theater District with the goal of igniting economic activity, developing, and promoting LA’s rich cultural diversity, and increasing neighborhood tourism, as outlined in the 2021 LA Tourism Master Plan.

Below is an outline of proposed discrete adjustments to touchpoints along Broadway, which have been chosen in collaboration with DTLA business owners, residents, and visitor. DLANC requests the support of City Council, the Mayor’s Office, and the relevant city agencies in revitalizing Broadway as outlined below:

1. Increase public access to theaters along Broadway. We are grateful for the support from and continued involvement of the Department of Transportation (LADOT), Economic and Workforce Development Department, and Department of Public Works Bureau of Engineering (LABOE) with the following:

Action Instruct the LADOT to remove and/or relocate the “pilot” fiberglass planters (aka Ponto Tapered Cylinders) that are impeding the loading of passengers at the Los Angeles and State Theaters. Current placements that block passenger loading along Broadway are not aligned with the Broadway Streetscape Master Plan (BSMP).

Action Instruct LADOT to work with LA Metro’s Bike Share to Relocate Metro Biker Share dock from the west side of S Broadway in front of the Million Dollar Theatre (parcel 5149-015-026) to one of three alternate sites:

- i. Same block, ~400 ft south, in front of parcel 5149-015-039,
- ii. Across the street, on west side of 200 block, in front of parcel 5149-009-003, or
- iii. Same block, ~180 ft south, in front of parcel 5149-015-018

Action Commercial Loading

- i. Instruct the LADOT to assess and report back on what is needed to facilitate a commercial loading zone along the south side of east bound 3rd Street during off-peak times. Doing so will facilitate loading of theatrical equipment into the Million Dollar Theater, which is also prevented on Broadway¹.

2. Aid in the refresh and beatification of the District’s historic urban landscape, including the revitalization of legacy theatres and their characteristic lighting facades, which contribute significantly to the characteristic style of Downtown. Specifically, we are grateful for the support from and continued involvement of City Council and the Economic and Workforce Development Department for the following improvements:

Action Submit a motion to Council requesting the renewal of the very successful 2017 **Facade Lighting Program** and administration as previously authorized by CF 12-0492-S1

- i. In 2016, Council authorized a \$750,000 architectural façade lighting grant program that

¹ The Broadway Street Master Plan calls for the protection of loading zones on both sides of Broadway and specifically calls for, “special consideration,” to accommodate valet/passenger drop-off needs for special events at the historic theaters along Broadway.

improved façade lighting of a dozen historic buildings on Broadway buildings in 2017, though only one theater was awarded a grant. Improved façade lighting will help create a safer, more attractive Broadway and will highlight the architectural features of some of the corridor's most beautiful historic building. Doing so will help drive new business to Broadway by encouraging a more active pedestrian environment.

Action Submit a motion to Council requesting the allocation of funds necessary to renew the lapsed **Broadway Streetscape Masterplan Dress Rehearsal Service Contract** (CF 13-0356). City contract no. C-128818; Contract amount: \$201,076; Expired 1/10/21

- i. Eight years after their installation in 2014, as part of the BSMP "Dress Rehearsal" most planters are now a blight on the Historic Core District as they are without plants and serve as no more than receptacles for refuse.

Action Submit a motion to Council requesting that the Economic and Workforce Development Department be directed to evaluate the historic Broadway Theatre District as defined by the City Ordinance 180871 from Olympic Street to E 2nd Street as a **JEDI Zone** and report to the Council with findings and recommendations on creation of the zone

We ask that the City do everything possible to aid in revitalizing LA's historic Broadway Theater District so as to improve the economic opportunities and quality-of-life for DTLA stakeholders. We look forward to continuing our great work with you and your staff to make this dream a reality.

Sincerely,



Claudia Oliveira
President,
DLANC



Ryan Afari
Chair,
DLANC Planning & Land Use Committee