

# SUMMARY | CCA WHITE PAPER

## *Expanding Opportunities for Child Care and Schools in DTLA: Growing Our Neighborhoods as Complete Communities*



### DEMONSTRATED NEED FOR ECE & SCHOOLS IN DTLA

DTLA has transformed from an office district to a vibrant 24/7 urban environment but needs early care and education (ECE) and schools to welcome residents of all ages in the upcoming years.

- An estimated 80,000 people currently call DTLA home. By 2040, DTLA's population is expected to reach 250,000.
- A conservative projection shows DTLA gaining 11,900 children by 2040, totaling 17,500 children.
- LAUSD public schools located within the DTLA boundaries have a current combined capacity of 1,641 students.

### FAR-REACHING BENEFITS FROM INCREASED ACCESS

Ensuring access to education and care – essential community resources – would result in various economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits including:

- Helping to attract and retain a broader resident pool and talented workforce.
- Leveraging early education to address inequity and improving access to opportunity.
- Reducing vehicle miles traveled and improving public health by locating ECE and schools closer to housing.
- Creating strong synergy and diverse community among families and the region's rich cultural and civic center.

*DTLA is its own unique and vibrant neighborhood with an existing population the size of Santa Monica. It deserves to have the education infrastructure that would cement it as a complete community.*

### FACILITIES BARRIERS CAUSE SITING CHALLENGES

Expanding options for schools and ECE in DTLA has proven challenging due to a combination of building and safety code requirements and licensing, real estate, and political barriers, such as:

- Code and design specifications and indoor/outdoor space requirements that severely limit locations in mixed-use buildings in vertical, urban environments.
- Zoning limitations on where schools and ECE are allowed by-right and permit requirements that are time-consuming and create costs and uncertainty for operators.
- Unclear and unpredictable waiver processes and criteria for alternative compliance for ECE facilities.
- The cost and availability of land for the construction and operation of education facilities, as well as rents and lease structures that are not aligned with schools' needs.
- A lack of formal partnerships among stakeholders, ECE and education providers, and the real estate community.



*Para Los Niños has operated one of DTLA's few elementary schools in an adaptively reused building at the intersection of the Arts District and Industrial District since 2002. However, since this site's zoning designation is Industrial, Para Los Niños must regularly receive approval for its CUP and parking variance.*

## **ACTIONABLE STEPS TO BRING MORE EDUCATION FACILITIES TO DTLA AND BEYOND**

*Our white paper recommends steps to locate ECE and schools near existing housing in DTLA, as part of new developments, and creating the relationships necessary to achieve these goals. These steps apply to areas outside of DTLA and accomplishing these recommendations will require partnerships with the City, LAUSD and State. We offer the following recommended actions.*

### **LOCATING IN EXISTING BUILDINGS**

- Work with the CA Department of Social Services (DSS) and the City of Los Angeles to create a clear and predictable outdoor space waiver process and work towards a program to utilize public space for ECE facilities located in dense urban environments.
- Eliminate Conditional Use Permit (CUP) requirements and eliminate or reduce parking requirements for ECE and school facilities.
- Enable more flexible land use provisions for industrial areas to encourage adaptive reuse of buildings as schools and ECE facilities.
- Create a fund to fill gaps in rent for property owners that agree to 30-year leases with ECE or schools that are minority- and women-owned, and that can be used for tenant improvements of existing buildings to accommodate schools.
- Work with the State to consider establishing a threshold of the number of occupants, or another metric, for which buildings may safely share the same egress with ECE or school uses.

### **LOCATING IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS**

- Encourage the development of new ECE and school facilities in new development by discounting them from Floor Area Ratio (FAR) calculations under DTLA 2040, regardless of whether it is part of the Community Benefits Program.
- Make ECE and schools a top priority public benefit provision in any development agreements, discretionary approvals or joint developments that provide public land, such as the Civic Center Master Plan and Angels Landing.

### **STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS**

- Encourage LAUSD to conduct its own needs assessment to be shared with the community for discussion.
- Urge LAUSD and the City of Los Angeles to strategically utilize their real estate across Downtown to create a DTLA school campus or leverage properties in a land swap for parcels situated closer to housing and relocate LAUSD and the City's existing functions.
- Establish a task force that can lead key decisions about DTLA's educational future.
- Engage with the DTLA real estate community to articulate the demand for schools and ECE and push for these facilities as tenants.
- Encourage DTLA businesses to provide or sponsor ECE as an employee attraction and retention strategy.

TO READ THE FULL WHITE PAPER WITH OUR COMPLETE LIST OF DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS, VISIT [CCALA.ORG/DTLAEDUCATION](https://ccala.org/dtlaeducation).