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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Council Unanimously Approves Downtown Arts District Expansion

The expansion, proposed by Councilmember Huizar, will add about 15 blocks to the Arts District

LOS ANGELES (Dec. 16, 2008) - The Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously today to support Councilmember José Huizar's legislation to expand the Arts District boundaries to include 15 additional blocks in Downtown Los Angeles.

The agreement, which allows for the Artists-in-Residence use in the existing Industrial Zone, comes after a three-year back-and-forth discussion between the Councilmember, whose 14th District includes the Arts District, the City's Planning Department and concerned residents and business associations.

"Many residents already call this area home," said Councilmember Huizar following Tuesday's vote. "And so today, the City officially endorsed what has occurred organically and welcomed a vibrant community into the fold of the Arts District."

The expanded area includes Violet Street to the south, 6th Street to the north, Mill and Wilson streets to the west and the Los Angeles River to the east.

In Council Chambers today, Councilmember Huizar praised the work of the Planning Department in working out a compromise, following an earlier plan, which sought to limit residential use in order to promote job growth in the Industrial Zone.

The Councilmember says the change will not only alleviates residents' concerns, but will also help support Downtown Los Angeles as a multi-dimensional fusion of residential, commercial, wholesale trade and industrial interests.

(more)

Council supports Councilmember's call for an expanded Arts District

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"This vote allows industrial job growth areas to be protected, while recognizing this unique zone has already been largely converted and is already a community-in-progress Downtown, which we as a City can now officially encourage and support," Huizar said.

The Councilmember first introduced City legislation asking for the Planning Department to extend the boundaries in May 2007.

By extending the Artists in Residence zoning south to Violet Street, which is south of 7th Street, the new plan will also compliment the Los Angeles River Master Plan calling for 7th Street to be used as a regional gateway for pedestrians and bicycles.

Tuesday's vote was expected to garner wide-spread approval from community and business interests in the Arts District.

"The people spoke on this issue, and, ultimately, we as a City listened," Huizar said.

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