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## **COUNCILMEMBER JOSE HUIZAR UNVEILS VISION FOR BRINGING BACK BROADWAY**

*Public-Private partnership to invest nearly \$40 million to restore downtown's  
Historic Broadway District and revived streetcar transportation*

**LOS ANGELES (Jan. 28, 2008)** – Los Angeles City Councilmember José Huizar, joined by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and property owners of the largest theater district west of the Mississippi, today unveiled a vision for *Bringing Back Broadway* and announced an initial \$36.5 million investment for projects that will restore downtown's historic Broadway District to its former glory.

“All great cities have a bustling theater district – London, New York, and Paris would not be the cities they are today if their theater districts, and all the great things to do nearby the theaters, did not exist as the cultural hearts of those cities,” Councilmember José Huizar said during a news conference at the Los Angeles Theater. “Now is the time for Los Angeles’ cultural heart to beat again on Broadway.”

Bringing Back Broadway is a public-private partnership between Councilmember Huizar’s office, the Mayor’s office, the City of Los Angeles and owners of properties on Broadway. For the initial phase of the initiative, Councilmember Huizar has identified more than \$16.5 million in City, state and federal resources to help pay for streetscape design, property for a new parking facility, and the next steps in the streetcar revival plan.

“Bringing Back Broadway complements the dynamic revitalization efforts which are transforming downtown Los Angeles into a world-class destination,” said Mayor Villaraigosa. “A restored Broadway District will keep Los Angeles rooted in history as we grow into our future.”

Property owners committed to invest more than \$20 million for façade lighting and improvement, historic rehabilitation, business improvement district activities and state-of-the-art technical upgrades.

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*“Bringing Back Broadway* is a long-range vision and a passion project for everyone involved,” said Councilmember Huizar. “This is just the beginning. We will see great progress this year and over the next several years, with a decade of work before us to make Broadway revitalization a reality to benefit our entire City. It’s a great feeling to get things started and see the opportunities ahead.”

Councilmember Huizar envisions a Broadway that harkens back to its glory days, while providing entertainment, eclectic cultural amenities and diverse retail options for downtown residents and visitors enjoying one of the city’s most remarkable pieces of history.

The *Bringing Back Broadway* initiative will link Broadway’s past to its future. The City is studying the feasibility of reviving the downtown streetcar. The streetcar served as a popular mode of transportation along Broadway until 1961. The revived downtown streetcar would connect the revitalized Broadway district to new, large-scale downtown developments, such as L.A. Live and the Grand Avenue project.

Before unveiling the concepts publicly, Councilmember Huizar worked closely with property owners and City departments to secure commitments and develop a long-term vision for the historic district that all participants saw as both feasible and attainable. To ensure the initiative’s success, the Councilmember negotiated mutual commitments from the City and Broadway property owners.

“Through all the attempts to revitalize Broadway, I have never seen this type of collaboration between the City and property owners, or among property owners themselves,” said Steve Needleman, owner of the Orpheum Theater, which is recognized as a model for how private investment in a Broadway theater can produce regular viable programming on Broadway. “Councilmember Huizar has a clear vision for Broadway that will make the district a place where people will want to spend their free time. I couldn’t be more supportive. He is the right person to get this job done.”

Councilmember Huizar examined the previous, unsuccessful attempts to revive Broadway to learn from those efforts and avoid the traps that led to defeat.

“In the past, Broadway has suffered from an unfortunate ‘chicken-and-egg’ paradox,” said Councilmember Huizar. “There’s been a struggle for years about which come first: private investment or public investment. Today, we all realize that both are needed at the same time to reach our collective objectives.”

Under the plan, private investments, such as property rehabilitation and technical upgrades necessary to sustain programming, will be made while the City improves the public way, increases parking and focuses on transit connectivity with the streetcar.

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Councilmember Huizar has created the *Bringing Back Broadway* Trustees, as the group which will oversee the initiative, develop and refine the strategic plan and bring it to fruition. Members of the Trustees include: Councilmember Jose Huizar's Council District 14; City of Los Angeles officials, departments and other public agencies, Broadway property owners, downtown leaders and representatives from key organizations.

A key component to the program's success will be an executive director to work with the Bringing Back Broadway Trustees to act as the liaison between the City and the community and coordinate the various efforts related to the initiative.

"This initiative will make Los Angeles a national model for linking historic preservation to revitalization," said Linda Dishman of the Los Angeles Conservancy. "The opportunities, beautiful architecture and rich entertainment history have always been here, while this kind of collaboration has been needed for a long, long time. This is exactly what Broadway needs."

Before Hollywood became the worldwide center for the entertainment industry known today, Broadway was the birthplace. Vaudeville acts and early century cabarets found great success inside the ornate theaters that lined Broadway. The Marx Brothers performed on Broadway, and many of our nation's greatest entertainers – Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Jack Benny and George Burns – honed their craft on Broadway. Later the theaters evolved into the grandest of movie palaces. Charlie Chaplin premiered "City Lights" at the Los Angeles Theatre, and Broadway was the launching pad for numerous Hollywood stars and starlets on the silver screen.

"Broadway holds just as important a role in shaping our City's main business into what it is today as El Pueblo's Olvera Street, known as the birthplace of Los Angeles, played in forming our cultural destiny," said Huizar.

The Bringing Back Broadway vision honors Broadway's rich and diverse history by once again making it a viable, distinctive entertainment and cultural destination that will shape the future of Downtown Los Angeles.

"The Broadway of tomorrow will be a strolling boulevard that offers a wide variety of options – concerts, plays, musicals, sidewalk dining, shopping and others services – to meet the desires of current Broadway retail patrons, and our growing and diverse Downtown community," said Huizar. "There will truly be something for everyone on Broadway, day and night."

To learn more about the Bringing Back Broadway initiative, visit online at [www.BringingBackBroadway.com](http://www.BringingBackBroadway.com).

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