

Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council

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The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(20) Nay(0) Abstain(0) Ineligible(0) Recusal(0)

Date of NC Board Action: 04/12/2017

Type of NC Board Action: For

Impact Information

Date: 05/09/2017

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 15-1364-S1

Agenda Date:

Item Number:

Summary: The Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council (“DLANC”) supports Council File 15-1364-S1 and the Council’s effort to support, retain, and preserve small businesses—especially long-established and/or locally-owned small businesses. DLANC has used this Council File as a chance to reach out to neighborhood small businesses for their first-hand perspective on support, retention, and preservation. As the Council moves forward with this file, DLANC looks forward to working together with the CLA, Economic and Workforce Development Department and the soon-to-be-formed Los Angeles Small Business Commission to realize the recommendations it has identified in the attached letter



April 12, 2017

Council File 15-1364-S1

Honorable City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk
Los Angeles City Hall
200 North Spring Street, Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Honorable Members,

The Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council (“DLANC”) requests that the following Community Impact Statement be added to Council File 15-1364-S1 in support of the Council’s effort to support, retain, and preserve small businesses—especially long-established and/or locally-owned businesses—in Downtown LA.

DLANC strongly supports the City’s commitment to providing effective support services and incentives for small businesses, and greatly appreciates the opportunity to provide its input regarding Downtown LA. DLANC believes that small businesses are essential to the diverse character of its neighborhood. While Downtown LA has experienced unprecedented growth and development in recent years, that influx of wealth and people can put small businesses under incredible stress in often-unforeseen ways. DLANC has used this Council File as a chance to reach out to neighborhood small businesses for their first-hand perspective on support, retention, and preservation. As the Council moves forward with this file, DLANC looks forward to working together with the CLA, Economic and Workforce Development Department and the soon-to-be-formed Los Angeles Small Business Commission to realize the recommendations it has identified below. We hope that our collective insight and advice can provide real value to the resulting report and policy responses.

In response to this Council file, DLANC members have invested considerable time and energy talking with small businesses in Downtown LA and collecting their concerns. Many of the issues and recommendations below are interconnected, though some obviously have more significance than others. While the priority of order may change from business owner to business owner, DLANC has tried to organize the following issues in terms of importance to our stakeholders.

1. **Centralized Permitting Services:** We regularly heard from our neighborhood small businesses that the City must work toward providing a clear, centralized system of access to City and area services, especially streamlined permitting. Throughout Downtown LA, prospective small business owners are regularly held up for two to three years on permitting issues that could be resolved through centralized administration. Even if the

City does not set up one, single clearinghouse for small business permits, it must establish better lines of communications between the different permitting bodies.

2. **Safety**: Many storefronts in Downtown LA report regular instances of property theft, threats of bodily harm, and other crimes. Oftentimes, the crimes are relatively minor, which limits the responsiveness of the Los Angeles Police Department. And while the Downtown Business Improvements Districts offer crucial security support to member businesses, their services do not cover all businesses and all types of crime. In many circumstances, small business owners have no one to contact for reprieve. The City should establish an alternate system for responding to small business owners impacted by crime.
3. **Parking**: A number of small business owners in Downtown LA have expressed serious concerns about the parking situation. Not only is parking limited in Downtown LA by the sheer number of people and cars, the recent explosion of construction and development has further impeded on parking access for small businesses. While some parts of Downtown LA are readily-accessible by public transit, many parts of our neighborhood are not. The lack of parking can be fatal to small businesses. DLANC recommends the City consider utilizing City-owned properties for small business parking, as well as providing priority parking or setting off a percentage of parking spots for small businesses.
4. **Community Building**: To support our small businesses, the City (potentially through DLANC) could invest in social events and other community-building exercises to facilitate relationships and communication among small business owners. Ideally, these events would allow for exchanges of best practices, or even presentations by sister cities on effective small business support and retention programs. Oftentimes, starting a small business in Downtown LA can feel like a lonely exercise. It does not have to be that way.
5. **Interruption Funding**: As Downtown LA continues its rapid growth, the City should continue to be mindful of the consequences of construction and development on small businesses. DLANC appreciates the creation of the “Interruption Fund” for businesses in Little Tokyo affected by Metro construction, but those funds are not available to many Downtown LA small businesses. In particular, DLANC is extremely concerned about the effect the impending 110-N/6th Street closure will have on small businesses. The City should strongly consider expanding the reach of the Interruption Fund to support all small businesses significantly affected by public construction.
6. **Incentives and Designations**: DLANC also believes the City could implement a more effective system of incentives and special designations to support small businesses. Some Downtown LA small businesses are considering the viability of an “OGLA” designation for long-established and locally-owned small businesses, akin to cultural-historical designations. Further, DLANC recommends the City re-evaluate its definition of “small business” in its incentive programs to better emphasize “long-established” and/or “locally-owned” small businesses. DLANC also believes the City should provide incentives to small businesses to encourage “social responsibility,” especially related to offering public green space and supporting our homeless stakeholders. This could even include incentives to property owners to fill vacant properties, as empty store fronts directly undermine the small business environment in Downtown.

This Community Impact Statement is based on the recommendation of the Government Liaison Committee on March 22, 2017, and action taken at the Board of Directors meeting on April 12, 2017, when the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council adopted the following motion and directed that a Community Impact Statement be filed reflecting its position.

Motion: “The Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council (“DLANC”) should submit a Community Impact Statement in support of Council File 15-1364-S1. DLANC should submit the letter posted with this Agenda in support of the Community Impact Statement.”

Sincerely,



Patricia Berman
DLANC President

Sincerely,



Nate Johnson
DLANC Government Liaison Committee Chair