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# Assembly California Legislature



**REGINALD BYRON JONES-SAWYER, SR.**  
CHAIR, ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY  
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, FIFTY-SEVENTH DISTRICT

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2028 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC  
GAMES  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
HOMELESSNESS  
NATIVE AMERICAN AFFAIRS

April 10, 2023  
Los Angeles City Hall  
200 N. Spring Street, Room 450  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**RE: LA's Garment Industry and the Downtown Los Angeles 2040 Community Plan**

Dear Councilmembers,

I write to express my strong support for the Garment Worker Center amendments to the DTLA 2040 Community Plan to preserve, protect and incentivize this essential industry. LA's garment workers are leaders of a growing alliance of industry players, including manufacturers, contractors, brands, and advocates dedicated to ensuring the long-term viability of our neighborhood and industry. With a history in Downtown LA going back over 130 years, the Los Angeles garment industry is the largest apparel-producing hub in the United States.

The **DTLA 2040 Community Plan** and the zoning and land use changes it proposes will impact thousands of garment industry businesses and their employees within the DTLA Fashion District, as well as the countless neighboring businesses that support and work with these businesses on a regular basis. Within the Fashion District, the DTLA 2040 Plan proposes a drastic shift in land use from largely manufacturing zones to primarily 'Markets' and 'Hybrid Industrial' designations, both of which allow for a significant restructuring of the Fashion District's urban form. The consequences of these strategies on the garment sector with an estimated 20,000 jobs, thousands of small businesses, and the Fashion District's immigrant, low-wage workers of color cannot be understated. The infiltration of market-rate housing through the DTLA 2040 Plan is of particular concern, as it will significantly raise land values within the area. The DTLA 2040 Plan incentivizes commercial landlords to displace garment manufacturing businesses to create unaffordable, market-rate housing by applying Market and Hybrid Industrial zoning designations over much of the Fashion District.

**The Fashion District should be understood and celebrated as a lively and growing ecosystem that provides the critical infrastructure needed to protect public health and ensure the industry's growth in sustainable production.** This requires proximity to the largest concentration of skilled garment workers in the United States, who have on average over 21 years of experience, affordable manufacturing, and industrial spaces for fabric and garment manufacturing, assembly, finishing, warehousing, and distributing. LA accounts for 82.5% of California's and 83% of the nation's cut-and sew-apparel sales. According to the California Fashion Association, LA's fashion industry produces an estimated \$15 billion worth of products each year. The displacement of the businesses that make up this ecosystem and the jobs they provide will

have a devastating impact on the future of the domestic apparel industry and would be a huge setback to these recent gains. **I support the solutions proposed by the Garment Worker Center to remedy these problems within the DTLA 2040 plan and to ensure the long-term viability of LA's unique and essential garment sector. These solutions are outlined below and detailed in a separate letter previously submitted to the Council File by the GWC in February of 2023.**

### **Preservation**

LA garment workers demand the preservation of the Fashion District neighborhood as a localized urban manufacturing employment hub and ecosystem by ensuring garment manufacturing uses remain permitted throughout the district, with no loss of the jobs or businesses that make up the largest apparel-producing industry in the United States. It is critical to maintain accessibility to these jobs for the workers who rely on public transportation in their commutes. A built environment that allows for easy movement of goods and materials within and between these businesses and dedicated, affordable manufacturing and industrial spaces for garment manufacturing, assembly, finishing, warehousing, and distribution processes are vital to ensuring these jobs persist.

1. Help curb displacement of garment jobs and create and enforce a retroactive “lookback” going back 5 years to identify if manufacturing uses have occupied a portion of any building or lot before permitting a change of use.
2. Identify and allocate resources to an appropriate entity to assess small business displacement risk as a result of redevelopment and support any displaced small businesses in the Fashion District when displacement cannot be prevented.
3. Require the preservation of freight elevators, loading docks, and loading bays within and directly surrounding buildings currently occupied by garment manufacturing businesses.
4. Require 1.5 Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of manufacturing space for all new, residential, and non-residential developments in mixed-use areas of the Fashion District.
5. Identify and allocate resources to an appropriate entity to enforce FAR requirements before leasing is approved.

### **Protection**

LA garment workers demand the protection of DTLA's garment manufacturing jobs and this local ecosystem from displacement due to real estate speculation and climbing rents as a result of the introduction of new and competitive uses within the Fashion District. Additionally, garment workers seek the prioritization of the development of affordable housing at “Very Low”, “Extremely Low”, and “Acutely Low” income levels within the Fashion District through strong community benefits agreements and within Adaptive Reuse and Live/Work programs.

6. In the Western proposed IX2 use designation within the Fashion District, change use designation from IX2 to IX3.
7. Expand Planning's proposed Community Plan Implementation Overlay (CPIO) A.5 Employment Incentive Subarea in the Fashion District throughout the entire IX3 use designation, as well as IX2, IX4, and CX3 use designations within the Fashion District to promote and incentivize developers to create new light manufacturing space.

8. Prohibit hotels in IX2, IX3, IX4, CX3, I1, and I2 use designations within the boundaries of the Fashion District.
9. Affordability requirements must remain in the Downtown Adaptive Reuse provisions.
10. Strengthen requirements for conversion of manufacturing space into Joint Living and Work Quarters, and limit “work” uses to ensure a focus on garment manufacturing.
11. In IX2, IX3, + IX4 use designation areas within the Fashion District, prohibit entertainment, recreation, and stadium uses from being developed or converted from industrial uses:
12. Prohibit the off-site construction of affordable housing units for developments in the Fashion District.

### **Incentivize**

LA garment workers demand that city leaders collaborate across departments and offices to create opportunities to provide various financing tools that attract and incentivize mission-driven urban manufacturing developers in order to help preserve existing and create new manufacturing jobs downtown that employ local Angelenos and revitalize this sector and neighborhood.

13. Facilitate and support partnerships between the City’s Workforce Development Board, Economic and Workforce Development Department, and proven industry-specific organizations and labor groups like Garment Worker Center to develop, pilot, and fund Los Angeles fashion manufacturing programming aimed at preserving employment opportunities, increasing economic impact and job creation, as well as uplifting and growing ethical and sustainable garment manufacturing jobs for garment workers in Los Angeles.
14. Facilitate links with established retail banks, community development financial institutions, credit unions, and federal and local funding opportunities which create access to capital to drive recovery for the garment industry.

At this time, I respectfully ask that the voices of the workforce and businesses that define and characterize the area triumph. This land use proposal is an important opportunity to redirect the systemic inequities garment workers face and engage this historically underrepresented population in planning. I urge you to do right by the community of garment workers and small businesses who were essential in protecting us from the onset of the pandemic.

Sincerely,



REGINALD BYRON JONES-SAWYER, SR.  
State Assemblymember, 57<sup>th</sup> District