



October 17, 2024

Mr. Vincent Bertoni
Director of Planning
Department of City Planning
City of Los Angeles
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA. 90012

Re: Amenity Gap Study for Skid Row

Dear Mr. Bertoni:

The neighborhood in Downtown Los Angeles, known as Skid Row, is an impoverished and underserved community. It is home to thousands of residents and workers, yet lacks everyday services and amenities, such as grocery stores, pharmacies and hair salons. These uses – typically readily available in neighborhoods across the city – are notably absent in Skid Row. The absence of neighborhood services and amenities negatively impacts the quality of life of residents and workers.

As the Council Member representing Skid Row, I have supported and continue to urge the Planning Department to implement through DTLA2040 robust incentive programs to attract and accommodate private and public amenities that are accessible to Skid Row community stakeholders.

I offered an amendment to the DTLA 2040 Skid Row zoning modifications under Council File No. 22-0617-S3 to request the Planning Department to conduct a “Skid Row Amenity Gap Analysis Study” to determine the degree to which Skid Row may be an “amenity desert”. The study’s purpose would be to determine gaps in the provision of essential and occasional amenities within this geography. The study’s findings could be the basis for formulating future incentive strategies and programs to attract investments in such needed essential services and amenities with the vision to build a vibrant community in Downtown Los Angeles.

For your consideration, I have taken the liberty of providing a suggested methodology and general analytical framework which may be utilized to conduct the study.

Sincerely,

KEVIN DE LEÓN

Councilmember, Council District 14

cc: Council File No. 22-0617-S3
Shana Bonstin, Deputy Director
Craig Weber, Principal City Planner

Skid Row Amenity Gap Analysis Study: General Analytical Framework

General analytical framework to determine gaps in the provision of essential and occasional amenities in Skid Row:

1. **Define the Neighborhood Boundaries:** Clearly establish the extents of the analysis recognizing that pedestrian access to services and amenities will be the only access type to analyze (and will therefore influence definition of boundaries).
2. **Define the categories of services and amenities:** This study is intended to identify gaps in the provision of essential amenities (i.e., utilized on an almost daily basis or of a critical nature) and occasional amenities (i.e., utilized infrequently and/or necessary for generally improving quality of life). Identify the types of uses that can populate each of these two categories.
3. **Identify Relevant Data Sources:** Gather relevant data from various sources, such as government agencies, local organizations, open-source data clearinghouses, and private data vendors. The following data sources can provide valuable insights:
 - a. **Store Data:** Obtain information on the locations and types of identified stores, businesses, amenities within or near the neighborhood. This can include data on the number of stores, their sizes, and the availability of products/services.
 - b. **Socioeconomic and Demographic Data:** Analyze socioeconomic and demographic information about the neighborhood's residents. Factors such as income levels, poverty rates, education levels, and transportation options can impact access.
 - c. **Transportation Infrastructure:** Evaluate the neighborhood's transportation infrastructure, including the presence of public transportation, sidewalks, controlled intersection, crosswalks, bike lanes, and ADA access. Lack of mobility (primarily non-vehicular) infrastructure affects Skid Row's residents' ability to access services.
4. **Define Amenity Desert Criteria:** Determine the criteria that defines an amenity desert based on available research and guidelines, recognizing that amenity deserts are likely a characteristic unique to Skid Row. Food desert criteria might serve as a good parallel.
5. **Analyze Amenity Accessibility:** Utilize GIS to determine the proximity of amenities (daily and occasional) to and within the neighborhood. Calculate distances between residential areas and identified amenities. Consider the walking, biking, and public transportation options available to residents.
6. **Evaluate Availability and Affordability:** Assess the variety and quality of identified daily and occasional services and products within the neighborhood. Analyze the affordability of these options in relation to residents' income levels.
7. **Engage with the Community:** Conduct interviews, surveys, or focus groups with residents, local organizations, and stakeholders to gather qualitative insights and understand the lived experiences of the neighborhood's residents and workers regarding access to neighborhood amenities and services.