



Broadway Initiative Action Plan



Los Angeles
Conservancy
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Action Plan Summary

A. Overview



This "Action Plan" summary document represents the launch of the Los Angeles Conservancy's "Broadway Initiative", a comprehensive, multi-year revitalization strategy for Los Angeles' incomparable Broadway Historic Theater District.

The Broadway district in downtown Los Angeles - once the entertainment and retail hub of our city -- remains one of our nation's most underappreciated urban treasures. With the highest concentration of movie palaces in the world, boasting a combined seating capacity of over 17,000, Broadway (between 3rd and 9th Streets) is the first and largest Historic Theater District listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

This Action Plan lays the groundwork for a focused ten-year investment in creating an exciting future for Broadway, a Broadway that will again become a lively entertainment center for downtown and surrounding communities. The Plan recognizes that the theaters themselves can only be successful in an Historic Core that is attractive and economically vibrant. Building on the active retail environment found on today's Broadway, the plan envisions a reinvigorated retail base with a more diverse mix of ground floor uses, along with its historic theaters renovated and reused for new entertainment uses. The plan also contains a strong emphasis on converting vacant commercial buildings on Broadway and on surrounding Historic Core streets into residential space, creating a 24-hour community in the historic core, with new residents living in apartments, artists' lofts, and live/work spaces.

When the plan is fully implemented, Broadway will reemerge as a vital, central street for all of Los Angeles, giving new life to the city's most important architectural treasures, creating thousands of new job opportunities, and leveraging tens of millions of dollars in new private sector investment.

To achieve this vision, the Action Plan outlines the creation of a four-year Los Angeles Conservancy "Broadway Initiative" to spur the revitalization of Broadway and the Historic Core. The Initiative, to be supported by private and philanthropic funding, will establish a "Broadway Coordinator" through the Los Angeles Conservancy (LAC) to provide a full-time advocate and resource for Broadway revitalization.



Courtesy Downtown Strategic Plan

B. The Los Angeles Conservancy



The Los Angeles Conservancy, the largest local membership-based historic preservation organization in the country, is a non-profit organization dedicated to the recognition, preservation, and revitalization of the architectural heritage of greater Los Angeles. Established in 1978, the organization has grown to a membership of over 6500, including more than 400 volunteers. Through both its advocacy and educational programs, the Conservancy raises public awareness of the value of the area's historic resources and has become a strong voice for preservation and reuse in the establishment of public policy.



Since the founding of the Conservancy, the fate of Broadway has been a key part of the organization's efforts - most notably through the highly successful "Last Remaining Seats" film series held in the Broadway theaters since 1987. Weekly tours of Broadway, through the Conservancy's Downtown Walking Tours, highlight the architectural treasures of the street as well as the neighborhood context. Through the Broadway Initiative, the Conservancy is now redoubling its efforts, playing a leadership role in bringing Broadway alive again as an attractive, inviting, 24-hour street.



The Los Angeles Conservancy plans to play a leadership role on Broadway for the next four years. The organization will be hiring a "Broadway Coordinator" who will spearhead revitalization activities for the district, serving as an advocate, spokesperson, marketing director, and real estate broker for Broadway, and developing strategic partnerships toward successful revitalization. The Conservancy is lining up funding support for the Broadway Initiative from private foundations, financial institutions, and government agencies.

The Conservancy's new efforts in the Broadway district have been attracting widespread attention. In December 1998, the Conservancy helped bring First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton to Broadway as part of the White House Millennium Council's "Save America's Treasures" program to preserve the nation's most important and endangered historic sites. At a "Save America's Treasures" event in Broadway's Los Angeles Theatre, joined on stage by singer Stevie Wonder, the First Lady expressed her strong support of the efforts to revive the historic Broadway Theater District. "I have a vision of what could be done with these old theaters," said Mrs. Clinton. "When we see our history come alive as these theaters are coming back to life, it's really our communities coming to life."

C. Vision for Broadway



Many Los Angeles residents today know New York's "Great White Way" far better than Los Angeles' own distinctive Broadway. How many realize that behind Broadway's facades and shuttered marquees are a dozen major theaters with the highest concentration of magnificent movie palaces in the world? How many stop to look past today's visual jumble on the street to envision what once was, and what now could be?

Each year, over 10,000 people attend the Los Angeles Conservancy's "Last Remaining Seats" film series on Broadway. Those who attend have felt for themselves the special excitement of greeting friends in the Los Angeles Theatre's grand, opulent lobby. They've felt the thunderous Wurlitzer organ as they took their seat at the Orpheum Theatre. They've felt the tangible electricity in the air when the lights go down and the stage lights up at the Palace Theatre. They now know that the Broadway experience is a far cry from the local mall's multiplex.

Yet, despite such successful entertainment and educational events, Broadway is still not aglow every night of the week. To be sure, the Conservancy and other organizations have had many preservation successes on Broadway over the years: today most of the theaters are indeed standing and some remain in operation, against very heavy odds. By day, Broadway is still a lively, Latino-oriented shopping district. However, by night Broadway is dark and desolate, and many of its most important historic buildings are largely vacant.

Historic preservation necessarily must be about more than saving individual buildings. Preservation must also involve reviving entire historic streets and districts, creating a successful economic climate in which historic buildings can be saved and thrive. The Conservancy determined that achieving success on Broadway required the organization to move beyond its traditional activities of education, technical assistance, and legislative advocacy and serve as an engaged, active catalyst for revitalization.

In mid-1997, the Conservancy formed the Commercial Centers Task Force to develop a proactive advocacy program for Broadway, and the Task Force has articulated a compelling vision for Broadway.

Come with us now and take a glimpse at a revitalized Broadway, in the year 2010, a Broadway that:



- Has again become a lively entertainment center for downtown and surrounding communities.
- Has renovated and reused its historic theaters for new entertainment uses - housing a mix of major theater and entertainment companies, films, lively non-profit arts organizations, and nightclubs.
- Maintains its established connection to the Latino communities of the region, while expanding its appeal to shoppers and patrons from all cultures.
- Has reinvigorated its retail base, not with the large department stores of the 1920s, but with a strong mix of popular and specialty stores and restaurants.
- Has become a 24-hour street, with residents living in apartments, artists' lofts, and live/work spaces in the upper floors of formerly vacant commercial buildings.
- Has become a cultural mecca for students, driving over from USC or walking from a nearby collection of urban campuses that are creatively re-using historic buildings as classrooms and student housing.
- Has successfully addressed building code issues that had made renovation and re-use of historic Broadway structures problematic in the past.
- Has preserved and enhanced its most important historic buildings.
- Has enhanced its streetscape with new street trees, pedestrian-scaled lighting, attractive crosswalks, a comprehensive signage plan, and new art program.
- Has a successful, long-running Business Improvement District (BID), assuring that the street is clean and safe and that Broadway property owners are working cooperatively toward common goals.
- Has established a streetwide parking strategy to assure the availability of convenient, safe, and affordable parking.

Broadway today is similar to where Hollywood, Old Pasadena, and New York's 42nd St. were more than a decade ago. In Cleveland, Playhouse Square's cluster of 1920s movie houses was also largely forgotten in a decaying downtown. However, with focused leadership and years of hard work, these areas have - or are becoming - models of urban regeneration.

Why not Broadway next? Why not now?

D. Strategic Linkages



The Broadway theaters are not only important in themselves, and located within a still active retail setting, but they are also positioned within a dynamic downtown context.

The re-opened Million Dollar Theater, at Broadway and 3rd Street, is housed in the mixed-use Grand Central Square project, and now closely connected to Bunker Hill by means of Angel's Flight. Easily accessible from the Pershing Square Red Line Station, it is also adjacent to Grand Central Market, across the street from the Bradbury Building, one block south of Times Mirror Square, and on a block that is ripe for further mixed-use development.

The retrofitting of the historic Broadway Department Store into the new Junipero Serra State Office Building at Broadway and Fourth Street is a new success story on Broadway, complementing the nearby Ronald Reagan State Office Building at 3rd and Spring Street. This northern portion of Broadway is just one block away from the Civic Center extension proposed in the City's Ten Minute Diamond plan.

The cluster of theaters anchored by the Los Angeles Theatre, at Broadway and 6th Street, is just one block east from Pershing Square, and thus within easy walking distance from both the Square's Red Line Station and ample parking. Improvement of the streetscape along just one block of Fifth and Sixth Streets would strongly connect the entire central district of theaters to the offices and hotels on the west side of downtown.



Meanwhile, many other plans, projects, and development proposals are in process near the Broadway Historic District. The Downtown Center Business Improvement District (BID) has already made a remarkable difference in cleanliness and a greater sense of security. A newer BID in the Historic Core is expected to have a similar impact. Broadway will also benefit from its close linkages to adjacent, revitalizing streets in the Historic Core. Spring Street, now wired with high-speed Internet access, is already becoming an attractive home for start-up high-tech and multimedia firms. The City's new Adaptive Reuse Ordinance is also spurring the conversion of buildings on Spring, Main and Hill Streets to housing. Transportation linkages will be further augmented by a proposed re-establishment of a Red Car trolley line down Broadway.



In the larger context of downtown Los Angeles, the Theater District also sits at the center of an extraordinary complex of attractions for local residents and tourists. To the north of the district are innumerable major sites: El Pueblo, Chinatown, Little Tokyo, the Japanese American Community Cultural Center, the Japanese American National Museum, the new Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angeles, the historic St. Vibiana's Cathedral, the Music Center and soon to be built Disney Concert Hall, the Colburn School of Music, the Museum of Contemporary Art, and the second largest concentration of government facilities in the United States.



To the east and southeast are two often overlooked economic engines of Los Angeles - the thriving Toy District and Fashion District. To the west and south are still other significant destinations: the Staples Arena, the Los Angeles Convention Center, the Shrine Auditorium, the main campus of the University of Southern California, and Exposition Park with its new California Science Center, museums, and Coliseum.

These nearby attractions and immediate context of recent investment in the historic core of downtown Los Angeles help to define the area's strategic linkages and answer the question "why now?": the time is right for Broadway.

The Broadway Initiative's Activities

A. Catalytic Projects



The Broadway Initiative will undertake a number of catalytic activities toward Broadway's revitalization, including the following:

- **Pursuing major investments in Broadway by entertainment companies.** As on 42nd Street in New York, where Disney's commitment to renovating the New Amsterdam Theater led to increased confidence from other investors, the investment of a major entertainment company in one of the large Broadway Theaters (such as the Orpheum or Los Angeles) could be a major catalyst for future investment by others in revitalizing the street.



- **Creating new, creative partnerships with arts organizations in need of exciting urban venues.** Broadway can become an attractive venue for live popular music (contemporary Latin, rock, jazz, salsa, mambo, Afro-Caribbean & Tejano). The Conservancy will also work closely on this recommendation with ARTS, Inc., the Los Angeles area's major arts service organization. ARTS, Inc. is launching a "Cultural Facilities Brokering Service," seeking to match performing arts organizations in need of space with appropriate venues. The Broadway Initiative will also work to identify "outside the mainstream" arts partnerships for Broadway, as has proved successful with Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival in New York, Dallas' West End club scene, and Santa Monica's Bergamont Station.



- **Marketing Broadway and the historic core as a creative new urban campus for major educational institutions.** The historic buildings on Broadway offer tremendous possibilities for adaptive reuse as educational buildings. In Savannah, Georgia, the Savannah College of Art and Design pieced together an urban "campus" by assembling over 50 historic buildings in that city's Historic District. Downtown Los Angeles offers similar opportunities to growing educational institutions in need of space. Art and architecture schools, downtown satellites of major universities, culinary schools, performance schools, and extension classes in the arts and technology all offer tremendous opportunities for reuse of Historic Core buildings.

- **Expanding conversions of office space to residential use.** The future of Broadway's vacant upper floors is clearly in residential uses. The new housing market in the Historic Core, on Broadway and on nearby streets, will likely attract several markets: 1) Young, unmarried



urbanites looking for unconventional living space in an active urban environment; 2) Students from USC and other local educational institutions; 3) White collar downtown employees looking to live close to work; 4) Blue collar workers in downtown area industrial and service jobs; 5) Transit-dependent residents preferring to live at the heart of the region's public transportation system.

- **Continuing to promote Broadway's use by government agencies.** The northern end of Broadway sits square within the City's "Ten-Minute Diamond" for the location of government offices. The Junipero Serra State Office Building is creating a critical mass of daytime employees on Broadway, generating new opportunities for ancillary businesses that serve daytime workers. Future location decisions by the City, County, State and Federal governments can build upon this new energy.
- **Exploring the viability of establishing a Farmer's Market,** in coordination with the Historic Core BID, to raise the visibility and desirability of Broadway as a destination. In order to avoid competition with Grand Central Market, a Farmer's Market might be held further south on Broadway.
- **Continuing to support the crucial revitalization work of Friends of the Orpheum (FOTO).** FOTO, which has been in existence for almost a decade, raised almost \$50,000 in 1998 through film festivals, fundraising campaigns, rental of technical equipment, and donations. The group of volunteers who form the core of the organization donated almost 1,000 hours of labor in 1998 to install a new dimming system, improve the live sound system, begin installing surround sound for films, and provide technical assistance for special events. The group's eventual goal is to take over operation of the theater and follow a dual track of restoration and modernization.
- **Supporting efforts to revive the historic Red Cars in downtown Los Angeles.** Many other cities, including Portland, San Francisco, Dallas, Memphis, and Charlotte, have successfully reintroduced trolleys to revive their historic downtowns. A feasibility study on reviving the Red Car in Los Angeles is now underway. A successful reintroduction of the Red Car on Broadway and elsewhere downtown would bring tourists and local residents alike back to the historic heart of the city.



- **Assuring that the annual Fiesta Broadway actively utilizes the Broadway theaters.** Fiesta Broadway attracts up to 300,000 visitors to Broadway on a single day in April, making it the largest annual street festival in Los Angeles. The huge turnout for the event offers a unique opportunity to showcase the historic theaters and other historic buildings to new audiences, and to tie promotional activities for the event into promotions for the theaters and other Broadway businesses. Yet while extraordinarily successful, Fiesta Broadway's offerings have been limited to outdoor, on-street events. Fiesta Broadway could and should expand its programming to use the theaters and to showcase Broadway's built heritage.



B. Physical Improvements

A major feature of Broadway is the richness of its architecture and the continuity of its early 20th century urban form. Public streetscape improvements and a program for the enhancement of the public face of the buildings themselves are key to developing a revitalized district and the impression of a "clean and safe" environment. While the Conservancy itself cannot fund or construct large-scale physical improvements, the Broadway Initiative's legislative activities will include efforts to spur various upgrades to Broadway's overall appearance, such as the following:

- **Full Implementation of the Broadway Streetscape Plan:** The landscape design firm of Campbell & Campbell has developed a comprehensive streetscape plan for the Community Redevelopment Agency that will provide for sidewalk upgrades, historic light fixtures, an integrated street graphics program, improved street furnishings and new street trees. The Broadway Initiative will help assure that this plan is fully implemented for the length of the Broadway Historic Theater District.
- **Streetscape Extension to the West:** The extension of the Broadway streetscape improvements along Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Streets to the west (Hill Street) is also recommended to provide a strong Broadway connection to Pershing Square, its garage, and the Metro Rail Red Line portal.
- **Historic Markers:** A series of multi-lingual kiosks, signposts and plaques should be developed to mark the street's history and landmark buildings, in coordination with the Angel's Walk program, the Historic Core BID, and the Confederation of Downtown Organizations' planned way-finding sign network.
- **Sitting areas and public restrooms:** Broadway presently lacks suitable places for shoppers and patrons to sit or use a restroom. The streetscape program for Broadway should therefore include attractive benches, and the possible creation of other rest areas. In addition, the Broadway property owners need to provide public restroom facilities at convenient locations along the street.
- **Facade Improvements:** Through a matching grant program, building owners may be encouraged to improve and clean building facades, remove inappropriate additions (particularly at street level), and reveal the original historic architecture. Additional work includes window replacement and masonry repair to maintain the historic integrity of the building.



Reinforce Pershing Square Connections

- **Building Lighting:** A program to light the exterior facades of the major historic buildings with a uniform white light will reinforce the distinctive architectural characteristics of Broadway and provide ambiance for evening activities.
- **Marquee Improvements:** The theaters' great marquees herald the unparalleled collection of theaters on Broadway. A program to renovate and re-establish these marquees, as well as historic vertical signs, may reinforce the street's unique identity.
- **Rooftop Features and Lighting:** The City's Cultural Affairs Department has implemented a successful program along Wilshire Boulevard and in Hollywood to re-light historic building rooftop signage. The expansion of this program to Broadway, including the lighting of existing and potential new rooftop towers, will provide a special signature for the street.



Banners and Facade Lighting

C. Parking Improvements



Although a large percentage of Broadway's current shoppers and employees arrive on public transportation, any revitalization strategy in auto-oriented Los Angeles must be aware of the area's parking needs. Nearly every revitalized commercial district in Southern California has found it essential to provide convenient, visible, and affordable parking.

Recent parking studies of Broadway have found that while parking is plentiful in some areas of the street, it is often found on blocks outside of Broadway or a few blocks away from Broadway's core. Parking on or near Broadway is also unusually expensive.

The Action Plan recommends the following:

- **The CRA and the Conservancy should jointly determine whether additional parking supply is necessary to spur and accommodate Broadway revitalization.** If so, the CRA should work closely with the Mayor's Office, Council offices, and other appropriate City agencies to develop a workable funding mechanism for its construction.
- **The CRA and City Department of Transportation (DOT) should spearhead a comprehensive parking management plan for Broadway,** whether or not additional parking supply is ultimately provided. Parking on Broadway should be marked by: a) parking that the motorist can easily find; b) parking that invites, not deters, patrons; c) parking managers and attendants that facilitate a positive experience for Broadway visitors; and d) a clean and attractive environment for the pedestrian leaving and returning to the car. The parking management strategy should therefore include enhanced pedestrian linkages to Pershing Square; new, attractive parking identification signage; enhanced mid-block connections to parking on Hill Street and Spring Street; and creative mechanisms to bring affordable parking to private lots during evening entertainment events.
- **Work with the Historic Core BID to create incentives for collaboration between parking providers and building owners.** Since Broadway's parking properties and major property owners are represented in the BID, the BID provides an excellent forum to institute special discounted parking policies or validation programs, as well as other changes that will lead to a more positive parking experience.





D. Legislative Initiatives

Achieving Broadway's revitalization will require the active collaboration of all levels of government. The Conservancy's Action Plan recommends a number of immediate follow-up steps, involving new governmental initiatives.

- **Supporting the creation of State tax incentives for adaptive reuse of commercial buildings for residential or live/work uses.** The Central City Association has played a leadership role on this issue, working closely with Assemblyman Gil Cedillo's office, to develop new adaptive reuse incentives that can apply to Broadway and the Historic Core. While such tax benefits might apply in many urban areas, they could prove especially crucial to developing Broadway's residential base.
- **Overcoming building code obstacles that have hampered rehabilitation projects in the Historic Core.** The Broadway Initiative will work with the Department of Building and Safety to assign a specialized case manager to work with all historic buildings on Broadway and in the Historic Core. The Initiative will work with Building and Safety and the Mayor's Business Team to help "trouble-shoot" on code issues in the Historic Core and assure that Building and Safety staff is receiving regular training on the State Historic Building Code.
- **Helping to implement the City's new Adaptive Reuse Ordinance.** The Adaptive Reuse Ordinance, by removing the traditional zoning impediments to residential conversion projects, has already spurred great interest in residential opportunities in the Historic Core. The Broadway Initiative will monitor the ordinance's implementation, work with developers to facilitate projects under the ordinance, and move toward codification of the City's new code guidelines for adaptive reuse projects.
- **Working to see that no stone goes unturned in identifying funding for Broadway and the Historic Core.** Strong legislative support at the City, State and Federal levels will be crucial to assure that Broadway and adjacent streets reap the benefits of all possible programs in economic development, transportation, housing, arts development, historic preservation, and other public policy areas.



- **Creating special zoning restrictions on Broadway to control inappropriate conversions of historic theaters to non-entertainment uses.** This action plan seeks to revive Broadway as an entertainment district and the City's zoning scheme on the street should reinforce these efforts. The City should consider imposing a "moratorium" on theater demolitions or theater conversions to non-entertainment uses. In addition, the zoning of the theater properties on Broadway could have a special "Q" (qualifying) condition limiting their ground floor space to entertainment uses (defined broadly, to include restaurants and other entertainment-related uses) thereby preventing the continued erosion of the district's entertainment base. While non-entertainment uses could still be permitted by variance, such a measure would assure City discretionary review of such uses in historic theaters. Finally, the City should consider concentrating entertainment-related uses on Broadway rather than dispersing them throughout the downtown area.
- **Protections for historic buildings:** The Broadway Initiative, by compiling a physical database and inventory on Broadway's historic structures, will help assure that Broadway's historic features remain intact. The Conservancy can then work to explore whether additional design controls on building alterations are necessary.
- **Working to assure that Broadway and adjacent Historic Core streets are receiving adequate and effective police patrols.** In cooperation with the Historic Core BID, The Broadway Initiative will work closely with the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and Community Police Advisory Board (CPAB) to assure that Broadway is receiving sufficient police attention.
- **Creating a pool of funds to serve as operating subsidies and grants for non-profit organizations to rent space or use the Broadway theaters.** Broadway's revitalization will likely require the participation of numerous small arts organizations, which often cannot afford substantial rental fees for theaters. A pool of \$50,000 or \$100,000, perhaps through the City's Cultural Affairs Department, could be awarded competitively over the course of the year to arts organizations that will make the biggest contribution to bringing new audiences to Broadway. Even this limited amount of funding would go a long way toward making Broadway accessible for arts organizations, and toward re-energizing the street.



- **Assuring that City codes are being adequately enforced along Broadway.** Broadway today has a plethora of visible City code violations, particularly illegal signage, that affect the attractiveness and perceptions of the business district. The Conservancy's Broadway Initiative will work with the Council office, Department of Building and Safety, and Department of Public Works to assure that these code violations are corrected, ideally coupling enforcement with small funding options for physical improvements.

E. The Broadway Coordinator



The success of the Broadway Initiative depends heavily on implementation -- proactive leadership to follow up on all of the action plan's recommendations, and aggressively spearhead Broadway's revival. A central recommendation of this Action Plan is, therefore, the hiring of a "Broadway Coordinator." The Broadway Coordinator will be a spokesperson, economic and real estate facilitator, advocate, and marketing and public relations director for Broadway's revitalization.

To achieve the results outlined in the Action Plan, the Broadway Initiative and Broadway Coordinator will undertake the following:

- **Creating a "one stop" economic database at the Conservancy** containing comprehensive information on Broadway properties and incentives for potential developers and new tenants
- **Establishing a clearinghouse of creative public and private financing tools** successfully employed in redevelopment of entertainment districts
- **Facilitating key catalytic development and rehabilitation projects** on Broadway and in the Historic Core, spurring new economic investment throughout the district.
- **Attracting major investment and lending commitments for the Historic Core and Broadway from local financial institutions.** The Conservancy has already secured a \$10 million commitment from Tokai Bank of California to revitalization projects in the Historic Core and will be seeking similar investment commitments.
- **Leveraging outside government funds** to provide maximum return on the private sector's new investments on Broadway.
- **Working with the Historic Core Business Improvement District (BID)** to enhance Broadway's "clean and safe" program.
- **Enhancing the programming of Broadway's theaters** through active participation with the BID, ARTS, Inc., and the City's Cultural Affairs Department - extending and enhancing the currently successful Fiesta Broadway, Last Remaining Seats, Friends of the Orpheum events and Downtown Walking Tour programs.

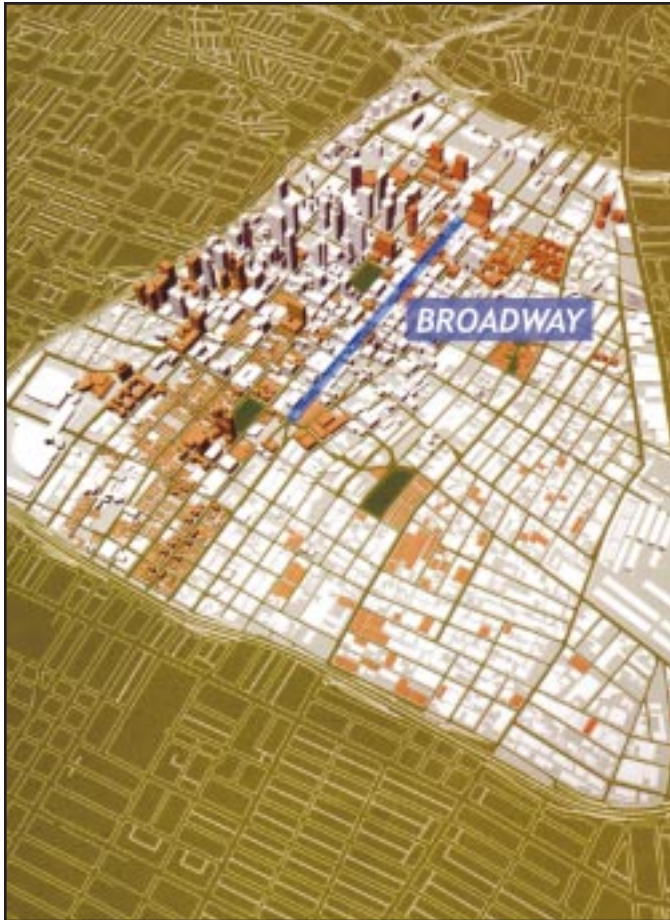




- **Developing a comprehensive marketing and solicitation package to encourage new investment**, including a Broadway Initiative Web site.
- **Creating a targeted marketing program** aimed at enticing private sector entertainment and arts organizations to utilize the Broadway theaters.
- **Advocating for legislative and funding initiatives** that can provide needed improvements on Broadway
- **Serving as a guardian of the historic fabric and character of Broadway** through education, awareness, and ongoing liaison with the Cultural Heritage Department of the City, as well as the Conservancy's resources
- **Becoming a "voice" for Broadway advocacy** in marketing, investment and programming, and with the BID and governmental agencies.
- **Providing a significant support mechanism for institutions and developers** to successfully answer the question "why here?" and "why now"?

The Conservancy's Commercial Centers Task Force is expected to evolve into an Advisory Task Force. Working with the Broadway Coordinator, the Advisory Task Force will aggressively manage and monitor Broadway's renaissance, through specialized steering committees addressing Physical Improvements, Arts Programming, Governmental Relations, Public Relations/Marketing, and Economic and Legal Issues.

F. The Opportunity



Courtesy Downtown Strategic Plan

With Hollywood already undergoing an exciting revitalization, Los Angeles' next major urban revitalization opportunity is on Broadway - Los Angeles' own Broadway - a unique historic entertainment and commercial hub. The fate of Broadway and its historic resources will likely be determined by what we in Los Angeles do - or fail to do -- in the next few years.

All too often, good plans end up collecting dust on a shelf because they lack a clear implementation strategy or an entity to spearhead the plan day after day. In order to assure the success of this Action Plan, the Los Angeles Conservancy is prepared to remain engaged on Broadway for several years to come. In addition, Broadway's revitalization will require the active involvement of many other entities, both public and private.

The Broadway Initiative is, at its heart, about providing a catalyst for Broadway's revitalization, assuring daily attention to Broadway and its needs. The Initiative will create the initial spark and excitement on Broadway, and assure that plans keep moving forward.

Without such focused attention, Broadway's treasures may end up as just another testament to urban neglect and abandonment. But with creativity, new partnerships, and leadership, Broadway can provide a nationally recognized symbol of urban regeneration, transforming today's "Vision for Broadway" into an exciting reality.

Appendix

A. A Brief History of Broadway

Growth & Development

Broadway in downtown Los Angeles grew to become the street we recognize today in a remarkably short period of time. From the late 1890s to the early 1930s, the street emerged as one of the city's most dense retail, entertainment and business environments.

Originally called Fort Street, Broadway first played a prominent role in the residential development of downtown Los Angeles in the nineteenth century. With the nearby construction of a new City Hall in the late 1880's, major businesses were attracted to the street, and the City Council changed the street's name to Broadway in 1887.

Broadway quickly became an important commercial thoroughfare, as two- and three-story brick buildings were developed at the northern end of the street to meet the growing commercial needs. The Bradbury Building and the Pan American Building, both of which survive today, were constructed on opposite corners at 3rd St. during the 1890s.

It was not until the first decade of the twentieth century that serious development began on the retail and theater buildings that would come to define Broadway. In 1906, the new home of the Hamburger Department store opened at the corner of 8th and Broadway. The store was expanded in 1923 when it became the May Company, and remained the downtown home of the May Company until 1986.

The next major department store to open on Broadway was Bullock's in 1907. The store was expanded several times, eventually encompassing half of the block it occupied. The store closed in 1983. The third major department store, which helped to make Broadway a shopping mecca, was the Broadway department store, which opened in 1915 at the corner of 4th and Broadway and has recently been rehabilitated for state offices. Later, the Eastern Columbia Department store became a landmark upon its opening in 1930 at the corner of 9th and Broadway.

The block of Broadway between 8th and 9th became the nucleus of music retailing and publishing. By the late 1920s, Southern California Music Company was at 806 S. Broadway, with Wurlitzer's Los Angeles headquarters just down the street at 816 S. Broadway. Across the street, the Majestic Theatre building at 845 S. Broadway was the home of many music publishers.

The Theaters

Broadway's preeminence as the commercial core of Los Angeles was matched by its growth as the leading theater district for the region. Between 1906 to 1932, Broadway between Third and Olympic became the center of one of the largest concentrations of vaudeville, motion picture and legitimate theaters in the country. Motion pictures and vaudeville both grew up and flourished during this period, before radio, television and suburban sprawl. The average Angeleno might see a vaudeville show once a week, also attend several movies the same week, and the venue of choice was the Broadway Theater District.

At first, nickelodeons and vaudeville theaters began to appear on Broadway, drawing business downtown. Then, serious theatrical activity began in 1906, when impresario Oliver Morosco convinced the Hamburger real estate interests to construct a theater and office building adjacent to their new department store. This theater, the Majestic, was the first major legitimate theater to move to Broadway. Morosco's success grew and he added another legitimate theater, the Morosco (now the **Globe**) in 1913.

By 1910, Broadway could boast of four theatres constructed since the turn of the century and was well on its way to becoming Downtown's preeminent entertainment district. Although none of these original Broadway theaters still exist, four more were constructed in 1910, three of which remain today: the **Cameo** (originally Clune's Broadway, a nickelodeon showing silent pictures), the **Arcade** (originally the first Los Angeles house for the Pantages vaudeville circuit), and the **Palace** (originally the third downtown location for the Orpheum vaudeville circuit).

However, the era of the Broadway movie palace really began with the opening of the **Million Dollar Theatre** in 1918. Here was a 2,000-seat theater with plush appointments, classical Spanish architecture, a full stage and the first clear-span balcony in Los Angeles. In charge was Sid Grauman, who would go on to fame with the Egyptian and Chinese theaters in Hollywood. It was at the Million Dollar that Grauman conceived the idea of the 'prologue' - a stage show themed to the movie feature. The Million Dollar quickly became the preferred spot for film premieres. Grauman added to his downtown empire with the **Rialto** at 820 S. Broadway and the **Metropolitan Theatre** at 5th and Hill.

Within a few years, the major vaudeville circuits outgrew their theaters and constructed even grander houses - the **Pantages** at the corner of 7th and Hill, the original **Orpheum** near Ninth and Broadway, and a 'Junior Orpheum' at the corner of 8th and Hill.

Broadway continued to prosper through the 1920s and early 1930s with theater construction replacing several generations of earlier buildings in the blocks between 6th and 10th Streets. All of the Broadway houses from this period remain intact. The **Loew's State** movie palace at 7th and Broadway was constructed in 1920. This was followed in 1925 by the last and most elaborate **Orpheum** vaudeville house. In 1927, **United Artists** opened its Los Angeles showcase facility midway between 9th and 10th Streets. Also that year, the more intimate **Tower Theatre**, the first theater built to accommodate talking pictures, was constructed at the southeast corner of 8th Street. The Tower was followed in 1931 by the luxurious **Los Angeles**, the last and most extravagant Downtown movie palace, and the modest **Roxie**, the final theater to be constructed in the district.

Restaurants became an important part of Broadway, serving both the shopping and theater-going public. Besides full-service restaurants in all of the major department stores, Schaber's Cafeteria became a favorite destination after its opening in 1928 next to the Palace Theatre. Another downtown favorite was the Pig n' Whistle, which had several locations, including one near the new Orpheum Theatre in the 800 block of Broadway. Clifton's Cafeteria has been a landmark since the 1930s at its location near 7th and Broadway. It still boasts an elaborate terrazzo sidewalk depicting scenes of Southern California and an interior decorated to resemble a redwood grove.

With its commercial and entertainment base, Broadway served as a civic gathering spot for the city. Ticker tape parades were a common occurrence. In 1936, the entire street was lined with floodlights to celebrate the opening of Hoover Dam. Later, Broadway would be the scene of enormous victory celebrations at the end of World War II. During the war, Broadway was a 24-hour street, with theaters and store staying open at all hours to serve the war plant workers and military personnel.

Post-War Broadway

As quickly as it had grown, the street began to decline as suburban growth exploded after the war. The major department stores began opening branches in the new suburbs, and downtown shopping declined. The rise of the suburbs after WWII led much of the population out of the historic cores and downtown Los Angeles became seen as a less desirable residential neighborhood. The advent of television cut movie attendance, and in a legal action the major studios lost control of the Broadway movie palaces.

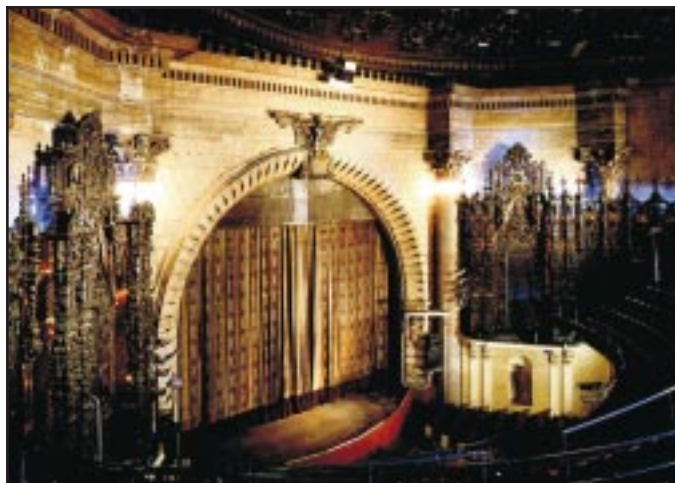
In the late 1960s Broadway experienced a resurgence as a shopping and entertainment district for the city's growing black and Latino population. Live Spanish stage shows begun by Frank Fouce in the 1950's at the Million Dollar Theatre flourished and were copied at the Globe and the Mayan. The major studios began supplying first-run films with Spanish subtitles. Combined with new films from Mexico, there was enough product to fill most of the theaters on Broadway from morning until late at night. At the same time, the State Theatre continued to be the highest-grossing single theater in Los Angeles, playing to a mostly black audience.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the grosses from retail and theaters was so high that many building owners were able to abandon the upper floors and earn some of the highest rents in the city from the ground floor spaces only. Even through the late 1980's, Broadway's 875,000 sf of retail space generated \$26.4 million in sales, making it the 12th largest shopping district in Los Angeles.

After undergoing a dramatic transformation from the 1890s through the 1920s, the streetscape of Broadway has since evolved much more slowly. However, unlike other parts of downtown Los Angeles that have completely lost their historic character, Broadway remains in many ways the street it was in the 1930s. This physical stability offers tremendous potential for renewal.

B. The Broadway Theaters

There are twelve remaining historic theaters on Broadway. Five of these are large theaters with current seating capacity in excess of 1,700 seats. The twelve theaters are:



Million Dollar

307 Broadway
Built 1918
Original Seating: 2,345 seats
Current Seating: 2,092 seats
Current Use: First Run Films



Roxie

518 Broadway
Built 1932
Original Seating: 1,600 seats
Current Seating: 1,295 seats
Current Use: Closed (Lobby Swapmeet)



Cameo (Clune's Broadway)

528 Broadway
Built 1910
Original & Current Seating: 775 seats
Current Use: Closed (Lobby Swapmeet)



Arcade (Pantages)
534 Broadway
Built 1910
Original Seating: 1,400 seats
Current Seating: 900 seats
Current Use: Closed (Lobby Swapmeet)



Los Angeles
615 Broadway
Built 1931
Original Seating: 1,967 seats
Current Seating: 2,004 seats
Current Use: Filming and Special Events



Palace (Orpheum)
630 Broadway
Built 1911
Original Seating: 2,220 seats
Current Seating: 1,162 seats
Current Use: Films



State (Loew's State)
703 Broadway
Built 1921
Original Seating: 2,450 seats
Current Seating: 2,380 seats
Current Use: Church



Globe (Morosco)
744 Broadway
Built 1913
Original Seating: 782 seats
Current Seating: 0 seats
Current Use: Swapmeet



Tower
802 Broadway
Built 1927
Original Seating: 900 seats
Current Seating: 300 seats (balcony)
Current Use: Filming and Special Events



Rialto
812 Broadway
Built 1917
Original Seating: 840 seats
Current Use: Closed (Lobby Swapmeet)



Orpheum
842 Broadway
Built 1926
Original & Current Seating: 2,192 seats
Current Use: Films



United Artists
933 Broadway
Built 1927
Original Seating: ? seats
Current Seating: 1,700 seats
Current Use: Church

C. Commercial Centers Task Force

The Conservancy's Commercial Centers Task Force is comprised of Conservancy board members and staff, leading developers, economic and legal experts, and advocates for a revitalized Broadway. The Action Plan is the result of the active participation and input of this Task Force.

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D. Interviews

In the course of the development of the Action Plan, a wide range of interviews were conducted with property owners, operators, downtown political leaders, and others who brought special insight to the issues and initiatives of the Action Plan.

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Clifton's Cafeteria

Bruce Corwin
Metropolitan Theaters

Ezat Delijani
Los Angeles Theater

Irving Fuller
Palace, State, and UA Theaters

Marianne Giblin
Fashion District BID

Larry Gonzalez
Fiesta Broadway

Joseph and Michael Hellen
Roxie, Cameo, and Arcade Theaters

Estela Lopez
Miracle on Broadway

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Orpheum Theater, Anjac Fashion Properties

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Downtown Strategic Plan
1b, 5t, 18t

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3m, 4b, 5b, 6t, 7t, 7m, 7b, 8t, 8m, 9t, 11t, 11b
12t, 12b, 13t, 14t, 15t, 22m, 22b, 23t, 24m, 25t

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