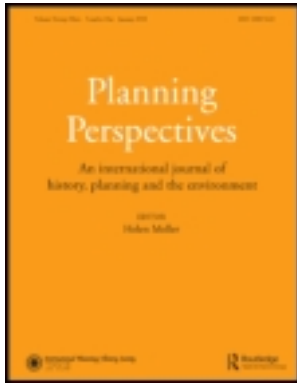


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Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office:
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Planning Perspectives

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rppe20>

Zoning Los Angeles: a brief history of four regimes

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Version of record first published: 13 Jun 2012.

To cite this article: Andrew H. Whittemore (2012): Zoning Los Angeles: a brief history of four regimes, *Planning Perspectives*, 27:3, 393-415

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02665433.2012.681140>

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Zoning Los Angeles: a brief history of four regimes

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This article explains how, through tools of land-use regulation, several groups of actors became particularly adept at shaping the form of Los Angeles and to what ends. Land-use regulation in Los Angeles, this article argues, represents the outcomes of battles pitting one political group against another, quite in disregard of the common purpose this regulation is intended to serve, with the most powerful usually winning at the expense of others. In Los Angeles, there have been distinct winners and losers, and these winners and losers have varied over time. In Los Angeles, there seem to be four distinct regimes characterizing the historical politics of land use. Rampant speculation defined the first, lasting from the advent of zoning in Los Angeles in 1921 into the Depression, government-sponsored big real estate the second, lasting from the Depression until the 1960s, and anti-growth advocates the third, lasting from the 1960s until 2000, with the fourth forming over the last decade and characterized by a balance between allied housing and development interests and anti-growth advocates. This article documents the rise and fall of these regimes and summarizes their varying impacts on the city.

Keywords: Los Angeles; zoning; real estate; politics; urban regimes

Introduction

This article explains how, through tools of land-use regulation, several groups of actors became particularly adept at shaping the form of Los Angeles and to what ends. Land-use regulation in Los Angeles, this article argues, represents the outcomes of battles pitting one political group against another, quite in disregard of the common purpose this regulation is intended to serve, with the most powerful usually winning at the expense of others.

This was certainly not what the early twentieth-century leaders in planning and real estate had hoped for. Planners of that day considered zoning nothing less than ‘an exact science’ that could deliver the general welfare by proscribing abuses endemic to private use of property while adequately forwarding collective prosperity.¹ Los Angeles’ first Planning Director Gordon Whitnall explained that Los Angeles would be a ‘community in which size shall not be a detriment and in which all numbers might for once prove an asset...’² However, already in 1931, William Munro, then president of the National Municipal League, lamented that ‘whenever a question of rezoning comes up, the issue is not usually approached from the standpoint of what the city needs, but of what the private owners desire and what their immediate neighbors feel disinclined to let them have’. The goal was ‘to get the public mind away from the notion that a city is zoned for the benefit of any section or neighborhood or any individual plot of land’.³ However, in the political setting that has characterized land-use administration before and since then, planning for any public benefit, ‘what the city needs’, is an elusive goal.

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There is nothing particularly surprising about the conclusion that land-use politics have been regularly dominated by parochial interests in Los Angeles. Literature focusing on the parochial management of zoning and planning and its outcomes has been plentiful.⁴ However, little work has considered the history of this body of regulation in any location from its advent until the present. Consequently, there is a limited understanding of how land-use regulation changes over time or the full breadth of its historical and contemporary consequences.

In Los Angeles, there have been distinct winners and losers, and these winners and losers have varied over time. In Los Angeles, there seem to be four distinct regimes characterizing the historical politics of land use. This article documents their rise and fall and summarizes their impacts on the city. The first regime, lasting from the advent of zoning in 1921 until the mid-1930s, was characterized by the hegemony of speculative real estate interests. Despite zoning's origin in the visions of community developers and planners seeking stability for private investments, small-scale speculators were in this period able to co-opt zoning as a speculative device.

With the collapse of property values in the late 1920s and the founding of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) in 1934, a new phase in the history of land-use regulation ensued. The intervention of the FHA made the low-density development of residential property more profitable because it greatly expanded the accessibility of the single-family home, and zoning as a result catered to the large-scale community developers and their buyers. However, as land prices rose, developers turned increasingly to infill development, and homeowners' groups dug in their heels against what they understood to be an assault on their way of life. Thus, began four decades of homeowner pre-eminence, an anti-growth machine to use the parlance of Harvey Molotch, with the great majority if not all alterations to the zoning code geared towards decreasing development possibilities. Only in the last decade, despite a housing crisis decades in the making, have housing advocates been able to present an effective case against further development suppression in the city and begun to wrestle control of land-use regulation away from homeowners' groups.

The first regime: the era of the speculator

In October of 1921, the Los Angeles City Council, following the recommendation of the 1-year-old City Planning Commission, created five zones designated by letters 'A' through 'E', 'A' proscribing any use but single-family homes, 'B' proscribing non-residential uses, 'C' proscribing industrial uses, 'D' proscribing only the most noxious industrial uses, and 'E' being unlimited.⁵

In devising a citywide zoning scheme, planners in Los Angeles set goals in line with the popular ideals of the time. For decades, theorists who regarded the big city as an alienating, demoralizing, and corrupting place had espoused the value of small, self-sufficient, contained communities centred in civic institutions and public spaces. In community design schemes such as that of New York's Clarence Perry, single-family homes were to be protected on quiet interior streets, with commercial activities and apartments clustered at the community's edges along major arterials.⁶ Likewise, planners in Los Angeles were determined to zone arterials predominantly for multi-family use, with commercial uses located in clusters at major intersections and interior streets reserved for single-family residences and public facilities.⁷ This was also in line with large developers' vision of what constituted an economically stable and attractive division of land uses.⁸

Zoning represented a far more stringent regulatory regime than had ever existed before in Los Angeles. Commission members had to repeatedly talk to the local press to explain the reasons for and scope and components of zoning in response to disgruntled property owners.⁹ The Commission thus made it customary to engage the wider public.¹⁰ The careful containment of commercial and multi-family residential uses proved problematic over the course of public engagement: more restrictive zoning categories were hardly beneficial designations from the perspective of speculating small-scale landowners whose profits depended on getting the most out of their limited resources. As the City Council took into consideration the popular demand for less restrictive land-use designations, communities became zoned for more intensive uses than called for in planners' visions. Thus, the principal hallmark of the interwar and Depression years was 'over-zoning', with this representing a victory for speculating small-scale landowners and a loss for homeowners, big developers interested in a more stable picture, and the Planning Commission.

Planners and big developers were divided in their criticism of over-zoning for residential uses, with some saying that it allowed for necessary growth, and some saying that it led to helter-skelter construction that depreciated single-family home values.¹¹ Some argued that the city was relatively uncrowded – the California Businesses Association estimated that the city could grow to 6 million without fear of crowding – a figure that it has not yet reached today.¹² Homeowners were often the losers here, and even their efforts at a compromise failed. In 1928, homeowners' plans to create an additional zoning category between 'A' and 'B' withered among protests from hopeful income property developers.¹³

The planners' scheme for contained suburban commercial centres met its end in the well-meaning 'Major Traffic Street Plan for Los Angeles'. Published by the Traffic Commission in 1924, it called for the designation of 48 radial routes and 36 inter-district 74-foot-wide thoroughfares.¹⁴ This generous accommodation of automobile traffic reflected the contemporary sentiment that improvements in public transportation 'artificially stimulated' downtown values to the benefit of the downtown landowner but to the detriment of the congestion-weary commuters.¹⁵ The accommodation of automotive transport would create a city wherein, a contemporary report argued,

a great city population which for the most part lives near its work, has its individual lawns and gardens, finds its market and commercialized recreation facilities right around the corner and which because of these things can develop a neighborhood with all that it means.¹⁶

City planning engineer Thomas Coombs condemned the new thoroughfares of Los Angeles as unaccommodating for any use, calling them the most injurious mistake the city had made.¹⁷ Property owners on these streets insisted that it was logical for their properties to be zoned for commercial use, as there was too much noise and dirt for residential construction, and a high volume of traffic made the adjacent land highly accessible. However, the real attraction was value: property values jumped as much as 300% on up-zonings to commercial use.¹⁸ In a City Council in which party affiliation was not allowed, the desire for support meant that favours were not hard to achieve; when asking the Planning Commission for a beneficial zoning designation failed, money could be exchanged. The City Council ended up zoning the city for commercial uses almost everywhere it may ever be desirable, and most major roads were given commercial frontage. The Planning Commission's Annual Report of 1928 reported

that 5.8% of the city's land was used for commercial purposes, while 13.4% was zoned for it.¹⁹ In 1928, the ratio of commercially to residentially zoned land in boomtown Los Angeles was 25% – the average in other cities was 9%.²⁰

Planners and the most powerful real estate interests condemned the trend of over-zoning for commercial use. They feared that over-zoning would reproduce chaotic speculation and haphazard land improvements rather than ensuring a suitable environment for long-term investment. The Los Angeles Realty Board concluded that the value of commercial land was not sustainable and based on an artificial attraction, 'a strange psychology not founded upon reason'.²¹

Where concentrated shopping districts were achieved, lengthy strips of frontage could eventually be zoned for commercial activity due to the practice of 'spot-zoning' by elected officials. Spot-zoning involved granting exceptions, or variances, usually on the scale of a single property. The difference between variances and zone changes was clear on paper: variances corrected for the exceptional circumstances of a single property, whereas zone changes provided for necessary changes to the district as a whole.²² However, because zoning restrictions at the time almost entirely consisted of use restrictions, variances were functionally similar to zone changes. Resident groups hit the variance provision as 'a notorious condition which seeks to exploit the majority property owners for gain, promoted by a few paid lobbyists and workers, who are subverting the cause of justice for the benefit of their secret employers'.²³

The Planning Commission strove in cooperation with the City Attorney to keep zoning free of irregularities despite the permissive tendencies of the City Council. The 1921 zoning ordinance dictated that a variance should only occur if the property in question was in a different situation when compared with other similarly zoned properties, if denial of a variance would result in a denial of a substantial property right, and if a variance would not be materially detrimental to the public welfare.²⁴ The Planning Department and Municipal League publicly condemned lobbyists who paid the City Council to override the Commission's recommendations.²⁵ In the 1930s, accusations of graft erupted, and district attorney Buron Fitts launched an investigation. Fitts called the Council's oversight of the city's zoning a 'racket' that 'eclipses any other form of asserted corruption yet brought to our attention'.²⁶ By some accounts, Los Angeles was even unique in this regard: in 1929, there were reportedly 224 instances of the so-called spot-zoning in Los Angeles versus 66 in New York City.²⁷

The boom of the 1920s and related zoning imbalance did add incredible value to the marketplace: the total valuation of Los Angeles County matched that of Chicago's Cook County by 1929.²⁸ However, the spike in value gained from rezoning often failed to materialize in the actual development – and it eventually evaporated in the Depression. While residential construction was allowed in commercial zones, builders were wary of putting residential buildings there because they could soon be adjacent to some egregious commercial use that would lower rents in adjacent residential properties. Being so abundant, commercially zoned land did not necessarily attract business either. The result was miles of vacant land along Los Angeles' boulevards throughout the 1920s and into the Depression. In 1926, 30% of land in the Wilshire–Hollywood district to the west of downtown was zoned for commercial use, but only 7% was put to this use – the Realty Board called it an 'economic waste' and laid the blame squarely on the shoulders of speculating property owners.²⁹

Over-zoning for commercial uses was also negatively impacting the residential character of the city. One article in the *Times* speculated that the prospect of so much eventual traffic-generating commercial development was damaging to abutting residential communities and driving

homeowners to other jurisdictions.³⁰ Another contemporary critic found that single-family districts were being pushed 'to a circle far outside that which would reasonably be expected'.³¹ Over-zoning also made public investments irrelevant: William Munro pointed to empty schools in former residential districts invaded by the industry. He observed that

No one thinks to ask whether the change, if made, will increase or simplify the difficulties of municipal administration, or whether it is in line with the process of orderly, planned, and regulated growth which the municipality has laid out for itself.³²

The solution was to change zoning. The policy of down-zoning stubbornly vacant commercial property was called 'unfreezing'. Gordon Whitnall explained that a property could be 'thawed out by landing it such protection as results from a reclassification into a zone use for which there is a demand...'.³³ However, owners of commercial land were not eager to down-zone.³⁴ According to the Guaranty Building and Loan Association of Hollywood, the value of land at the time was to a great degree based on its potential rather than on its use, and owners' payment of higher taxes only increased their hopes for eventual development.³⁵ Such assessment practices thus discouraged consent to down-zoning.³⁶

There was plentiful homeowner activism against over-zoning. The homeowner groups of the Los Feliz neighbourhood northwest of downtown became especially skilled at gaining tighter regulation.³⁷ In one instance, the Los Feliz Improvement Association and Hollywood Chamber of Commerce together persuaded the mayor to veto the rezoning of Los Feliz Boulevard to a commercial thoroughfare saying that 'City planning would be a farce if every subdivider or owner of vacant lots that might bring a higher price for business purposes, is allowed to disregard the interests of the home owners in residence districts'.³⁸

Spot-zoning and over-zoning continued to be problems even in the Depression. There was in fact an increase in the number of variances from 189 to 463 between 1927 and 1931.³⁹ The expansion of zoned territory meant that in some ways the city was more over-zoned than it was ever before. In 1933, only 4.8% of the city's zoned land was zoned for single-family use, down from 9.5% 5 years later, though 58.9% of the zoned land was developed for this use. About 63.6% of the zoned land was zoned for multi-family uses, up from 59.3% 5 years later. The amount of commercial zoning was also up from 13.4% to 19.1%, although only 9.2% of the zoned land was used for commercial purposes.⁴⁰ One 1935 estimate put the capacity of the city's multi-family 'R4' district alone at nearly 22 million.⁴¹

The second regime: the era of the community developer

The planners' and Realty Board's idealization of the city received a boost when the FHA, founded in 1934, began to require lending standards for the reception of federally insured amortized mortgages. The FHA was very cautious in its definition of safe investment areas. In grading neighbourhoods from 'best' to 'hazardous', it assumed the inherent volatility of mixed-use blocks and the economic stability of the socially and physically homogeneous single-family district. Therefore, a good score from the FHA depended on the containment of intensive uses and protection of low densities that local major developers and planners had been promoting.⁴² The winners in this period were big developers and homeowners; both had a common opponent, as was detailed in Marc Weiss' *Rise of the Community Builders*, in the fly-by-night speculator who may buy a zone change and erect some noisy, traffic-generating,

polluting use next to a polished residential subdivision.⁴³ In sociologist Harvey Molotch's influential academic piece *The Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place*, capitalist cities are described as 'growth machines', in which an elite persuades the government into permissive land-use policies, with the bulk of profits returning to this elite.⁴⁴ In Los Angeles, the early postwar years were the time of the 'growth machine', in which a developer elite bolstered by government policy stimulated growth, with the profits of that growth returning to this elite, but also to a growing number of homeowners. Another scholar of political science, Clarence Stone, has termed growth machines as 'development regimes', political systems focused primarily on changing land use in order to accommodate growth. This regime remained in place until the 1960s, when it was replaced by what Stone termed a 'middle-class progressive regime', a political system concentrated on as environmental protection, historical preservation, and other quality-of-life concerns.⁴⁵

The FHA's favouring of big developers was apparent in what they chose to insure. The FHA overwhelmingly denied mortgages in areas of older construction, areas that were not zoned, and areas where the incorporation or proximity of less restrictive zoning even mildly threatened investments in low-density residential construction. The FHA provided a convincing case that zoning for the city's new single-family designation 'R1' and preserving it, accommodating the vision of big developers and planners in other words, was the best way to assist hopeful homeowners eager to acquire FHA-backed mortgages.⁴⁶

The city conducted a property survey of the central 100 square miles of Los Angeles with funding from the Civil Works Administration and concluded that much of the single-family properties were not up to par with the FHA standards.⁴⁷ Change was slow at first: from 1936 to 1938, the Council moved 14.3 miles of street frontage from multi-family designations into single-family 'R1', 6.4 from business designations to residential ones, and 1.82 miles of frontage from industrial designations to various less intensive ones. In total, in this period, 25 miles of frontage was shifted to more restrictive designations versus 0.6 miles to less restrictive ones.⁴⁸ The federal policy of the 1930s seems to have brought an end to over-zoning in many areas, at least on the scale seen in the 1920s, more than any other effort. Even during the wartime housing crunch, planners warned against the consequences of permitting higher densities, saying that it 'would bring about a return to the old practice of overloading the land at the expense of community welfare'.⁴⁹

While in response to the postwar housing shortage, the City Council did ultimately pass an ordinance reducing building setbacks, the general trend in the era was towards tighter restrictions.⁵⁰ Large area-wide rezonings principally focused on down-zoning: rezoning multi-family 'R4' as 'R2' or 'R1' and accommodating commercial districts under the local commercial 'C1' designations rather than under the general commercial 'C2' designations.⁵¹ Municipal level planning, federal standards, and the private housing industry together worked to build a city characterized by large expanses of single-use development. This aided the realization of multi-thousand unit single-family developments by community developers such as Fritz Burns, contemporary co-chair of the National Association of Real Estate Boards and head of the National Association of Home Builders, whose FHA-funded Westchester project in the southwest section of the city was praised in the press as the largest and most spectacular feat of city building ever witnessed in Southern California.⁵²

The Planning Department made a concerted effort to coordinate FHA-spurred development with planning. Long-range planning for the San Fernando Valley envisioned the preservation of

profitable agricultural uses and the containment of urbanization in concentrated nuclei.⁵³ Many property owners stated their satisfaction with the city's plans for contained urbanization in the Valley, advocating against expanded development.⁵⁴ Many more property owners, however, desired a turnover to urban uses, especially single-family development.⁵⁵ The year 1950 was the busiest for the Planning Department since 1923: the city approved over 30,000 housing units, with 25,000 of these being single-family homes.⁵⁶

When zoning could not live up to plans' expectations, plans were made to accommodate zoning trends. Here was a case of zoning 'wagging the planning dog', as zoning critic Richard Babcock later put it.⁵⁷ Due to pressure for development, the 1955 Master Plan for the San Fernando Valley advocated at least halving the amount of land in agricultural zones.⁵⁸ The original plan for preserving agriculture in the San Fernando Valley around dense urban centres was compromised and the FHA-backed community builder reigned supreme. Trends in zoning administration were now towards providing for lower density rather than for concentration, culminating in the introduction of an 'RE' Residential Estate zone in 1955 at the behest of wealthy newcomers to the San Fernando Valley.⁵⁹ By the mid-1950s, the goal of urban nuclei in an agricultural setting had proven unachievable, and rezoning to non-agricultural uses was occurring without any reference to plans.⁶⁰

By the mid-1960s, most of the agriculturally zoned land in the Valley had disappeared, and the urban centres that the Planning Department had tried to promote bled into a single mass. With the FHA's requirement of low-density urbanization as the means for mass homeownership, the march of development proceeded outward at an amazing pace. As the city advanced ever closer to the natural growth boundary of the mountains and the ocean, land costs rose, and multi-unit construction passed single-family construction in unit volume for the first time since the 1920s in 1957.⁶¹ However, in a city where hundreds of thousands were now accustomed to large homogenous areas of single-family uses, and had bought under the assumption that their property values depended on the maintenance of a low-density character, new building trends presented a problem. The growth machine that characterized Los Angeles in the postwar years would prove to be its own undoing.

The third regime: the era of the homeowner

Until 1960, Angeleno homeowners had usually fallen in step with the big developers. The adoption of zoning, promoted by the city's big real estate interests, afforded homeowners protections beyond what private covenants could give them. The FHA's influence on zoning practice likewise satisfied both big developers and homeowners who saw it as a significant incentive against spot-zoning for apartments and commercial development. However, after 1960, homeowners' groups increasingly found something to dislike not only in the speculator seeking to construct a service station on the corner, but also in many of the larger developers, the people who had built communities just like theirs. In this era, current homeowners emerged victorious over developers, potential homeowners, and the planners who represented their interests.

Problematically for homeowners, as land that could accommodate low-density development dwindled in Los Angeles and its vicinity, developers began to pursue denser infill development in already built-up areas. The first major gains of homeowners' groups were in the tightening and expansion of height district regulation. In 1962, in light of one especially riling apartment building proposal, the Los Feliz Improvement Association petitioned to create a new height

district more limiting than any current alternatives.⁶² Associations from various other wealthy areas of the city in the Valley and on the Westside chimed in their approval of the proposed height district, hoping that stiffer regulation would be adequate to protect vistas, one of the many increasingly assumed inalienable assets of property ownership during the 1960s.⁶³ Since then, two more even more restrictive height districts have been introduced at the behest of homeowners.⁶⁴

Height was only one target for homeowners' groups. The city expanded the regimen of exclusive residential zones in the 1960s, adding four 'Residential Estate' zones.⁶⁵ Some neighbourhoods settled for nothing less than the new zoning designations: in one case, neighbours condemned up-zoning to a more compact single-family 'R1' from 'RE' as advocating the creation of a slum even though the costs of new homes would be in line with others in the area.⁶⁶ Suburbanites were evidently demanding that their neighbours lived at least as well as they did.

A 1962 case closing a rock quarry despite no clear viable alternative use led to a spate of efforts to protect industrial uses.⁶⁷ This culminated in the creation of the 'MR1' and 'MR2' Restricted Manufacturing districts in 1970 'to protect industrial land for industrial use'.⁶⁸ Reform of commercial zoning was also performed with greater attention to homeowners' sensibilities, when in 1960 the City Council ruled that the adjustments of zones to accommodate shopping centres could not increase the overall amount of commercial land at the site.⁶⁹ On the hillsides, Los Angeles' last undeveloped frontier, the spirit of preservation was perhaps the strongest. While preservation was often geared towards protecting the fragile ecology of the hills, it also assured that, as with large lot zoning in the flatlands, new arrivals lived at least as well as current residents.

The rise of the homeowners was immediately reflected in the tone of citywide politics. In 1961, Valley Councilman Patrick McGee based his campaign for mayor, in a race he lost to Sam Yorty, in large part on what the *Los Angeles Examiner* called his 'unusual councilmanic record of being an almost constant dissenter . . . featured by his opposition to almost every development proposed'.⁷⁰ Valley residential groups' efforts to preserve agricultural land led to a movement to recall local councilman Tom Shepard when he failed to protect agricultural zoning in the rezoning of the Valley area of Porter Ranch.⁷¹

With their new-found authority in the City Council, homeowners' groups could push freezes on rezoning actions pending adoption of community plans.⁷² *Los Angeles* magazine opined that planners were coming to 'the troubling realization that public apathy can no longer be depended upon'.⁷³ On the homeowners' side was a sense of moral authority because of their supposed attention to non-material values of community. 'Nobody is making a buck out of this homeowner association', said Mrs Jerry Loeb of the Encino Property Owners Association in the midst of a battle over development on Ventura Boulevard.⁷⁴ Activists in the Valley's Sherman Way neighbourhood condemned high-density zoning as 'monetarily prized'.⁷⁵ A band of 'City Hall Fighters' emerged in the Valley's Sylmar district in the early 1960s; abiding by a strict 'us versus them' mentality, they at the opening of the decade counted two victories against a cemetery and a housing project. They described their opponent as a City Hall bent on destroying 'sitting duck' communities.⁷⁶

The term 'growth machine' has been applied to Los Angeles by critics of the real estate industry's traditional influence on zoning policy.⁷⁷ However, what was unclear about the Los Angeles 'growth machine' was whether the developer 'elite' consumed an inordinate reward; significant communities of middle-class homeowners had coalesced around this 'elite's'

products. For all the noise made by preservationist groups, one should consider data produced by the Board of Zoning Appeals on the number of variances and conditional uses processed at this time, which showed that while applicants for variances made 110 appeals to the board over an 18-month period from January 1961 to June 1962, protesters made only 15.⁷⁸ Fifteen cases in a city of two and a half million hardly presents a picture of communities as 'sitting ducks' in the face of corrupted zoning practices. In 1963, the *Los Angeles Times* reported on a group called GRIPE, Group Representing Ignored Public Everywhere, 'a sort of high-income area working man's group' the paper said, working to create citizens' advisory committees to act as devil's advocates at the Planning Commission meetings.⁷⁹ However, the ratio of applicants' appeals versus protesters' appeals to the Board of Zoning Appeals increased to 91 to 8 in the same year and to 111 to 2 in 1964.⁸⁰ These numbers raise the prospect that more than anything, local homeowners' groups just made a lot of noise over a limited number of what were debatably abuses.

In delivering so much attention to the plight of suburban homeowners, the City Council forgot the more formidable problems of the inner city. In Los Angeles, only the Watts Riots garnered changes to inner city zoning, when the city relaxed restrictions to allow for foster homes and Head Start facilities.⁸¹ The city did, in a significant boon for the redevelopment of the central city, halve parking requirements in Downtown Los Angeles in 1962.⁸² Elsewhere, however, the city met the challenge of increased vehicle registration and an on-street parking problem with increased parking requirements and with little to offset costs to developers. In 1965, the city effectively doubled the parking requirements in all residential zones.⁸³ In 1970, the City Council overrode a mayoral veto to pass an ordinance increasing the required parking spaces by increasing room counts, an ordinance the Department of City Planning described as 'so restrictive as to be detrimental' and the Building Industry Association warned would come at a cost of 7000 units per year.⁸⁴

It was increasingly evident that the combination of high land costs, density restrictions, and parking requirements was forcing developers to charge higher prices for housing units. Already in 1963, builder Ray Wyatt of Los Angeles complained that unreasonable density restrictions forced him to price units out of the range of the majority of consumers: 'We are forced to build 75% of our houses at prices 15% of our customers can afford', he said.⁸⁵ The *Los Angeles Times* reported that one way to defeat inflated unit costs was to permit the high densities capable of offsetting land costs.⁸⁶

However, few things aggravated homeowners' associations in the 1960s as much as Planned Unit Developments, locally termed Residential Planned Developments (RPDs). Because they allowed developers to cluster allowable density over a large area into smaller, compact forms, planners hoped that RPDs would introduce an element of diversity long absent from postwar construction.⁸⁷ The RPD issue came to a head when in 1966 a county grand jury indicted developer Bryan Gibson on charges of grand theft and conspiracy to pay 51,000 dollars in bribes over a conditional use permit for 900 units in a townhouse-style RPD in the San Fernando Valley's Chatsworth district.⁸⁸

Public faith in planning and zoning fell precipitously, and the case quickly exploded into a general trial of zoning. A resulting citizens' committee report presented recommendations calling for, among other things, regular area-by-area revision of the General Plan, the conformance of zoning with the General Plan, and standardized processing for conditional uses and RPDs.⁸⁹ The reaction from homeowners' groups to the drafts of the citizens' report was strongly favourable. The West Valley Property Owners Association considered the citizens' committee

report a 'bill of rights' to be submitted to the city's voters unaltered for its placement in the Charter.⁹⁰ The 1969 Charter amendments largely delivered on the recommendations, although not, significantly, on zoning's conformance with the General Plan.⁹¹

The Planning Department undertook each area-by-area review, termed Community Planning, with the aid of a local advisory group.⁹² From 1972, the Planning Department began to organize its staff geographically to encourage specialization in local issues and priorities.⁹³ Homeowners' groups were major participants in Community Planning and made their mark on the land-use plan of the city by calling for significant zoning rollbacks in their individual Community Plan Areas. Also at that time, the Planning Department released the first citywide conceptual plan, 'Concept Los Angeles'. The Concept called for preserving areas of single-family construction and containing growth in high-density mixed-use concentrations called centres. Planning Director Calvin Hamilton sought to bring the Concept in line with the vision of community groups, endorsing the department's own zoning rollback study. A 1972 study advocated a zoning capacity reduction of 35% for a 1990 population capacity of 4.1 million.⁹⁴

However, this seemed far too permissive to critics, as it was still a great deal larger than the current population of 2.8 million. This was a time when area planning workshops were discussing no growth as a realistic alternative.⁹⁵ John Pastier of the *Times* wrote that 'Although the Concept claims to seek an end to *laissez-faire* development, it also takes special care to cultivate the root of that evil by not curbing the inordinate growth of population'.⁹⁶ The logic of the anti-growth movement explained that growth accommodation was really growth stimulation and that permissive zoning was a self-fulfilling prophecy maintained by regulators at the behest of wealthy developers. The Department of City Planning argued that this 'inhumane' position 'ignored the nature of population increase' and that overly stringent zoning would not stop growth, but merely force it elsewhere.⁹⁷ Unfortunately for anti-growth advocates, the 1972 rollback study, although incorporated into land-use plans, was at least for the time being toothless and difficult to implement except on a parcel-by-parcel basis as long as the city could get away with not enforcing the General Plan.⁹⁸ In 1978, the state legislature passed Assembly Bill 283, requiring that Los Angeles' zoning conform to its General Plan by 1 July 1981.⁹⁹ The General Plan was finally implemented when a case filed by a coalition of 42 Westside and Valley homeowner organizations gave Los Angeles until March 1988 to make its zoning consistent with its General Plan.¹⁰⁰ An anti-growth machine was now firmly in place.

The expansion of regulation in this period was complimented by limited measures to provide housing for some disadvantaged groups. The '15% ordinance' of 1971 required all developments of five or more units made feasible pursuant to a zone change or conditional use permit to reserve 15% of total units for low-income buyers.¹⁰¹ One promising development for downtown came with a live/work ordinance that allowed residential and limited commercial uses to occur in the same building.¹⁰² However, the high cost of living in Los Angeles and throughout California was having a toll not only on low-income families and artists, but also on the middle class. One result of this in the 1970s was a rebellion against property taxes in the form of Proposition 13, a 1978 state-wide measure severely restricting cities' and counties' ability to raise taxes on residential property. As a result, residential construction, as far as fiscally minded planners viewed it as a revenue-generating commodity, lost much of its appeal.¹⁰³

The Housing Element of 1986 reported that the combined effects of Proposition 13 and zoning restrictions meant that housing turnover was slow, and when new units were added to

the city's supply or older units came onto the market, they tended to go to the highest bidder; that bidder was inevitably not a low-income earner.¹⁰⁴ The potential homebuyers of Southern California may have deserved to take advantage of the developing economy and region as much as the previous generation. Unfortunately for them, they were frequently left outside a land-use decision-making process dominated by homeowners and fiscally minded planners.

Bill Boyarsky of the *Los Angeles Times* reported that in 1980: 'A 2500 square foot house on one half acre of land with two large automobiles in the garage is no longer a realistic dream for the average American family'.¹⁰⁵ Such a sentiment did yield a townhome zone in 1984 – homes with zero lot lines had been illegal since the Yard Ordinance of 1935 at the height of the FHA-induced row house phobia.¹⁰⁶ More permissive zoning for mobile homes also came in the 1980s.¹⁰⁷ The state's 1981 'Granny Bill' permitted local jurisdictions to allow accessory dwelling units limited to two persons over 60 in single-family zones, while a 1982 bill required the allowance of accessory dwelling units to be available to people of all ages.¹⁰⁸ Los Angeles followed suit establishing a conditional use process for these units.¹⁰⁹

Also in 1982, the state mandated a density bonus of 25% if developers reserved 10% of units for lower income households or 25% of units for low- or moderate-income households.¹¹⁰ However, in large cities, there was little interest in the density bonus because it could not overcome the barrier of high land costs.¹¹¹ Developers were adamant that if they were given control over zoning, the city could be housed. In the words of one developer: 'It may be eighty-two dwelling units to the acre, and units may be four hundred square feet, but it can be done'.¹¹² By 1987, 72 density bonus projects had only produced 3520 rental units, 22.4% of which were priced for moderate-, low-, or very-low-income earners.¹¹³ The city took the position that the density bonus legislation was producing all the negative impacts of density without creating a satisfactory supply of affordable units and suggested targeting it solely to low- and very-low-income households.¹¹⁴ This became state law in 1989, guaranteeing a higher number of units set aside for low- and very-low-income earners, but also further decreasing the profitability of the affordable housing density bonus programme.¹¹⁵

Homeowner power culminated in 1986's Proposition U, a measure that halved the allowable floor-area ratio from 3:1 to 1.5:1 in commercial and manufacturing zones in the city's prevalent Height District '1'. Height District '1' covered about 70% of the land zoned for commercial and manufacturing uses and 85% of commercially zoned areas.¹¹⁶ When the initiative failed to get sufficient support in the Council, anti-growth Councilman Zev Yaroslavsky took it to the wealthy homeowners of the Valley and the Westside.¹¹⁷ Proponents gathered over 100,000 signatures, more than enough to place an initiative on the ballot for that year.¹¹⁸

The proposition's supporters were able to gain a non-traditional ally in low-income minority areas by linking their cause with that of the Concerned Citizens of South Central Los Angeles who were fighting a trash-burning operation in their area.¹¹⁹ However, many in the city's low-income communities may have supported the initiative for a different reason: *Community Democrat* publisher Willard Murray believed that the proposition would not stop development but direct it out of high-income areas and cause it to be more evenly spread.¹²⁰ The African-American publication *The Los Angeles Sentinel* opposed the proposition.¹²¹ Ted Watson of the Watts Labor Community Action Committee said that it 'doesn't have any real relationship to what's going on in South Central'.¹²²

When the proposition passed, the low-slung commercial boulevards of Los Angeles, for better or for worse, were effectively frozen in time for the foreseeable future. For planners, a

voter initiative with so much power seemed a radical compromise of the city's planning traditions. The American Planning Association's 1986 Los Angeles Conference was welcomed by the *Los Angeles Times* with the words 'Welcome to Los Angeles Planners: R.I.P'.¹²³

Planners were soon, however, to be saddled with plenty of responsibility stemming from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970. In 1987, a court decision was handed down in favour of the 'Friends of Westwood' who had sued the city to force the compiling of Environmental Impact Reports for large-scale projects. Although state law was clear on the subject, city policy had remained somewhat ambiguous.¹²⁴ The city immediately made it a policy that staff should conduct environmental reviews for all projects of over 40,000 square feet, generating 500 or more car trips per day or having 25 or more residential units.¹²⁵

Three years later, a city ordinance mandated a 'site plan review' process for all projects meeting these thresholds.¹²⁶ In Los Angeles, site plan review required the Planning Department to find a proposal's consistency with zoning, the General Plan, any redevelopment plan if applicable, that the proposed development would incorporate satisfactory mitigation procedures as may be required by CEQA, that the proposed development would be compatible with development on neighbouring properties, and that if a residential development, it would incorporate the appropriate type and placement of recreational facilities and amenities to improve habitability and minimize impacts on abutting properties. Site plan review in essence limited the circumstances under which a developer could achieve by-right approvals for large projects and expanded the city's ability to mitigate project impacts even beyond what was required by CEQA.

After the Westwood case, empowered homeowners took to the review of development proposals with renewed gusto, using site plan review as a mechanism to saddle private development with conditions rendering it satisfyingly innocuous or infeasible. This watering down of new development arguably came at the cost of further displacing development and any negative impacts to fringe locations where it may be unaccounted for and also discouraging local benefits that may come from development.¹²⁷ Developers and their allies derided these new urban engineers as NIMBYs, sufferers of a 'Not in My Back Yard' syndrome: cynical homeowners who refused to measure potential negatives of development against potential benefits to themselves and others.

The fourth regime: the era of balance

In 1990, suburban anti-growth interests dominated land-use policy-making in Los Angeles. This is arguably still the case today. The single-family house, opined Robert Greene in the *L.A. Weekly* in 2003, had become a revolutionary force in the past quarter century.¹²⁸ From the proliferation of large lot zoning and ever-increasing parking requirements to Proposition U and the 'institutionalized NIMBYism' of site plan review,¹²⁹ the story of land-use regulation in Los Angeles was for the better part of the late twentieth century written by suburban preservationists. Lower income South Los Angeles so far had had an impact on liquor store regulation, but not much else, and suburbanites were keen to keep any pro-development stances of Central and South Los Angeles revitalization-focused politicians at bay. What began as a housing crisis for lower income households in the 1960s has in the last two decades become a crisis affecting the middle-class majority.

The Citywide General Plan Framework of 1996, although it officially replaced the quarter-century-old 'Concept Los Angeles', largely reiterated the goals of the old plan: the preservation of low-density residential areas and the accommodation of population growth in new and revitalized high-density mixed-use districts proximate to transit corridors.¹³⁰ The vision called for by the Framework has not, however, proven popular among the Valley and Westside homeowners eager for further empowerment.¹³¹

Their desires were partially addressed with the creation of Neighborhood Councils. Permitted by the 1999 Charter, these are voluntary non-mandatory organizations intended to enhance community presence in decision-making. The Neighborhood Councils were part of an effort to soothe Westside and Valley dissatisfaction with City Hall, which reached its height in the late 1990s and early 2000s when the Valley attempted secession. One editorial in the Valley's *Daily News* argued that the secession effort was really a 'smokescreen' for Valley homeowners' desire to exercise greater control over land-use decisions.¹³²

The Councils allowed by the 1999 Charter were, however, a watered-down version of a much grander vision.¹³³ Reform Commission member William Weinberger feared that a genuine decentralization of zoning power would recreate the exclusivity characteristic of the politically fragmented suburbs: 'If each community decided they didn't want any commercial development in their plan, that would have an effect on the entire city'.¹³⁴ As a result of these anxieties, the Neighborhood Councils essentially became official advisory community liaisons to City Hall: less powerful than initially planned, but still influential platforms.

It is likely fortunate that the Commission felt as it did: a 2007 University of Southern California study painted a bleak picture of decentralized democracy in Los Angeles. The Neighborhood Councils, the study found, had failed to become representative of their communities in terms of demographics and local priorities. The Councils were generally wealthier and whiter than their constituents.¹³⁵ Nor were they substantively representative of their communities: whereas 20% of likely voters ranked education as their top priority, under 5% of Neighborhood Council members did so. Whereas only 5% of likely voters ranked land use as their top priority, over 25% of Neighborhood Council members did so.¹³⁶ Indeed, land-use issues at the time of the study accounted for 49% of issue-oriented Neighborhood Council activities citywide and 60% in the wealthier Westside and San Fernando Valley.¹³⁷ The Councils themselves were years into their existence undecided over the issue of enhanced land-use powers, with some fearing that the power would lead the Councils to ignore other relevant issues even more.¹³⁸ Not that the lack of this power hurt them greatly: despite the lack of greater authority in land-use matters, land use was the most often cited area of achievement for the Councils according to the study.¹³⁹

This further empowerment of homeowners occurred in the context of an acute housing crisis. The federal government's Center on Budget and Policy Priorities found in the late 1990s that the Los Angeles area suffered a shortfall of 300,000 units at the end of the decade, making its housing the second most overcrowded in the nation, second only to neighbouring Orange County.¹⁴⁰ The city of Los Angeles played no minor role in the crisis, with half of the shortfall blamed on the city.¹⁴¹ Fifteen per cent of the county's households were overcrowded in 2001, triple the national average.¹⁴² The Southern California Association of Governments reported at the time that only 8000 housing units were being produced in the city per year, but 60,000 were necessary per year to alleviate the high cost of housing.¹⁴³

A 2001 joint report of the University of Southern California's Southern California Studies Center and the Brookings Institution, *Sprawl Hits the Wall*, opined that the city was still operating under the assumptions of the suburban era: namely that the supply of land was unlimited.¹⁴⁴ 'Simply put', said the report, 'the region is building the wrong type of housing in the wrong location at the wrong price for the population and economy it now has'.¹⁴⁵

However, the anti-growth achievements of the previous decade left limited prospects for an adjustment of the development climate the report observed. The General Plan Housing Element of 1994 reported 1,210,819 units in the city, with a capacity for 958,237 more assuming a 100% build-out.¹⁴⁶ However, there was economics to consider – whether or not allowable densities would permit developers to recover land costs in their developments. There was also the issue of how much neighbours were willing to allow. Despite the supposed room to grow, only 84,255 multi-family units were added in the 15 years following 1994, not 14% of the estimated multi-family build-out. In contrast, 21,888 single-family units were added in the same period, 65% of the single-family build-out.¹⁴⁷ There remains an evident bias in what gets permitted in Los Angeles.

The meagre rate of housing construction in the city has propelled an increasingly conspicuous and illegal overcrowding problem. Already by 1990, there were an estimated 40,000–50,000 illegal dwelling units in Los Angeles, housing 200,000 people.¹⁴⁸ In 1997, a joint task force recommended the rehabilitation of illegal units with city funds and granting the improved units temporary occupancy permits.¹⁴⁹ Homeowners' groups balked at the measure, with one saying that it was 'gutting the Los Angeles zoning code through the back door'.¹⁵⁰ The problem is unresolved and, in the meantime, illegal units have persisted as a hazard to their inhabitants.¹⁵¹

The city has had some success in the last decade introducing new zoning categories that promise to deliver a greater number of market-rate units. In 1999, the City Council convened a Housing Crisis Task Force to generate recommendations on ways to increase housing opportunities in the city.¹⁵² Describing the city's capacity for new residential development at 'nearly zero', the Task Force's Land Use and Planning Sub-Committee delivered recommendations on the zoning code, processing, incentives for affordable housing, and other areas.¹⁵³ Delivering on these recommendations has required to some extent getting around Proposition U – a manoeuvre that has done significant further damage to relations between City Hall and many neighbourhood groups. In 2002, the City Council created two new 'Residential Accessory Services' zoning designations that permitted ground-floor-accessory-limited commercial uses through vertical subdivision.¹⁵⁴ These could replace the commercial zoning affected by Proposition U while preserving the possibility of commercial uses and restore the residential potential of sites where Proposition U had removed it. By 2010, the implementation had resulted in the provision of 10,900 units.¹⁵⁵

The adaptive reuse of underutilized commercial buildings presented another opportunity for housing provision. A 1999 ordinance established procedures for the adaptive reuse of commercial or industrial economically unviable buildings built before the 1974 institution of modern building codes in downtown and adjacent Westlake district.¹⁵⁶ The 2002 Adaptive Reuse Incentive Areas Specific Plan expanded the geographical scope of the Adaptive Reuse programme to other historical commercial areas of the city including Hollywood and mid-Wilshire.¹⁵⁷ In early 2010, the Department of City Planning estimated that the adaptive reuse ordinance had produced 9156 units.¹⁵⁸

The adaptive reuse programme, along with the long-in-progress approval of standards for home occupations in 1996, signalled a shift towards land-use control through performance standards.¹⁵⁹ However, it seems unlikely that the use of such standards will develop further in the city's residential areas. The accommodation of illegal units through performance standards, for example, seems to be understood by homeowners' groups only as setting a dangerous precedent.

Nevertheless, it may be argued that the past 20 years have witnessed a diversification of Los Angeles' zoning policy. Not a quarter century after Proposition U, there does seem to be any dominating narrative out of City Hall with regard to zoning. The complaints of suburban homeowners over limited clout in City Hall seem out of touch considering that there is an actual group of have-nots who do not live in single-family homes on the Westside, but in various valleys and deserts of Southern California distant from preferable locations or in overpriced and often overcrowded rental units in the denser parts of Los Angeles and its region. Councilman Ed Reyes has summarized the situation, if somewhat pessimistically: 'L.A. today is a tale of two cities, with the haves protected by City Hall, and the have-nots left to fend for themselves'.¹⁶⁰

Conclusion

To simplify the history of land-use regulation in Los Angeles, there seem to be four distinct phases or regimes: the first lasting from the advent of citywide land-use regulation in 1909 until the mid-1930s, the second from the mid-1930s until the 1960s, the third phase from the 1960s until 2000, and a fourth arguably in progress over the last decade. Each is defined by the domination of one or more interest groups over others in policy-making. The first phase, lasting from the initiation of citywide districting legislation until the first half of the Depression, was characterized by the hegemony of speculative real estate interests. While large-scale development interests brought zoning and planning into being in Los Angeles, they failed to gain adequate control over its exercise. The resulting real estate bubble of the 1920s collapsed with dire consequences for speculators and their market in quickly lost property values, and for big developers and the wealthier homeowners they served in a plethora of shoddily subdivided and vacant properties, it deflated the value of adjacent better planned areas.

With the collapse of property values in the late 1920s and the founding of the FHA in 1934, a new phase in the history of land-use regulation ensued. The intervention of the FHA made the low-density development of residential property more profitable because it greatly expanded the accessibility of the single-family home. This achievement was at the expense of the inhabitants and landowners of the central city, who failing to gain the federal support presented to suburban buyers and developers were left to deal with decay and declining property values. The outward focus of development also created a predicament for future urbanization considering the natural growth boundaries of the Los Angeles region.

The danger presented by the pattern of growth realized between the Depression and the 1960s was not only in the inadequate recycling of valuable land or in associated geographical inequalities, but also in its construction of a large class of suburban homeowners attached to the concept of unchanging conditions as the underpinning of their homes' values. As this population matured in the 1960s, they became the chief opponents of developers intending to capitalize on demand in already developed areas. Through the election of anti-growth candidates to the City Council, the suburban homeowners of the Valley and the Westside were able to impose their preferred model of growth, basically a system of no growth or slow growth, on the entire

city. This has been a desperately unfair scenario for areas in need of revitalization or simply more tolerant to greater growth.¹⁶¹

Arguably, the city of Los Angeles may just in the last decade be witnessing a third paradigm shift. Since the 1980s, low-income areas of South Los Angeles have finally gained a role in land-use planning matters. The shrinking share of homeowners and a growing population for whom the housing market presents no safe or healthy options has generated enough anxiety among some in planning and the City Council to raise a challenge to the hegemony of suburban homeowners in growth matters. It has been a short time since the introduction of many strategies for the promotion of urban infill and accommodation of population, and we arguably have not seen significant results. In addition, critics are correct when they point out that too much of this development does not serve the people who need housing the most.

On the bright side, the first decade of the twenty-first century may at last have been the decade in which planners and legislators, even though still driven by the concerns of an affluent minority, represent a diverse enough segment of the electorate to at least be trying to expand the definition of the public served by land-use regulation. The advocacy for the general welfare hoped for 90 years ago now seems an achievable goal.

Notes on contributor

Andrew Whittemore's research interests include the history and theory of city planning in the USA and Western Europe and urban history, as well as current and historical land-use planning. Dr Whittemore completed his Ph.D. in Urban Planning at the University of California, Los Angeles, in 2010. His dissertation, titled 'The Regulated City: The Politics of Land Use Regulation in Los Angeles, 1909–2009', considered the historical and contemporary influence of various interest groups on land-use policy in the city of Los Angeles. He is also the co-author and illustrator of 'American Urban Form: A Representative History', published by MIT Press in March 2012.

Notes

1. 'City Planning', *Pacific Municipalities* 45, no. 1 (1931): 63.
2. G. Gordon Whitnall, 'Importance of Broad City Planning', *Southern California Business* 1, no. 1 (1922): 8, 45.
3. William B. Munro, 'A Danger Spot in the Zoning Movement', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 155, Part II (1931), 202–206 (206).
4. Some of the most significant literature focusing on the parochial management of zoning and planning in the USA and its outcomes has included Richard Babcock, *The Zoning Game* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966); John Delafons, *Land Use Control in the United States* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969); Richard Jackson, *Land Use in America* (New York: V.H. Winston & Sons, 1981); and Seymour Toll, *Zoned American* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1969). Partial histories of zoning in Los Angeles have most notably been written in Robert Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967); William Fulton, *The Reluctant Metropolis* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 2001); and Marc Weiss, *The Rise of the Community Builders* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987).
5. Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 42666, adopted 19 October 1921.
6. See Clarence Perry, 'The Neighborhood Unit', *Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs* 7 (1929), 22–140, and Clarence Perry, *Housing for the Mechanic Age* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1939).
7. Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning *Annual Report*, 1931–1932, 12; each commercial cluster could serve a few of these communities and would be limited in size to preserve the value of commercial land. Designer Charles Cheney pointed out that in a low-density urban area, commercial

- centres should be smaller and farther apart to maximize the concentration of purchasing power necessary to sustain businesses, see 'Business Area Analysis Made', *Los Angeles Times*, October 13, 1929.
8. 'Work Out Zoning Policy', *Los Angeles Times*, September 26, 1920; also see Los Angeles (City) City Planning Commission *Minutes*, Vol. 7A, July 28, 1926: 172–3, on the process of determining commercial zones' arrangement and size within a new subdivision.
 9. Gordon Whitnall, 'Zoning Rules Are Explained', *Los Angeles Times*, July 22, 1923; 'How to Choose Site for Home', *Los Angeles Times*, August 12, 1923.
 10. 'Plans Hearing for Zoning in Wilshire', *Los Angeles Times*, October, 31, 1920; Gordon Whitnall, 'History of Zoning Told', *Los Angeles Times*, November 18, 1923.
 11. On multi-family zoning being accommodating, see 'Zoning Change Yields Activity', *Los Angeles Times*, October 28, 1928; on multi-family zoning being too permissive, see 'Zone Condition Draws Protest', *Los Angeles Times*, December 2, 1928.
 12. 'Providing Space for the Newcomer', *Southern California Business* 7, no. 6 (1928): 22.
 13. Petition No. 4859, 1928 (Box A-0373 Los Angeles City Archives), from G.H. Woodruff, 'suggesting that if any changes are made, that restrictions be modified instead of increased'; Petition No. 4890, 1928 (Box A-0373 LACA), from Los Angeles Realty Board; Petition No. 5119, 1928 (Box A-0374 LACA), from the Wilshire District Chamber of Commerce, 'that this change would place too much authority in the hands of one body'; Petition No. 5150, 1928 (Box A-0374), from Wilshire Boulevard Association; Petition No. 5201, 1928 (Box A-0374 LACA), from the Northwest Chamber of Commerce; Petition No. 5410, 1928 (Box A-0375 LACA), from Alexander and Nathan.
 14. Frederick Law Olmstead, Harland Bartholomew, and Charles Henry Cheney for the Committee on the Los Angeles Plan of Major Highways of the Traffic Commission of the City and County of Los Angeles, *A Major Traffic Street Plan for Los Angeles* (Los Angeles, CA: City of Los Angeles, May 1924), 34–46.
 15. C.A. Dykstra, 'Congestion De Luxe – Do We Want It?', *National Municipal Review* 15, no. 7 (1926): 394–8, 395.
 16. Efficiency Director of the Department of Water and Power C.A. Dykstra citing the Kelker-DeLeuw 'Report on Rapid Transit' in Dykstra 1926: 397–398.
 17. Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning *Annual Report*, 1929–1930, 49.
 18. 'Notes and Events', *National Municipal Review* 13, no. 5 (1924): 318.
 19. Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning *Annual Report*, 1927–1928, 6.
 20. 'Too Much Business Zoning', *Los Angeles Times*, October 10, 1928.
 21. George H. Coffin Jr., 'Appraising Property Zoned for Business', *Journal of the American Institute of Real Estate Appraisers* 3, no. 1 (1934): 29–33.
 22. Section 4 of the ordinance provided for exceptions to zoning rules, what would come to be known as variances. Problematically, as this code only regulated use and not bulk or density in all but Zone 'A', variances in practice amounted to zone changes, see Los Angeles (City), Ordinance 42666, adopted 19 October 1921.
 23. 'Association Hits Zoning Alteration', *Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 1925.
 24. City Attorney to City Planning Commission in Los Angeles (City) City Planning Commission *Minutes*, Vol. 6, August 6, 1925: 101–3; Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 42666, adopted 19 October 21, Section 4.
 25. 'Los Angeles City Plan Association Honors Gordon Whitnall', *Pacific Municipalities* 44, no. 7 (1930): 252; 'Notes and Events', 318.
 26. 'Zoning Graft in Wilshire District Told', *Los Angeles Times*, December 17, 1938; the York Valley Taxpayers Association referred to spot-zoning as a 'racket' in its resolution for amending Section 4 of the zoning code in Resolution of York Valley Taxpayers Association to City Council, 12 September 1932, in Petition No. 4224, 1932 (Box A-0526 LACA).
 27. Edward Bassett, 'Spot Zoning', *City Planning* 6, no. 3 (1930): 229–30.
 28. 'Record in Property Values', *Southern California Business* 8, no. 4 (1929): 30.
 29. 'Realty Board Sifts Zoning', *Los Angeles Times*, September 19, 1926.
 30. 'Too Much Business Zoning', *Los Angeles Times*, October 10, 1928.

31. Carl Bush, 'Zoning, Its Possibilities, Purposes, and Difficulties', *Los Angeles Realtor* VII, 9 June 1928, 24, 28–32 (24).
32. Munro, 'A Danger Spot', 203–4.
33. Gordon Whitnall, 'Supply and Demand in Zoning', 109, quoted in Weiss, *The Rise of the Community*, 104.
34. See 'Survey' of John P. Nield, 29 June 1933, in Petition No. 6374, 1932 (Box A-0539 LACA).
35. 'Factors Cited in Appraisals', *Los Angeles Times*, March 4, 1928; City Planning Commission to Edward W. Hopkins, Los Angeles County Assessor, 12 April 1932, in Petition No. 1830, 1932 (Box A-0516 LACA).
36. Donald M. Baker, 'Zoning, Taxation and Assessments', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 155, Part II (1931): 137–144 (141).
37. 'Zoning Regulation Change is Opposed', *Los Angeles Times*, November 14, 1922; 'Zoning Change Protested', *Los Angeles Times*, January 27, 1924, 24.
38. 'Councilmen's Zoning Action is Approved', *Los Angeles Times*, April 29, 1923.
39. Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning *Annual Report*, 1930–1931, 12.
40. Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning *Annual Report*, 1932–1933, 14; Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning *Annual Report*, 1928, 6.
41. 'Unbalanced City Zoning Disclosed by Engineer', *Los Angeles Times*, December 7, 1935.
42. The FHA also incorporated social characteristics into its evaluations such as the presence of minorities, with this reflecting the social norms of the days. See Kenneth Jackson's discussion of FHA lending standards in Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 197–203.
43. See Weiss, *The Rise of the Community*.
44. Harvey Molotch, 'The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place', *The American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 2 (1976): 309–32.
45. Clarence Stone, 'Urban Regimes and the Capacity to Govern: A Political Economy Approach', in *Power in the City: Clarence Stone and the Politics of Inequality*, ed. Marion Orr (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2008), 76–107, 96–97.
46. Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning *Annual Report*, 1934–1935, 17–20.
47. *Ibid.*, 20.
48. Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning *Annual Report*, 1937–1938, 15.
49. Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning *Annual Report*, 1946–1947, 44.
50. 'Zoning Code Amended on Apartment Houses', *Los Angeles Times*, February 3, 1948.
51. See, for example, Communication No. 14773 (Box A-827 LACA) on rezoning 3.5 square miles in Playa del Rey; in industrial Wilmington near the port, the City Planning Commission continued the work began in 1933 to reduce the amount of commercial zoning, rezoning much of the area for residential property to accommodate incoming defence workers and arguing that '...the proposed zoning map should afford sufficient protection to encourage the FHA to insure loans and reputable lending agencies to finance multiple residential improvements...' in a letter to the City Council, 27 September 1943, in Communication No. 15797 (Box A-834 LACA); Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 83070, adopted 23 December 1943.
52. 'Growing Pains of a Great City: Sensational Development of Westchester Outlined', *Los Angeles Daily News*, October 19, 1941; 'Westchester District Sets New Development Standard', *Los Angeles Times*, June 7, 1942; 'City Planning Ideas Realized in Southwest Development', *Los Angeles Times*, September 20, 1942.
53. Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning 'San Fernando Valley' in *Annual Report*, 1942–1943, n.p.
54. 'Hear Petition', *Van Nuys News*, November 6, 1947, clipping in Communication No. 30314 (Box A-945 LACA); in the Sepulveda district, opposition to the extension of commercial zoning was based on preferences for suburban living; see Communication No. 30314 (Box A-945 LACA).
55. See petition to the City Council, 31 August 1948, in Communication No. 34603 (Box A-978 LACA) in support of extended commercial zoning in the Sepulveda district and asking why 'shoe stringing' is to be avoided in light of the automobile.

56. Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning *Annual Report*, 1949–1950, 4.
57. Babcock, *The Zoning Game*, 120.
58. Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning *Annual Report*, 1954–1955, 20.
59. The city introduced the ‘RS’ Residential Suburban zone in 1950 mandating a 7500-square-foot lot minimum; see Communications No. 44357 (Box A-1053 LACA), Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 97201, adopted 27 October 1950, Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning *Annual Report*, 1949–1950, 2, 36; for early examples of rezoning to the ‘RS’ designation, see Communications Nos. 50990 (Box A-1115 LACA), 56766 (Box A-1167 LACA), 57254 (Box A-1172 LACA), and 58042 (Box A-1181 LACA); regarding the ‘RE’ Residential Estate Zone, see Communication No. 66318 (Box A-1266 LACA), Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 105652, adopted 24 May 1955, and Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning *Annual Report*, 1954–1955, 14.
60. Fred E. Case and James Gilles, ‘Some Aspects of Land Planning: The San Fernando Valley Case’, *The Appraisal Journal* 23, no. 1 (1955): 14–41.
61. Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning *Annual Report*, 1957–1958, 10.
62. Los Feliz Improvement Association to City Council, 24 October 1962, in Council File 110260 (Box A-1737 LACA).
63. Council File 110260 (Box A-1737 LACA).
64. Concerning Height District 1-VL, see Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 145486, adopted 2 January 1974; concerning Height District 1-XL, see Council File 77-2251 (Box B-814 LACA) and Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 151564, adopted 21 September 1978.
65. Council File 115144 (Box A-1796 LACA); Council File 117977 (Box A-1829 LACA); Council File 117977 S1 (Box A-1829 LACA); Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 127777, adopted 16 June 1964; Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 130132, adopted 17 May 1965.
66. ‘Zoning Plan Protested as “\$40,000 Slum”’, *Los Angeles Times*, June 3, 1969.
67. Jackson, *Land Use in America*, 35.
68. Council File 141493 (Box A-2166 LACA); Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 140934, adopted 3 September 1970; Council File 71-1902 (Box A-2401 LACA); Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 142690, adopted 3 November 1971 allowed the Planning Commission to recommend changes of ‘M’ classified land to ‘MR’.
69. Council File 97189 (Box A-1589 LACA); Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 117399, adopted 19 October 1960.
70. ‘For Mayor of Los Angeles’, *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 15, 1961.
71. ‘1200 Petition Against Porter Ranch Zoning’, *Los Angeles Times*, September 26, 1963; Al Thrasher, ‘Recall Threatened in Ranch Zoning Battle’, *Los Angeles Times*, January 16, 1964.
72. ‘Encino Put on Partial Zoning Freeze’, *Los Angeles Times*, March 12, 1961.
73. Frank Riley, ‘The Cry to Save Los Angeles: Is Anyone Listening?’, *Los Angeles* 10 (December 1965): 42–45, 45.
74. Irv Burleigh, ‘Encinians Choose Up Sides in War over Development’, *Los Angeles Times*, February 9, 1967.
75. Walt Secor, ‘Sherman Way Zoning Proposal Draws Fire’, *Los Angeles Times*, August 13, 1964.
76. ‘Sylmar Group Seeks Zoning Moratorium’, *Los Angeles Times*, November 6, 1960.
77. Fulton, *The Reluctant Metropolis*.
78. Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning *Annual Report*, 1961–1962, 115.
79. Sid Bernstein, ‘GRIPERs Push for Zoning Committee’, *Los Angeles Times*, July 25, 1963.
80. Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning *Annual Report*, 1963, 22; Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning *Annual Report*, 1963–1964, 26.
81. George Garrigues, ‘Foster Home Zoning Rule May be Eased’, *Los Angeles Times*, March 22, 1966; Erwin Baker, ‘Council Liberalizes Foster Home Zoning’, *Los Angeles Times*, April 13, 1966; ‘Council Would Waive Zoning for Head Start’, *Los Angeles Times*, February 24, 1966.
82. The ordinance increased the parking requirement in single-family zones from one space to two and in multi-family zones from one space per unit to one space per any unit of one or two habitable rooms, one and a half spaces per any unit of three habitable rooms, and two spaces for any unit

- of over three rooms. See Council File 105311 (Box A-1677 LACA) and Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 122273, adopted 12 June 1962.
83. Council File 116846 (Box A-1816 LACA); Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 129334, adopted 19 January 1965.
 84. See motion, 21 August 1969, in Council File 146712 (Box A-2237 LACA); Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning Staff Report and City Planning Commission Recommendation for 30 October 1969 in Council File 146712 (Box A-2237 LACA); Building Industry Association of California to John S. Gibson, 27 January 1970, in Council File 146712 (Box A-2237 LACA).
 85. Ray Wyatt quoted in Robert Seaver, 'The albatross of localism', *House and Home* 24, no. 6 (December 1963): 99–107, 195, 198–199, 202–203 (195).
 86. 'Zoning Called No. 1 Hurdle in Building Low Cost Housing', *Los Angeles Times*, October 10, 1967.
 87. 'Zoning Regulations Hamper Land Use', *Los Angeles Times*, April 2, 1961; 'Premise Behind Zoning Laws Obsolete, City Planners Charge', *Los Angeles Times*, September 24, 1961; 'Zoning Waived in Favor of Optimum Land Use', *Los Angeles Times*, February 18, 1962.
 88. Ron Einstoss, 'Tighter Zoning Control Needed, Yorty Tells Jury', *Los Angeles Times*, December 9, 1966.
 89. Los Angeles (City) Citizens' Committee on Zoning Practices and Procedures 'First Report to the Mayor and City Council', Vol. 3 of *A Program to Improve Planning and Zoning in Los Angeles* (Los Angeles, CA: City of Los Angeles, 1968), 8–14.
 90. West Valley Property Owners Association to L.E. Timberlake, 11 February 1969, in Council File 132460 (Box A-2015 LACA).
 91. Erwin Baker, 'City Council Approves Zoning-Planning Shifts', *Los Angeles Times*, February 20, 1969; Erwin Baker, 'Planning-Zoning Shift Amendment Ordered', *Los Angeles Times*, February 25, 1969; 'YES on City Zoning Reform', *Los Angeles Times*, May 21, 1969; Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 138800, adopted 29 May 1969; Los Angeles (City), *Charter of the City of Los Angeles as Adopted January, 1925 ... and Amended May, 1969* (Los Angeles, CA: City of Los Angeles, 1969): Article VIII, Sections 95, 95.5, 96.5, 96.6, 97.1, 97.2, 98, and 99; Council File 70-1137 (Box A-2286 LACA); Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 141821, adopted 30 March 1971.
 92. Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning *Annual Report*, 1971–1972, 3.
 93. *Ibid.*
 94. Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning, *Density Adjustment Study: An Examination of Multiple Residential Zoning in the City of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles, CA: City of Los Angeles, May 1972), 55.
 95. Regarding workshop 'Crisis 1972', see 'Zoning is Subject of Two-Day Forum', *Los Angeles Times*, August 20, 1972.
 96. Jon Pastier, 'City Plan Concept "Predicated Upon Dangerous Gamble"', *Los Angeles Times*, February 15, 1970.
 97. 'Role of Planning' in Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning *Annual Report*, 1969–1970, n.p.
 98. Most down-zoning took the form of rezoning multi-family 'R3' districts to one of the 'Residential Density' districts, an action the Department of City Planning argued satisfied the community plans comprising the General Plan's Land Use Element but still promised to provide more affordable, multi-family options, see Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning 'Staff Report' on Residential Density zones, 8 August 1974, in Council File 117977-S2 (Box A-1829 LACA).
 99. AB 283 (Thomas, 1978); Los Angeles' tradition of home rule had enabled it to circumvent the state requirement that zoning conform to the General Plans in existence since AB 1301 (McCarthy, 1971).
 100. Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning *Annual Report*, 1985, 16.
 101. Council File 71-2915 (Box A-2424 LACA); Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 145927, adopted 16 December 1971.
 102. Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 156279, adopted 12 January 1982.
 103. In *The Reluctant Metropolis*, Fulton reported that in 1978, before Proposition 13, the cities of Oxnard, Ventura, and Camarillo collected 8 million in property taxes and 10 million in sales taxes. One year later, they were collecting 3.7 million in property tax and 12 million in sales tax.

- With Proposition 13, Fulton argues, retail became the ‘cash crop’ of California cities, see Fulton, *The Reluctant Metropolis*, 260–3.
104. Los Angeles (City) Department of City Planning, *Housing Element: An Element of the General Plan of the City of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: City of Los Angeles, December 1986), 46.
 105. Bill Boyarsky, ‘Easing L.A. Zoning, Rent Controls Urged’, *Los Angeles Times*, July 8, 1980.
 106. Council File 83-1020 (Box C-692 LACA); Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 159532, adopted 20 November 1984.
 107. Council File 81-6052 (Box C-123 LACA); Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 161716, adopted 6 December 1986.
 108. Jack Birkinshaw, ‘Cities May Open Door to “Granny Housing”’, *Los Angeles Times*, July 18, 1982. SB 1160 (Mello, 1981).
 109. Council File 82-0229-S3 (Box C-465 LACA); Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 159599, adopted 21 December 1984.
 110. California State Department of Housing and Community Development *State Density Bonus Law* (Sacramento, 1986), 1.
 111. Barbara Taylor, ‘Inclusionary Zoning under Study’, *Los Angeles Times*, August 16, 1981.
 112. Robert de Alameda quoted in Don G. Campbell, ‘Inclusionary Zoning Becomes Tidal Wave’, *Los Angeles Times*, August 17, 1980.
 113. See report of Intergovernmental Relations Committee Item 5, 12 December 1988, and attachments 1–5, in Council File 88-2194 (Box C-2149 LACA).
 114. See report of Intergovernmental Relations Committee Item 5, 12 December 1988, and attachments 1–5, in Council File 88-2194 (Box C-2149 LACA).
 115. AB 1863 (Hauser, 1989); regarding city conformance with the new density bonus legislation, see Council File 90-1034 (Box C-2408, LACA); the density bonus programme has again been altered by SB 1818 (Hollingsworth, 2005) to allow a by-right 20% density bonus given the reservation of 5% of units for very low-income households with a 2.5% additional bonus for every additional percentage point reserved up to a maximum density bonus of 35%. Alternatively, it allows a by-right 20% density bonus given the reservation of 10% of units for low-income households with a 1.5% additional bonus for every additional percentage point reserved up to a maximum density bonus of 35%. A minimum density bonus of 5% can also be granted given the reservation of 10% of units for medium-income earners in condominium projects, with a 1% additional bonus for every additional percentage point reserved up to a maximum density bonus of 35%.
 116. Rich Connell, ‘Prop U Backers See It as Start of Land-Use Revolt’, *Los Angeles Times*, October 12, 1986; Sam Hall Kaplan, ‘Citizens Want a Hand in Zoning’, *Los Angeles Times*, April 6, 1986.
 117. Doug Dowie, ‘Two Councilmen Take Initiative on Zoning Law’, *Los Angeles Daily News*, March 23, 1986.
 118. See Council File 86-1090 (LA City Clerk Connect, <http://cityclerk.lacity.org/lacityclerkconnect/>); *Arnel Development Co. v. City of Costa Mesa* 28 Cal 3d 511 (1980) ruled that an initiative could be used to rezone any property regardless of its size, paving the way for initiatives such as Proposition U.
 119. Connell, ‘Prop U Backers See It’.
 120. Rich Connell, ‘Prop U Backers Hit Mail Hard to Blunt Critics’, *Los Angeles Times*, October 31, 1986.
 121. Ibid.
 122. Ibid.
 123. Kaplan, ‘Citizens Want a Hand’.
 124. *Friends of Westwood v. Los Angeles* 191 Cal. App. 3d 259 (1987); Dan Shapiro, ‘Citizen Review Now Can Save Zoning Outrage Later’, *Los Angeles Times*, August 4, 1988.
 125. Motion, 10 June 1987, and report of Mayor Tom Bradley, 27 July 1987, in Council File 87-0986 (Box C-1707 LACA).
 126. Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 165951, adopted 29 May 1990.

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128. Robert Greene, 'Power to the Valley', *L.A. Weekly*, December 12, 2003, 28.
129. *Ibid.*
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132. Editorial, 'Breaking the Code; "Local Control" Means the Valley Wants a Say in Zoning Issues. What a Concept!', *Los Angeles Daily News*, November 17, 1998.
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135. Juliet Musso et al., *Toward Community Engagement in City Governance: Evaluating Neighborhood Council Reform in Los Angeles*, Civic Engagement Initiative (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, 2007).
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141. *Ibid.*
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144. University of Southern California, Southern California Study Center and the Brookings Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, 'Sprawl Hits the Wall', 1.
145. *Ibid.*, 43.
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152. Council File 99-1753 (LA City Clerk Connect).
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154. Residential Accessory Services zones 'RAS3', permitting 'R3' residential uses, and 'RAS4', permitting 'R4' residential uses, see Los Angeles (City) City Planning Commission to the Planning and Land Use Management Committee of City Council, 3 June 2002, in Council File 02-1240 (Box B-2914 LACA); Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 174999, adopted 26 November 2002.
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157. Council File 02-0177 (LA City Clerk Connect); Ordinance 175038, adopted 20 December 2002.
158. Jane Blumenfeld, 'L.A. Zoning Turns 100?'
159. Los Angeles (City) Ordinance 171427, adopted 20 November 1996.
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