



**DTLA STRONG**



April 1, 2021

Redistricting Commission  
City of Los Angeles  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Commissioners,

We are a coalition of Downtown Los Angeles (DTLA) residents, business owners and operators, nonprofits and civic organizations committed to a vibrant, livable city center. We offer this letter to explain our shared priorities for the redistricting process. Most importantly, we believe that **DTLA should be recognized as a community of interest with political representation in one council district**. We thank you for your time and dedication to the 2021 redistricting process.

### **Community of Interest**

The redistricting process lays out a complex set of legal requirements that guide the drawing of new city council districts. The concept of preserving communities of interest is a guiding principle in this process. Communities of interest are defined as identifiable, shared interests that exist in one geographic area. Common interests can include housing and economic patterns and transportation preferences.

DTLA has transformed into a vibrant, urban community with a growing voting bloc in the last two decades. We expect to grow even more as our city leaders significantly expand capacity for new housing and development through the proposed [DTLA 2040 Community Plan](#) (DTLA 2040), a critical document that will guide DTLA's future. According to the plan, DTLA is defined by its:

- **Growing residential population** – Home to approximately 80,000 residents and is expected to grow to well over 200,000 residents in the next two decades.
- **Rich mobility options** – As the region's transit hub, 40% of all Metro Rapid Bus Lines serve DTLA in addition to the many fixed rail stations.
- **Historical assets** – A historic community home to 190 Historic Cultural Monuments, and 4 Designated Historic Districts including Little Tokyo, Theater District, Chinatown and Olvera Street.
- **Center for economic activity** - DTLA represents 1% of the city's land but 18% of its jobs.<sup>1</sup>

People move to DTLA to live an urban lifestyle that provides housing close to work, walkable streets, reduced reliance on cars and proximity to our world-renowned historical assets, cultural institutions, museums, sports

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<sup>1</sup> US Census Bureau Center for Economic Studies, LEHD

stadiums and restaurants. **DTLA's growing residential population, strong connection to transit and high concentration of jobs make it a uniquely urban community distinctly different from other neighborhoods in the city.**

### **Effective Political Representation**

DTLA must be treated like the important community that it is, and our growing voter bloc deserves to choose our political representative. Our coalition has a shared set of priorities including welcoming sustainable, multi-modal transportation and valuing dense, vertical housing options. We also face challenges such as helping the significant number of individuals living on our streets, and while we know that our entire city is impacted by homelessness, our failed policy of containment in DTLA requires a tailored approach.

This year's redistricting process determines new council district boundaries that will directly impact DTLA's ability to elect representatives that will share our priorities. We believe a DTLA representative that fully understands our needs will lead to a comprehensive policy vision and clear leadership.

Downtown's stakeholders share common interests and concerns that are different from other neighborhoods in the city. **Our neighborhoods must remain a united community of interest that can rely on one elected councilperson to deliver tailored policies and solutions.**

**There are also practical and legal reasons to keep DTLA as a community of interest with political representation within one council district, including:**

- DTLA has a contiguous population that shares common social and economic preferences for urban living.
- The Fair Maps Act (AB 849) directs cities and counties to keep neighborhoods unified based on contiguity and the geographic integrity of any local neighborhood or local community of interest.
- Much of DTLA is currently represented by one council district (CD 14) with boundaries that adhere to key redistricting criteria including compactness, political boundaries and existing geographic boundaries like freeways and the LA River.
- DTLA is expected to provide 20% of the city's future housing growth. This responsibility requires accountable leadership.

We appreciate your willingness to serve on the Redistricting Commission, and hope as you deliberate the new boundaries, you are driven by the spirit of the City Charter while promoting population equality, physical compactness, fair demographic representation and contiguity.

Sincerely,

Patti Berman, President  
Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council \*

Sara Hernandez, Founder  
DTLA Strong

Suzanne Holley, President & CEO  
Downtown Center Business Improvement District

Jessica Lall, President & CEO  
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LA Fashion District Business Improvement District

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\*Title for identification purposes only

CC: City Attorney Mike Feuer  
City Controller Ron Galperin  
Los Angeles City Council  
Mayor Eric Garcetti