ACCESS L.A. City Hall is the L.A. Area Chamber’s annual advocacy event aimed at building stronger partnerships between L.A. City Hall and local businesses. Here are nine things the Los Angeles City Council can do to improve our economy during 2014.

1. Make business growth and job creation the No. 1 priority at City Hall

We still have more than 202,600 fewer jobs in L.A. County than we had at the start of the recession. Unemployment in the City of Los Angeles is 11.3 percent, while California is 8.9 percent and the U.S. is 7.3 percent. The City Council must be pro-active in adopting strategies and policies to assist businesses in investing in L.A. and creating new jobs. City staff must also be pro-active in providing responsive and efficient customer service to create jobs as quickly as possible.

2. Implement plan to phase out the Gross Receipts Tax

The City of Los Angeles has the highest business tax of any City in L.A. County and one of the highest in the nation. The Business Tax Advisory Committee recommended a 15-year phase out plan. The former Jobs and Business Development Committee of the City Council approved the first five-years of the plan. We urge the new council to revive this issue and approve the first phase as well.

3. Support LAX modernization

Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) impacts, directly and indirectly, 294,000 jobs in the County and generates more than $39 billion into our economy. The City Council took a big step toward modernization with its vote in support of the Specific Plan Amendments and the realignment of the north airfield to ensure that LAX can safely and efficiently handle the new generation of airliners. The City Council must continue to support this modernization plan and move quickly on other major decisions such as the placement and alignment of the Crenshaw light rail station at LAX.

4. Ensure the Port of Los Angeles can compete with a widened Panama Canal

The Port of Los Angeles is responsible for hundreds of thousands of jobs and billions in tax revenue throughout the region. By aggressively supporting projects designed to increase competitiveness, the City Council can ensure the seaport is ready to meet the challenges of an expanded Panama Canal. We must modernize and green the Port by updating terminals, developing near-dock rail facilities and relieving congestion on our goods movement corridors.
The Chamber was a major proponent of creating the LA 2020 Commission. This group of experienced and dedicated stakeholders from across Los Angeles accepted the challenge of recommending a blueprint to achieve greater fiscal stability and economic vitality. It is critical that their report and recommendations do not collect dust on a shelf but are used to improve the finances and the economy of our city.

### Utilize the LA 2020 Commission Report as a helpful tool

After a long and exhaustive process, the City of Los Angeles has begun to move in a new direction to promote economic development. Learning from cities like Houston and New York, where public private partnerships have facilitated new investment and new jobs, the City has the opportunity to develop new strategies and a series of new alliances. The City must commit real financial resources to this effort and back up those resources with collaboration and flexibility.

### Commit to a new Economic Development Vision for Los Angeles

In late 2010, the L.A. Area Chamber and United Way of the Greater Los Angeles released Home For Good, an action plan to end chronic and veteran homelessness in Los Angeles by 2016. Since its launch, Home for Good has inspired a cooperative alliance between federal and local officials; a landmark shift of County resources and policies; and the establishment of a Funders Collaborative to leverage public and private funds for permanent supportive housing. We applaud the City for its active partnership in Home For Good and encourage the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority to focus its resources on the Home For Good plan.

### End chronic and veteran homelessness in L.A. by supporting Home For Good

In 2007, the DWP began pre-funding retiree health care for the first time, causing a "spike" and ongoing higher costs.

### Support continued investments in tomorrow’s workforce

Prioritize investments to improve the cradle-to-career pipeline including Student Recovery Day and the Reconnections Career Academy to reengage disconnected youth; the HIRE LA’s Youth Initiative to improve workforce readiness; the Cash for College program to promote college access; and financial aid completion and Gang Reduction Zones to ensure student safety in and outside of school. Strengthen the region’s workforce development system by deepening relationships and shared resources with regional workforce partners and support regional coordination efforts under the L.A. Compact.

### Improve streets, sidewalks and mass transit

Angelenos want to see results from their Measure R dollars and major repairs to streets and sidewalks. The initiative being studied by Councilmembers Mitchell Englander and Joe Buscaino could be transformative for the City.

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