



## Introduction

Los Angeles, California is one of the most expensive cities in the nation, falling right behind New York and San Francisco. Rents are steadily rising, forcing thousands more into the streets every year. LA suffers from a deadly lack of affordable housing, especially for those with extremely low incomes.

**Housing is a basic human right**, the key to solving this crisis, and criminally scarce in a city with our resources.

With simple changes to our land use policies, over time we can build a city where homelessness isn't common or lethal. Los Angeles is in the process of updating all 35 community plans that comprise the city's General Plan. Each Community Plan contains policies reflecting a future vision for neighborhoods and designates land for a range of uses including jobs, housing, manufacturing, transportation, open space and amenities.

In October 2016, the LA Department of City Planning proposed to rezone parts of Skid Row to include market rate housing as part of the Downtown Los Angeles community plan update, or DTLA 2040. No one who lives, works or shares a stake in Skid Row gave input to this plan, which suggested conditions for Skid Row to be carved up and sold to the highest-bidding real estate mogul. In response, we formed Skid Row Now & 2040 to include community groups, non-profits and individuals who believe everyone deserves a home and a voice in the future of their neighborhood.

Skid Row Now & 2040 wants generations of families and Skid Row residents to lead full and vibrant lives in Downtown Los Angeles, so we've created the following guidelines for the City Planning Department, District 14 and the Mayor's Office. If adopted, these policies will prevent displacement of current Skid Row residents, enrich lives and show the way to ending homelessness in all 35 communities. We're waiting to hear LA City Planning, Jose Huizar and Mayor Garcetti's response.

Please contact the Los Angeles Community Action Network to add your name to our growing list of supporters and learn how you can get involved in the fight for Skid Row's future.

## **No Displacement of Extremely low-income residents should occur; policies that prompt the Human Right to Housing should be enacted in the plan update.**

The DTLA 2040 update should not include any policies or zoning code changes that create harm to low-income communities of color in Downtown LA. This includes policies that lead to the criminalization or displacement of people from their community. No displacement of any Skid Row resident, housed or unhoused, should occur as a result of the update. The DTLA 2040 plan must support housing as a human right – using this process to maximize opportunities to house homeless residents and preserving the homes of extremely low-income residents.

### **Policy Recommendations;**

- I. **No Net Loss** - All existing units must be protected with the inclusion of a No Net Loss policy to ensure baselines of affordable housing units remain in DTLA.
  - The city's community plan update must mirror and support other city policies that have been passed to ensure a baseline of affordable housing units existing in Downtown. These policies include, but are not limited to, the City Residential Hotel Ordinance and the Design guidelines that are part of the Wiggins settlement agreement. For units not covered by Wiggins or the City Residential Hotel Ordinance, the Planning Department must create an additional inventory using the city's RSO rent registry and annual registration process to add additional properties to the baseline.
- II. **Inclusionary Zoning** - The DTLA 2040 concept map is currently proposing to change Skid Row's light manufacturing zone into a traditional housing zone, boosting land values tremendously for Developers.
  - Skid Row Now & 2040 is recommending the creating of a 25% set aside to generate 7,000 new units.
- III. **Affordable Housing Creation** - With much of the cities' affordable housing funding being lost with the dissolution of the Community Redevelopment Agency, Skid Row Now & 2040 suggests the creation of funding sources for affordable housing in Downtown.
  - Developer fees – existing TFAR program and a new 1% impact bond for rental subsidies.
  - Tax-Increment Financing Tools - assess the feasibility of EIFD, CRIA, NIFTI, and AHA financing mechanisms and establish the suitable tax-increment financing district in the Downtown/Skid Row neighborhood.
- IV. **Vacancy Tax** - 1% of a vacant building's value for every year vacant towards affordable housing, charged annually.
- V. **Anti-Displacement Protections** - Tenant legal representation to fight evictions, extend just-cause eviction protections, end discrimination by landlords against housing voucher recipients, end Ellis Act abuse, create anti-harassment penalties for landlords who try to illegally evict tenants.

## **Investing in and prioritizing current residents and organizations**

The DTLA 2040 update should support the human and economic development of the Skid Row Community while preserving the culture, wellbeing and values of the Skid Row community. This can occur by increased accessibility to parks and open space, social services, health care services, pedestrian and bike-friendly amenities.

### **Green Space and Common Space**

- Parks and Rec will be audited to determine whether alleged overspending in predominantly white, affluent areas have left Skid Row public spaces understaffed and underfunded, and Skid Row parks budgets will be increased to reflect their higher usage.
- An increase in overall land zoned for social services for homeless and/or extremely low-income residents.
- New social services sites that are linked to social spaces like parks, community centers, and transit stops.
- All Skid Row crosswalks and street lights should be better timed to acknowledge the needs of disabled and elderly neighborhood residents and to ensure better access to and from social services sites.
- Improvements to pedestrian safety infrastructure by upgrading lighting, signage, and crosswalks and by introducing speed-bumps on the numbered streets.
- The creation of a bike infrastructure plan for the Skid Row community to ensure ZERO traffic fatalities.
- New community amenities that prioritize increased access to water, sanitation, green space and community gardening space.

### **Sanitation**

- The Refresh Spot model will be expanded to provide 24/hr restroom attendant services in all Skid Row parks.
- All 311 trash and bulky item pick-ups in Skid Row will be handled by Skid Row residents employed by the city to minimize trauma created by strangers throwing away resident's critical possessions such as medicines, identification and shelter.
- Clean Harbors' contract will be cancelled; Skid Row residents employed by the city will handle Skid Row street sweeping to minimize trauma created by strangers throwing away resident's critical possessions such as medicines, identification and shelter.

### **Health & Wellness Protection**

The need for health and wellness protection becomes essential in communities like Skid Row where recovery has been a center piece of the neighborhood cultural make up. Skid Row is called one of the largest recovery communities in the nation. Yet bars and off-sale alcohol outlets are often proposed and permitted in helping to generate upscale development that is out of range for our community.

- No new bars, alcohol sale permits or off-sale alcohol outlets shall be permitted in the Skid Row neighborhood.
- No new marijuana dispensary/cannabis stores shall be permitted in the Skid Row neighborhood.
- The permit process, tax incentives, transit access and public walkways relating to grocery stores, farmer's markets and healthier food options will be incentivized and streamlined to prioritize access to nutrition and better living.

### **Arts & Culture in the Skid Row Neighborhood**

Over many years Skid Row has emerged as a neighborhood with a number of profound and important values that are reflected in daily life and celebrated and further imagined in neighborhood manifestations of arts and culture. Exemplary cultural values of the neighborhood include: empathy, looking out for each other, sharing, second chances, recovery, inclusion, tolerance, and embracing difference. Community emphasis is on making and sharing art rather than solely being a relatively passive audience member. This is a manifestation of the community value of inclusion. The lived value of tolerance, the open and welcoming community ethos, creates an ambiance in which everyone feels encouraged to participate, whether they are masters of their craft or someone bravely doing something for the first time. The community plan must generate additional resources necessary to support the growth of artistic and cultural expression in Skid Row. This could take many forms including support for existing spaces, the creation of a number of additional spaces and/or the creation of a dedicated cultural center or designated area that could function as a cultural campus.

- The Department of Cultural Affairs will be audited to determine whether alleged overspending in proximity to predominantly white, affluent areas have left Skid Row art programs understaffed and underfunded.
- The creation of a neighborhood Arts Council will advocate for Skid Row artists and locate resources for opportunities to create art, including live music and theatre.
- Skid Row business owners will be charged a mandatory bond towards resident-created murals on Skid Row, which will be repayable by hosting murals on buildings' exteriors or widely visible interior blank walls.
- Skid Row will be an open market similar to Venice Boardwalk where any business can advertise and conduct business on the street without fear of police harassment.
- No Parks & Recs fees for public community events on Skid Row and streamline the permit process for outdoor events and street performances.

### **Intentional and meaningful input from both housed and unhoused low-income residents**

- **Skid Row Neighborhood Council** – Skid Row residents' votes having been suppressed in the recent sub-division application, a Skid Row Neighborhood Council will ensure Skid Row residents have a voice in future decisions about land use, law enforcement policy and everything else within the domain of a standard Los Angeles Neighborhood Council.
- The LA Planning Department must be intentional about creating opportunities and tools for this population – especially considering the uniqueness of the Skid Row community. These include, but are not limited to increasing the notification radius and timelines for all developments to the neighborhood.
- **End Criminalization of Homelessness** - Reduce law enforcement personnel and budget by 20% over four years in Skid Row, using the savings to increase personnel and budget for health care workers. Skid Row needs fewer police and more doctors.
- The permit process to allow temporary fences to block sidewalks in the Skid Row neighborhood for construction work by property owners will incur fees toward affordable housing for every foot of sidewalk for every day blocked.

## BUILDING A SKID ROW FOR TODAY AND FOR 2040

The work around ensuring meaningful community participation in the updates of the Downtown community plan is directly related to the Skid Row community's desire to prevent community displacement. Skid Row community residents, non-profit organizations, and Skid Row supporters have been meeting for the last year in coalition as SKID ROW NOW & 2040.

In order to build a Skid Row for today and for 2040, the Department of City Planning must ensure that the community plan update recognizes, affirms and strengthens the history and culture of Skid Row. Given the history of the creation of Skid Row and today's need to provide more affordable housing in Los Angeles, it is crucial for DCP to work with the community of Skid Row to ensure displacement does not occur. The city has the opportunity to develop creative solutions to both the housing and homelessness crisis through preserving Skid Row.

Please contact the Los Angeles Community Action Network to add your name to our growing list of supporters and learn how you can get involved in the fight for Skid Row's future.

