


LOS ANGELES 2010

**ANNUAL STATE OF
THE CITY REPORT**

A Publication of the Pat Brown Institute



Dear Readers:

It gives us great pleasure to welcome you to our 2010 edition of the *Los Angeles: State of the City Report*. As the title implies, the publication is an annual enterprise of the Pat Brown Institute of Public Affairs.

Los Angeles is the nation's second most heavily populated city; it has a formidable economy, albeit a troubled one, that provides a financial base for the nation's largest state economy, helping California attain its status as one of the largest economies in the world. The city is arguably one of the most culturally diverse cities in the nation and, indeed, the world. This remarkable place can be analyzed and described in many ways and each perspective opens an exciting new window to its rich, social, political, economic, and cultural dynamics. In this report, regional experts offer substantive discussions on various issues that affect the quality of life in Los Angeles. We have purposefully moved away from the idea of a scorecard, since it leaves out much needed discussion regarding how we come to know and evaluate our city.

In the 2010 edition of the State of the City Report, we have asked eight Los Angeles experts to offer their opinions on economy, immigration, housing, politics, sustainability, transportation, water, and health. Though not intended as a comprehensive coverage of every topic, this report attempts to initiate a dialogue around important challenges and opportunities that face our city and its residents. An expanded version of this report will be made available during our Annual California Policy Issues Conference in November 2010.

We are proud and delighted to present you with this sixth annual report. We hope that you find this and future reports informative and useful.

We are grateful for the support of the **John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation** who made the 2010 State of the City Report possible.

Sincerely,

Jaime A. Regalado, Ph.D.
Executive Director, Pat Brown Institute

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STATE OF THE LOS ANGELES ECONOMY

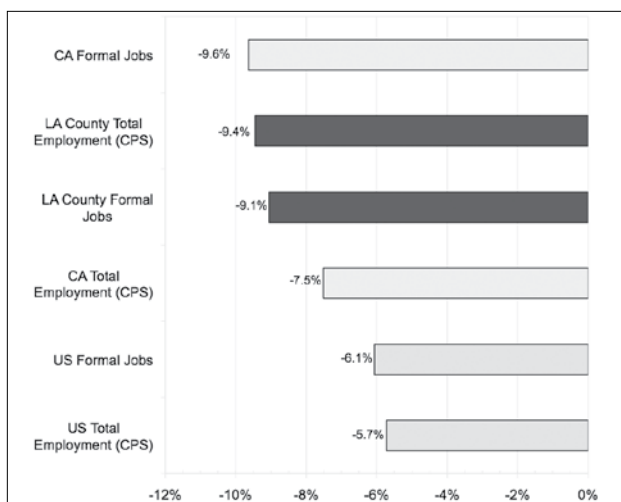
DANIEL FLAMING, President, Economic Roundtable

Employment

The most concrete characteristics of a recession are that demand disappears for some of the commodities produced by workers and unwanted unemployment is imposed on a large segment of the labor force. Loss of jobs causes much of the destructive impact of recessions. When families lose the income and social inclusion provided by employment, they are more likely to sink into poverty, require public assistance, lose their homes, experience family dysfunctions, and have increased susceptibility to health problems.

Job losses in the current recession are much more severe in Los Angeles than in the nation as a whole. This recession, begun after the economy peaked in December 2007¹, appears to be as severe as the 1990 recession, from which Los Angeles has yet to recover. When we look at the first 24 months of the current recession (Figure 1), we see that over 9% of jobs were lost in Los Angeles County – losses that slightly exceed the first 2 years of the 1990 recession. Compared with California, Los Angeles lost more jobs in its total labor market, which includes self-employed and informal workers, but retained more of its jobs in the formal economy, where employers report earnings to the government and pay taxes.

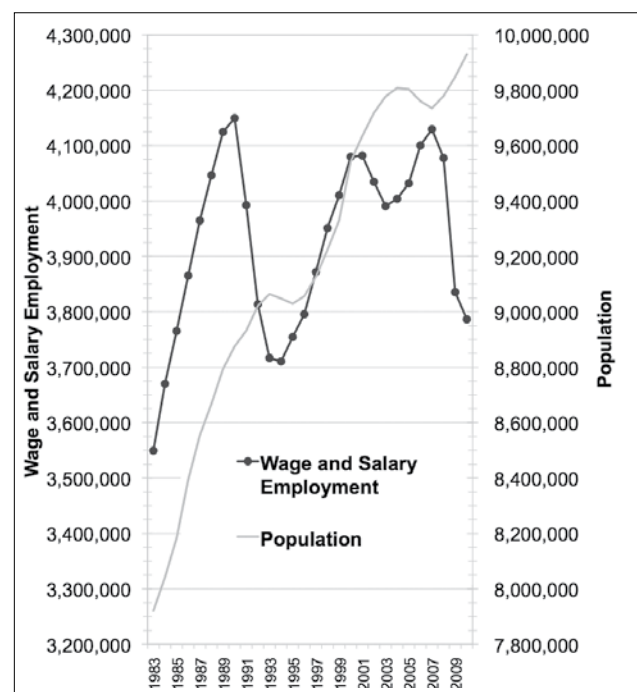
Fig 1. Change in Los Angeles County Employment December 2007-December 2009



Sources: California Employment Development Department, U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics.

Loss of jobs caused by the recession compounds an already inadequate supply of jobs in Los Angeles. Job growth in LA's formal economy has not kept pace with population growth (Figure 2). From 1990 to 2007, Los Angeles County's population grew 11%, but employment in the formal economy declined 8%.

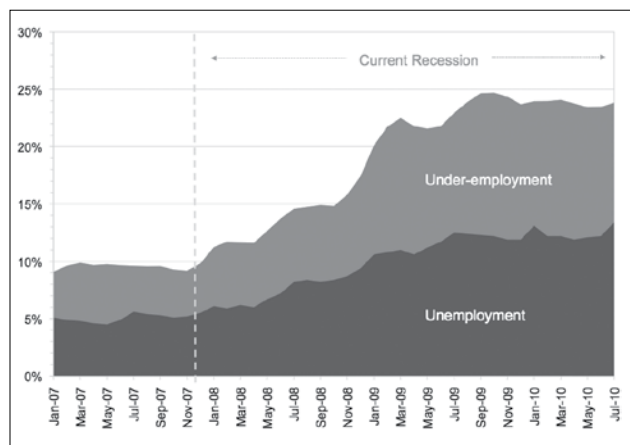
Fig 2. Los Angeles County Population and Jobs 1983-2010



Source: Population data from U.S. Census Bureau, employment data from California Employment Development Department.

Los Angeles County's *unemployment* rate in July 2010 was 13.9% and the *under-employment* rate was 25.5%. While *unemployment* rates are commonly used to depict changing economic conditions, *under-employment* rates are a more comprehensive measure of labor market conditions and workforce participation. *Under-employment* rates include both unemployed and under-utilized workers participating in the labor force and marginalized workers not included in the labor force²—which is often referred to as “hidden unemployment.” The *under-employment* rate in Los Angeles is roughly equal to the *unemployment* rate (Figure 3).

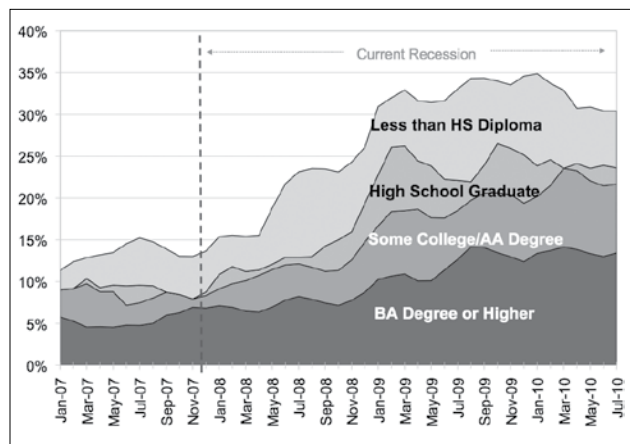
Fig 3. Los Angeles County Unemployment and Under-Employment Rates January 2007–July 2010



Notes: Unemployment rates for the labor force are from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and are not seasonally adjusted. December 2009 BLS unemployment rates for the labor force are preliminary figures. Under-employment rates are derived from the Economic Roundtable's analysis of Current Population Survey (CPS) data and use a 3-month moving average.

The hardship of labor force marginalization and exclusion is not borne equally by workers. Workers without a high school diploma have unemployment rates that are 40% higher than the overall labor force, and workers with college degrees have rates that are 48% lower than for the overall labor force (Figure 4).

Fig 4. Los Angeles County Under-Employment Rates January 2007–July 2010 by Level of Education

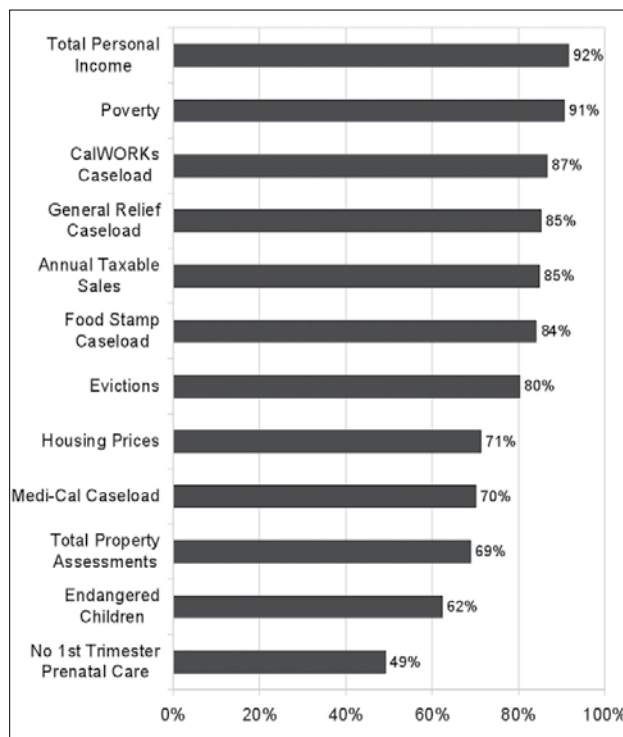


Notes: Under-employment rates for the labor force are derived from the Economic Roundtable's analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Current Population Survey (CPS) data, using a 3-month moving average and are not seasonally adjusted.

Not only are the least educated workers more likely to be marginally attached to or completely detached from work than other workers, they average the shortest workweek and experience the greatest decline in work hours during economic downturns.³

There is a broad range of social problems, including poverty that increase and decline together with changes in the number of workers who have jobs. Over the past 20 years, changes in levels of poverty and social dependency have been closely tied to changes in employment (Figure 5). Evictions, home prices, and the property tax base also closely track changes in employment. Nearly two thirds of all changes in the number of allegations of endangered children, and half of all changes in the share of pregnant women who do not receive first trimester prenatal care are tied to increases and decreases in the level of unemployment. Evidence from the current recession shows that the link between loss of jobs and these indicators of social distress remains strong.

Fig 5. Proportion of Change in Social Indicators Linked to Change in Employment



Source: Adjusted r-squared value for the proportion of change in social indicators that occurs concurrently with change in employment, 1988–2008 and 2009.

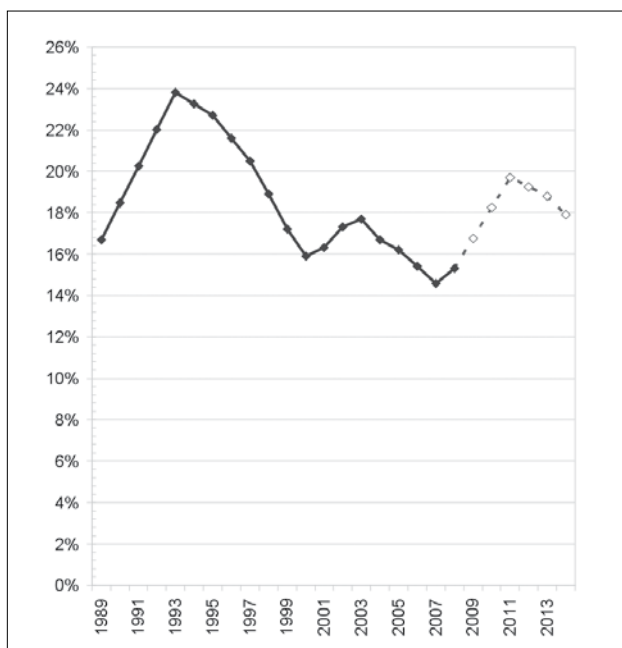
Poverty

Changes in poverty correlate closely with changes in total employment. Poverty causes lasting harm to the social cohesion and human capital of communities. This harm includes diminished health and well-being, unfulfilled educational potential, social isolation, child welfare emergencies, mental health emergencies, and homelessness. Inability to safeguard residents from this kind of catastrophic damage will harm the trust that binds Los Angeles together.

Fortunately, the poverty rate entering the current recession was 3.5 percentage points lower than the rate at the beginning of the 1990 recession, quite possibly reflecting the economic progress that has been achieved by immigrant workers. The lower poverty rate at the beginning of this recession means that even though the poverty rate is likely to increase significantly, it is unlikely to go as high as in the 1990 recession, when it reached 24%.

Job losses in the first 2 years of the current recession exceed losses of the 1990 recession, suggesting that the rate of increase in poverty in the current recession may at least equal the rate of increase in the 1990 recession. Applying the rate of poverty increase in the 1990 recession to the current recession, Los Angeles County's poverty rate is projected to reach 19.7% in 2011 (Figure 6). This recession is projected to bring two million residents of Los Angeles County into poverty.⁶

Fig 6. LA's Poverty Rate Projected to Reach 19.7%



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Small Area Poverty Estimates and Economic Roundtable projections.

Poverty rates for adults without a high school diploma are twice as high as the overall poverty rate. This means that 40% of Los Angeles adults who are not high school graduates are projected to be in poverty when the peak impacts of the recession are felt. The economic wreckage from this recession is likely to include high poverty rates that persist for 2 years *after* unemployment starts declining.

Recommendations

Communities that have come of age are able to make decisions that shape their future and safeguard their well-being. One critical measure of Los Angeles' standing in 2010, the third year of a severe recession, is its capability to take actions that preserve the foundations of shared well-being.

Much of the job destruction and ensuing vulnerability that occurs in recessions is blind to social needs; productive industries, firms and workers are marooned by shrinking markets. For example, many construction workers who were building much needed housing three years ago are now jobless and their families are scrambling to survive, despite a persistent housing shortage.

Government influence over the trajectory of the economy is at least as great during economic downturns as during times of growth. Strategic regulatory and budget decisions, and use of special funds designated for redevelopment and job creation can have the effect of nudging the economy toward greater sustainability.

Los Angeles risks lasting damage to its social cohesion and human capital through the harm this recession is causing to children and families. This harm includes the hardships of poverty, child welfare emergencies and homelessness. Safeguarding people from catastrophic damage is at the heart of the trust that holds society together and gives government legitimacy. This includes using society's resources fairly and effectively to protect members from suffering arbitrary, life-altering misfortune in a disaster.

Los Angeles and California will have serious revenue shortfalls through at least the 2010–2011 fiscal year, an interval when many residents will have critical needs for state-funded services. Seven actions are recommended to address the need for economic growth and increased public revenue:

1. *Enact temporary taxes for unhealthy consumer items* – Enact a temporary tax targeting unhealthy products that directly contribute to state healthcare costs, including all sales of alcohol, tobacco, sodas, and junk food.
2. *Enact fee for served alcohol* – Enact a per drink fee for served drinks.

3. *Collect taxes on the informal economy* – Bring the barter and cash economies into the formal economy through regulation and taxation. Collect taxes on services and goods produced by 16% of LA County's labor force that is informally employed, including workers in food service, construction, street vending, nondurable manufacturing, and arts and entertainment.
4. *Create a pool of revolving funds for green retrofits of buildings* – This recommendation is revenue neutral, creating jobs that pay for themselves through energy saving and power generation from retrofitted buildings, with cost savings recycled to pay for more retrofits and more jobs.
5. *Enact a severance tax on oil* – California is the only major oil producing state that does not tax oil that is taken out of the ground. A tax as low as 6% would raise roughly a billion dollars a year.⁶
6. *Encourage participation in education and training* – The harsh labor market reality is that there are fewer jobs than there are workers. Within the limits of whatever policy and budget discretion is available, unemployed workers and prospective new entrants into the labor market should be encouraged to invest in their own human capital by participating in vocational training and formal education, thereby improving their future productivity and earnings potential, while reducing the number of idle workers. Continued funding of community colleges and adult education programs is necessary to meet these education and training needs. In addition, facilitating the participation of welfare-to-work parents in education and training will help their families move toward long-term self-sufficiency.
7. *Make land use, economic development, and educational decisions that increase sustainable employment and earnings:*⁷
 - Understand industry strengths and monitor trends to identify key industries.
 - Make land use decisions that support growth of key industries.
 - Create industry forums with industry stakeholders from key sectors.
 - Preserve a stable and competitive environment for key industries.
 - Intervene in measured ways to avert decline in key industries.
 - Use government purchasing power to support growth in key local industries.

- Prioritize infrastructure improvements to help key industries.
- Use strategic infrastructure assets to leverage value-added activity and jobs.
- Take measured, efficient steps to make business capital available to targeted industries in targeted communities.
- Help residents get good jobs through training and employment initiatives.

NOTES

¹ National Bureau of Economic Research (December 1, 2008) U.S. Business Cycle Expansions and Contractions, <http://www.nber.org/>

² Under-employment includes four categories of workers: (1) unemployed workers who are actively looking for a job, (2) employed workers who usually work full-time but have been reduced to part-time work, (3) discouraged workers – persons who are not currently looking for a job because they believe there are none available or none for which they would qualify, but they want and are available for work and have looked for work sometime in the last 12 months, and (4) conditionally interested workers – persons who want to work but who have not looked for work recently because they face barriers to employment, such as lack of transportation or child care.

³ Economic Roundtable (2009), *Ebbing Tides in the Golden State*, p. 26, www.economicrt.org.

⁴ Economic Roundtable (2009), *Ebbing Tides in the Golden State*, p. 55, www.economicrt.org.

⁵ Economic Roundtable (2009), *Ebbing Tides in the Golden State*, p. 52, www.economicrt.org.

⁶ Hiltzik, Michael (2009, June 15), *A California tax on oil drilling? Why not?* Los Angeles Times, pp. B-1.

⁷ For a more extensive discussion of public economic development strategies, including criteria for weighing both risks and benefits of applying strategies to specific industries, see: Economic Roundtable (2007), *Briefing Paper: Planning Economic Growth*, <http://www.economicrt.org/>

IMMIGRANTS AND THE NEW MATURITY OF LOS ANGELES

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Los Angeles has been the nation's major immigrant-receiving city of the last half century, just as New York was the major gateway of the early 20th century. However, in the new century, the rapid growth of immigration has ended and past waves of immigrants have successfully settled in. Los Angeles is not returning to the past; rather, the city is advancing to a more stable and rewarding immigrant future, one that reflects its new maturity. What does the new era imply about the prospects for immigrant integration in Los Angeles? What are its lessons for citizen-voters and policy makers?

LOS ANGELES: THE LEADER IN IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENT

For several decades, Los Angeles has led the nation in immigrant settlement (Fix, McHugh, Matteo Terrazas, & Laglagaron, 2008), but it was not always that way. Los Angeles' current demographic profile was formed in just 20 years between 1970 and 1990, when the foreign-born population rose from 14.6% to 38.4% of residents (Table 1). Compared with New York City, Los Angeles had a much lower foreign-born share in 1970, but by 1990 Los Angeles had become more attractive to newcomers and its foreign-born share (38.4%) had surpassed New York's (28.4%).

Table 1. Comparison of Foreign-Born Population Growth in Los Angeles and New York

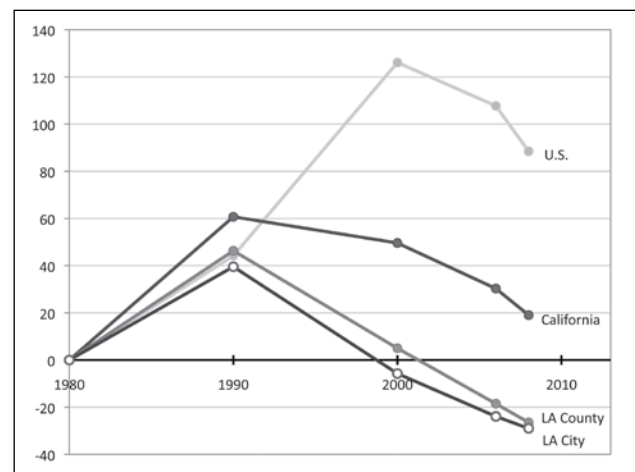
	Number of Recent Foreign-Born Arrivals Within Last 10 Years			Percentage Change	
	1970	1990	2008*	1970 - 1990	1990 - 2008*
Los Angeles City	171,865	754,366	424,059	338.9	-43.8
Los Angeles County	333,800	1,526,142	833,721	357.2	-45.4
New York City	463,218	953,449	870,568	105.8	-8.7
United States	2,859,400	8,663,627	12,458,766	203.0	43.8
	Share (%) of Total Population That Is Foreign Born			Increase in Share	
	1970	1990	2008	1970 - 1990	1990 - 2008*
Los Angeles City	14.6	38.4	39.4	23.8	1.0
Los Angeles County	11.4	32.7	35.2	21.3	2.5
New York City	18.2	28.4	36.4	10.2	7.9
United States	4.8	7.9	12.5	3.2	4.5

Note: Recent foreign-born arrivals are current residents who arrived in the preceding 10 years; the reported number in 2008 is adjusted to a decade equivalent.

Source: U.S. Census, 1970, 1990; American Community Survey, 2008.

In contrast to this history of rapid immigrant growth, the rate of new arrivals to Los Angeles has slowed since 1990 (Figure 1), and the total foreign-born population has begun to level off. The 60% increase in immigration to California between 1980 and 1990 caused fears among voters that the state would be swamped with immigrants. This perception persists today in some quarters, even though after 1990 immigration began to level off in California, and after 2000 it declined substantially. This deceleration has been especially pronounced in Los Angeles, where by 2000 new immigrant arrivals had fallen below levels of the late 1970s. California was on a different track than the rest of the nation, because the deep recession of the 1990s diverted new arrivals to other destinations with better job opportunities.

Figure 1. Percentage Change Since 1980 in Annual Immigrant Arrivals



Source: U.S. Census, 1980, 1990, 2000; American Community Survey, 2006, 2008.

The authors benefited from support of the USC School of Policy, Planning, and Development and its Population Dynamics Research Group. Research funding from the Haynes Foundation is most gratefully acknowledged.

The net result for the City of Los Angeles is that the foreign-born population ceased its rapid expansion. Between 1990 and 2000, the foreign-born population grew by only 13.5%, reaching 1.512 million (or 40.9% of the total population). By 2008, the foreign-born population had leveled off and even slightly declined to 1.486 million,¹ according to the most recent available data (Table 2).² At the same time, the percentage foreign born had fallen to 39.0%, a statistically significant decline.³ This marks the end of four decades of rapid growth in the immigrant population. We now need a new understanding of the foreign-born population in a maturing Los Angeles.

Table 2. Number and Percentage of Immigrants in Los Angeles City

	1980	1990	2000	2008
Foreign-Born Population	802,920	1,331,536	1,511,701	1,498,184
Total Population	2,978,260	3,468,546	3,695,444	3,803,383
Percentage Foreign Born	27.0%	38.4%	40.9%	39.4%
Percentage Change in Foreign Born		65.8%	13.5%	-0.9%

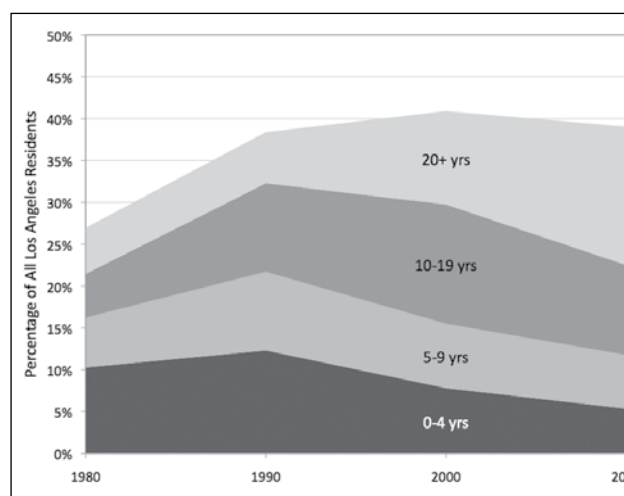
Source: U.S. Census, 1980, 1990, 2000; American Community Survey, 2008.

A SURGING SETTLEMENT RATIO OF MORE OLDTIMERS AND FEWER NEWCOMERS

Since 1980, immigrants to Los Angeles have come from the same countries and have the same racial composition. Yet the character of Los Angeles's immigrants is changing because their average length of settlement is growing, leading directly to substantial increases in immigrant integration. Once they arrive in Los Angeles, immigrants begin making progress toward learning English, and as they become more settled, increasing numbers of immigrants gain the financial and social capital needed to buy homes. Foreign-born homebuyers are a mainstay of the Los Angeles housing market, accounting for 45.7% of all the homebuyers in the last five years.⁴

Figure 2 shows the percentage of Los Angeles residents who are foreign born, breaking these into the components that are recently arrived and longer settled. The share of residents who are newly arrived immigrants peaked in 1990 at 12% of the total city population and fell to 5% by 2008. Meanwhile, there has been a sharp increase in the share of city residents with more than 10 years of US residence and especially more than twenty years ("long settled"). Long-settled immigrants comprised 42.3% of the foreign born in 2008, nearly triple their share in 1990.

Figure 2. Foreign-Born Population by Length of Residence in Los Angeles City



Source: U.S. Census, 1980, 1990, 2000; American Community Survey, 2006, 2008.

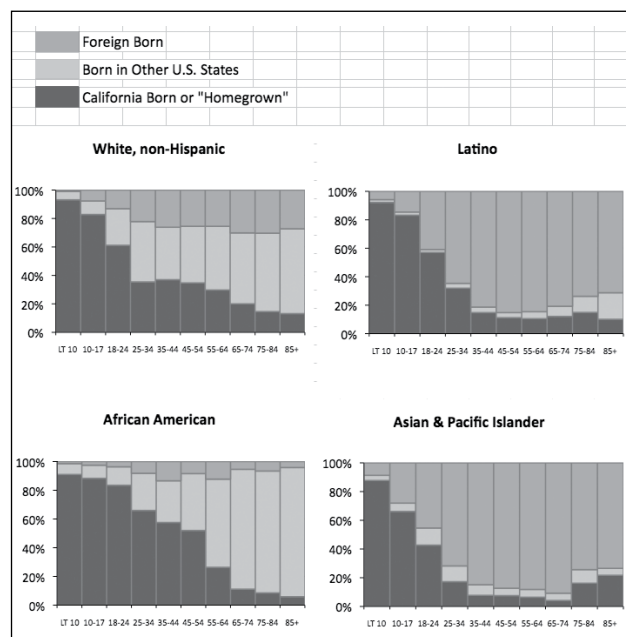
This maturation can also be understood through changes in the "settlement ratio" between the numbers of long-settled and recent immigrants. When new immigrants arrived in 1980 or 1990, they joined a community dominated by other new arrivals. By 2008, the settlement ratio had escalated six-fold, rising from 0.53 oldtimers per newcomer in 1980 to 3.09. With six times as many old hands to help new immigrants incorporate into the city, immigrant communities today have significant advantages over communities in the past.

AGING BABY BOOMERS AND A NEW HOMEGROWN GENERATION

The new maturity of Los Angeles reaches beyond the immigrant population. As immigration slows and immigrants become more settled, Los Angeles's native-born population is rapidly graying. The leading edge of the Baby Boomers is on the threshold of retirement, and the "senior ratio" of older Angelenos to working-age residents⁵ is slated to more than double between 2000 and 2030. This tsunami of aging threatens to flood our economy with too many retirees and home sellers, and overwhelm our government with the needs of aged dependents. The aging crisis is a true emergency, and the children of Los Angeles's immigrants have a crucial role to play. Though a majority of all the children in Los Angeles have immigrant parents (68.3%), 92.4% of all children also were born in the U.S.

The great majority of Los Angeles children are native Californians, or “homegrown,” rather than imported from other states and nations.⁶ This pattern is evident among younger people of all major racial and ethnic groups in Los Angeles, but is much less common among the older generation, as shown in Figure 3. Even with immigrant parents, the new generation is not “foreign.” These are the new native daughters and sons of California, growing up in California schools, and destined to become the future workers, tax payers, and home buyers of California.

Figure 3. Birthplaces of Los Angeles City Residents by Age and Race in 2008 (Percentage of Each Age Group)



Source: American Community Survey, 2008, USC Population Dynamics Research Group, 2010.

CONCLUSION

Demographic change continues so rapidly in Los Angeles that what many think of as “new” is really the pattern that prevailed in 1990. Some changes are so recent that policy makers can scarcely see them, let alone recognize where the change is headed or what it should mean for policy. Five changes mark the new maturity of Los Angeles.

First, immigration remains at the core of Los Angeles’s identity, but fewer new immigrants are entering the city today than at any time since 1970. As a result, the foreign-born population has stopped growing and even begun to slightly decline.

A second change is that Los Angeles’s immigrants are now predominantly long settled. Whereas in 1980 or 1990 there was only one longtime immigrant resident for every two or more newcomers, by 2008 the ratio reversed to three long-settled immigrants for every newcomer. Policy makers have not yet begun to appreciate how this new maturity of immigrant settlement will enhance integration.

Meanwhile, the city’s population is rapidly aging, placing unprecedented importance on the new generation being raised in the city. This third aspect of the new maturity poses grave economic and policy challenges: there are too many people leaving the workforce, too many requiring (and deserving) pensions and healthcare, and too many who are prospective home sellers. The Baby Boomer tsunami threatens to swamp us all.

The fourth facet of the new maturity in Los Angeles is our formation of a new, homegrown generation that has become the majority. Since before the Gold Rush, the people of California have been predominantly drawn from other states and nations. Today Los Angeles’s new generations are born here, with parents who are either immigrants or Baby Boomers. These children are our responsibility, and they in turn will be responsible for us.

Finally, the fate of Los Angeles depends upon our social and political maturity, how we as voters, taxpayers, civic leaders, and responsible citizens will exercise our stewardship. To be fully realized, the new maturity requires a new sense of responsibility for building our shared future.

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NOTES

¹ The 2008 figure has a 90% confidence interval calculated as plus or minus 25,735, indicating that the decline in number is potentially due to sampling variability in the American Community Survey.

² The latest data available from the American Community Survey during the spring/summer of 2010, when this study was conducted, were collected in 2008. In fall 2010, the Census Bureau is scheduled to release data from the 2009 survey, which we anticipate will extend the trends that have been recently observed. An update to key trends reported in the present study will be found on the Population Dynamics Web site at USC. Search for “popdynamics” or go to <http://www.usc.edu/schools/sppd/research/popdynamics/>

³ This percentage has a 90% confidence interval of plus or minus 0.9, indicating that the foreign-born share in 2008 is significantly lower than the share recorded in the 2000 census.

⁴ The immigrant share of home buyers is based on owner occupants who occupied their homes in the last five years, as reported in the 2008 American Community Survey.

⁵ We define the *senior ratio* as the number of residents aged 65 and older divided by residents aged 25 to 64. *Prime working age* is commonly defined as 25 to 64. Granted that many residents over 65 may not be retired, but virtually all will be retired by age 75, and most are eligible for health care and pension benefits by 65. Similarly, many residents may be working before age 25, but most young people are either in school or military, in apprentice positions, or not yet in well-paying jobs. Demographers traditionally use age 15 as the beginnings of working age, but that is more appropriate for a rural, farm labor economy than for our modern society. Certainly these young people cannot be expected to support the elderly or buy their homes.

⁶ The discovery of a new homegrown majority in California was reported in Myers, Pitkin, and Ramirez (2009). Estimates of homegrown status for Los Angeles and other counties in 2010 were presented in Myers and Pitkin with Mawhorter, Goldberg, and Min (2010).

2009, THE TIME IS RIGHT: PUTTING HUMAN RIGHTS INTO CITY HOUSING POLICY¹

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Rising rents, evictions, and high rates of underemployment and unemployment brought anguish and fear to low-income tenants and at-risk owners in 2009. Higher-income people who found themselves jobless and unable to pay their monthly mortgages joined their ranks. The collapse of the housing bubble and the financial crisis clarified that a de facto housing policy based on homeownership was flawed (DeLisle, 2009).² The 1949 U.S. Housing Act called for “the goal of a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family” (Housing Act of 1949, 1949); this and succeeding laws acknowledged that not everyone could afford to be a homeowner. Reinterpreting housing policy as a human rights issue is an alternative analysis that is comprehensive, incorporates an “action” component, and ties to organizing. This framework offers a deeper understanding about the systemic unending crises in housing and the opportunity to change policies that are not serving people equitably.

In 2009, only one event that affected housing policy in the City of Los Angeles was consistent with a human rights framework. The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) sent Raquel Rolnik, a Special Rapporteur, to monitor the state of adequate housing in the United States; Los Angeles was part of an eight-stop tour. In LA, the Housing Rights Collective, a coalition of community-based, housing, and tenant groups, used the findings in their ongoing campaign for housing justice and developed a set of demands built around human rights.

WHAT A HUMAN RIGHTS FRAME INCLUDES

Two main international agencies³ have successfully raised

the visibility of housing injustices and have advocated for the security of tenure, accessibility, affordability, habitability, services, infrastructure, cultural adequacy, and meaningful participation for residents. One is the UNHRC and the other is the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), a nonprofit founded in 1991 and incorporated in 1994. In 1999, COHRE received special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

The early November 2009 visit by Rolnik was the first time the UNHRC sent someone to review the ways in which the United States addresses the right to an adequate standard of living in which housing plays a major role.⁴ The Special Rapporteur’s report puts faces on what might be abstractions. The report recounted one Los Angeles tenant living in slum conditions “with rats, cockroaches, bedbugs, deteriorating piping and lead-based paint,” (Rolnik, 2010, p. 15) all of which are linked to health problems (Lubell, Crain, & Cohen, 2007; Alameda County Public Health Department and Just Cause Oakland, 2009).⁵ The overall findings recognized the “high quality of the majority of housing in the United States” but reported that “millions of people . . . face serious challenges in accessing affordable and adequate housing, issues long faced by the poorest people and today affecting a greater proportion of society” (Rolnik, 2010, p. 28).

The Los Angeles Department of City Planning’s (2009) Executive Summary of the 2006-2014 Housing Element included a reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,⁶ but its analysis is largely driven by available funding. This omits in-

¹ Shoshana J. Krieger prepared all charts and helped in research and editing. She will receive her JD/MA in Law and Urban Planning from UCLA in 2011.

² Delisle (2009), in a Congressional Budget Office brief reported that the tax deduction for mortgage interest amounted to about \$80 billion in lost revenue. This exceeded the entire U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-enacted budget for fiscal year 2009–2010. In 2006–2007, Graves & Anderson (2009) wrote for the California Budget Report that California State directed over 92% of its housing-related spending to homeowners.

³ The human rights perspective is embedded in the United Nations’ adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 (United Nations, 1948) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights that was adopted for ratification in 1966 and put into force in 1976 (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1976).

⁴ Other Special Rapporteurs have visited the United States and Los Angeles. On May 21, 2010, a town hall meeting was held with Anand Grover, the Special Rapporteur on Health and Human Rights in LA; in 2007, a Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Rights visited the South Central Farm.

⁵ Just Cause Oakland makes the argument that community health in the aggregate can be used to fight the instability arising from foreclosures.

⁶ The Los Angeles Department of City Planning’s Housing Element, 2006-2014 stated that “It is the overall housing goal of the City of Los Angeles: to create for all residents a city of livable and sustainable neighborhoods with a range of housing types, sizes and costs in proximity to jobs amenities and services. In keeping with decades of federal Housing Acts and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that declared housing as a human right, the City will work towards assuring that housing is provided to all residents.” (P11)

sights that can be gained from collaborating with communities to effectively combat the housing crisis in a holistic manner. Even so, Housing Elements are useful in documenting the gap between hope and reality.

THE HOUSING CRISIS NEVER ENDS: UPDATING LA'S HISTORY

The terrible truth of an unending crisis and a permanent housing hardship took shape in LA in the 1980s when the housing inventory did not keep pace with population growth. Year after year, goals fell short and in 2009 the situation became dire, in terms of supply and affordability, to name only two problems. Since at least 1999, documents on housing have pointed to a crisis in the making where the only production goals that were successful were market rate. A deeper structural issue about housing equality was evident even when production was higher. In the 2006-2014 Housing Element, the City boasted of producing 84% of the overall housing unit goal. In comparison, only a mere 39% of its very-low-income and low-income housing goals were met (City of Los Angeles, 2009, p. 5-1). The **only category of production that exceeded its goals was market-rate housing** (author's emphasis). The inventory continued to decline, mainly through condo conversions; by 2006, there was "a net loss in the City's rental inventory" (Flaming et al., 2009, p. 289). The number of housing units at the beginning of 2009 was 1,407,967 (State of California, Department of Finance, *E-5*, 2009), about 70,000 more than the preceding year but far fewer than was needed to accommodate an optimal average of one housing unit for every 2.5 residents.⁷

When supply is insufficient, preserving public and private existing units (including making necessary repairs) is a prerequisite for a human rights framework. This is especially so based on 2009 alone when workers in California lost purchasing power and hours of work and low-wage workers' hourly wages steeply declined. Between 2000 and 2008, the housing wage in the LA-Long Beach Housing Metropolitan Fair Market

Area (HMFA) increased by 61.9 percent (National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2008).

Meanwhile citywide foreclosures and the vacancy rates climbed; overcrowding slightly declined citywide; and tenants paying 30% or more of their income on rent stayed high. Foreclosures topped off at 4,317 by mid-2009, decreased in the first two months of 2010 compared to the same time in 2009, and increased again in March 2010. Vacancy rates climbed as high as 5.4% by mid-2009, then dropped to 5.1%.⁸ Climbing foreclosure and vacancy rates appear contradictory. Common wisdom is that as foreclosure rates rise, vacancy rates should decline since former owners will be pushed into renting. This is not occurring since overall vacancy rates in Los Angeles have been increasing and stayed close to 5% or over in 2009 and into 2010. A bloated inventory can be ascribed to high rents, tenants doubling up, and landlords warehousing empty units.

Overcrowding is less than in 2000—attributed to the increase of apartments with more bedrooms to meet the needs of large families—but remained at 20% from 2004 to 2008. Overcrowding varies by geographic area, number of bedrooms, and the occupants' poverty level. In different parts of the city (excluding West Los Angeles and the South Valley), and among low-income renters, overcrowding remained severe (Flaming et al., 2009, pp. 65-68). Affordability also remains an issue. The percentage of people paying more than 30% of their income for rent has been steadily increasing since 2003. Similarly, the percentage paying more than 50% of their income rose although a slight decrease is noticeable in 2007. This means that more than half of renters pay more than 30% of their income for rent.

Some federal and municipal programs were created to alleviate such problems (Carreras, 2009).⁹ The Helping Families Save Their Homes Act in 2009 permits households the right to stay "after foreclosure for 90 days or through the term of their lease" (Tenants Together, 2009, p. 1).¹⁰ Similar protections were extended to people who have Section 8 housing vouchers. The LA City Council passed further eviction protections in 2009

⁷ The methodology is taken from the Economic Roundtable's study on rent stabilization (2009); see Figure 2, "City of LA Housing Units, 2000-2008"; see chapter by Leavitt in the longer version of the *State of the City*.

⁸ Citywide vacancy rates can be deceiving. When different geographical sections are compared to the citywide percentage – the Harbor, Central, Valley, and West – the West Side is higher and the Harbor is lower (Flaming et al., p 66). Five percent is an important indicator because it signals when controls on condo conversions can be lifted; the Municipal Code allows for a halt on condo conversions when low vacancy rates limit renter choices. (LA Municipal Code, Section 12.95.2(F)(6)).

⁹ Carreras wrote that HUD awarded Los Angeles \$32.8 million to develop a Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) for renovating and rehabilitating properties. The enacting legislation is part of HR 3221, the American Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008 and allows localities to renovate and rehabilitate foreclosed and vacant homes among other mandates.

¹⁰ HR 5028 (Girjalva, 2010), the "Right to Rent Act of 2010," making its way through the House of Representatives at the time of writing, will allow owners in foreclosed houses to become renters in the house, for a 5-year period, and pay a fair market rent.

in order to remove abuse and fraud when owners evict, either to move into the unit themselves or to place a family member in the unit (Coalition for Economic Survival [CES], 2009).

In a city of renters, tenants who cannot afford market prices are dependent on direct assistance or local rent protections. These programs are continually under attack and resources have been shrinking. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) subsidizes the vast majority of LA's covenanted units. Older HUD programs, such as mortgage subsidies and Project-based Section 8 multifamily housing have seen a net loss of close to 8,000 units of subsidized housing. The Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) has funded the development of new units but this production has barely offset the loss of mortgaged and Section 8 properties (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD], 2010).¹¹

Additional losses have impacted the supply of public housing. Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-CA) and Congressman Barney Frank (D-MA), were unsuccessful in seeking a one-year moratorium preventing disposition of public housing. Their letters to the HUD Secretary went unanswered in 2009 and the year before (Rolnik, p. 12). The findings of the Special Rapporteur identified the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) as planning the "transformation" of Mar Vista, a 601-unit development and the only public housing on the west side (Rolnik, p. 13).¹² Rolnik concluded that public housing should not be demolished as long as there are short-

ages of affordable housing and before any resident is displaced "housing should be made available" (Rolnik, p. 30).¹³

By the end of 2009, the visit from the Special Rapporteur was the spark that led civil society to develop a transformative comprehensive policy that would turn "goals into human rights" (Flagle, 2009).¹⁴ Community-based, housing, and tenant groups have been turning to a human rights framework and the development of campaigns around the reduced standard of living, most noticeably since 2007 when the national Right to the City Alliance was formed (Leavitt, 2007b).¹⁵ The Los Angeles Housing Collective developed a strategy that crossed race and ethnic lines and neighborhood boundaries. On International Human Rights Day, December 10, 2009, the Collective "converged on city hall to deliver one message, 'housing is a human right'" (Los Angeles Community Action Network [LA CAN], 2010, p. 1).¹⁶

The Collective requested the City Council impose a temporary rent freeze on July 1, 2010. This date was a triple threat to tenants; they faced simultaneous hikes in bus fares, water and power bills, and rents. The idea of a freeze was to give tenants some rent relief and provide six months time for the City to study rent control laws in order to come up with a fair settlement.¹⁷

In April 2010, the Los Angeles Housing Rights Collective issued a LA People's Declaration on the Human Right to Housing to a Council subcommittee.¹⁸ Both short- and long-range recommendations were included, for example, to preserve con-

¹¹ For a more detailed explanation of this data, see the longer version of this report.

¹² Government withdrawal from public housing has been an ongoing problem from its inception, only finding favor when housing was desperately needed during World War II for defense workers. In 2008, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles ([HACLA] 2009) became the lead agency for redeveloping the 700-units Jordan Downs public housing in South LA. HACLA is working with residents on a redevelopment plan that holds promise. Planning has taken place during 2009 for an urban village, tied to workforce development, educational, and commercial and recreational facilities. Using a 21-acre adjacent vacant parcel that HACLA bought to build on, tenants have been promised one-for-one replacement. The future will tell whether Jordan Downs, like the HOPE VI Pico-Aliso development, will have fewer permanently affordable public housing units for existing tenants (Leavitt, 2001a). Some expect that HUD's Transforming Rental Housing (TRH) program will further accelerate the privatization of public housing (Carson, 2010, pp. 1-11).

¹³ The Right to the City Alliance (Sinha, A., Nunn, A., Villano, V., Waheed, S., Benford, H., Romano, T., & et al., 2010) also calls for preserving and strengthening existing public housing, stopping demolition, ensuring community control, filling vacancies, and expanding public housing.

¹⁴ Citing Scott Leckie, the former Executive Director of COHRE, Flagle writes that "a state that fails to meet a policy goal is very different from a state that violates the basic human dignity of its citizens," thereby reframing the problem (p. 2).

¹⁵ Jacqueline Leavitt, State of the City 2007, "State of the City Housing 2006," Prepared for the Pat Brown Institute (2007).

¹⁶ The Collective includes LA CAN, Union de Vecinos, Comunidad Presente, Esperanza Housing, CES, Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance (KIWA), Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE), Coalition LA, Los Angeles Housing Preservation Alliance, Bus Riders Union, Homeless Health Care LA, Hippie Kitchen, Inquilinos Unidos, LA Coalition to End Hunger & Homelessness, POWER, and legal allies.

¹⁷ In 2010, after two readings at City Council meetings, the Council tabled the third reading and sent the proposed moratorium back to Committee. The issue is not dead among the organizations that make up the Collective.

¹⁸ Were the City to adopt their agenda, the threat of losing a total of 1,522 units of permanently affordable public housing units at Estrada Courts, Pueblo del Rio, and San Fernando Gardens would be halted. Vacancies in these developments could become available to the homeless and or those paying more than 50 percent of their income for rent. Accepting the declaration, or parts of it, would permit the City to admit the depths of the housing crisis and could start the participatory planning process. The City divesting from banks that illegally displace tenants is a bold step that is akin to divestment in South Africa or the Council's more recent stand to boycott future business with Arizona in order to protest the state law that threatens anyone of color. The anti-speculation regulations also have precedent in the anti-predatory regulations the City passed earlier in 2002 (National League of Cities, 2008).

ventional public housing developments, expand the city-wide Rent Stabilization Ordinance to cover more tenants through a state amendment, and mount legal actions against banks and landlords that either “illegally displace tenants” and/or “expose tenants to unhealthy, unsafe conditions that impact their physical and mental health.”¹⁹ The recommendations would require action at all levels of government.

CONCLUSION

Events in 2009 will lead to repercussions for many years to come, thereby making it more imperative to adopt a human rights framework. This requires: (1) pre-requisites for long-term collaboration between the City and tenants, housing, and community-based organizations; and (2) authentic participation.

Pre-requisites for long-term collaboration

The City Council should create a foundation for trust. This includes:

1. Adopting the UN International Covenant on, Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights; and
2. Instructing city departments to use popular education as a means of providing accessible and useful information about vacancy rates, amount of housing in different income classes, etc., with maps, and that reach more residents beyond neighborhood councils, public hearings, and other traditional venues.

Authentic participation

This requires the following:

1. Using moratoriums (Newman, 2008)²⁰ to prove that government is capable of listening to and acting on the stories of those living in inadequate housing and or no housing at all: enact a one-year “equity” moratorium on evictions or until such time as an effective anti-displacement plan is in place.

2. Adopting a rollback and/or freezing rent.
3. Stopping permits for market rate housing as long as a designated percentage of units are vacant.
4. Including community land trusts in the Housing Element, and working with the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) to shore up support and funding for them.

These steps would demonstrate the City’s willingness to meaningfully improve conditions for the poor and working poor. A process needs to be developed with the Los Angeles Housing as a Human Rights Collective and other members of civil society, government, business, landlords, etc. in ways that put teeth into the participation process.²¹ The meetings should be strategic. One aim could be to create a parallel document, a People’s Housing Element that is based on human rights and with more realistic timetables. Priorities on housing preservation through a code enforcement program that is targeted at the neighborhood level might be pragmatic given the City’s shrinking resources. The City could establish neighborhood code enforcement offices with tenants accompanying inspectors; tenant expertise can help facilitate the program, for example, letting inspectors into apartments by scheduling appointments when someone is home. This could assist landlords in overseeing ongoing maintenance that become more expensive to fix if delayed. Similarly, the City could develop construction skills programs among youth living in deteriorating buildings. (Venice Community Housing Corporation [VCHC], 2008)²² Those newly trained can form the core of a municipal superintendent corps whose aim is to preserve existing housing.

Finally, the City needs to decide and debate, at all levels, in all agencies and departments, with the full engagement of the people, whether Los Angeles wants to repeat the ongoing housing crisis with the numbers changing a bit here and there or to take a stand and plan for a human rights strategy. Last year proved that the time is right—now.

¹⁹ The prosecution of slum landlords has precedent in the work that Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE) pioneered and whose methodology for holding accountable large-scale landlords could be adopted (McHugh Campaign, 2009).

²⁰ Moratoria can galvanize action. In February 2005, the author was a member of a United Nations Advisory Group on Forced Evictions (AGFE) that visited Rome, Italy, the first time that AGFE sent a mission to a developed country. During the visit the Regional Authority issued a year-long moratorium on evictions.

²¹ Two examples of extraordinary participatory processes that bear further study are Colombia, Bogota and Porto Alegre, Brazil.

²² Venice Community Housing Corporation targets youth 16-24 and includes teaching construction skills as part of VeniceYouthBuild.

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L.A. POLITICS, 2010

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INTRODUCTION

The Los Angeles City budget crisis reminds us that no city is an island. Buffeted by a national economic recession, even the most dynamic cities have seen their fortunes wrecked and their autonomy challenged. Los Angeles is no exception, having faced gigantic holes in its budget for the last several years. The tough choices required to close the budget gap will test the relationship between political leaders and the community.

ELECTIONS

In 2009, Antonio Villaraigosa won reelection to a second and final term as mayor of Los Angeles, gaining 55% of the vote in the nonpartisan primary. Some saw this as a sign of weakness, but he also managed to preempt other, more serious, opposition because of solid majority support from Latinos and African Americans (Citywide survey, 2009).

There was concern that a Villaraigosa machine would control city hall if his reelection were joined to victories by allies Jack Weiss and Wendy Greuel for city attorney and city controller, respectively. The use of the term *machine* in a Los Angeles context must be taken with a grain of salt, however, given the long reform tradition of the city's government.

In any case, such a one-sided slate was not to be. Greuel was indeed elected controller, but by a considerably larger margin than Villaraigosa. Though her success bolstered Villaraigosa and labor (partly because of strong support from the Department of Water and Power [DWP] union), her strong electoral showing also ensured independence from the mayor.

Meanwhile, Villaraigosa's ally Jack Weiss was defeated by Carmen Trutanich in the city attorney race. Weiss, who had contentious relations with his council colleagues and a number of neighborhood groups in his 5th council district on the Westside, ultimately depended on labor and minority voting strength to overcome his unpopularity at home. Trutanich had built a following not only in his own San Pedro area but also among neighborhood council activists who are critical of city hall leadership.

In sum, the election returns show an evolution in the Villaraigosa era toward a city hall, labor-oriented, multiracial alliance that is increasingly challenged by a loosely defined neighborhood-based counteralliance critical of city hall and of growth and development.

The citywide races were accompanied by important local elections to fill vacant council seats held by Weiss and Greuel. Former state legislators won both seats. In the high-turnout 5th district, former assemblymember Paul Koretz defeated neighborhood council activist David Vahti. In a special election later in 2009, Paul Krekorian survived a tough primary against one candidate endorsed by the mayor and another endorsed by Greuel and organized labor and then won the runoff election against Greuel's endorsee. Both winners were likely to be critics of the downtown growth coalition.

THE GOVERNMENT

The mayor has shown himself to be a talented political leader, able to build a strong coalition on the city council even for unpopular initiatives, such as imposing the city's first trash collection fee to support increased police hiring. He has largely managed to keep the city on track for his 10,000 police officers plan, a goal that has eluded previous mayors. His style of governance, peripatetic at first, evolved into a muscular coalition model of leadership agreements.

The new city council had two new faces in place of two strong Villaraigosa allies. A block of council members were identifying as "budget hawks," critical of the mayor's priorities (Zahneiser, 2010, May). Further, Greuel would have considerable incentive to carve out her own persona as controller independent of the mayor. Trutanich was likely to be an aggressive interloper as city attorney, not part of the comfortable alliances Villaraigosa and the council had constructed.

The decision by popular police chief William Bratton to surrender his post and go to the private sector was a big surprise. Bratton had been a mainstay for two consecutive mayors, Hahn and Villaraigosa. For Villaraigosa, who had been labeled as soft on crime by Hahn in 2001, Bratton was a key ally. The search for a replacement led to Charlie Beck, an insider favored by Bratton.

THE BUDGET

With new alignments at city hall, the budget nightmare continued to dominate the government's deliberations. Like most other cities, Los Angeles has been subject to declining revenue and locked-in spending. Property taxes were hit hard by

the decline in home value, augmented by rising foreclosures. The city's retail sales in 2010 were down 12.6% from 2009 (Mayor of Los Angeles, 2010, p. 1).

The largest block of city spending is for employee wages and benefits. Villaraigosa found himself in a tight spot with his union allies and called for large wage cuts to be negotiated with the unions, or else there would be layoffs. Lurking behind the scenes was also fear that pensions are a ticking time bomb. In 2009, the mayor and council accepted a union proposal to speed up early retirement for city workers. By 2010, it was clear that proposed cuts and proposals would not be sufficient to close the gap. With contracts due to run out in the summer, the battle lines were drawn. Actual layoffs began.

Then, the Department of Water and Power (DWP) entered the budget fray. The DWP is governed by a 5-member board appointed and removed by the mayor (with council concurrence on the appointment). Its employee union wields extraordinary power in salary negotiations, more than the other city unions.

Close to the mayor, but distant from the council, the DWP often seems imperious and impervious. In 2009, city officials joined the DWP in pushing Measure B, a charter measure for solar power, with all work to be done by employees of the DWP union. The measure was, however, opposed by a number of neighborhood activists and became a symbol of the city hall "machine." It went down to a surprising defeat.

Then in 2009 and 2010, the DWP truly overplayed its hand. The general manager, S. David Freeman, withheld the last transfer of funds from DWP to the city budget (\$73 million) until the council would approve DWP's proposed rate hike. The mayor largely backed the DWP, because the board was pursuing his clean energy plan with increased rates. The standoff hurt the mayor politically, because the DWP was the obvious villain of the story. Greuel issued a highly critical report in 2010 contending that the DWP had not needed to withhold payment in the first place. Now there is momentum to create a ratepayers' advocate to hold the department accountable and open its doors to scrutiny (Zahniser, 2010, July)

With the city budget in continuing crisis and the State of California in its usual budget gridlock, local eyes turned toward Washington, D.C. The House of Representatives passed stimulus funding in 2009 with \$40 billion for states and cities. But a Republican Senator, Susan Collins of Maine, demanded the removal of the funds as the price of her vote. So the structure of the national government, designed in 1787 to preserve the dignity

of the states, badly hurt suffering states and cities. Ironically, the state of Maine's entire population is 1.3 million people, less than one third that of the City of Los Angeles.

Working closely with County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky and State Assembly Member Mike Feuer, Villaraigosa created a ballot measure in 2008 to raise the county sales tax by a half cent to pay for mass transportation projects. Needing a two-thirds majority, the measure received a remarkable vote in excess of 68%. With this fiscal asset in hand, the mayor proposed to the Obama administration that it provide a "bridge loan" so that the construction could be completed in 10 years instead of 30. Clearly this would be a big boost to the construction industry and would meet the administration's stimulus goals. There appears to be growing sentiment in the nation's Capitol to sign on.

MAYOR VILLARAIGOSA AND HIS FUTURE

Villaraigosa has been an effective and even creative mayor. He has hired talented people in city hall, some from outside Los Angeles. But he has also had problems. His affair and divorce in 2007 obviously hurt. But the other problem has been his attraction to glamour. In NYC, a mayor can both govern and socialize, because media coverage of city hall is so intense that one can get credit for accomplishments and still be a celebrity. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, an inveterate Yankee fan, was in such a bitter divorce that his wife tossed him out of Gracie Mansion.

In Los Angeles, this is harder to pull off. There is far less media coverage of city hall than in New York City. For many voters, all they know of Mayor Villaraigosa is that they saw him at the Oscars or at the Lakers' game, or that he has had a messy personal life, not that he appointed very capable people or that he has a great 30-10 plan. And when it came out that he has been receiving tickets to big events and not reporting them as gifts, he ran into another kind of trouble, now being explored by several agencies.

Even so, Villaraigosa remains a formidable political figure. Should Dianne Feinstein not seek another Senate term in 2012, he would be a strong candidate for that post, and depending on the outcome of the 2010 governor's race, he may yet have another shot at it in 2014.

LOS ANGELES POLITICS: WHERE DOES IT GO FROM HERE?

The future of Los Angeles politics and government begins with the budget. Long-term issues such as pension reform will

occupy state and local officials for years to come as they prepare to cope with the coming retirement of their employees.

Los Angeles government must ultimately try to chart its own course through the fiscal crisis and beyond, hoping to maintain essential services while building a framework for local economic success. It is no easy task.

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LOOKING FORWARD: SUSTAINABILITY AND THE FUTURE OF LOS ANGELES

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While the nation tries to balance an economic recovery and Congress remains stuck on whether to adopt legislation to address climate change, it's often at the city, regional and state levels where the most difficult and long-lasting change really happens.

Los Angeles, for example, has been trying to blend environmental and economic sustainability, along with equity, in municipal buildings retrofits and port expansion. Meanwhile, California has adopted SB 375, an "anti-sprawl" law that seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by requiring the state's regional authorities to better coordinate land use and transportation decisions across local jurisdictions.

Can Los Angeles, long considered the capital of bad air and environmental neglect, really lead on sustainability? Will the Southern Californian region be able to overcome its historic fragmentation and be able to utilize the opportunities presented in SB 375? And what does this mean for other mega-cities?

THE STATE OF SUSTAINABILITY

In 2008, SustainLane¹ ranked Los Angeles as the 28th most sustainable city among the 50 most populous U.S. cities.² The City was considered a leader in four categories: Metro Transit Ridership, Knowledge/Communications, Waste Management, and City Innovation; we lagged, not surprisingly, in Air Quality, Housing Affordability and Congestion.

This is actually an impressive performance given our history. Developed through growth-machine induced sprawl, political fragmentation, and residential segregation, the region has often been considered a poster-child for sprawl. Yet partly because of high land prices, L.A.'s urbanized areas actually have the highest residential densities in the United States.

This gives us a mixed legacy for promoting sustainable compact development: we have the right densities but significant fragmentation by race, class, and jurisdiction. This means that getting to sustainability will require that we also address the social

separation driving residential segregation, that has also made us a capital of working poverty and, sometimes, interethnic tensions.

The regional fragmentation is paralleled by municipal fragmentation within the City of Los Angeles. Sustainability is often parceled-out to the corresponding department – and so policies on water, waste, air pollution, energy, smart growth/development and transportation become siloed. The one unifying force in terms of sustainability, the City of Los Angeles' Environmental Affairs Department (EAD), was disbanded in February 2010. The new Office of Energy, Environment, and Sustainability (EES) is designed to provide oversight, coordination, and accountability for all city departments.

The major, centralized, citywide, sustainability-oriented plan produced in Los Angeles is Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's *Green LA: An Action Plan to Lead the Nation in Fighting Global Warming*. Noting that the "City's carbon footprint is roughly equivalent to that of Sweden," the plan sets as its goal to reduce GHG emissions to 35% below 1990 levels by 2030. As of 2008, the City had reduced municipal CO₂ emissions to 11% below 1990 levels, and L.A. plans to continue the effort with new green building standards for public buildings and investments in alternative fuel vehicles.

As is often the case in Los Angeles, the nonprofit sector has also been active in this sphere. One important part of the ecosystem has been the Green LA Coalition, formed in 2005 and including over 100 environmental organizations of all stripes – preservationists, environmental justice groups, businesses looking to be more energy efficient, etc. Coming together under one umbrella has helped to consolidate the message to the Mayor but by interaction and conversation, it has also helped inform the mainstream environmental community about the importance of the equity and led to a series of creative efforts to blend social and environmental sustainability.

Some business-led civic groups are taking initiative, too. For example, the Los Angeles Business Council (LABC) includes sus-

¹ Clearly, ranking cities according to the level of sustainability is an emerging area filled with methodological challenges and disputes. There may be room for argument over SustainLane's data, methodology and/or rigor of analysis, and the ranking here is used only as an illustrative tool for rough comparisons.

² See <http://www.sustainlane.com/us-city-rankings/overall-rankings>.

tainable development as a key priority area, along with housing, education, and workforce development. LABC and its partners have been proposing and working for a program that would allow private businesses, public and non-profit organizations, and homeowners to install solar panels on their roofs and sell energy back to the local utility; LABC argues that this would not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also create more local, green jobs in the solar manufacturing and installation industry.

MAKING SUSTAINABILITY HAPPEN

That blend of green and fair is seen in the Clean and Safe Ports Campaign. The Campaign emerged partly because the desire of the Los Angeles and Long Beach ports to expand trade volume—something that squared well with regional economic development strategies—was running up against environmental concerns, particularly about diesel emissions. Equity issues were also at stake: many of the communities abutting both the ports and the connecting freeways are disproportionately poor and minority; at the same time, many of the truckers concerned about being displaced by new regulations were themselves low-income immigrants.

The Clean and Safe Ports Campaign brought together environmental, labor, faith-based, community, and public-health organizations to support a Clean Truck Program (CTP) to reduce pollution from drayage (short-haul) trucks by 80% by 2012. The CTP, a means for implementing the Ports' 2006 Clean Air Action Plan, banned all trucks built before 1989 from entering port terminals by late 2008 and, by 2012, would only allow those trucks that met 2007 US EPA emission standards. A "concessionaire system" was proposed under which small independent owner-operators would be replaced by larger companies that would hire drivers, with the environmental logic being that larger companies would be better positioned to finance truck purchases or retrofits and would be easier to regulate. The system also made unionization easier, something that could improve the lives of independent owner-operators who were making \$11-\$12 an hour after expenses.

The Port of LA is ahead of schedule – emissions have already been reduced by an estimated 70%. But the American Truckers Association, seeking to preserve the independent owner-operator system and block unionization, sued the Port of LA for interfering with interstate commerce and won a temporary court order to stop the concessionaire system; meanwhile, the Port of Long Beach independently abandoned the concessionaire system. Interestingly, the National Resource Defense Council (NRDC) has stuck with its labor allies on support for a concessionaire system, a development that shows the strengthening ties between environmental and equity proponents.

Another recent example of blending green and fair is Los Angeles's Green Jobs Ordinance, passed in 2009. The ordinance aims to retrofit city buildings to be energy efficient and to simultaneously train and place low-skilled residents in good jobs. Pushing the ordinance was the Los Angeles Apollo Alliance, a local coalition of over 25 local community, labor, and environmental organizations; leading the charge on this sustainability effort was the local nonprofit organization Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education (S.C.O.P.E.), whose primary historic concern has been about economic opportunity and social justice.

Both examples demonstrate the growing ties between environmental protection, economic development and social equity emerging in the nonprofit arena – and the way in which harnessing the energy of L.A.'s social justice infrastructure can help with sustainability.

Other opportunities are emerging, the most important of which is SB 375, the nation's first law to control GHG emissions by trying to change regional land use patterns, specifically by curbing sprawl. SB 375 will require all the regional councils of governments (COGs) in the state to develop a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) as a collaborative process. Because those regions with an SCS will be able to utilize a streamlined environmental permitting process for "transit priority projects," this could promote the sustainable transit-oriented development that the City and the region need. This could be furthered by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (Metro) "30/10" proposal to take the projected revenues from Measure R, an initiative that increased the county sales tax by a half-cent over 30 years, and borrow against them to do 30 years of transit improvement in the next 10 years.

Other revenue sources may be forthcoming. On the government side, the Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities between HUD, the Department of Transportation, and the US EPA explicitly supports sustainable regional development with grants to entice metropolitan areas to collaborate across jurisdictions. On the philanthropic side, the Ford Foundation recently launched a \$200 million, 5-year initiative to promote a new metropolitan approach that integrates housing, transportation, and land use policy for economic growth and environmental sustainability at the regional level.

LOOKING FORWARD

Los Angeles has made significant—and often uncelebrated—strides toward sustainable development. At the same time, LA can and should learn from others. Chicago is leading in green-roof installation, and Mayor Daly is known for 20 years of progressive environmental policy. Meanwhile, New York is making strides in developing a comprehensive citywide sustainability plan and reports annually on its progress.

In order to better gauge our progress, Los Angeles needs to develop its own indicator project. It is not just a question of measurement: robust indicator projects tend to build support of coordinated, city or region-wide sustainability efforts. That is, they promote as much conversation as they do accountability.

Such conversation is essential. We have long been taught to believe that the environment was something to be despoiled in the pursuit of economic growth and that social equity was an issue to be addressed only after the economic damage was already done. But even if such mindsets once made sense (and it is not clear they did), they no longer hold true.

Consider the environmentally disastrous Gulf oil spill and the way in which this has dashed the economic hopes of Gulf Coast residents. Consider how rising inequality – the worst since just before the Great Depression – helped trigger an economic meltdown by creating one group so rich they were forced to speculate and another group so stressed they were borrowing just to stand still.

Environmental and social sustainability is a moral imperative, to be sure – this is about whether we respect the planet, consider the fate of future generations, and seek a measure of opportunity for all. But it is also just part of what we need to do to right a shipwrecked economy and help Los Angeles, the nation, and the world move toward a healthier, more secure and prosperous future.

ROAD PRIORITIZATION: THE WAY FORWARD FOR LOS ANGELES

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Los Angeles stands at a crossroads. Its density increased from 10.9 to 13.6 persons per acre over the last two decades and it is now ranked in the top tier of U.S. city densities.¹ Lacking developable land, it will become denser in the future. Can the city's transportation system evolve in a way that will make access and mobility work for more than 4 million residents? The answer is *road prioritization*—the allocation of road space to priority uses such as bus-only lanes.

Angelinos' personal travel relies heavily on single occupant vehicle travel. Carpooling and transit represent slightly more than 11% of work trips each. In the past two decades, small gains in transit ridership have been offset by declines in carpooling. In fact, the drive-alone share in Los Angeles *increased* (in the 1990 to the 2006–08 period) from 65.2% to 67.1% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Reflecting this reliance on private vehicles, daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per person in the Los Angeles/Long Beach/Santa Ana Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) ranks fifth of 14 major U.S. metro areas. This is higher than expected given the city's density (Sorensen et al., 2008).

The Texas Transportation Institute rated the Los Angeles/Long Beach/Santa Ana MSA as the most congested in the United States based on travel speeds and delay. The 2007 data indicate that 86% of peak VMT are in congested conditions. The "travel time index" (actual travel times versus travel times in hypothetical uncongested conditions) is 1.49 (Texas Transportation Institute, 2009).

Figure 1 shows surface street congestion during an afternoon peak period. Most of the core area has a volume to capacity ratio of .95 or more, indicating severe congestion. In addition, the city's traffic monitoring system routinely indicates that major arterials function at 10 mph or less during the peak period.² This congestion makes buses slow, inefficient, and less able to compete for riders. For example, east-west bus route run times in the

Wilshire corridor increased 6% between 2003 and 2006 (Metropolitan Transit Authority [MTA], 2008).

Finding solutions to the city's density and congestion challenge requires a consideration of the **strengths** of the transportation system, which include the following:

- An extensive arterial system that complements the freeway system and provides mobility for automobiles, transit vehicles, bicycles, trucks, and emergency vehicles. The Los Angeles MSA has the densest road network in the U.S. on a lane miles per square mile basis (Sorensen, 2008)
- Earmarked, county-level local sales taxes and voter support for transit system development, including the recent Measure R.
- An expanding rail transit backbone and a good start on transit-oriented development (TOD).
- A service economy that provides flexible work arrangements. Work is increasingly dispersed rather than concentrated in centers, offering opportunity for alternative modes.

The city's transportation system also has **weaknesses**, which include the following:

- Excessive reliance on the automobile. This is a problem because road expansion is constrained by lack of land and funding, community resistance, and environmental impacts. The system is not resilient from an environmental or energy perspective, and it limits access for those who cannot drive.
- Deteriorating streets. In 2008, the Bureau of Street Services rated the average condition of major streets as C+, with residential streets rated as C- (LADOT, 2008). The Bureau estimates an existing backlog of maintenance and rehabilitation requirements of \$1.92 billion.
- Limited financial resources. The city is facing a budget deficit that will compete with allocations for transportation.

¹ Calculated with an area of 300,201 acres, a 1990 population of 3,276,000, and a 2010 population of 4,094,764. Data sources are American Factfinder, U.S. Census Bureau, (1990 and 2010), California Department of Finance (State of California, 2010), and the Trust for Public Land (2008).

² Real time traffic data available from the City of Los Angeles (2010). <http://trafficinfo.lacity.org/>

Figure 1. Roadway Congestion in Los Angeles County



Used with permission from Sorensen et al. (2008). Base data from 2004 regional transportation model data provided by SCAG staff.

- A reputation for congestion. Congestion affects the city's desirability as a place to live, work, operate a business, or visit. Moreover, communities affected by congestion often oppose growth indiscriminately.
- Traditional ways of thinking. Change is needed to traffic engineering standards, transit system models, and assumptions about alternative transportation.

THE ROAD PRIORITIZATION CONCEPT

For too long, general use lanes and on-street parking have been the only two uses of city streets. If prioritization provides ex-

clusive lanes for buses, for example, improved bus speeds and productivity make transit more attractive. The city's wide rights-of-way and streets present many opportunities to prioritize road space.

How Can Prioritization Work?

Prioritization favors road uses that have higher person-throughput or fewer environmental impacts, or both. The success of the Orange Line exclusive bus facility in the San Fernando Valley provides an indication of what is possible. The Orange line carried 23,521 riders per weekday in April 2010, roughly equal to the Gold

Line light rail line before its extension to East Los Angeles.³ Bus lanes are needed in busy districts and commercial strips, such as Ventura Boulevard, Vermont Avenue, or Wilshire Boulevard.

If buses are stuck in traffic, they cannot attract people who have the choice of driving. In England, the London Bus Initiative created bus priority at intersections and 24-hour bus-only lanes on 27 high-frequency bus routes, producing a patronage increase of 22% (Hodges, 2007). Moreover, additional riders bring service increases and make the transit system more productive because each bus completes more loops of its route for a given service level.

Bus lanes are a key element of a broader Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) concept. The other components are distinctive transit vehicles, inviting stations, use of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), clear service patterns, and appropriate land use and parking policies.

Many types of bus flow improvements are possible, such as curbside lanes, median lanes, and contraflow lanes. Cities that have implemented these, including San Francisco, Manhattan, and others, have learned lessons about facility design, enforcement, and signage that can benefit Los Angeles. Bus lanes also have precedent in Los Angeles. The downtown Los Angeles Spring Street contraflow bus-lane has been converted to a pair of curbside bus-lanes on Spring and Main streets. A proposed Wilshire Bus-Only Lanes project would provide dedicated curbside bus lanes on Wilshire Boulevard during peak hours.

Buses do not constitute the only demand for road prioritization. Other uses include carpools and vanpools, pedestrians, bicycles, and neighborhood electric vehicles. For example, the city's draft Bicycle Master Plan calls for a 5% bike mode share, an appropriately aggressive target for a city that is well-suited to biking (LADOT, 2010).

TECHNIQUES FOR FREEING UP ROAD SPACE FOR TRANSIT, BICYCLES, AND PEDESTRIANS

If general-purpose lanes are reallocated to buses or bicycles, automobile congestion could initially worsen. Narrowing sidewalks is a bad idea for walkability, so what else can be done? The following provides some ideas:

- Increase the efficiency of the remaining general-purpose lanes. This can be accomplished by one-way couplets, such as those proposed for Olympic-Pico, signal timing, and/or reversible lanes.

- Remove on-street parking, permanently or during peak periods. On-street parking can be replaced by better use of off-street parking and city-private sector partnerships to provide new, shared parking structures. Parking fees can reduce parking demand, and developer in-lieu fees can fund shared parking structures.
- Eliminate turn lanes and/or turn movements.
- Reduce automobile demand through alternative transportation and pricing. For example, London, England reduced traffic with a cordon-style pricing scheme in which a fee is paid for driving in a Congestion Charge Zone (Hodges, 2007).
- Reduce automobile trips through TOD. The city could expand TOD on bus corridors and increase the influence area of rail-based TODs.

THE WAY FORWARD

This essay focuses on the transportation dimensions of road prioritization. Space does not allow an enumeration of the co-benefits, but they are substantial. Schemes that increase the use of transit, walking, and bicycling have benefits for public health by increasing physical activity and quality of life. They also increase travel options for those dependent on transit. And finally, they reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels and lessen air pollution, noise, and greenhouse gas emissions. Taken together, the co-benefits present a powerful case for road prioritization.

Opponents to road prioritization want to preserve lanes for solo drivers and fear impacts on local businesses. Perhaps the best way to start is to work with communities in support of demonstration projects that produce early "wins."

The urgency of congestion and environmental problems demands an end to the status quo on the use of valuable public right-of-way. Los Angeles needs creative planning and engineering, civil discussion of options, patience for the long gestation period of these schemes, and old-fashioned political courage.

Los Angeles was an early adopter of the automobile. It is not possible to be an early adopter in road prioritization; others have gotten there first. But if there is anything true about Angelinos it is capacity for change—we have the resources, technology, and creativity to provide the ideal transportation system for a decentralized 21st century city. It is time to move forward. Do we have the will?

³ MTA. (2010). *Ridership statistics*, Retrieved May 24, 2010, at: <http://www.metro.net/news/pages/ridership-statistics/>

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THE FUTURE OF LOS ANGELES' WATER SUPPLY

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The City of Los Angeles is grappling with receiving less water from two of its traditional sources, the Eastern Sierra and State Water Project, and now is seeking to increase water supplies from alternative programs including conservation, recycling, and groundwater recharge programs. Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) Assistant General Manager Jim McDaniel has said that the city faces the grim reality that water supplies that have been historically relied upon are being greatly diminished, based on events and actions well beyond the city's control.

It's important to understand that these reductions are most likely not temporary and could involve even more future water loss and uncertainty. Add the factor of climate change, and there is even more uncertainty facing the water supply for the people of Los Angeles.

SETTING THE STAGE

The LADWP was established in 1902 to deliver water to the city. Today the city serves water to about 4 million residents. Based on the population growth of 500,000 more people by 2030, according to the Southern California Association of Governments, the LADWP estimates that it needs to "find" an additional 100,000 acre-feet of water per year (15%) (Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, 2008). That's enough water to fill 100,000 football fields one foot deep or, as LADWP estimates, enough to fill the entire San Fernando Valley with water one foot deep – every year.

THE TROUBLE WITH THE TRADITIONAL SUPPLIES

Eastern Sierras

Until recent court decisions and agreements reduced the amount of water exported to Los Angeles, the Owens Valley provided up to 75% of the city's annual water supply. Only about 35% in an average water year still comes from the Owens Valley via the two Los Angeles Aqueducts (J. McDaniel, personal communication, July 27, 2010). After years of legal battles, Inyo County and the City of Los Angeles came to an agreement to jointly manage the valley's water resources and regulate the amount of exported water based on environmental effects. Several environmental restoration projects in the Owens Valley will cause the annual reduction of water delivered to Los Angeles. These projects include restoring

Mono Lake, controlling dust pollution at Owens Dry Lake, enhancing Owens Valley ecosystems and recreational opportunities, and planning the re-watering of the Lower Owens River.

State Water Project

The water the city gets from the State Water Project (SWP) has become less reliable in recent years. The SWP comes to the city through the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), the water wholesaler for most of urban Southern California. In an average year, the city gets 53% of its water from MWD – a significant increase in recent years as the Eastern Sierra water has diminished (Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, 2010). With construction of the SWP in the 1970s, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta became a critical link in the state's complex water distribution system. This project provides water to more than 4 million acres of irrigated Central Valley farmland and to more than 25 million people, the majority in Southern California.

For better than 25 years, the Delta has been embroiled in continuing controversy over the struggle to restore the faltering ecosystem, while maintaining its role as the hub of the state's water supply. Lawsuits and counter lawsuits have been filed – with environmentalists and water users clashing over the issue of adequate science in determining the amount of water that can be safely exported from the region. While stakeholders and political leaders have struggled to reach a compromise, the region's decline has continued – the ecosystem has deteriorated, levees have become more fragile, and fish populations have collapsed. All the while, the Delta's role in sustainable water delivery has become increasingly questionable.

Colorado River Water

Of the water the city gets through MWD, about a quarter of the amount comes from the Colorado River via MWD's Colorado River Aqueduct. In recent years, California has agreed to reduce its use of Colorado River water to levels reached in a historic 1922 agreement between states sharing the Colorado River. This reduction of Colorado River water will reduce the amount MWD can deliver to all its customers, including the City of Los Angeles (Totten, 2004, p. 21).

Through the years, California has used more than its 4.4 million acre-feet share, reaching up to 5.3 million acre-feet in some years. Because of growing water needs in Arizona and Nevada, in 1996 the Interior Secretary told officials they could no longer rely on receiving more than the state's annual allocation. California needed to develop a conservation plan to avoid exceeding allocation and face federally imposed water supply cuts. Because MWD holds a lower priority to Colorado River water, this edict reduced its Colorado River water by half.

FINDING THE 'NEW' WATER Conservation

LADWP officials say their long-term plan to bridge the 100,000 acre-foot gap calls for half of the water to come from conservation and half from groundwater replenishment and water recycling. One area in which the city believes it can see big reductions is outdoor water use. Because 30%–40% of the water used by customers is used for outdoor watering, LADWP has joined other California water agencies in encouraging their customers to change outdoor water usage by planting California-friendly or drought tolerant plants, removing grass, and installing efficient irrigation timers (California Department of Water Resources, 2010). It will continue to take motivation and money to achieve impressive conservation results. The conservation budget for LADWP is \$29 million a year. This is very aggressive considering that the MWD conservation budget is \$19 million a year (J. McDaniel, personal communication).

Recycled Water

Along with conservation, recycled water is the other half of the plan to bridge the gap. Because there is no "new" water and the exported supplies are increasingly unreliable, LADWP has decided to look internally. Water recycling involves treating municipal wastewater to remove sediments and impurities for reuse. As good as recycled water sounds, it can fill only a small percentage gap of the needed water.

Currently, LADWP has decided to increase the use of recycled water from its present 1% approximate annual use to 6% (B. Baker, Public Affairs, LADWP, personal communication, July 26, 2010). It will increase water recycling by expanding the city's "purple pipe" system (the color of the pipe designates it as recycled water), which carries treated wastewater to irrigate public spaces. It's a program that makes use of the water again that has already been collected, transported, and treated – rather than disposing of it in the ocean.

Groundwater Replenishment

Another type of recycled water involves groundwater. Today 11% of city's water in an average year comes from groundwater supplies. Now the city plans to return to the groundwater resource and get 14% of the 100,000 gap by recycling water through large-scale groundwater recharge or replenishment (P. Parekh, Director of Water Quality Compliance, LADWP, personal communication, July 30, 2010). Using highly treated wastewater to recharge groundwater wells may have public perception problems to overcome. Therefore, a strong public involvement and education program is needed. After advanced treatment process and percolation in the groundwater, recycled water is being accepted and reused for drinking water throughout the world and in many American cities. The use of water replenishment and recycled water by LADWP is projected to be approximately 50,000 more acre-feet by 2030.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The aging infrastructure drew attention after a series of pipe bursts in 2009. The city estimates the current age of its pipes is 70–100 years old (Orlov, 2009). Plans are to lay more pipe. In 2006 the city laid 50,000 feet a year. By 2012, the city hopes to lay 150,000 feet of pipe a year. The eventual goal is to lay 200,000 feet a year. Even at this rate of pipe replacement, it will take the city 290 years to replace all of the pipe and will require rate increases (J. McDaniel, personal communication).

WATER QUALITY

The LADWP is faced with its most significant drinking water regulatory challenge in its history, according to Jim McDaniel. It has to come into compliance with two recent federal Safe Drinking Water Act regulations, one of which requires covering, by-passing, or re-treating the water in the six remaining open distribution reservoirs so as to reduce those water bodies' vulnerability to microbial contamination. LADWP has determined that the most cost-effective and efficient way to comply with these rules will be to cover all its reservoirs and then convert from chlorine to chloramines for disinfecting the water in the system (P. Parekh, Director of Water Quality Compliance, LADWP, personal communication, July 30, 2010).

FINAL THOUGHTS

Los Angeles is pursuing programs to increase its water supply so the city can depend less on water from its traditional sources – the MWD (State Water Project and Colorado River) and the Eastern Sierra. Due to environmental problems, court decrees, political

agreements, and years of drought, those sources are less reliable than in previous years. Additionally, the days of cheap water for all of Southern California are over. The programs being pursued by LADWP eventually will increase costs to customers but it will be more dependable. There are also public perception problems to overcome. Public education programs will be necessary to help people understand that they need to be willing to pay a little more to increase the reliability and keep the integrity of their public water supply. After all, the tap water costs pennies compared with the expensive bottled water many city residents drink.

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HEALTH CARE REFORM IN LOS ANGELES: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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INTRODUCTION

On March 23, 2010, after months of bitter political struggles, the United States Congress passed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, (ACA). Over 4 million people in California will become eligible for new health insurance options, either within the public sector or through private health insurance. The ACA is complex and has many components, some of which will take effect in 2010 and others phased in over the next 4 years. While there are many aspects of the ACA, the following are major provisions that are likely to affect Los Angeles and its surrounding communities.

Medi-Cal expansion. ACA enables uninsured people to obtain coverage through Medi-Cal if they have family incomes less than 133% of the federal poverty level (FPL).

Health insurance exchange. The State of California will establish a set of approved health insurance plans and organize them as an exchange. Individuals who are not offered a qualified health plan and small businesses will be eligible to purchase health insurance through this exchange much like federal employees can now do through the Federal Employees Health Insurance Plan (FEHB).

Premium subsidies. Under ACA, individuals whose incomes are too high to qualify for Medi-Cal, and who choose a plan in the exchange, will be eligible to have a portion of their premiums subsidized by the federal government with the amount varying based on their income. Subsidies will be available in the form of a tax credit for people whose incomes are between 133% and 400% of FPL, but the amount of the subsidy will range from 2% to 9.5% of their income.

The individual mandate. Among the more controversial elements of the new law is requirement that all individuals have health insurance. The individual mandate will be enforced through the income tax system with fines for not participating ranging from \$695 to \$2,085 per family, but not exceeding 2.5% of household income.

Immigration and health reform. Undocumented immigrants are ineligible for most provisions of the new law. Many lawfully residing immigrants will be able to purchase coverage through the exchange and also be eligible for federal subsidies on the same basis as citizens.

No exclusions based on pre-existing conditions. There are several provisions in the new law that will affect private health insurance. They include the elimination of the practice whereby an insurance company can exclude people based on pre-existing health problems. ACA now prohibits insurance plans from excluding people with pre-existing conditions, beginning with children in September 2010 and adults, in 2014.

Other Insurance reforms. There will be other changes affecting private health insurance, including the elimination of limits on what an insurance company will pay for an individual over the course of the lifetime of the policy, and the practice of rescissions in which a health insurance company cancels a health insurance policy that has gone into effect because the insurer believes a person had a condition that was not properly disclosed at the time of the application for coverage.

Expanded dependent coverage. Beginning in 2010, the new law will allow young adults to remain on their parents' health insurance policies until age 26.

Employment and private health insurance. Beginning in 2014, businesses will be encouraged to provide coverage to their workers. Small employers, those with fewer than 25 employees and average wages of less than \$50,000, will be eligible for a tax credit if they purchase health insurance for their employees. Larger employers will face fines if they do not provide coverage for all of their employees.

Changing the delivery of health care. Physicians will be encouraged to redesign their practices as patient-centered medical homes that are more comprehensive, integrated and emphasize primary care and prevention. In addition, new payment systems will be established to encourage physicians, hospitals, pharmacies, and other provider groups to form alliances called accountable care organizations (ACO).

An emphasis on prevention. The law provides new ways to support and expand clinical and community-based prevention programs. Those on Medicare will no longer have copayments or deductibles for clinical preventive services, such as cholesterol screening and blood pressure checks.

HEALTH REFORM AND LOS ANGELES

The health problems facing Los Angeles were highlighted in the last two State of the City reports including the most recent describing the growing number of uninsured residents. Today, the number of those in Los Angeles without health insurance has likely reached over 2.7 million people nearly one in four residents. Because of this disproportionately high number, the ACA will likely have a dramatic impact on Los Angeles and its surrounding communities. Many may benefit from the new insurance options, however many people are likely to be left out

An estimated 822,000 U.S. citizens and legally residing immigrants will become eligible for Medi-Cal. Nearly 1.07 million uninsured people have higher incomes (between 133% and 400% of FPL) and will be eligible to purchase insurance through the new health insurance exchange. They can have part of their premiums subsidized in the form of a refundable tax credit. An estimated 525,000 people will be ineligible for any new insurance program even if they pay for it themselves because they are undocumented immigrants.

In sum, over 1.9 million currently uninsured people in Los Angeles may be eligible for new health insurance programs. While eligibility will expand for many uninsured, not all will participate. Many small businesses may begin offering coverage under the new law. Some people will be offered coverage but choose not to enroll. Some may choose to pay the fine for non-coverage rather than purchase insurance, even if they could receive a partial subsidy. Finally, although many will become eligible for Medi-Cal, there are many administrative barriers that now keep eligible people from applying for the program.

Employers and small businesses. Small and medium-size businesses are important for the Los Angeles economy and provide almost 7 million jobs and over 52% of the county's workforce. There are over 214,000 firms in Los Angeles County with fewer than 25 employees. The uninsured within these plans will benefit from the new plan. In addition, until the health insurance exchanges are in place, firms with fewer than 25 employees will be able to obtain credits for covering their employees beginning in 2010. Employees who are offered a qualified health plan are not eligible for the health insurance exchange.

Health care providers. The ACA does provide some expansion of efforts to encourage medical students to enter primary care and for physicians to locate in medically underserved communities. In our current system, private providers often shift the uncompensated cost of caring for uninsured or underinsured patients to other

payers, including private health plans and in some cases Medi-Cal. Much of this shift may disappear as more people get covered under the ACA. While provider participation is generally low for the Medi-Cal program, the new law will temporarily increase Medi-Cal reimbursement for primary care physicians to an amount equal to Medicare, although rates will not increase for specialty care physicians.

The safety net. The ACA poses challenges for public hospitals and community health centers, some private hospital and physician groups, and hospital emergency departments. At the core is the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services (DHS). DHS must be able to accommodate the new and expanded revenue streams as many of the previously uninsured move into Medi-Cal and health plans that can pay for their care. Many may choose to seek care in other facilities and DHS must re-organize their delivery system to compete for these patients and keep them within their systems of care. However, DHS and its partners will also have to maintain some capacity to serve those who remain uninsured.

Community clinics and health centers. Los Angeles has approximately 211 community and free clinic sites operated by 97 organizations. The new legislation provides \$11 billion nationally for the expansion of existing or establishment of new federally qualified or community health centers. Many Los Angeles-area health centers would benefit from some of these expansion and start-up grants.

Prevention and community health. Health reform has the potential to help reverse the pernicious disparities in health that have plagued low and working class communities in Los Angeles. New initiatives are possible through the ACA that can support prevention programs, solve reduce obesity, prevent and better manage chronic illnesses such as asthma, heart disease and cancer, and even address environmental and other social determinants of health.

CONCLUSION

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act promises significant improvements in the U.S. health care system. Although there will be formidable implementation challenges, over 1.9 million people in Los Angeles will be eligible to receive health coverage. Increasing access to health insurance itself does not assure improved access to health care services. Additional work needs to be done to improve provider participation in Medi-Cal, increase the number of clinicians practicing in Los Angeles's medically underserved communities, and stabilize our system of hospitals and health centers. Safety net providers must become more competitive and responsive to the broader needs of the newly insured patients but remain accessible to those left out of the new insurance programs.

In sum, the ACA will not only expand coverage but provide Los Angeles with opportunities for developing innovation in medical care practice, and new ways of preventing disease and promoting public health. Although implementation will be a challenge, the ACA represents a remarkable opportunity to improve health and reduce health care disparities in Los Angeles. It is now incumbent on residents, providers, business owners, philanthropists, scientists, and policy makers to come together to determine how the ACA can best work for the people of Los Angeles.

BIOGRAPHIES

DR. MICHAEL R. COUSINEAU is currently Associate Professor of Research in the Department of Family Medicine and Preventive Medicine at the USC Keck School of Medicine. He directs the USC Center for Community Health Studies and teaches in both the Masters in Public Health program and in the Professionalism and the Practice of Medicine. He has a masters and a doctorate from the UCLA School of Public Health. His work focuses on health policy and health services and evaluation research, access to care for the low income uninsured, governance and operation of safety-net providers including public hospitals, community-based clinics and health centers; and health needs of vulnerable populations including homeless people. His work includes studying the impact of initiatives designed to expand health insurance to adults and children, the dynamics of insurance coverage decisions by small businesses, alternative governance of safety net hospitals, and the health and mental health needs of the homeless.

DR. DANIEL FLAMING has been the president of the Economic Roundtable since 1991, when the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors unanimously endorsed converting the Roundtable into an independent research organization. Dr. Flaming has led more than 40 major research projects at the Roundtable that have illuminated critical changes in the regional economy and documented conditions of the working poor. Dr. Flaming has extensive practical experience in the community social and economic analysis and urban social policy.

DR. JACQUELINE LEAVITT'S research has focused on housing and community development policy, public housing, women and housing/service needs, and the multiple meanings of home, among other topics. Recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship in 1997, Dr. Leavitt is studying the impact of privatization on tenants living in council and state housing; this work is being compared with similar research she is involved in with public housing tenants in Los Angeles. She currently is principal investigator on a project to help community organizations reverse disinvestment in troubled urban areas. UCLA was the only university in Southern California and one of fourteen nationwide to receive the grant, awarded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development as part of

its new Community Outreach Partnership Center Program. Her current research looks at interrelated issues of schools and youth programs in relation to community development. She is working with 4-H on after-school programs concerning children's understanding of their environment.

DR. ALI MODARRES is the former Associate Director of the Edmund G. "Pat" Brown Institute of Public Affairs at California State University, Los Angeles and Chair of the Department of Geography and Urban Analysis on the same campus. He specializes in urban geography and his primary research and publication interests are community development and planning. He has published in the areas of urban development, transportation planning, environmental equity, social geography, immigration, and race and ethnicity as they relate to the issues of access and the role of public policy in creating disadvantaged communities.

DR. DOWELL MYERS is a professor in the USC School of Policy, Planning, and Development. He is director of the Population Dynamics Research Group—whose recent projects have been funded by the National Institute of Health, the Haynes Foundation, Fannie Mae Foundation, and the Ford Foundation – and he also is co-director of the new Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration. Dr. Myers leads the ongoing USC California Demographic Futures research project. Recent applications have focused on the upward mobility of immigrants to the US and California, trajectories into homeownership, changing transportation behavior, education and labor force trends, and projections for the future of the California population. In March 2007, the Russell Sage Foundation published his newest book, *Immigrants and Boomers: Forging a New Social Contract for the Future of America*, which received the 2007 Thomas and Znaniecki Award from the American Sociological Association for Best Book on Immigration.

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RITA SCHMIDT SUDMAN is Executive Director of the Water Education Foundation. She directs the development of *Western Water* magazine, the *Layperson's Guide* series, the Foundation's Colorado River program, public television programs on water, poster maps, tours, press briefings and school programs. Ms. Sudman is a former radio and television reporter and producer and received her master's degree in telecommunications from San Diego State University. She has developed a television production team which has won two Emmys and several regional Emmy nominations for the Foundation's public television documentaries. She has served on numerous boards including the President's Advisory Commission on water for the University of California and the board of Water For People, an international program assisting people in developing countries to obtain safe drinking water.

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