



1884 - 2014
LITTLE TOKYO
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
CELEBRATING 130 YEARS

September 16, 2014

The Honorable Mayor Eric Garcetti
City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Parker Center/Los Angeles Street Civic Building Project

Dear Mayor Garcetti:

The Little Tokyo Historical Society (LTHS) and its members extend their undivided support of the Alternative B2 option of the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Los Angeles Street Civic Building Project that was released to the public in September 2013. LTHS members voted to support the Alternative B2 option at its July 5, 2014 general meeting because this option is the best outcome as it encompasses partial demolition and rehabilitating the main portion of Parker Center facing Los Angeles Street with an addition to the building. The history of the block including the iconic Parker Center is significant to the Japanese American Little Tokyo community so preserving the building is important and should not be destroyed and forgotten after a life of only 60 years.

To many residents of Los Angeles, the history of Parker Center and what it stands for is controversial, but it had a prominent role in the affairs of the city and Little Tokyo's history. Before construction of the building began in the early 1950s, the block that it sits on, First Street, John Aiso Street (formerly No. San Pedro Street), Los Angeles Street and Temple Street, was at the core of Little Tokyo. Many Japanese American residents, businesses, and cultural organizations were located on this very active block including my paternal grandparent's business, Toyo Nursery & Florist that was on the west side of No. San Pedro Street. Demolition of the block displaced hundreds of Japanese Americans who felt history was repeating itself as many of the same people went through the same experience only a decade earlier in order to be forcibly removed and then taken to the internment camps for the duration of World War II.

LTHS is an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization established in 2006 to preserve, educate and share the stories of Los Angeles' historic Little Tokyo district. Fittingly, Little Tokyo is observing its 130th Anniversary (1884-2014) throughout this year and we are very proud of the fact that there are several structures and a living tree in Little Tokyo that have been designated a Historic-Cultural Monument by the City of Los Angeles.

Sincerely,

Michael G. Okamura
President