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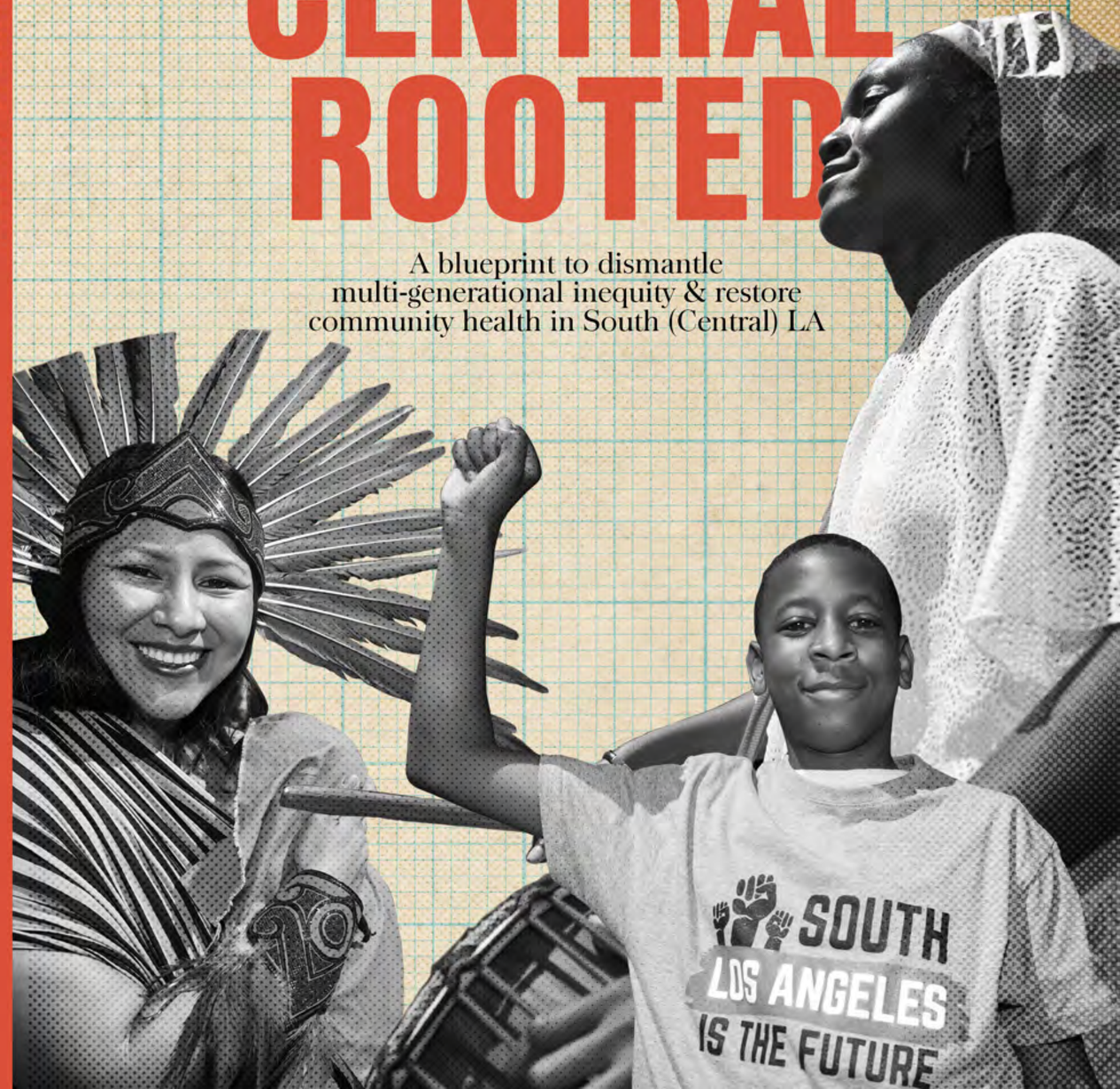
A blueprint to dismantle multi-generational inequity & restore community health in South (Central) LA



SOUTH CENTRAL ROOTED

A blueprint to dismantle multi-generational inequity and restore community health in South Central Los Angeles

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

South Central Rooted was born out of the collective vision of South Los Angeles community leaders 25 years after the 1992 LA Uprising. South LA residents, grassroots leaders, community organizers, institutional leaders, and our allies in academia were essential in shaping this report's analysis. We would especially like to honor the leadership of the Building Healthy Communities (BHC) South Los Angeles community—both Steering Committee and partner organizations, who helped ground this report in community voice and experience. Additional thanks to the staff and grassroots members of the South LA BHC Steering Committee organizations who conceptualized this report and framework, held space for both challenging and visionary dialogue to emerge, and who are already working on translating its contents into popular education materials. We hope that this report further elevates the inspiring movement building work going on in South Central.

By Laura Muraida and Eric Wat
in collaboration with Building Healthy Communities South Los Angeles

Designed by Diana Molleda and Glauz Diego

The authors would also like to thank a team of thought partners and co-conspirators who helped develop this project from its inception and who generously shared their wisdom. Tammy Bang Luu, Robert Battles, Tamu Jones, Saul Sarabia and Elizabeth Sunwoo helped secure the commitments and resources needed to get this report off the ground. Our brilliant team of readers and contributors included: Martha Dina Argüello, Maisie Chin, Manuel Criollo, Joe Donlin, Nancy Halpern Ibrahim, Lizette Hernández, Alberto Retana, Rabeya Sen, Keshia Sexton, Monika Shankar, Lola Smallwood Cuevas, Cynthia Strathmann, Saba Waheed, Gloria Walton, and Pete White. Many thanks to Robert Chlala, who researched and wrote part of an early draft of this report. We also appreciate the contributions of SCOPE staff Paloma Hernández, Pamela Stephens, and Benjamin Toney for providing their support with focus group documentation, writing, editing and mapping.

Additionally, we would like to thank another team of folks who helped us cross the finish line. We are incredibly grateful for Nicole Duarte, who played a critical role in editing the report and executive summary. Thanks to our talented design consultants Glauz Diego and Diana Molleda who brought the report to life. And thanks to Morelia Rivas, who supported with Spanish translation. We appreciate you all sharing your skills and time with us on this project.

Finally, we appreciate the support from The California Endowment and The California Community Foundation whose committed investment in South LA grassroots leadership has made this report possible.

South Los Angeles Building Health Communities Partner Organizations

A New Way of Life
Advancement Project
Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE)
Brotherhood Crusade*
CADRE*
CD Tech*
Community Coalition* (CoCo)
Community Health Councils* (CHC)
Dignity and Power Now (DPN)
Esperanza Community Housing Corporation*
Gender and Sexualities Alliance Network
LA Black Worker Center* (LA BWC)
LA Commons*
LA Community Action Network* (LA CAN)
Labor Community Strategy Center*
Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust* (LANLT)
Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches (LAM)
Physicians for Social Responsibility – Los Angeles* (PSR-LA)
Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education* (SCOPE)
Southside Coalition of Community Health Centers*
St. John's Well Child and Family Center*
Strategic Actions for a Just Economy* (SAJE)
T.R.U.S.T. South LA
UMMA Community Clinic
Youth Justice Coalition (YJC)

*South LA BHC Steering Committee Member

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INTRODUCTION

In December 1965, the California Governor's McCone Commission released its 88-page report entitled *Violence in the City—An End or a Beginning?* four months after the largest urban rebellion of the civil rights era broke out in the South LA neighborhood of Watts. While the commission reported that the six days of civil unrest could be traced to an inciting incident between residents and police, it noted that the root cause was structural, community-wide, and had persisted for much longer than a week. The commission recommended a slate of robust reforms addressing unemployment, lack of health care, and inadequate public education and transportation in Los Angeles's Black community. While patronizing and myopic in some ways, the commission made two vital assertions.

First, the commission recognized that to thrive, Black residents desperately needed a holistic overhaul of the entire system of interconnected structures that governed their public lives. Second, the commission declared that it was the responsibility of city leaders and government agencies to work with leaders in the Black community to make those improvements. "If the city were to stand aside, the walls of segregation would rise ever higher," the authors concluded, insisting that their recommendations for publicly funded preschool programs, improved relations between communities and police, investment in low-income housing, and targeted job training were a necessary response to the "crisis" of systemic, structural inequality.[1] Ultimately, most of their recommendations were never realized, but the commission's warnings and predictions have proven true in the decades that followed. Without a systemic effort to address the interconnected structures that form and reinforce inequality in Los Angeles, the conditions of racial and economic injustice have only become more entrenched.

To repair public trust and prevent further uprisings, the McCone Commission urged that city and community leaders should focus their immediate attention on three core issues: education, employment, and police-community relations. Again, the commission was proven prescient in predicting that failing to address these problems in any kind of systemic way would eventually lead to another revolt. In 1991, then-26-year-old Rodney King was chased by police and pulled over for speeding. A local resident videotaped up to eight police officers tasering, kicking, and striking King with police batons for a full 15 minutes, while more than a dozen police officers looked on.[2,3] The 1992 LA Uprising was a direct response to the systems of structural racism that prevented King from receiving justice, including the racially biased courts that acquitted the four police officers who were charged with attacking him, and the public that explained away their crimes, even in the face of indisputable video evidence. The 1992 LA Uprising exposed how little conditions had changed, deepening tensions that city leaders attempted to pacify with promises of "rebuilding."[4] The city's response included the "Weed and Seed" program and other tough-on-crime approaches that targeted Black and Latinx[5] communities for surveillance and arrest. Another wave of conservative policies and ballot initiatives swept through the state by the mid-to-late 1990s targeting all people of color. They included: Proposition 184 and the three-strike law in 1994, which required a 25-year-to-life minimum sentence for any person with three felony convictions; Proposition 187 in 1994, which would deny non-emergency healthcare, public education,

and other state services to undocumented immigrants; Proposition 209 in 1996, which eliminated public affirmative action programs; and Proposition 227 in 1998, which banned bilingual education in public schools.[6] Together, this slate of policies further segregated, disenfranchised and criminalized South LA residents, and Black residents in particular, ultimately creating a state of disinvestment and political neglect that is still felt to this day.

It is not a coincidence that South LA, the historic heart of the Black community in Los Angeles, was at the epicenter of two of the most significant periods of civil unrest in recent history. The findings from a national study by the Economic Policy Institute looking at economic progress for African Americans in the U.S. since the 1960s show that despite improved education attainment and employment earnings in this population, "With respect to home ownership, unemployment, and incarceration, America has failed to deliver any progress for African Americans over the last five decades."[7] Echoing this conclusion, a

The 1992 Uprising—the nation's "first multiracial riot"—made visible the demographic transformation of South LA that resulted in Blacks and Latinos living side by side under a shared legacy of racialized inequality.

recent study from the UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge found sparse progress in South LA since the 1960s. Income disparity has widened. Today, South LA workers make only 60 cents to the dollar compared to the average LA County worker, a decline from 80 cents in 1960. Adjusted for inflation, average home prices in South LA today have nearly tripled since 1960. As a result, fewer than one in three South LA residents own their home. Now, home ownership is even more out of reach for residents than it was a half century ago, when redlining and housing discrimination were more blatant.[8]

However, the 1992 LA Uprising made clear that African Americans were not the only residents of South Central LA languishing under a system of criminalization and economic exclusion. In the 1980s, Mexican and Central American immigrants began moving into communities across South LA at increasing rates as decades of disinvestment and neglect made it one of the more affordable areas in the county for recent immigrants to find a home. These Latinx immigrants largely worked in exploitative, low-wage (and sometimes underground) jobs, often facing institutional xenophobia and structural barriers to economic stability. The 1992 Uprising—the nation's "first multiracial riot"[9]—made visible the demographic transformation of South Central that resulted in Black and Latinx residents living side by side under a shared legacy of racialized inequality.

The goal and challenge for this report is to illustrate how South LA arrived at these conditions, expanding beyond the 1965 and 1992 periods of unrest to unfold a history of structural racism and inequality that spans over a century and still impacts the health and livelihoods of South LA residents today. In spite of the vigilance and resilience of South LA residents, the lack of progress, especially for African American residents, described in the UCLA and Economic Policy Institute reports, illustrate the fact that government and philanthropic investments have been mostly band-aid solutions that do not address the deep-seated and pervasive inequities in this community. Throughout this report we identify where these band-aid solutions have failed, where progress has been made, and where future opportunities lie.

We hope that this report sheds light on a history of South LA that is much more complex than is revealed by a few painful flash points and political backlashes. While on the one hand, South LA has been a testing ground for racist policies, on the other hand it has also been a real-life laboratory for innovative solutions. In Los Angeles, 1992 stands as a turning point in the progression of multi-racial and multi-sector social movement building, laying the groundwork for long-term transformation of existing power structures. The setback from Proposition 184 and Proposition 187 in 1994 motivated South LA leaders to organize across race in an attempt to mobilize an "emerging majority" in California that included "Black, Latino, Asian American, and progressive White voters."[10] This electoral strategy was cultivated in South LA and spread to the rest of the county and statewide. While it was not enough to fully defeat Proposition 209 two years later, the statewide measure was rejected by voters in Los Angeles County. Exit polls suggested that

the cross-racial mobilization was effective, and the anti-affirmative action initiative was opposed by 74% of African American voters, 76% of Latinx voters, and even 61% of Asian American voters, despite the mainstream argument that a "color-blind" policy would benefit the last group.[11] More recently, Proposition 36 in 2012 and Proposition 47 in 2014 lessened some of the most draconian impacts of California's three-strike law. This signaled a turning of the tide on mass incarceration that leaders said is a result of a voter outreach effort "to expand the electorate by targeting young people, new citizens, and people of color who are typically overlooked by electoral campaigns," particularly in South LA.[12]

In our view, where progress has been made in South LA, it has been led in large part by those on the ground grassroots leaders, community organizers, and local residents coming together to demand change. To this day, South Central counts on the powerful resolve and creativity of its residents, a robust network of community-based organizations, social service providers and advocacy groups, and deep connections to broader social movements for racial justice. Living at the intersection of multiple issues, Los Angeles's low-income Black, Latinx, and immigrant residents have been at the forefront of successful campaigns for affordable housing, good jobs, healthy neighborhoods, and ending the school-to-prison pipeline.

However, these victories are set against the backdrop of a changing political climate. Today, South LA's residents remain vulnerable to multiple forms of displacement and erasure, including rapidly expanding gentrification, the criminalization and killing of Black and Latinx men, women and transgender people, and the persecution and deportation of immigrants. While significant reforms have been made, residents of South LA are still far from building the power needed to transform deeply ingrained power structures that exploit and push out low-income communities of color from the LA region. Given its particular history of oppression and resistance, the South Central community is poised to explore the question: What will it actually take to ensure low-income communities of color can thrive in Los Angeles over the next 50 years? Through this report we hope to demonstrate that the answer lies within intersectional systems change approaches led by grassroots leaders.

GIVEN ITS PARTICULAR HISTORY OF OPPRESSION AND RESISTANCE, THE SOUTH LA COMMUNITY IS POISED TO EXPLORE THE QUESTION: WHAT WILL IT ACTUALLY TAKE TO ENSURE LOW-IN-COME COMMUNITIES OF COLOR CAN THRIVE IN LOS ANGELES OVER THE NEXT 50 YEARS?

A GUIDE TO USING THIS REPORT

Developed with the input of over 30 South LA community-based organizations and institutions and 125 resident leaders as part of the South LA Building Healthy Communities Collaborative (South LA BHC), the goal of this report is to shed light on the structures and systems that created and now reinforce inequality in South LA. It is our hope that this analysis fosters new thinking and discussion among systems leaders, funders, organizers and advocates about the need for intersectional approaches to fundamentally transform conditions in South LA and similar communities across Los Angeles.

This report explores four intersecting root causes, or "drivers of disparity" in South LA:

1. **Gentrification, Displacement, and Homelessness**
2. **Poverty, Disinvestment, and Joblessness**
3. **Policing, Suppression, Deportation, and Mass Incarceration**
4. **Environmental Racism**

EACH CHAPTER FOCUSES ON ONE OF THE DRIVERS OF DISPARITY TO HIGHLIGHT THE DEEP INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN SYSTEMS THAT PERPETUATE INEQUITY IN SOUTH LA.

Intersecting this root-cause analysis, we add a health equity lens that serves several purposes. First, while there is a moral imperative to address each of the four drivers of disparity in South LA, we aim to show that these drivers have tangible, day-to-day consequences on residents' abilities to lead full lives and participate meaningfully in their communities and the broader democracy. Second, a health equity lens takes into consideration the many factors and systems that impact individual and community health. This approach lends itself to an intersectional analysis that reflects the connections among these drivers. Third, in recent years, health equity has gained credible traction within both government and philanthropy. It has become a powerful framework for our allies in these sectors to seriously tackle the complex challenges faced by communities like South LA and develop longer-lasting solutions to them.

This report draws upon existing academic and community-based research, a series of focus group conversations with South Central residents, as well as policy reports and media coverage where relevant.

USING A BROAD DEFINITION OF SOUTH LA (AS NO ONE STANDARDIZED OR CONSISTENT DEFINITION EXISTS ACROSS DATA SETS) TO PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEMS AND CONDITIONS, EACH CHAPTER IS BROKEN INTO THREE MAIN SECTIONS:

1

HOW DOES THIS DRIVER IMPACT COMMUNITY HEALTH?

This section provides a review of public health literature to demonstrate the connection between root causes and health outcomes.

2

HOW IS SOUTH LA DOING?

This section discusses the impact of this driver on current conditions in South LA.

3

WHAT ARE THE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THIS DRIVER IN SOUTH LA?

This section provides an intersectional analysis of the challenges and opportunities to create change, making linkages to the other drivers where appropriate.

SPECIFICALLY, WE INTEND FOR THE REPORT, IN BOTH ITS SUM AND ITS PARTS, TO BE ADAPTED IN DIFFERENT WAYS TO DEEPEN THE MOVEMENT-BUILDING WORK IN SOUTH LA, BY:

1 Incorporating an analytical lens that is both intersectional and rooted in South LA history and lived experience, the report allows South LA community partners that focus on different issues to move toward political alignment and deepen their collaboration. Just as they have done through the South LA BHC, South LA partners can determine and prioritize collective advocacy efforts, especially around those emerging issues identified in this report.

2 Citing credible data and evidence from peer-reviewed academic journals, expert policy reports, and focus groups conversations, advocates can use this report to develop policy advocacy materials and curriculum for grassroots political or popular education. In doing so, the report can support the base-building and leadership development work that is so crucial to long-term sustainability of any social justice movement.

3 Citing data from multiple public datasets on indicators such as homelessness, arrest rates, community health, and eviction rates, the report serves as a clearinghouse of data sources for activists and researchers in South LA to track these conditions longitudinally.

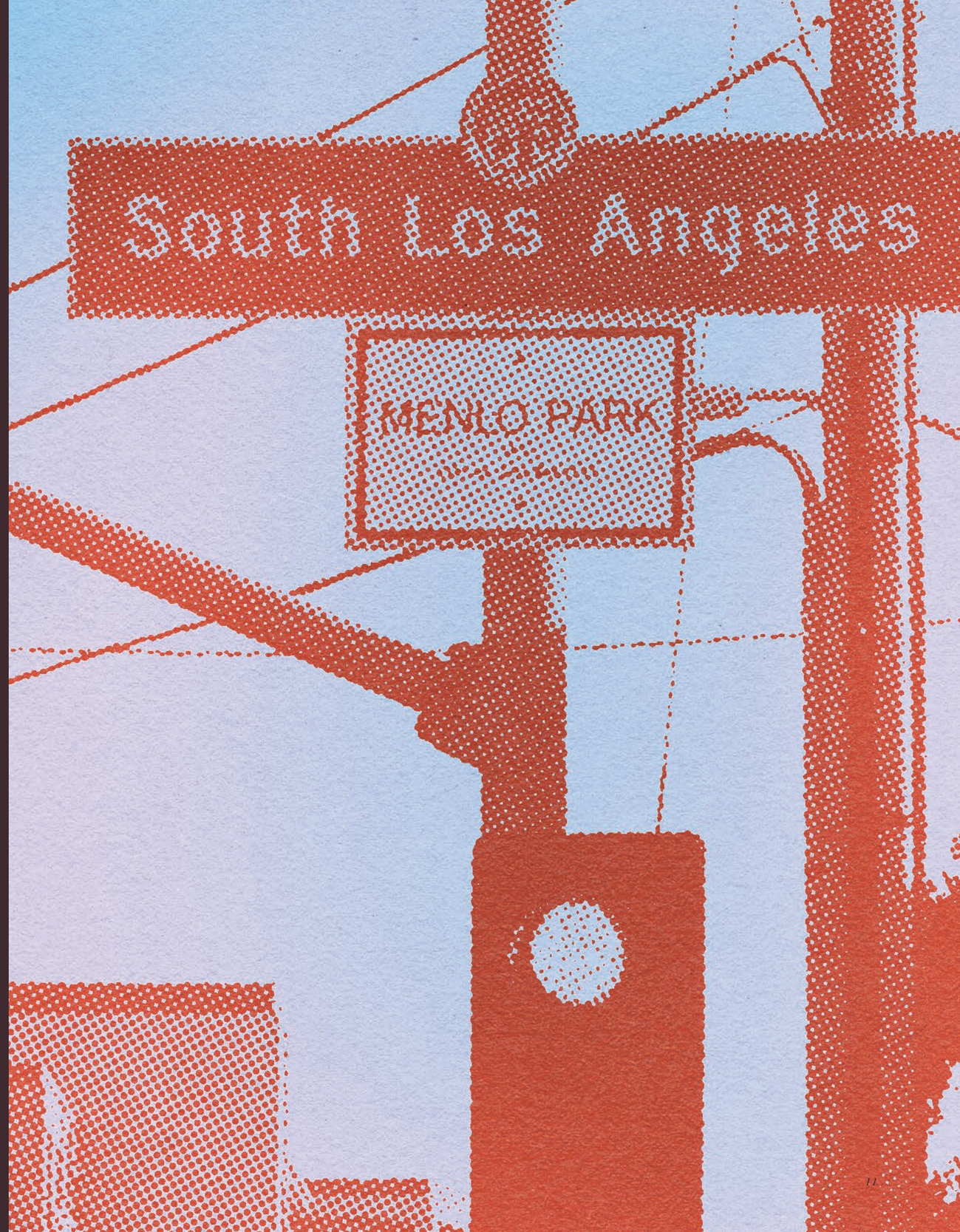
4 Advancing an equity framework and elevating the contributions and research by South LA community leaders, this report encourages funders, public officials, and other allies to think more holistically and strategically about the many strategies that need to be supported in order to improve community health in South LA and other similar communities.

(Photo/Mike Dennis)

South Central vs South LA:
The Politics of Place

As with most neighborhoods in Los Angeles, no single definition of South Central or South LA exists. Throughout this report you will see both names used; however, they are not necessarily interchangeable. In Chapter 1, we provide a historical overview that describes the early twentieth century origins of the name South Central—a Black neighborhood along the Central Avenue corridor just south of Downtown Los Angeles that grew out of enforced racial segregation. Over the subsequent decades, the name South Central was used to refer to numerous neighborhoods south of the 10 freeway, eventually becoming synonymous with Black Los Angeles. However following the 1965 and 1992 periods of civil unrest, mainstream media and local elected officials felt that South Central had a racially biased "negative connotation" and in 2003, the Los Angeles City Council officially discontinued the use of "South Central Los Angeles" in favor of South Los Angeles, which is now widely used.[13]

For some, the name South Central carried racialized stereotypes of violence and poverty—which we unpack and contest throughout this report. But for many, South Central also signifies community, pride, and resistance.[14] Generally, South Central is not used to refer to all the neighborhoods and communities that are now considered part of greater South LA. For this reason, we largely use the term South LA throughout the report. However, we intentionally use the name South Central in the title in an effort to affirm the identities, experiences and spaces of those Black and Latinx residents who have struggled in place for decades, those who have already been displaced, and those who have shaped South Central's long history of resilience.



1

Gentrification, Displacement, and Homelessness

DRIVER ONE

HOW DOES THIS DRIVER IMPACT COMMUNITY HEALTH?

Gentrification[15] can push out existing residents in a previously neglected neighborhood because of rising rents, overpolicing, and the replacement of existing local businesses by ones that current residents cannot afford. This displacement disrupts the social ties and support networks that long-term residents build over years. Even for residents who could afford to stay, the loss of long-time neighbors and a sense of continuity about their community creates stress and lasting psychological effects.[16]

High housing costs, especially for low-income families, limit the amount that a family can spend on nutritious food and health care.[17] Residents with housing instability may be marginalized to neighboring and less desirable parts of the city and likely experience food deserts, less walkable streets, pollution near housing or freeways, and overcrowding. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention concludes that these vulnerable populations are at risk of higher rates of cancer, asthma, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases as well as "unequal share of residential exposure to hazardous substance such as lead paint."[18] Many will even become homeless and are consequently exposed to more mental and physical health problems.[19] They are also less likely to have a regular source of medical care, have fewer resources to manage their conditions, and are harder for providers to reach.[20] Homeless individuals experience illness and injury 3 to 6 times more frequently and 30 fewer years of life expectancy than housed individuals.[21] Gentrification and displacement can dilute residents' political power and social networks that took years to build by pushing out neighbors who are allies and peers and bringing in new people who may not share existing residents' political or economic interests.[22]

DRIVER ONE

HOW IS SOUTH LA DOING?

The proportion of a household's income that must be devoted to paying housing costs is higher in South LA than other parts of Los Angeles County. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines a household as "cost-burdened" when more than 30% of household income is devoted to housing costs.

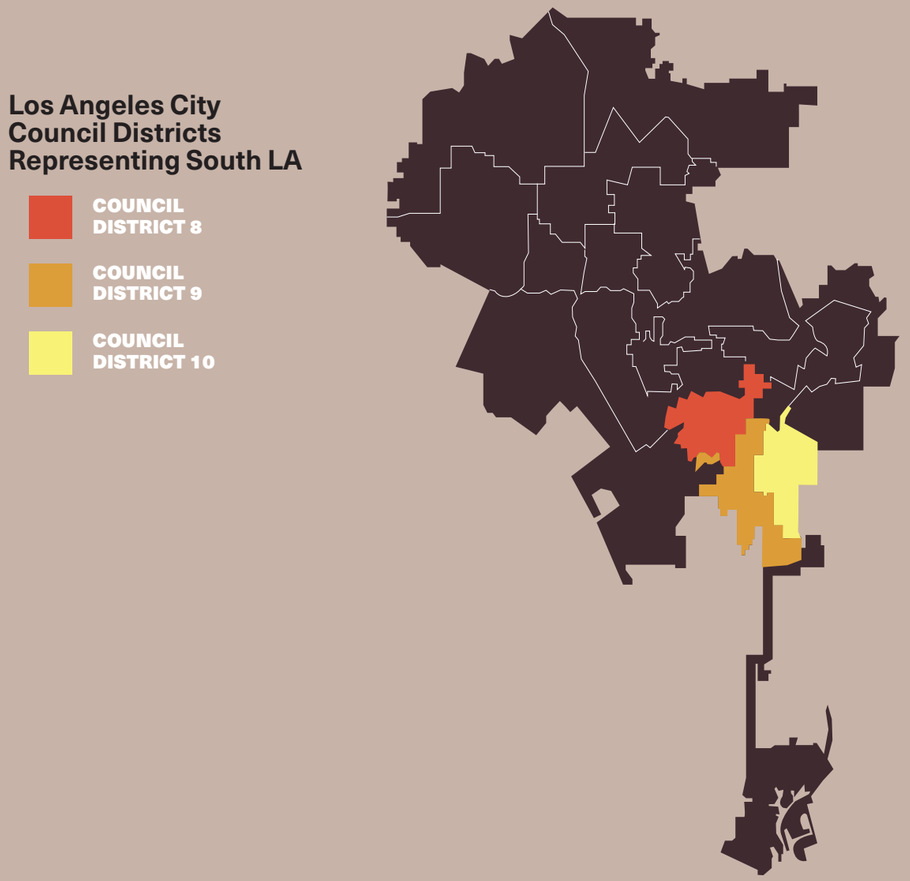
Severely cost-burdened families pay more than 50% of household income toward housing costs.[23] In 2010-2014, 63% of households in Service Planning Area[24] (SPA) 6 (largely South LA) spent at least 30% of their income on housing, compared to an average 50% in Los Angeles County, and more than any other service planning area. The South LA rate was virtuallly unchanged from 2006-2010 (63%), the years of the Great Recession, while housing cost burden has declined for the county from 51% since then. Rent increases also occurred more sharply in South LA than Los Angeles County in general. Average rent in South LA was $731 in 2000 but rose 31% to $956 between 2010-14. In Los Angeles County, average monthly rent went from $965 in 2000 to $1,212 between 2010-14, an almost 26% increase.[25]

Homelessness is a growing problem in Los Angeles. Several factors, discussed later in this chapter, resulted in a dramatic 23.3% increase in homelessness between 2016 and 2017, compared to a 6% increase between 2015 and 2016.[26] In 2015, one in ten (10%) of South LA adults experienced housing instability, i.e. they reported being homeless or not having their own place to live or sleep in the past five years, up from about 9% in 2011. During the same time frame, the rate of housing instability dropped approximately from 8% to 5% in the county overall. However, the 2015 housing instability rate for South LA was more than double the average for the county that same year.[27]

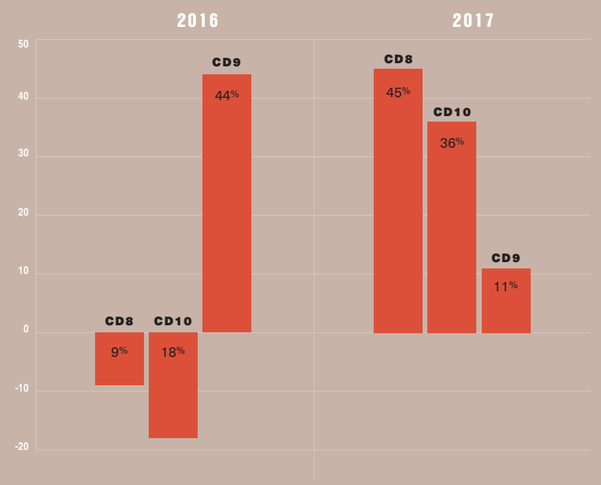
The growth of homelessness has varied within South LA. Among the three city council districts in South LA, the two west of the 110 Freeway (CD 8 and 10) saw a decline in homelessness of 9% and 18%, respectively, in 2016, but both districts experienced a tremendous increase in 2017 (45% and 36%, respectively). The rate of increase in these two districts in 2017 ranked as the second and third highest among the 15 council districts in the city. (Only CD 1, which encompasses downtown Los Angeles, was higher.) On the other hand, CD 9 in South LA, located south of downtown LA and along the 110 Freeway, including the Figueroa Corridor where gentrification facilitated by the University of Southern California and other private developers has been taking place, saw a 44% increase in homelessness in 2016, which was the largest increase among the 15 council districts in the city that year. In 2017, homelessness in CD 9 increased another 11%.[28]

Specific populations are more at risk of homelessness than others. African Americans continue to be over-represented in the homeless population. About 2 in 5 homeless people in Los Angeles are African American,[29] even though their proportion of the general population continues to shrink as the lack of economic opportunities has pushed many Black residents out of Los Angeles and into neighboring counties.[30] (Chapter 2 will explore the employment crisis in LA's Black community in more detail.) Black homelessness actually increased significantly in council districts like CD 8 in South LA. The number of people who were both Black and homeless was 923 in 2013 and 1,313 in 2015, an increase of 42% in two years, compared to only a 12% increase in the general population in LA County in the same period.[31]

The rate of increase in homelessness among young people, both minors (under 18) and transition age youth (18-24), far outpaced the rate movements for all other age categories. In LA County, the rate of homeless children under 18 in families and unaccompanied minors increased 41% between 2016 and 2017, while



Change in Homelessness Rates in South LA City Council Districts



the rate of homeless youth ages 18-24 saw a 64% increase during the same period. As a result, young people represented almost 1 in 5 homeless individuals in Los Angeles.[32] In CD 8 in South LA, these two age groups represented more than 1 in 4 (27%) in homeless population. In this district, 27% of homeless individuals were family members, compared to only 14% in the overall county.[33]

Transgender youth are especially at risk of homelessness, which has implications lasting into adulthood. Between 2015 and 2016, the number of transgender homeless individuals more than doubled from 222 to 488. That number was virtually unchanged in the following year, 2017 (484). A national study of LGBT youth service providers found that the top three reasons for transgender youth becoming homeless were: running away because of family rejection (46%), being kicked out of home by family (43%), and aging out of the foster care system (17%).[34] Another national survey of transgender and gender non-conforming adults found that almost 1 in 5 (19%) respondents reported having been homeless as a result of family rejection or discrimination. As adults, many of the transgender respondents reported being denied housing (19%) or evicted (11%) because of their gender non-conformity. Almost half (47%) reported being fired, denied a job promotion, or not being hired because of their gender non-conformity. For this population, the lack of economic opportunities increases the risk of homelessness or housing instability.[35]

In Los Angeles County, since 2013, there has been a 55% increase in the number of cis women experiencing homelessness. Research has shown that, while women also suffer from the structural factors that cause homelessness in the general population, they most often report becoming homeless as a result of violent victimization, especially violence perpetuated by an intimate partner.[36] About 1 in 3 (34%) homeless individuals in LA County had a history of domestic or intimate partner violence. This was more prevalent for cis women (50%) and transgender individuals (68%). In Service Planning Area (SPA) 6, there was a 181% increase of homeless individuals with a history of domestic or intimate partner violence between 2013 and 2017.[37] One study found that women who are victims of intimate partner violence and other violent victimization are more likely to experience multiple episodes of homelessness, possibly due to the cumulative effects of violence and untreated trauma.[38] Similarly, a national study found that 48% of transgender individuals who had a history of domestic violence had experienced homelessness.[39]

Sex trafficking among homeless cis women and transgender populations was also disproportionately high. About 28% of cis women and 42% of transgender homeless individuals in LA County had been forced, threatened, or pressured into performing a sex act with another person and received payment or something of value for this act.[40] In addition, 30% of homeless people in LA County experienced mental health issues, 18% experienced substance abuse, and 2% were living with HIV/AIDS. A homeless person could embody more than one of these challenges.[41] In the transgender population, for instance, "there is a high prevalence and heightened risk of substance abuse and other mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation...putting them at greater risks of becoming unstably housed," which in turn could exacerbate these conditions.[42]

In short, South LA residents face higher rates of housing instability and homelessness than the city at large, and within South LA, there are populations that are at a heightened risk of homelessness and displacement. We explore the contributing factors that shape these conditions in further detail below, with the aim to demonstrate the need for housing solutions that address both historic burdens and current disparities.

DRIVER ONE

WHAT ARE THE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THIS DRIVER IN SOUTH LA?

SOUTH CENTRAL ROOTED

DISAPPEARING AFFORDABLE AND SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

The Los Angeles Homeless Services A uthority (LAHSA) estimated that the affordable housing gap, the discrepancy between housing supply and population growth, was 527,000 units in the county in 2015.[43] A national study reinforced the acuity of the affordable housing shortage, placing a gap of 382,000 units in metropolitan Los Angeles alone, second only to New York City, even though the growth of homelessness in Los Angeles far outpaced New York City.[44] Unfortunately, this gap occurred at a time after Los Angeles had already lost 65% of state and federal funding for affordable housing, which occurred between 2009 and 2014.[45] Locally, the Los Angeles Affordable Housing Trust Fund dwindled from $100 million in 2008 to just $19 million in 2015, partially as a result of the demise of the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) in California in 2011.[46] The CRA was set up to stimulate economic activities and reduce blight. Until it was dissolved, the CRA provided the largest ongoing source of funding for affordable housing in California, up to $1 billion a year.[47] Affordable housing units located within a half-mile of transit stations were even more endangered, as 80% of federally subsidized affordable housing units in those areas expired by 2014.[48] In addition, traditional funding sources that address housing instability, like Section 8, Supplemental Security Insurance, and permanent supportive housing, have also been shrinking. Based on increasing need and shrinking resources available, one study concluded that 42% of people who experience homelessness do not receive the help they need to exit homelessness.[49]

And this isn't just a case of affordable housing not being built; the existing stock of affordable housing is disappearing because of harmful land use policies. According to a report on the economic drivers of homelessness, since the 1970s, corporate interests pushed elected and appointed government leaders to enact "neo-liberal urban policy" that "pushes for public goods to be privatized and government's ability to regulate to be sharply limited." This political trend, which is documented across the four drivers in this report, has meant a decrease in resources for and regulations ensuring affordable housing and other pro-poor policies and programs.[50]

Another reason for decreasing affordability is the limited reach of rent control, which does not apply to newer constructions or certain types of housing. As old housing units are demolished to make way for new developments, the number of rent-controlled units will continue to shrink over time. Even in rent-controlled units, landlords can raise rent to market rate once an existing tenant moves out. Statewide, there have been efforts to repeal the 1995 Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act, which exempts certain rental units from rent control. For Los Angeles, this includes units built after October 1978 and single-family homes. Los Angeles is already losing rent-controlled apartments faster than new affordable housing is being built.[51] If this legislation is not amended, the supply of rent-controlled units will shrink from year to year, rendering the policy tool toothless.[52] Costa-Hawkins supporters have argued that the legislation spurs new housing construction as it exempts newer housing units from rent control. However, since its passage the rate of new housing construction, especially in metropolitan cities like Oakland, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, lagged behind the rest of the country.[53] Proposed legislation to repeal Costa-Hawkins failed in the State Assembly in early 2017 in the face of opposition from both landlords and the real estate lobby, and a statewide ballot measure to the same end failed in 2018.[54],[55]

"Rent stabilized units are disappearing, Section 8 is not accepted in certain places anymore."

–South LA community member and focus group participant

A LEGACY OF EXCLUSIONARY DEVELOPMENT

DISPLACEMENT AND HOMELESSNESS IN SOUTH LA IS NOT A CURRENT PHENOMENON. The loss of affordable and subsidized housing is closely tied to a long history of exclusionary development and other discriminatory policies that target people of color, excluding them from economic opportunity on multiple levels (Chapter 2 explores the economic impact of this history in more detail). A position paper by City Councilman Marqueece Harris-Dawson (CD 8) stated, "The current homelessness crisis is decades in the making. For nearly 60 years, policies at every level of government have contributed to a disappearing social safety net, the loss of affordable housing, the rise of mass incarceration, the reduction of middle-class jobs, and the destruction of mental health care."[56] The current homelessness crisis is but the latest phase of a long history of disinvestment and neglect in South LA. But even as parts of South LA are finally attracting attention from developers and politicians, history shows that development in South LA has occurred at the expense of its African American, immigrant, and working-class families. Furthermore, generations of exclusion have made it impossible for many African Americans, and Latinx immigrants more recently, in South LA to accumulate wealth in their own communities with which they could withstand the onslaught of more powerful forces trying to displace them. Therefore, understanding the history of development in South LA is crucial to developing policies and other solutions that account for this legacy of exclusion.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the area we now know as South LA was mostly farmland. By the 1920s, it had been developed into an "industrial suburb" for a mostly White working class population. Absent the vast network of freeways that had yet to be built, South LA was close enough to employment for this population but

Santa Monica Freeway cuts through L.A. with 1962 dedication ceremony. | UC Berkeley, Bancroft Library

far enough away from the developing urban center.[57] The small number of African Americans in Los Angeles at the time were kept out of this area through racist restrictive housing covenants and discriminatory real estate practices like redlining. Redlining is a type of financial racial profiling whereby a particular demographic group is uniformly categorized as presenting a high financial risk in order to systematically and discriminatorily deny members of that group financial products and services, such as home loans or insurance. As a result, Black homebuyers were confined to find housing along the Central Avenue corridor just south of Downtown Los Angeles. (The name "South Central" was adopted by residents and outsiders years later and is now understood to encompass the larger area of South LA. However the swath of neighborhood where African Americans could purchase homes was originally much smaller.[58])

In the first half of the 20th century, the population of African Americans in Los Angeles increased steadily, doubling every decade until 1940. By then, African Americans represented about 4% of the total population in Los Angeles, about 70% of whom called the Central Avenue corridor home. African Americans fleeing the racial violence of Jim Crow in the American South accounted for the majority of this westward migration.[59] Although they still faced housing and employment discriminations in Los Angeles, they generally found "relative economic and housing freedom" in their new city.[60]

Starting from 1940, the aerospace industry and the related wartime economy in Los Angeles demanded a larger workforce and attracted even more African Americans to the city. The labor demand was so urgent that in 1941 President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8802 to prohibit racial discrimination in employment by any company that held a defense contract with the U.S. government. Between 1942 and 1945, about 200,000 African Americans moved to Los Angeles.[61] Even with the executive order, discriminatory employment practices did not die out overnight. Few African Americans were promoted to managerial positions, and employment gains in other private sectors remained minimal. Instead, the largest share of the African American workforce could be found in the public sector.[62] The significance of public sector employment opportunities for Los Angeles's Black residents is discussed in further detail in Chapter 2.

Initially, the influx of African Americans fostered a vibrant arts and cultural center in the Central Avenue corridor, especially the development of a jazz scene. However, lack of housing options elsewhere meant that the area where African Americans were concentrated was marked by overcrowding and other poor living conditions.[63] One scholar described how "Blacks were forced to live in old garages, brokendown store fronts, deserted railroad coaches and thatched tents, all without sanitary conveniences."[64]

Throughout the 1940s, Los Angeles started a wave of public housing projects to address the growing wartime labor force, incentivized by the concurrent federal investments in public housing following the Great Depression in the previous decade.[65] Initially, Blacks had to fight their way in courts to get access to these new public housing units, such as those located in Watts and other areas in South LA that still held a White majority. Resistance by local elected leaders to Black residents moving into public housing would subside later for two reasons: "the construction kept Blacks from seeking housing in surrounding White neighborhoods, and it was believed that Blacks were only temporary residents who, once their wartime jobs were eliminated, would return to their state of origin."[66] Those supervising and building new public housing translated these expectations into inferior constructions, which "did not follow the normal community pattern." Instead of single-family dwellings, this newly available housing "took the form of low-cost, two-story projects." Also, because business interests wanted to keep people of color farther away from the burgeoning business center, new public housing projects were placed farther south and away from downtown.[67]

Though at a rate slower than other populations, the number of African Americans living in South LA continued to grow after the war, as "the wartime munitions plants later transitioned to automobile, tire, and steel jobs."[68] Meanwhile, in 1948, the U.S. Supreme Court, in Shelley v. Kraemer, declared racial housing covenants to be unconstitutional. As a result, the Black community, especially the emerging middle class, began to move out of the Central Avenue corridor and into

neighborhoods to the south (such as Watts and Compton) or west (such as West Adams and Leimert Park). Following this influx of African Americans, these neighborhoods started to witness the first of a few waves of White residents moving out of South LA. This first "White flight" was aided by the development of suburbs (such as those in the San Fernando Valley) and the accompanying construction of freeways that connected these new homes with jobs in the city.[69]

The manufacturing sector continued to build up the Black middle class until the early 1960s. By 1960, 24% of employed African American men and 18% of their female counterparts in South LA worked in manufacturing.[70] Despite a strengthened economic base and the rollback of some, but not all, racist policies, African Americans still lagged behind Whites in home acquisitions. Between 1934 and 1968, 98% of home loans were given to White families.[71] As a result of being systematically denied home ownership, many African Americans were unable to transfer any wealth to the next generation in spite of the growing middle class and civil rights gains during these decades. Simultaneously, White flight made South LA communities more segregated, while investments, such as public housing, began to dry up in the latter half of the decade. Ironically, the freeway system that made suburbs more attractive to White Angelenos was often made possible by the decimation of these South LA communities. For instance, in 1963, the construction of the Santa Monica Freeway (I-10) broke up Sugar Hill, a middle-class African American neighborhood in West Adams.[72] In 1967, the construction of the Century Freeway through the southern part of South LA (the South Bay area just north of the Gardena and Hawthorne neighborhoods) destroyed more than 7,000 dwellings and almost 300 businesses, displacing more than 27,000 people, mostly people of color.[73] Property values in the neighborhoods adjacent to the Freeway dropped accordingly.

Residents' frustration with the stagnating post-war economy and diminishing public investment in South LA came to an explosion during the six-day 1965 Watts Riots. As previously mentioned, sparked by a confrontation between a Black motorist and White highway patrolman, the unrest was widely attributed to the worsening relationship between the Los Angeles Police Department and the African American community. One scholar stated, "The reputation of the LAPD became especially notorious under the reign of Chief William Parker from 1950 to 1966. Parker is infamous for many reasons. He is credited with not only promoting racial profiling and aggressive policing, but also with harassing business and patrons along Central Avenue so frequently that his policing methods led to not only breaking up Central Avenue's vibrancy but the 1965 Watts Riots."[74] Parker's repressive brand of policing African Americans was another means of confining that population in South LA and enforcing de facto segregation. Another scholar stated, "Chief of Police William Parker's infamous statement following the unrests—'We're on the top and they're on the bottom'—was not merely intended to calm the public and business community. It was a governing methodology that sustained Los Angeles's racial caste system."[75] Both scholars and activists believed that the conflicts with LAPD were rooted in the economic marginalization of African Americans in South LA, such as residential segregation, chronic unemployment, and racialized poverty, and advocated solutions beyond police reforms to address these structural issues.[76] (Chapter 3 will explore how overpolicing continues to reinforce gentrification and other inequities in multiple ways for South LA residents.)

Building on fire during the Watts Riots. (Photo/ LAPL Archive)

AS A RESULT OF BEING SYSTEMATICALLY DENIED HOME OWNERSHIP, MANY AFRICAN AMERICANS WERE UNABLE TO TRANSFER ANY WEALTH TO THE NEXT GENERATION IN SPITE OF THE GROWING MIDDLE CLASS AND CIVIL RIGHTS GAINS DURING THESE DECADES.

Unfortunately, the racist assumption of Black pathology prevailed, following the Watts and similar urban unrests in the late 60s. Official government accounts, like the McCone Commission that investigated the roots of the Watts Riots, treated symptoms, like family disorganization, as the cause and overlooked the political economy under which Black families were withering.[77],[78] Instead of addressing development inequities for communities that had been suffering from decades of neglect, public policies moved in the opposite direction and disinvestments in the inner cities became the norm for many decades to come.[79]

A family (the Lee family) in front yard of home near Central Avenue and 21st Street. | Shades of L.A. / LAPL

In the early 1970s, the Nixon administration decimated most of the federal low-income housing programs, favoring a private market housing allowance program over public sector investments in affordable housing stock.[80] Seeking cheaper labor, manufacturing sectors began to relocate their factories, first to U.S. cities with less unionization and eventually offshore to developing countries. South LA was part of a larger national pattern of deindustrialization and neglect of the inner cities. In South LA in particular, more industry has moved out of the area since 1971 than has moved in.[81] White flight intensified.[82] The vanishing of the industries and White population from South LA depleted its tax base and eroded basic services for the remaining residents.[83]

The waning of both public and private interests made poverty more entrenched in the area for those who couldn't move away, making South LA a fertile ground for an underground economy: theft, drugs, and prostitution.[84] Many residents who were victimized by this economy (e.g. sex workers, drug users, etc.) were also criminalized because of it. In the process, not only did these residents see their own prospects for economic advancement dim, but they also saw their families and social networks break up. The lack of employment, housing, or any economic opportunities made South LA particularly vulnerable to the next wave of assault on its communities: the crack epidemic.

Starting in the early 1980s, the crack epidemic struck many inner cities marked by poverty and unemployment because "crack offered a quick fix with a high profit margin."[85] In addition to the devastation associated with the use of the drug itself, the crack trade led to the proliferation of gangs who warred with both the police and each other.[86] South LA was "ground zero" for this epidemic.[87] Because of this tension, even residents who were not involved in the trade found themselves living in "a hyper-criminalized environment."[88]

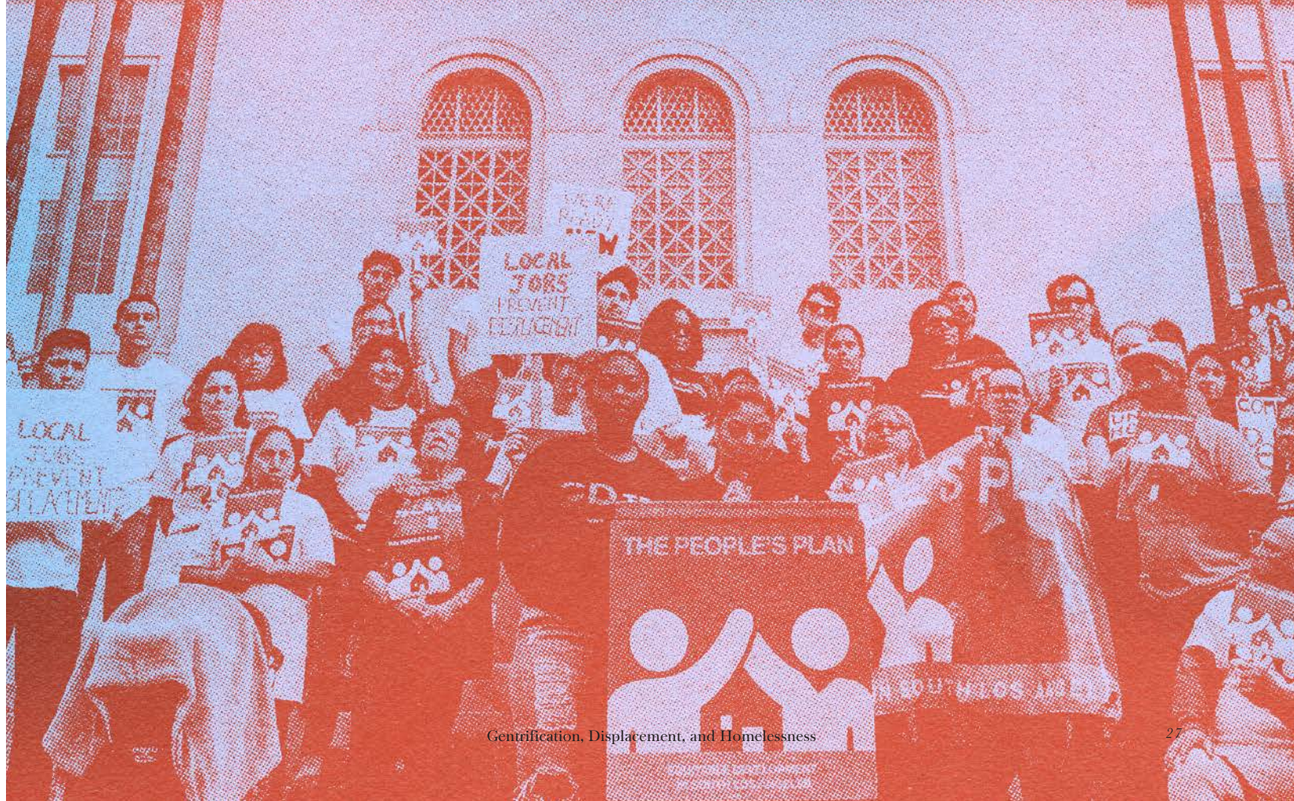
The abandonment of South LA left an opening for newcomers, like Asian and Latinx immigrants. Korean immigrants, for instance, while also not benefitting from bank loans and federal assistance in general, were at least able to pool the wealth they had accumulated before immigrating to start small business ventures in South LA to fill the gaps that were left behind by previous ethnic entrepreneurs and big business interests. Latinx immigrants, especially those from Central America, fled their home countries to escape violence and economic strife and began to settle in South LA. Eschewing the traditional entry points, like the Mexican-American stronghold East LA or overcrowded Pico-Union, these immigrants found cheaper housing and more single-family homes in South LA even though they "arrived to a neighborhood in crisis, one wracked by deindustrialization, a crack epidemic, and militarized police and gangs."[89]

Relations between the various ethnic groups in South LA were not always harmonious. Tensions between long-time residents and newcomers, and individuals of differing racial and ethnic groups at times resulted in violent confrontations. Though community leaders worked together across racial and ethnic lines to assuage mistrust,[90] some scholars found that certain incidents and misunderstandings were exacerbated by the frustrations of poverty and the collective dehumanization associated with ongoing unemployment and underemployment, gang and police violence, poor housing conditions and inadequate social services.[91] One of the most tragic examples was the 1991 murder of 15-year-old Latasha Harlins, a Black teenager who was shot and killed by Soon Ja Du, a Korean storeowner, after a misunderstanding and argument over a $1.79 bottle of orange juice. The various tensions from this period came to a boiling point in 1992 after the LAPD officers who beat Rodney King were acquitted. The decision ignited the fuse of another uprising, which had been rendering in the nearly 30 years since the Watts Riots. While some of the protestors' anger was directed at the Korean community and the members of other minority groups, many scholars and activists stated the LA Uprising was ultimately a collective reaction to the devaluing of human lives in South LA. For residents of all colors, it was an avenue to demonstrate their frustration at the everyday dehumanization they faced, making it what The Los Angeles Times called the "first multiethnic riot" in the U.S.[92]

The physical and economic devastation from the 1992 Uprising, along with "the slippage of employment, the rise of violence, the risks of overpolicing, and the obvious miscarriages of justice, led to a new migration: the out-flight of middle-class African Americans from South LA, who had provided a stabilizing presence but

RELATIONS BETWEEN VARIOUS ETHNIC GROUPS IN SOUTH LA WERE NOT ALWAYS HARMONIOUS.

TENSIONS WERE EXACERBATED BY THE FRUSTRATIONS OF POVERTY AND THE COLLECTIVE DEHUMANIZATION ASSOCIATED WITH IT.



(Photo/Mike Dennis)

> "My friends are moving out to Palmdale for cheaper houses that are bigger, but where are their jobs? They have to travel for 2 hours each day for work and spend money on that."
>
> — *South LA community member and focus group participant*

were now eager to provide a different environment for their children."[93] African American homeowners or those with sufficient resources began to move to the northern parts of Los Angeles County (such as Lancaster and Palmdale), the Inland Empire (San Bernardino and Riverside Counties), and even Las Vegas for more affordable housing and better employment opportunities.[94] At the same time, the Latinx population in South LA continued to grow. By the year 2000, they would outnumber African Americans.[95] They also developed their own infrastructure and cultural institutions, such as businesses, churches, and clinics.[96]

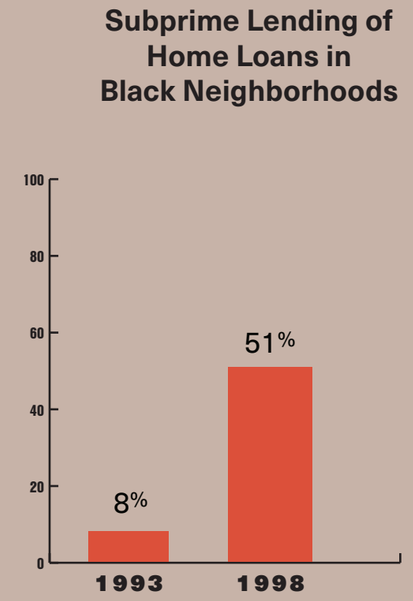
The 1992 Uprising occurred just as the country was starting to emerge from a recession in the early 1990s. With the exodus of Black homeowners and the lack of public investment in housing, property values in South LA plummeted even further. Each year since the 1980s, more housing units were demolished than built. Most of the remaining single-family housing stock in South LA were built before 1940, and were not usually in good condition because many of the Black homeowners had no or little access to bank loans to improve their properties.[97] Although the combination of social and economic woes and "growing volume of abandoned space" made real estate in South LA the cheapest in the city, neither the remaining African American residents nor the newcomer Latinx immigrants had accumulated enough wealth to buy up vacant South LA properties in the more open housing market. Instead, outside private and commercial interests began to take over.[98]

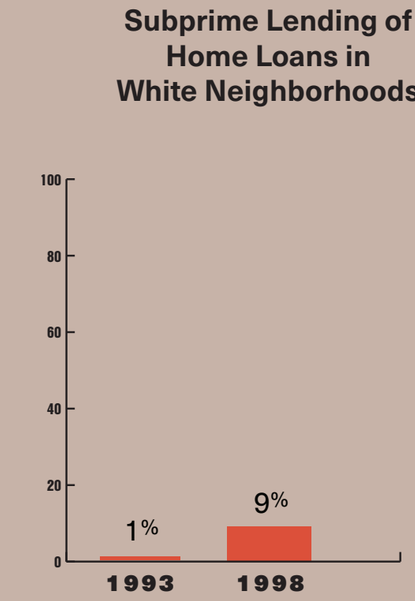
Some of these new owners were waiting for real estate values to rebound and left their properties unused or fallow, which contributed to the blight and general desolation in the community.[99] Developers in other areas in South LA focused on attracting a new demographic. For instance, USC had been expanding since the 1980s in the nearby neighborhood "with the assistance of the CRA [the now defunct Community Redevelopment Agency] and through the use of police power, eminent domain, and condemnation." The nearby West Adams and North University Park neighborhoods began to attract a new type of resident, a primarily young White professional and creative class.[100]

A decade later, South LA was in an even more vulnerable position for a housing crisis. Deregulation of the banking industry that started in the 1980s introduced practices of high-risk loans and predatory lending. Even when intended to reverse decades of redlining and racial discrimination to make home loans more accessible in poor communities of color, these policies (such as the 1992 Federal Housing Enterprise Financial Safety and Soundness Act) encouraged "the proliferation of subprime lending."[101] By allowing commercial banks to operate in the securities market, the repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act in 1999 paved the way for the ballooning of the subprime mortgage market. Commercial banks packaged subprime loans into mortgage-backed securities. Their proliferation was made riskier by the fact that these private-label securities were not backed by the U.S. government. As these high-risk loans began to turn delinquent, the market collapsed under their weight.[102]

These policies disproportionately affected neighborhoods with a majority of people of color, especially those with high concentrations of low-income families. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development found that subprime lending accounted for 51% of home loans in predominantly Black neighborhoods in 1998, compared to only 9% in predominantly White areas. Just five years before (1993), those figures were 8% for the Black neighborhoods and 1% for their White counterparts.[103] Studies showed that areas in South LA with high rates of subprime lending were highly correlated with high rates of eviction.[104] Many of those residents who had been able to stay above water financially became submerged when the housing bubble burst in 2007. Latinx and Black homeowners, while they couldn't be evicted, were hit hard with foreclosures and dispossession during the Great Recession because their assets were more likely to be held entirely through homeownership. One scholar concludes: "Ultimately, the proliferation of subprime and predatory lending in South LA during the 1990s not only influenced the process of displacement through bank repossession, but it also aggravated historic wealth disparities by contributing to a significant loss of wealth for Latinos and Blacks."[105] The devastation from the collapse of the housing market in the 2000s made South LA ripe for the taking. Low-income residents of color were targeted by both speculative investors as well as rental property landlords who wanted to cater to the more affluent demographics.

Understanding this history is important because some researchers and policymakers have characterized gentrification positively and narrowly as investment in "vacant" or neglected lands. Instead, gentrification needs to be evaluated as part of a longer process of the cultivation of vulnerability and a tandem exploitative process of development and displacement. That is, "one must first consider the disinvestment of urban neighborhoods and subsequent displacement, which makes land ripe of investment."[106]





REINVESTMENT DISPLACEMENT:
A Mismatch Between New Development and Longtime Residents

This report focuses on two types of displacement that could result from gentrification: reinvestment displacement and exclusionary displacement. Reinvestment displacement is when new commercial and residential developments make the area more attractive to newcomers with a higher socio-economic status, thereby raising property values and rents that then push out existing residents who can no longer afford to live there. Reinvestment displacement usually follows a period of disinvestment, when neglect and abandonment of low-income communities depreciates property values and allows outsiders to cheaply purchase properties for new developments.[107] These developments could potentially raise the quality of life for existing residents by bringing in amenities like grocery stores and sit-down restaurants that had been sorely lacking before gentrification, and by providing jobs in the construction of these developments and the businesses that occupy them once construction is completed. However, local hiring for construction projects and new local businesses, even when stipulated as part of the development agreements, require vigilant monitoring by community activists and enforcement by government officials in order to be successful.[108] (Chapter 2 will examine current efforts to monitor local hiring, especially of African Americans, in development projects in South LA.) And ultimately, many residents justifiably worry that they will not be able to remain in the area to enjoy these new benefits.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Even as early as the 1980s, government development incentives prioritized commercial interests over residential ones. One scholar wrote, "[D]evelopment has meant one thing for residents and quite another for growth interests in the city. Financiers, real estate interests, and politicians have been supporting investment that increases the value of land and from which a profit can be made. Using these criteria, a strategically placed parking lot can be considered a better investment than low-income housing."[109] Not every part of South LA receives equal commercial investment. Rather, investments occur in very strategic places chosen by private interests. Gentrification has been more active along the Figueroa Corridor around the University of Southern California (USC), just south of Downtown LA. Further, Metro expansion of the Expo Line to the Westside means the areas closest to the light rail stations in this east-west axis are also drawing commercial investments.

USC continues to expand north and south on the Figueroa Corridor, even more aggressively now than in the 1980s. USC as a driver of gentrification in South LA is a classic example of the "creative class" making a formerly neglected neighborhood more attractive to consumers, tourists, and even new residents. The creative class refers to "people who work in science and technology, business and management, arts, culture, media and entertainment, law, and healthcare professions."[110] Typically, the creative class is highly skilled and highly educated. USC has been purchasing property in its neighborhood for faculty, researchers, administrators, and students and attracting businesses that cater to these populations. In 1999, USC purchased an adjacent street mall (University Village) and spent $700 million to redevelop the 15-acre property, which now includes residence halls for 2,500 students as well as 100,000 square feet of retail space that attracted Target, Trader Joe's, Starbucks, and as many as 15 restaurants. The fitness center is restricted to USC students and faculty, and for "safety" reasons, no one without a campus ID is allowed to access these businesses and services after 10 p.m.[111] These new developments have spurred outside investors to "flip" houses in nearby neighborhoods, like Jefferson Park and West Adams, often selling these renovated properties less than a year later at twice the purchase value, to higher-income individuals who were priced out of more affluent housing markets in Los Angeles.[112]

Gentrification and the displacement of low-income families in this Figueroa Corridor has been going on for years and is well documented. In an analysis by community activists of the block of 36th Place west of Vermont Avenue, 29 of the 32 properties were community-serving housing in 1999. A decade later (2009) that number was reduced to seven, as student housing displaced existing residents. In 2012, a pastor at a local Catholic church testified in front of the Los Angeles City Planning Department hearing that his parish had suffered a loss of 1,000 families in the past ten years.[113] In that same year, a health impact assessment of proposed development estimated that the region saw a decrease in population, especially among family households, particularly those with children 14 years and younger, and African Americans. The Latinx population in Figueroa was declining even as it was still growing in more affordable neighboring regions.[114] The

> "Without protection on affordability, these residents will not have the opportunity to benefit from the new investments—pleasant streets with visual interest, short walkable blocks, tree canopy, housing close to jobs and retail options."

The promised economic opportunity that has taken place in the northern part of South LA hasn't relieved poverty—it has merely displaced it south of Martin Luther King Boulevard.

study also found that some of the population moved southward to other parts of South LA that had yet to be targeted for development. A 2009 study about the Figueroa Corridor predicted, "Without protection on affordability, these residents will not have the opportunity to benefit from the new investments —pleasant streets with visual interest, short walkable blocks, tree canopy, housing close to jobs and retail options."[115] Sure enough, three years later, as long-term residents were being pushed out by the development in the Figueroa Corridor, a community leader stated, "The promised economic opportunity that has taken place in the northern part of South LA hasn't relieved poverty—it has merely displaced it south of Martin Luther King Boulevard."[116]

The expansion of Metro light rails through South LA was another stimulus for commercial development and displacement. The vast majority of areas planned for transit-oriented development (TOD) in South LA, such as the Figueroa Corridor and the Exposition light rail line expansion, had the highest concentrations of low-income communities of color and immigrant communities in Los Angeles.[117] A 2011 study by the Los Angeles Planning Department predicted that "the same features that are likely to attract new demand to the study area may also cause displacement of existing residents. By attracting households with higher incomes, existing residents are more likely to be displaced as housing prices and the cost of living increase."[118] This prediction was quickly realized. By 2013, the UCLA Urban Displacement Project found that "transit neighborhoods are more associated with higher increases in Whites, college educated, higher income households and greater increases in the cost of rent."[119]

Research suggests that the more higher-income residents TOD attracts, the more likely public transit use will decrease because these newer residents tend to rely on cars.[120] Another study focused on Los Angeles found that "while extremely low (less than $25,000 per year in 2010 dollars) and very low-income households ($25,000-$40,000) are correlated with increased transit use, every other income category ($40,000/year and up) is associated with decreasing transit use." In other words, gentrification around TOD areas tends to negate the environmental impact that the development intends to have. The study concluded, "If policymakers are concerned with increasing station area transit use, they must retain current households earning less than $40,000 a year, and create new opportunities for very and extremely low-income households."[121] Ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing close to light rail stations would be key to increased ridership of this public transportation system, but it would require active intervention to counter the market forces that would try to extract as much profit as possible from these developments, even at the expense of displacing low-income residents. In addition, while light rail has been the focus of TOD in South LA, scholars, activists, and even Metro executives have urged for more resources to expand and improve the relatively inexpensive bus lines that even more riders depend upon, especially if quick access to jobs and services by public transit is key to the future development of the City.[122]

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Neighborhoods in the western part of South LA are experiencing a surge in home prices, including Inglewood, West Adams, and Hawthorne. The rise has to do with lack of housing construction on the Westside. As housing became more expensive in the Westside, many of its residents initially found cheaper housing options in the east and northeast side of Downtown LA, especially Boyle Heights. The overflow from gentrification from the Eastside has been spilling into South LA since 2013. Data from the California Regional Multiple Listing Services (CRMLS) show that prices in South LA averaged between $100 and $200 per square foot in the early years after the Great Recession (2010-2012) but rose to between $300 and $500 per square foot in 2016-2017.[123]

Areas with higher levels of commercial developments often attract new higher-income residents who now find these areas more attractive because of these new amenities. Leimert Park, one of the few remaining strongholds for middle-class African American families in South LA, is experiencing a "rebirth," partly as a result of its proximity to light rail stations and updated retail development. Longtime residents could see improvement in services after years of neglect, including "roads getting taken care of." But with richer (and predominantly White) households moving into the neighborhood, some residents worry whether they can remain in Leimert Park much longer to "reap the benefits" from these improvements. The resulting tension is sparking conversations among old and new residents about the best way to preserve the history and culture of the neighborhood.[124]

Unfortunately, tensions do not always generate productive dialogues. In many gentrifying neighborhoods, new and higher-income neighbors are turning to the police to control and even criminalize longtime residents for behaviors such as loitering, noise violations, or general "nuisance." Evidence suggests that "311 and 911 calls are increasing in gentrifying areas...that makes for a potentially explosive atmosphere with regard to the police."[125] This encourages excessive disciplining of some residents in "neighborhoods where [the police] didn't necessarily enforce nuisance laws before." It also unnecessarily creates more opportunities for police misconduct and violence as a result from the kind of oversurveillance that is described in Chapter 3.[126]

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Perhaps a bigger threat to the housing stability of existing South LA residents, especially the majority of renters in this area, is the corporatization of the rental housing market. Following the housing crisis, South LA was plagued by foreclosures and depreciated housing values. In 2010 alone, foreclosures pushed over 100,000 Los Angeles homeowners into the rental market.[127] As a result, private equity firms and commercial investors scooped up many of these distressed properties, essentially transferring the wealth of former homeowners of color to corporations. Across the nation, these corporations raised more than $20 billion to purchase more than 200,000 single-family homes and turned them into rental properties.[128] So-called "white papers" from leading investors publicized the profitability of rental market investing, attracting other investors with marketing promises that "there are great gains to be made with Wall Street capital should large-scale investors use their access to cheap credit to institutionalize and financialize the single-family rental market that has been historically inhabited by mom-and-pop landlords."[129]

Unlike previous speculators in South LA who would leave their properties inactive or blighted while waiting for the housing market and local infrastructure to rebound, these corporations have found a way to monetize distressed properties. The strategy of these equity-firms-turned-landlords is to profit from those residents for whom homeownership is becoming out of reach. Then, once home prices rise sufficiently, the properties will be sold (and the tenants evicted) for even a larger return.[130] Unable to compete with these new corporate landlords, even those potential homebuyers who are otherwise able to purchase their own homes are being crowded out of the housing market.[131]

The corporatization of the rental market in places like South LA threatens the housing stability of existing residents. People who rent from these corporations tend to have a higher housing cost burden than those who rent from traditional "mom-and-pop" landlords. One reason is that these corporations have many investors who want quick and sizable returns from their investments, and raising rents is a surefire way to keep these investors satisfied.[132]

In a study of single-family rentals in Los Angeles and Riverside owned by the Blackstone Group and its subsidiaries, researchers found that half of the respondents in Los Angeles spent between 30% and 50% of their income on rent, and another 17% reported paying more than 50% of their monthly household income on rent.[133] The study also found that Blackstone tenants on average paid a security deposit that was 157% of their monthly rent, an amount that would be beyond many working class families of color in South LA. In a handful of cases, tenants were required to pay a security deposit that was twice their monthly rent, a practice that is illegal in California.[134] The giant equity firm also treated these properties as short-term investments and did not improve the living conditions in these rentals. Tenants in the study reported multiple problems, including plumbing issues (46%), roaches and insects (39%), rodents or termites (22%), heating and air conditioning issues (21%), mold (20%), and roof leaks (18%).

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These corporatized landlords have spent a lot of their resources in protecting this market. In 2018, Wall Street and real estate interests contributed significantly to oppose Proposition 10, which would have allowed local governments to adopt rent control for any type of rental housing, an important step in repealing the previously mentioned Costa-Hawkins act. Over $68 million were spent on this ballot initiative, making it one of the most hotly contested propositions that year. About three-quarters of the donations were made in opposition to Proposition 10, primarily from Wall Street and real estate interests.[135] Blackstone Group, by itself, spent over $7 million on the efforts against this rent control initiative.[136] As a result, over 59% of voters voted against Proposition 10.

EXCLUSIONARY DISPLACEMENT: THE PERSISTENCE OF HOUSING DISCRIMINATION

Gentrifying displaces residents in two ways. First, residents leave when they can no longer to afford to live in their neighborhoods. However, they also leave when their landlords and financial institutions use questionable tactics to push them out. Exclusionary displacement encompasses these tactics, including discrimination, harassment, and violations of existing laws.

Discriminatory racial restrictive covenants were declared unconstitutional in 1948 and the Fair Housing Act in 1968 outlawed housing discrimination based on race. However, housing discrimination persists because of biased policies and practices that may appear race-neutral but actually impact people of color disproportionately. Moreover, landlords and financial institutions perpetuate discriminatory practices by taking advantage of the government's lack of resources and political will to monitor illegal activities. A national study in 2000 by HUD found that discrimination impacted the housing searches for 22% and 24% of Black and Latinx renters, respectively, and 15% and 17% of Black and Latinx homebuyers, respectively. Discriminatory practices included falsely saying that rental units were no longer available, and telling potential renters that they weren't permitted to inspect units. Additionally, not all renters or buyers were given similar levels of assistance or information.[137] Financial institutions like Wells Fargo and Countrywide Financial Corporation have paid hundreds of millions of dollars after the Great Recession to settle claims that they charged higher fees and interest rates to minority borrowers or steered them into more costly subprime mortgages. Former homeowners that incurred a history of foreclosure or bankruptcy are now plagued with bad credit because of these discriminatory practices, increasing their vulnerability to future housing challenges.[138]

Landlords in rent-stabilized neighborhoods are restricted in how much they can raise the rent per year, unless a tenant moves out. At that point, a landlord can raise the rent to market rate. Los Angeles County has seen a spike in tenant harassment by landlords or property managers as a way to pressure current tenants to vacate their homes. Official harassment complaints doubled from 251 during fiscal year 2012-2013 to 524 during 2014-2015.[139] Harassment can take the form

"If landlords see a Black or Latino resident, they raise the rent because they know we can't afford it and they can push us out to get White tenants who can afford to pay."

—South LA community member and focus group participant

of refusing to do repairs or remove mold or cockroach infestations and taking away amenities like heat, parking, or laundry facilities. In some cases, tenants were evicted based on false accusations of violating their leases, like housing additional people.[140] Tenants were also harassed or threatened with forcible removal because of their sexual orientation or disabilities.[141]

Since the housing market rebounded from the Great Recession, there has been an increase in landlords abusing the Ellis Act to push tenants out of gentrifying areas. Passed in 1995, the Ellis Act allows landlords to exit the rental market by selling their properties or converting their rental units into condominiums. In these cases, landlords can evict their tenants without cause.[142] The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project found that Ellis Act evictions were minimal during the housing crisis, but their number has climbed steadily since 2009. The number of evictions tripled between 2013 and 2016 in Los Angeles.[143] Specifically in South LA, there were no Ellis Act eviction in its three council districts (CD8, CD9, and CD10) in 2009 and only eight units (in two addresses) in 2010. That number rose to 168 units (in 57 addresses) in 2016 and 200 units (in 48 addresses) in the just first 10 months of 2017.[144] Since 2001, Ellis Act evictions eliminated 22,132 rent-stabilized affordable housing units in Los Angeles,[145] and without intervention, that number is likely to climb in today's housing market.[146]

Supporters of the Ellis Act stated that the legislation was meant to allow longtime "mom-and-pop" landlords to exit a business that they no longer wanted to conduct. However, the majority of Ellis Act evictions were from properties that had been purchased less than a year before the eviction. In other words, these evictions "are overwhelmingly a real estate speculation tool used by investors rather than the last resort of longtime small landlords."[147] Evidence further points to abuse of the Ellis Act when landlords evict existing tenants but continue to stay in the rental market by renting the same unit out to higher-income tenants in gentrifying areas, including through short-term rentals, like Airbnb.[148]

The proliferation of short-term rentals, the market where Airbnb constitutes a majority, has proven to be a detriment to both the housing supply and its affordability in Los Angeles overall. The conversion of a previously long-term rental unit to what essentially amounts to a hotel room reduces the already shrinking supply of housing at a rate that "neither the market nor the public sector can swiftly replace" and contributes to "displacement, gentrification, and segregation."[149] In 2014, Airbnb removed over 7,000 units from the rental market in Los Angeles, an equivalent of seven years worth of affordable housing construction in the city.[150]

Originally conceived as a model of "shared economy," Airbnb has developed into a cottage hotel industry, where almost two-thirds (64%) of its listings are for units that were never occupied by their owners or leaseholders but are operated year-round as short-term rentals for out-of-towners. The company's own data show that units with on-site hosts generate just 11% of its revenues. Instead, the listings are dominated by large-scale operators managing multiple properties. Just 6% of Airbnb hosts earn 35% of the revenues generated from the site. Overall in Los Angeles, nearly 90% of Airbnb revenues come from lessors with whole units (without on-site hosts) and leasing companies who rent out two or more whole units.[151] In fact, Ellis Act evictions have increased the most in neighborhoods where Airbnb listings are concentrated.[152]

While South LA neighborhoods are not among the areas with the most concentrated Airbnb listings, housing affordability is still impacted by the proliferation of these short-term rentals. As middle-class residents are pushed out of Airbnb hotspots, like the Westside, to poorer neighboring areas like South LA, rents have risen more dramatically than the rest of the city.[153] It also appears that Airbnb listings are growing faster in areas adjacent to neighborhoods that have already been saturated, suggesting that this trend will continue to spread outward from Airbnb hubs.[154] Furthermore, because Airbnb operates on a less labor-intensive business models than hotels, its growth has had a negative impact on hotel revenues, which leads to job losses and depressed wages in that industry.[155] As a result, low-income hospitality workers could find it financially challenging to stay in areas with high concentrations of Airbnb listings or their adjacent neighborhoods.

In order to preserve low-cost housing and protect tenants from being harassed and forced out from runaway rent increases, legislators and activists are considering different ways to expand rent control regulations. Some activists suggest amending the Ellis Act to limit its application to property owners who have owned the property for at least five years, or restricting the number of times per year a developer can use the Ellis Act.[156] An increasing number of incidents of tenant harassment have attracted the attention of the Los Angeles City Council. It is now considering an ordinance to require landlords to demonstrate "just cause" for evictions even in non-rent-controlled properties[157] as well as considering tenant harassment legislation modeled after successful laws at work in other cities, such as Santa Monica, West Hollywood, and San Francisco.[158]

Finally, people who are formerly incarcerated have been systematically denied housing support in Los Angeles County, which is a significant hurdle to reintegrating into their communities after their release. Up until as recently as 2015, formerly incarcerated people were only entitled to 90 days of transitional housing, and were expected to find their own housing after that. A program piloted by the county's Probation Department and Department of Health Services (with matching funds from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation) provided a permanent home in a rental property for 300 homeless formerly incarcerated people. This is evidence of a positive trend among various county departments towards considering "housing as a key to what they're trying to accomplish."[159] However, given that discriminatory policing and sentencing policies,

Since 2001, Ellis Act evictions eliminated 22,132 rent-stabilized affordable housing units in Los Angeles, and without intervention, that number is likely to climb in today's housing market. In 2014, Airbnb removed over 7,000 units from the rental market in Los Angeles, an equivalent of seven years worth of affordable housing construction in the city.

especially with nonviolent drug offenses, "has produced a disproportionate number of Black men and women in the prison system" from South LA, this renders them in a worse position when they reenter their community than before they entered the criminal justice system. To address the housing and other challenges these formerly incarcerated individuals face will require more solutions delivered on a much larger scale.[160]

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF GENTRIFICATION

Housing cost burden and insecurity is deeply connected to the other drivers in this report, particularly poverty (Chapter 2) and environmental racism (Chapter 4). Together, these drivers exacerbate health outcomes for South LA residents.[161] Studies have shown that people who have a higher housing cost burden have significantly worse self-reported physical health,[162] less healthy diets,[163] and higher risk of clinical depression.[164] Research by the MacArthur Foundation has found that poor quality housing is the most consistent and the strongest predictor of emotional and behavioral problems in low-income children and youth.[165]

Overcrowding is often a "trade-off" for longtime residents to stay in South LA amidst increasing rent with stagnant or declining incomes. According to U.S. Census data, Los Angeles and Orange counties contain a majority of the top 1% of the most overcrowded census tracts in the country.[166] Los Angeles County has seven of the 10 zip codes with the most overcrowded conditions in the U.S.[167] In fact, the most overcrowded zip code in the country is 90011, in Historic South Central, where nearly 45% of homes are considered overcrowded.[168] For these families and many others in South LA, doubling or even tripling up families in one household is the only viable way to maintain housing affordability and stability in the face of increasing gentrification.

In general, overcrowding is correlated with poverty and poor living conditions. Overcrowding exacerbates already poor living conditions and increases the risk for physical and mental health problems.[169] Poor living conditions, such as pests and mold, can trigger and aggravate asthma and other respiratory conditions already present in higher rates in environmental justice communities like South LA.[170] One study found that people who live in overcrowded conditions are more likely to be exposed to infectious diseases, such as hepatitis A, pneumonia, meningococcal disease, and tuberculosis.[171] Children in overcrowded housing perform significantly worse than other children with similar socio-economic backgrounds on some key developmental measures, such as elementary school reading and early IQ tests.[172] A 2012 study found that "in Los Angeles, there are clear and significant negative effects of crowding on all indicators of child wellbeing" that can persist throughout life, affecting their future socioeconomic status and adult wellbeing.[173] For adults, overcrowding contributes to strained social support systems and higher rates of psychological distress.[174]

Finally, research is also beginning to look at the cumulative impact of multiple displacements. Moving away from familiar surroundings disconnects residents from their social networks, which especially for the poor, are "a bulwark against hard times and emergencies." Lack of support could make these families increasingly isolated and stressed.[175] Multiple episodes of displacement could amplify this pernicious effect. According to a recent health impact assessment of a new development (The Reef) in an area of South LA that has a long history of gentrification, "multi-generational traumas can result from serial forced displacement resulting in a condition called 'root shock.'"[176] South LA residents are particularly vulnerable, not only because they might have experienced more than one instance of displacement within South LA, but also because many "Black and Latino residents who relocated to South LA to escape racial and political discrimination and violence brought with them the memories and traumas of previous displacements." The study concluded that the new development project would exacerbate this trauma and suggested a new approach of "Trauma-Informed Community Building (TICB)" to promote social cohesion and resiliency.[177] Created by San Francisco State University in collaboration with a local affordable housing developer, TICB strategies focus on increasing peer interactions, community leadership empowerment, shared positive experiences, health behavior, and the incorporation of resident input in long-term visioning and implementation of community development.[178]

In fact, the most overcrowded zip code in the country is 90011, in Historic South Central, where nearly 45% of homes are considered overcrowded. For these families and many others in South LA, doubling or even tripling up families in one household is the only viable way to maintain housing affordability and stability in the face of increasing gentrification.

(Photo/Mike Dennis)

"The 90011 zip code is the most dense in the country, most of them are renters. Seventy percent absentee landlord rate, which means people in homes are renters. Every single one of them are vulnerable – to institutions and eviction practices."

—South LA community member and focus group participant

ALL IS NOT LOST: OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT

Because of a long history of neglect, South LA residents are not categorically opposed to every type of new development. Many South LA residents and advocates campaigned fervently against Measure S, a blanket moratorium on development that failed at the ballot box in March 2017. Many activists and community organizers understand that development, whether public or private, is necessary to revitalize a community that has long been abandoned. However, residents, especially those who have stayed with South LA through its lean years, demand development projects that put people over profits.

Accordingly, South LA residents have a history of working collaboratively with community-based organizations and advocates on development projects and policy models that do not displace longtime residents or increase homelessness. There are examples in South LA where community engagement and input stemmed displacements. A USC case study profiled the accomplishments of United Neighbors in Defense Against Displacement (UNIDAD), a South LA coalition that successfully established a community benefits agreement with private developer G. H. Palmer Associates in 2011 and a development agreement with USC in 2012. These agreements brought tangible benefits to the community, including local and "disadvantaged" hiring, a new health clinic, living wage jobs, support for local businesses, and $20 million for affordable housing. Hailing their work as an "innovative model," the case study credited UNIDAD's success to its movement-building approach, which included building a broad base of support among residents, elevating their experience and training them to work with planners, and forming a diverse coalition to deliver a consistent and coordinated public message about development without displacement.[179]

Even after significant policy wins, community pressure will be key in the implementation of these and other efforts to ensure South LA will receive its equitable share of the intended benefits.[180] As a researcher reflected on the anti-gentrification struggles in South LA, "The more recent broadening of planning to include more advocacy and community participation is a welcome change, though there are concerns that the participatory process is not structured, funded, or empowered in such ways to be truly inclusionary of working families' voices."[181]

Recently, the UNIDAD coalition organized South LA residents and focused their pressure as the City of Los Angeles underwent the process of updating the South LA and Southeast LA community plans. These plans will be the blueprints guiding development in the South LA neighborhoods covered in these two jurisdictions. This community coalition released its own "People's Plan," which emphasizes renter protection and economic opportunities for small business owners.[182] Coalition members worked closely with the city's planning department to incorporate policy recommendations from the

People's Plan into the updated community plans. As a result, the LA City Council unanimously adopted both updated community plans in late 2017. About 75% of the community plans came directly from recommendations given in the People's Plan.[183] Although residents did not get everything they wanted in the final plans, both the process and results were significant, considering that many such community plans had not been updated for decades. In fact, these were the only two out of the 35 community plans in the city being updated and considered at the time, and "LA city officials have a long tradition of ignoring their constituents" in the planning process.[184]

The broader voter base in Los Angeles seems to be moving in favor of equitable development as well. In November 2016, voters overwhelmingly approved an affordable housing development measure that requires hiring of local workers at prevailing wages as well as a $1.2 billion homeless housing bond. South LA residents, advocates and organizations supported and campaigned for both measures. In 2018, although a statewide rental control initiative, Proposition 10, ultimately lost because its advocates were outspent by powerful Wall Street interests, housing advocates like Cynthia Strathmann from the South LA-based Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE) point out that the proposition prevailed in San Francisco and Los Angeles, and that the majority of Californians support rent control in voter polls. Strathmann and other advocates argue that the fact that the opposition was forced to spend millions of dollars on misleading advertising to defeat Proposition 10 indicates how seriously Californians and Angelenos take this issue.

In the same election, over 63% of California voters approved Proposition 2, which authorizes the State to use revenues from a tax on millionaires approved in 2004 for homelessness prevention housing for persons in need of mental health services. The California Endowment said that victories like these and the organizing that led to them, "illustrate paths forward for ensuring that low-income and communities of color have voice and agency and power to make change in a changing economy and urban environment."[185]

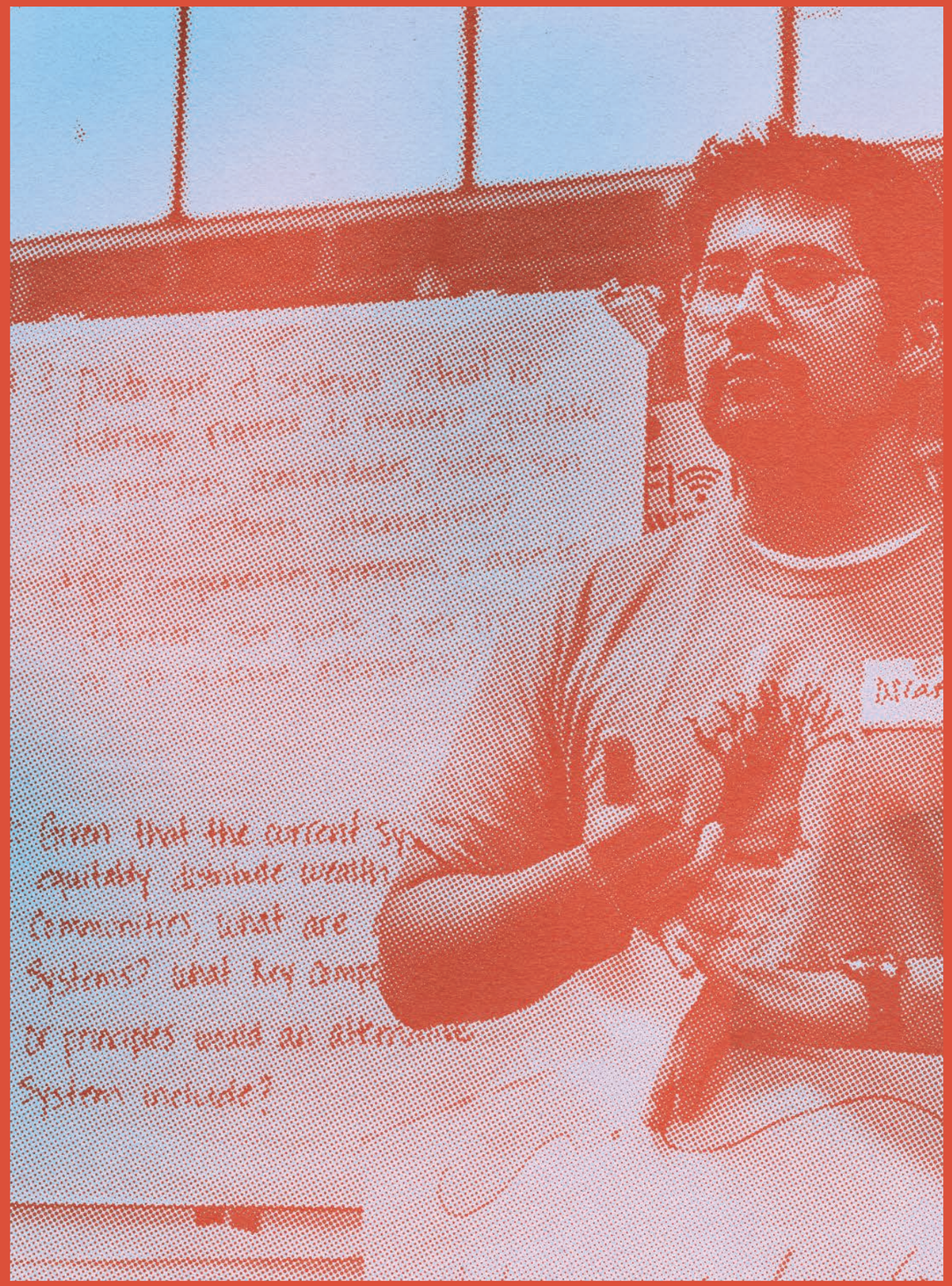
There is no lack of future development opportunities in South LA for which residents need to be vigilant. For instance, Measure M, which was passed by Los Angeles voters in November 2016, directs tax revenues to fund the expansion and maintenance of the public transportation system. These expansion projects will have implications on development and displacement in South LA. Measure M dollars are subject to a targeted local hire policy, developed with the input of South LA organizations and discussed in further detail in the next chapter. The measure does not specify any anti-displacement requirements, but neither does it preclude them. Advocacy efforts are underway to demand Metro use a percentage of the Measure M revenues, projected to be $130 billion, for investments that would retain families currently living near transit developments.[186] Newer developments, like the construction of a football stadium for the Los Angeles Rams, are also emerging opportunities for community organizing and advocacy.[187]

However, without community involvement in planning, any anti-displacement investments in South LA could be neutralized by the upcoming Olympic Games in Los Angeles in 2028. Researchers have noted that cities that recently hosted the Olympics have seen lower housing affordability. One economist noted, "[The host cities] clean out low-income neighborhoods in order to build infrastructure. They bring services into the area. You often get gentrification, which leads to higher rents."[188] For instance, the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta "provided the cover for the destruction of low-income communities in that city," while London saw "an irreversible increase in property prices and displacement" after the 2012 Olympics.[189] In an effort to "create the image of a world-class city" and boost tourism, these host cities ended up "cleans[ing] the area of any riffraff whatsoever that would cut into their profits and image."[190] And, as detailed in Chapter 3, the history of the Olympics in 1984, when Los Angeles last played host, confirms how the international event contributed to overpolicing in South LA for years afterwards. Even more so than in 1984, South LA residents are likely to bear the brunt of the effects of displacement because multiple sports venues will be updated or built in this community, which is likely to exacerbate the gentrification trends described in this chapter.

South LA residents have a history of working collaboratively with community-based organizations and advocates on development projects and policy models that do not displace longtime residents or increase homelessness.

COMING UP

Housing and jobs are inextricably linked. The same history that marginalizes South LA residents from housing also limits their economic opportunities. The next chapter will further explore the history laid out in this chapter and point to specific root causes of structural poverty and disinvestment in South LA. Specifically, it will examine how deindustrialization in South LA and inequity in public investments (in all areas except law enforcement) have led to a job crisis in the Black community, the proliferation of low-wage immigrant labor, and ultimately the lack of access to opportunities to build wealth.



2

Poverty, Disinvestment, and Joblessness

Gentrification, Displacement, and Homelessness

DRIVER TWO

HOW DOES THIS DRIVER IMPACT COMMUNITY HEALTH?

Socioeconomic status, whether measured by income, education, or occupational status, is one of the major factors contributing to disparate health outcomes across the world. Poverty limits access to quality housing, education, economic opportunity, and healthy food, creating a cycle of hardship that is difficult to escape.[191] Research shows that poverty's impact on physical and mental health can continue even after a person's socioeconomic status improves.[192]

Neighborhood-level conditions, including the physical and social aspects, significantly influence health. In the United States, these conditions are shaped by a legacy of racial residential segregation, including the formative period between 1940 and 1970 discussed in the previous chapter, which continues to confine poor people of color in largely urban areas of concentrated poverty. Concentrated poverty can be defined as neighborhoods where at least 40% of households fall below the federal poverty level—currently $24,000 for a family of four. Between 2000 and 2013, the number of people living in concentrated poverty in the United States nearly doubled, reaching 13.8 million in 2013.[193] Concentrated poverty and race overlap in overt ways. For example, while overall most poor people in the United States live in economically integrated neighborhoods, poor people of color are most likely to live in segregated neighborhoods with concentrated poverty. In the U.S., this means 1 in 4 Black residents and 1 in 6 Latinx residents live in areas of concentrated poverty, compared to 1 in 13 of their White counterparts.[194] This translates to a Black child spending 50% of his or her first 18 years of life on average in high-poverty neighborhoods, while a White child spends 5% of his or her first 18 years of life in the same conditions.[195]

Epidemiological research has demonstrated the connection between the concentration of poverty, the lack of quality educational and employment opportunities, and poor health outcomes.[196] In addition to limiting opportunities, concentrated poverty also can reproduce unhealthy conditions, including exposure to violence, crime, increased policing, and high incarceration rates. As a result, residents endure increased psychological stress, trauma, victimization, and destabilization of family and economic support systems.[197] (The impacts of overpolicing on health and well-being will be further explored in Chapter 3.)

Lack of access to educational and job opportunities, which is correlated with chronic job insecurity, unemployment, and low-wage employment, has equally been shown to have an impact on physical and mental health.[198],[199] A meta-analysis across 324 studies found that unemployment impaired mental health across multiple indicator variables.[200] Additional research has shown the long-term impacts of unemployment include long-term earnings losses, lower job quality, declines in physiological and physical well-being, social withdrawal, family disruption, and lower levels of children's educational attainment and well-being.[201]

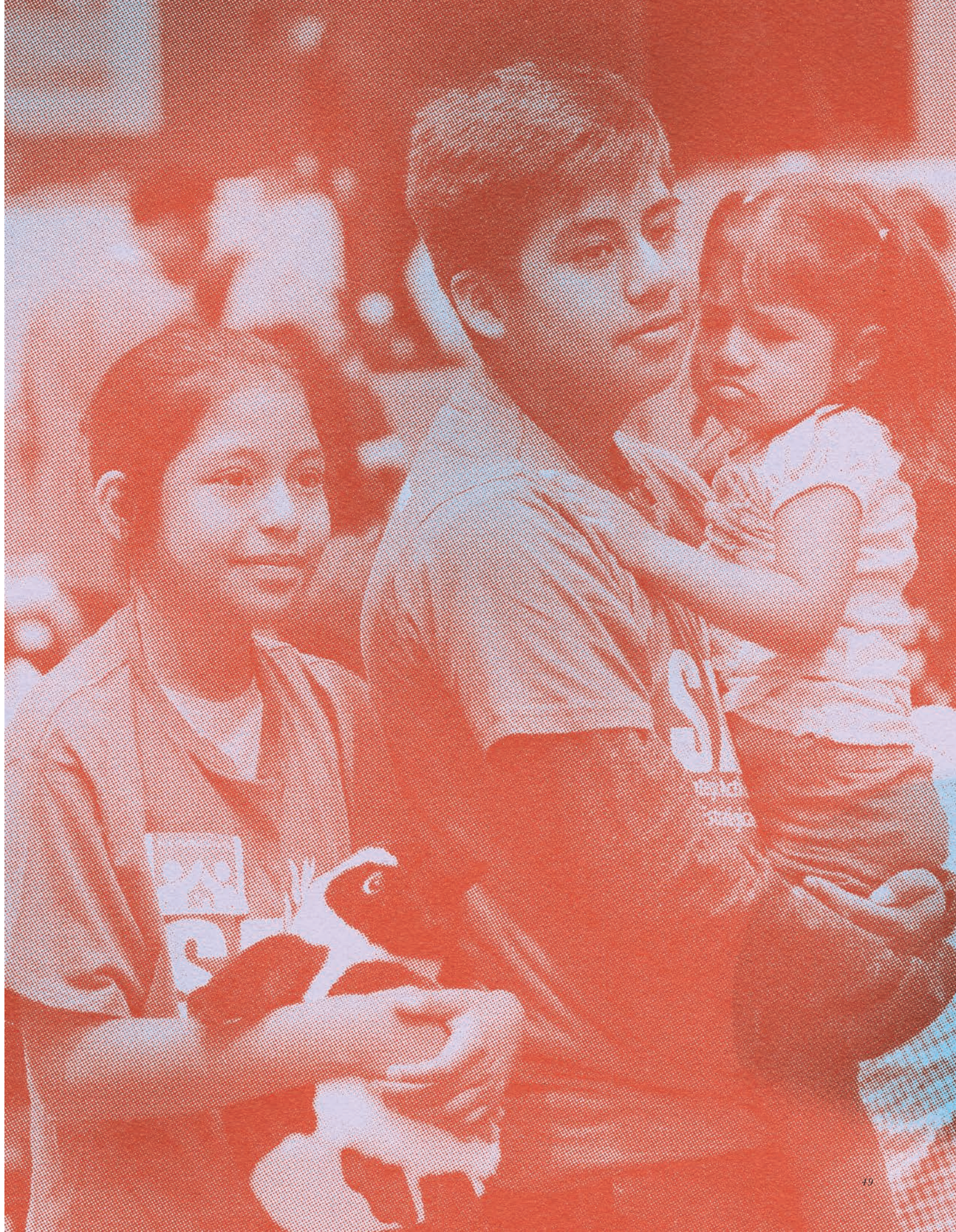
Additionally, due to the U.S.'s employment-centric social welfare system, unemployed individuals are at least four times less likely than employed individuals to have access to health care and at least 21 times more likely to delay health care due to cost.[202] Similarly, growing numbers of workers in low-wage, part-time, or temporary employment as well as those classified as independent contractors are less likely to have access to health insurance, sick days, paid time off for sick children, or other benefits.[203]

Research on the structural changes of work suggests that beginning in the 1970s, large corporations shed their role as direct employers of large-scale workforces in favor of reducing labor costs. These corporations

contracted work out to smaller companies, initially in areas with less unionization and eventually outside of the U.S, increasing competition and creating downward pressure on basic labor standards.[204] This large-scale shift has resulted in an increase in nonstandard work arrangements, declining wages, eroding health and retirement benefits, inadequate health and safety protections for workers across industries, and growing income inequality. Research indicates that the health of poor and working-class people of color, and women in particular, have been disproportionately impacted by these macrolevel economic shifts in the past four decades.[205]

This chapter explores the roots of these current conditions within the historical context of South LA, demonstrating how multiple systems intersect to maintain racialized poverty. Research on the associations between socioeconomic and racial health disparities underscores that poverty and health cannot be separated from systemic racism. In fact, all socioeconomic status indicators are highly patterned around race, indicating that systemic racism "combines with, and even transforms socioeconomic status to influence health."[206]

(Photos/Mike Dennis)



DRIVER TWO

HOW IS SOUTH LA DOING?

EARNINGS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY, 2015

	MEDIAN INDIVIDUAL EARNINGS	WOMEN	MEN
LA COUNTY	$30,654	$26,652	$32,444
BLACK	$32,433	$32,033	$34,533
WHITE	$47,607	$40,702	$55,348
LATINX	$22,617	$20,258	$25,547
ASIAN	$38,016	$34,496	$41,812
SOUTH LA COMMUNITY PLAN AREA	$17,988	--	--

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2015

UNEMPLOYMENT BY ZIP CODE, 2015

	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	BLACK UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	LATINX UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
90003	14.5	30.4	10.9
90007	14.1	26.2	13.9
90011	9.8	20.3	8.8
90018	12.1	17.4	9.8
90037	13.7	32.9	9.7
90043	15.5	16.6	12.5
90044	12.0	18.3	8.5
90047	17.0	22.1	9.0
90062	11.8	17.1	9.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

South LA lags behind the rest of Los Angeles County in socioeconomic status indicators. In 2015, over one-third (34%) of South LA residents were living below the federal poverty line, compared to 18% in Los Angeles County. The South LA poverty rate was the highest among all regions in the county in 2015 and represented a slight increase from 31% in 2011.[207] To put this into perspective, only the Detroit metro area had a slightly higher poverty rate in 2015 at 36%.[208]

Employment and earnings are key determinants of poverty status. A Portrait of LA County, released in 2017, found that median personal earnings in the South LA planning area[209] was just below $18,000. Across the county, median personal earnings were lowest for Black and Latinx residents, as shown in the table below.[210] While median individual earnings in LA County was only slightly below the national median, earnings disparities by race in LA County are much more polarized than across the U.S.

According to a survey conducted by Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, in 2015, 14% of adults in South LA were unemployed and looking for work, compared to 10% in Los Angeles County. The South LA unemployment rate was the highest in the county, but improved slightly from 2011, when it was 16%. Black workers in particular face the highest rates of unemployment in LA County at 17%, nearly double the rate of White workers. A recent study found that across all levels of education, Black workers experience the highest rates of unemployment, suggesting discrimination in hiring practices and barriers for chronically unemployed candidates.[211]

An analysis of localized data reveals that some zip codes within South LA fare worse than the county-level picture suggests.

Overall, earnings and employment data demonstrate that South LA residents are not only challenged by high rates of unemployment, but also by low wages. While 2016 data continues to show economic improvement for South LA, indicators of socioeconomic status have not reached pre-recession levels or even post-World War II levels. In fact, a recent study looking at the economic progress made in South LA between 1960 and 2016 showed a widening gap between median individual earnings over the past 56 years. It found that "the average South LA worker who is employed full-time, full-year earns about 60 cents on the dollar," compared to the average LA County worker.[212] In this 56-year time frame, the median earnings for a South LA full-time worker has decreased 20%. Median male full-time earnings in South LA have dropped 33%. As a result, women now out-earn their male counterparts. This reduction in earnings over generations, which will be discussed later in this chapter, is

not unique to South LA; rather it is indicative of the post-war deindustrialization process that decimated many working-class communities of color across the U.S.

Communities of color disproportionately feel the impacts of reduced employment earnings and unemployment because of their limited access to financial resources and reserves. Financial industries have historically discriminated against communities of color, while at the same time preying upon their limited access to resources. A 2016 study on debt and wealth in Los Angeles found that White households have a median net worth of $355,000, while Mexican and African American households have roughly 1% of the wealth of Whites at $3,500 and $4,000, respectively. The study also found that Mexicans (47%), other Latin Americans (55%), and Blacks (68%) were less likely to own checking accounts than White Angelenos (90%). Additional research suggests this leads to reliance on the often predatory "fringe lending landscape"—check cashing, payday loans, rent-to-own finance, pawnshops, and prepaid credit cards.[213] This results in communities of color often having higher-cost debt, higher debt-to-income ratios, less access to credit, and limited ability to build assets.[214] Criminal justice debt, and bail bonds in particular, are part of the cycle of debt that extracts wealth from communities of color. Between 2012 and 2016, residents of LA City Council District 9 paid the most in bail bonds (over $13 million), while Council District 8 paid the third-highest amount. Both of these council districts comprise a large swath of South LA. Furthermore, research conducted by UCLA's Million Dollar Hoods project shows that the four zip codes paying the most in bail bonds are all located in South LA. (The next chapter will discuss in more detail the excessive investment by the criminal justice system in South LA and how it perpetuates poverty through practices such as bail.) It is worth noting that these same zip codes have some of the highest unemployment rates in the county.

TOTAL NON-REFUNDABLE BOND PAID BY ZIP CODE 2012-2016

90044	$3,769,368
90003	$4,225,251
90037	$4,013,070
90011	$4,870,101

Source: UCLA's Million Dollar Hoods Project

JOBS & ACCESSIBILITY:

Occupation and access to work are key determinants of employment earnings, and as Los Angeles's economy has shifted and become more polarized over the past few decades, economic disparities have grown. In LA County, neighborhoods tend to be segregated by major sectoral categories. The top three sectors in each of the city council districts representing parts of South LA are listed below.

TOP 3 PRIVATE SECTORS BY DISTRICT, 201

	COUNCIL DISTRICT 8	COUNCIL DISTRICT 9	COUNCIL DISTRICT 10
1	Health Care	Education/Health Care	Health Care
2	Retail Trade	Manufacturing	Leisure & Hospitality
3	Leisure & Hospitality	Leisure & Hospitality	Retail Trade

Source: Los Angeles City Council Districts Economic Report, 2018

In 2015, over one-third (34%) of South LA residents were living below the federal poverty line, compared to 18% in Los Angeles County. The South LA poverty rate was the highest among all regions in the county in 2015 and represented a slight increase from 31% in 2011. To put this into perspective, only the Detroit metro area had a slightly higher poverty rate in 2015 at 36%.

Within these sectors, most South LA workers are employed in service (26%), sales (25%), and transportation (21%) related occupations.[215] Average wages for jobs in South LA in these industries range from $18,300 to $41,000 annually, with the exception of education and health care sector jobs in Council District 9 (which includes the University of Southern California), which have significantly higher average wages at $78,300. It is also important to note that of those residents that are in South LA's labor force (employed or unemployed and looking for work), only 43% are employed full-year, full-time, compared to 50% of LA County's labor force.[216] One 2011 recession-era study found that as few as 13% of those in South LA's labor force were in full-time positions, suggesting that underemployment is prevalent. This same study found that just over a quarter (27%) of those that were employed received employer-provided health insurance and only 25% received paid sick leave.[217] However since then, full implementation of the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid expansion has helped address the lack of access to care, as demonstrated by a drop in South LA's uninsured rate from 38% in 2011 to 18% in 2015.

Los Angeles's significant employment and wage disparities along race lines suggest that systemic barriers to employment disproportionately impact low-income and chronically unemployed people of color, making reemployment and career advancement challenging. A survey of over 1,000 South LA residents revealed that limited English proficiency (31%), lack of a driver's license or citizenship documentation (22%), and lack of education (20%) were the top three reported barriers to employment. Prior convictions (31%) and a lack of transportation (28%) were the top two barriers reported among Black survey respondents. Additional employment barriers identified included: racial discrimination, lack of work experience, lack of child care, limited social networks, and preemployment exams.[218]

Despite the challenging economic landscape in South LA, Los Angeles County as a whole will continue to add jobs in key growth sectors over the next five years. This includes jobs in education, health care, professional and business services, construction, administrative support, and financial services. Additionally, emerging industries, including advanced transportation and fuels, biosciences, and digital media are projected to grow. More than one-third of projected job openings in the next five years will not require a high school diploma, while another third of jobs openings will require a high school diploma and no work experience. However in Los Angeles, the median annual wage for occupations that do not require a high school diploma or work experience is $28,092.[219]

In South LA, 42% of adults have less than a high school diploma, while 26% have completed high school and 9% have a college or post-graduate degree.[220] While South LA education levels seem to match the needs of Los Angeles's labor market, without strategies to address barriers to employment, gaps in full-time employment with benefits, and the lack of career advancement opportunities in entry level jobs, projected job growth will not translate into equitable prosperity across the county—conversely, it will continue to widen the income gap.

DRIVER TWO

WHAT ARE THE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THIS DRIVER IN SOUTH LA?

A stable, family-sustaining job is key to eliminating poverty and ameliorating its adverse health effects. However, a historical and current analysis suggests the need to understand how racism is manifest in the economic policies and structures that have shaped South LA, determining who has access to economic opportunity and the ability to thrive.[221]

DEINDUSTRIALIZATION AND DISINVESTMENT

As described in Chapter 1, Los Angeles's Black population grew steadily in the first half of the 20th century, as many new residents sought to escape the discrimination and violence of the Jim Crow South. While housing and education opportunities were better than those available in the South, employment opportunities were limited and racially restricted housing covenants prevented Black residents from purchasing homes in most neighborhoods. As a result, a Black neighborhood began to take shape along the Central Avenue corridor, just south of downtown Los Angeles. While the neighborhood known as "South Central" was not the only Black community in Los Angeles, Black migrants continued to move in, buy homes, and start businesses, laying the foundation for South Central to become the heart of Black culture, business and politics in Los Angeles.[222]

In the 1920s, Los Angeles's manufacturing sector grew rapidly as multiple local and national manufacturing firms established plants in the area, including Goodyear, Goodrich, Firestone, Phelps-Dodge, and U.S. Steel. The Alameda Corridor, just east of South Central, was an early site of concentrated manufacturing firms. On the opposite side, the Alameda Corridor was bordered by race-restricted White working-class suburbs.[223]

Before World War II, the greatest barrier to economic opportunity for Black Angelenos was racial discrimination in employment. In Los Angeles, Black men most often worked as railroad porters, janitors, barbers, chauffeurs, and waiters, while Black women's employment options were more limited, largely restricted to domestic work.[224] At the same time, Los Angeles was heavily reliant on the labor of Mexicans and Mexican Americans, which "exacerbated the effects of employment discrimination by increasing competition at the lower end of the labor market."[225] Widespread discrimination among employers in Los Angeles at this time reinforced a hierarchy of racialized labor that gave preference to White workers in the highest-paid manufacturing industries, such as the aircraft industry, while at numerous plants "Mexican labor was used and Black labor was prohibited, particularly in the iron and steel, brick and clay, and oil industries."[226]

World War II drastically changed these conditions due to growing labor shortages and demands for defense production, combined with the signing of the aforementioned executive order banning racial discrimination in defense industries receiving federal contracts. During the war years, Los Angeles became the second-largest industrial hub in the nation receiving more than $11 billion in defense contracts.[227] Furthermore, this period, which began in the 1940s and lasted through the early 1970s, marked an era of mass unionism in Los Angeles. This was favorable to both Black and Mexican American workers, ultimately changing the face of the middle class in the region.[228]

As a result, millions of African Americans migrated to Los Angeles from the South, moving away from rampant racism and joblessness to pursue the opportunity for employment in well-paying, largely unionized manufacturing and public sector jobs.[229] In South LA, as defense industry jobs eventually transitioned

to automobile, tire, and steel jobs in the 1950s and early 1960s, "the manufacturing sector provided the economic foundation for a Black middle class in South LA. At its high water mark in 1960, 24% of employed African American men and 18% of employed Black women in Los Angeles worked as manufacturing operatives."[230] Black and Mexican American workers were also represented more or less in proportion to their representation in the workforce within the Laborers, Cement Finishers, and Building Service Employee's International Union (now SEIU).[231] That is not to say that Black and Latinx workers did not continue to face employment discrimination in manufacturing and other industries. Despite prior local efforts to prohibit discrimination based on race, employment discrimination was legal in the private sector until the passage of the California Fair Employment Practices Act in 1959.[232],[233]

However by the late-1960s, major economic shifts would begin to interrupt the decades of post-war union and wage growth. Steel, automobile, and tire manufacturing firms began to close and relocate jobs to other parts of the country or offshore to take advantage of cheaper, nonunion labor. This intentional process of "economic restructuring" led by employers in the LA region (and across the U.S.) destabilized the workforce, particularly in South LA. During this time, more than 75,000 blue-collar manufacturing jobs were replaced with jobs in the electronics, aerospace, and high-tech finance industries that were farther out in the city periphery or suburbs and less accessible to inner-city workers.[234] In the years that followed, South LA "lost 40,000 in population, the labor force was reduced by 20,000, and median family income fell to $5,900-$2,500 below the city median for the Black population in the late 1970s."[235]

It was not only manufacturing firms that left central Los Angeles—the post-war boom had expanded the housing and private automobile market, allowing primarily White families to move out of cities to the suburbs. With these changes, public transportation ridership decreased significantly, retailers followed their customer base, and tax revenues fell drastically. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the influx of federal dollars for freeway system expansion further facilitated the suburbanization of Los Angeles and decimated several South LA communities in its path.[236] Displaced residents and workers were increasingly pushed into public housing as declining tax dollars eroded basic services for inner-city residents.[237]

The post-war restructuring process—one part of a strategic corporate agenda—was significant in its focus on expanding corporate profits by reducing labor costs and relinquishing the responsibility for the social welfare of workers. Large corporations increasingly relied on growing subsidization by the government to spur economic development, signaling the progressive weakening of the New Deal contract between the public sector, organized labor, and poor and working class communities.[238] In this process, South LA—the heart of LA's middle and working class Black community at the time—was abandoned by public and private capital, allowing wealth to accumulate elsewhere in the region.[239]

If the Watts Rebellion of 1965 was a manifestation of the failures of this economic restructuring, the response from civic leaders did little to change its course. After the urban rebellions of the 1960s, White Americans grew increasingly critical of federal aid to cities.[240] By the Reagan era in the 1980s, the federal government had moved the urban policy agenda away from issues of transit, housing, social welfare, and economic development. This limited the scope of urban policy to issues of crime, waste, and education.[241] In California, local city and county budgets were further constricted after the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, which froze property tax rates and required two-thirds voter approval for most other taxes.[242] In addition to declining property tax revenues, as a result of corporate tax cuts and tax breaks in California, the share of corporate taxes paid as a percentage of net income has been cut by more than half since the early 1980s.[243] Combined, deindustrialization, disinvestment, and the shrinking of the public sector have created a South LA economy that to this day is characterized by limited public services and infrastructure spending, entrenched poverty conditions, and the expansion of exploitative and extractive practices, such as pay-day lending and low-wage, part-time work.

In its most recently adopted city-wide plan (approved in 1995), the City of Los Angeles identified South LA as a policy-linked area, or a place "that private developers have historically found unattractive due to a wide

THROUGH THE POST-WAR DEINDUSTRIALIZATION PROCESS, SOUTH LA—THE HEART OF LA'S MIDDLE AND WORKING CLASS BLACK COMMUNITY AT THE TIME—WAS ABANDONED BY PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CAPITAL, ALLOWING WEALTH TO ACCUMULATE ELSEWHERE IN THE REGION.

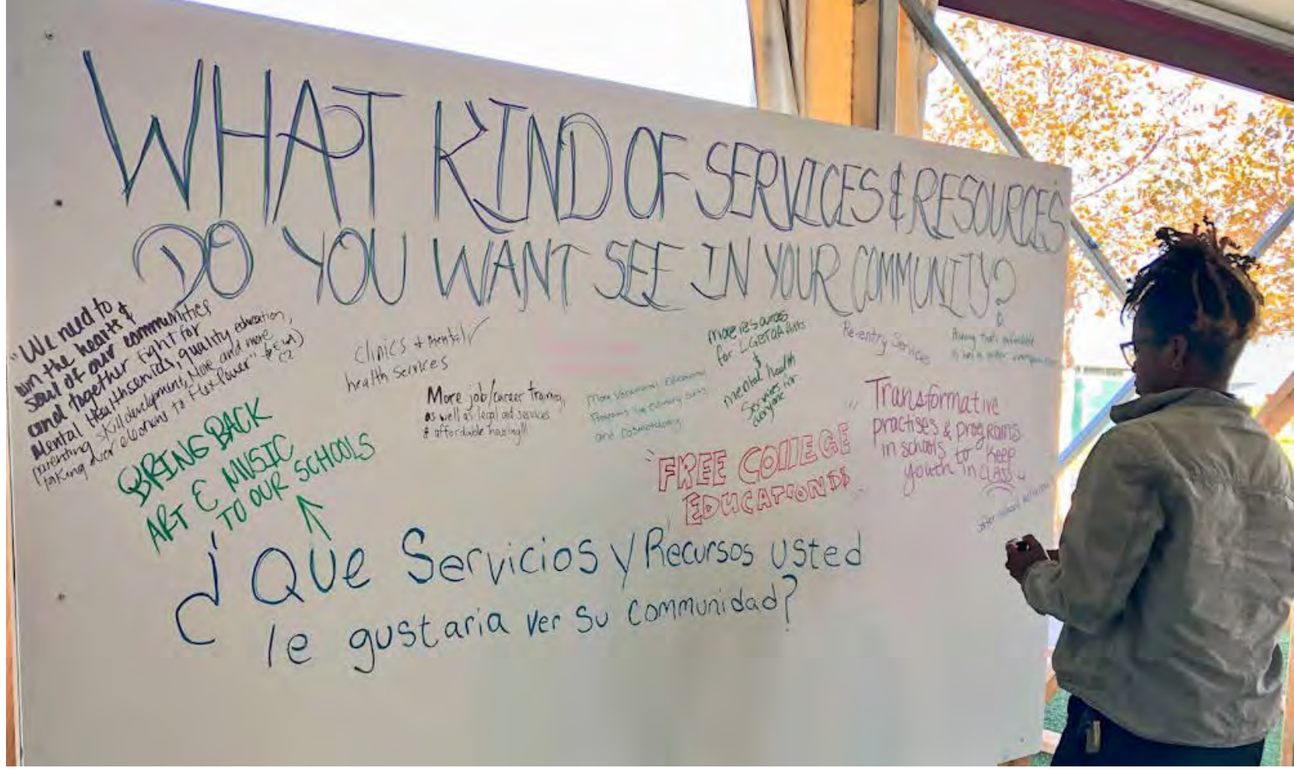
Howard Jarvis on June 7, 1978, happy about his Proposition 13 win. The measure, which cut local property taxes by more than 50 percent, doubled the state's voter turnout and made celebrities of activists Jarvis and Gann, who co-sponsored it. As a result of Prop. 13, state and county governments were hit with revenue shortages totaling more than $22.3 billion.

Three South LA city council districts have 20% of the city's population, but 34% of residents receiving public assistance. In spite of this, the three districts in South LA combined received just 13% of the targeted allocation for public services, 12% of funds for economic development, and 15% for neighborhood improvements from FY 13-14 to FY 17-18.

variety of socioeconomic factors, including the low revenue- generating potential of commercial uses that result from the resident populations' low income level."[244] However, this designation has not translated into significant changes in public spending patterns and priorities. A recent analysis of the City of Los Angeles's budget conducted by the Advancement Project demonstrates the discrepancies between the needs of South LA residents and the allocation of public dollars. For example, investment in infrastructure, such as roads and sidewalks, is critical for ensuring the safety and livability of a city and is essential for attracting and retaining local businesses. Infrastructure investment also acts as an engine for localized economic growth by generating tens of thousands of jobs in Los Angeles. The jobs generated by infrastructure investment often provide competitive wages, and these wages have steadily risen over the past decade. However despite clear indicators of need, in 2017, South LA council districts (CDs 8, 9 & 10) received only 7% ($17 million) of the over $241 million invested in bridges and streets, whereas downtown Los Angeles alone (CD 14) received 25%. Similarly, South LA council districts received 8% of the $613 million invested in municipal, recreational, and cultural facilities, whereas CD 14 received 53%.

The inequities extend to the provision of public services. Funding allocated for South LA lags behind other parts of the city, despite data that demonstrates the need is higher in South LA. For example, the City of Los Angeles receives federal grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide housing, social services, food, and community amenities to its neediest residents. Two of the three city council districts that make up South LA (CD 8 & 9) ranked the highest among all council districts in number of households receiving public assistance. Combined with the third district (CD 10), these three South LA city council districts have 20% of the city's population, but 34% of residents receiving public assistance. In spite of this, the three districts in South LA combined received just 13% of the targeted allocation for public services, 12% of funds for economic development, and 15% for neighborhood improvements from FY 13-14 to FY 17-18.[245]

In addition, each council district has discretionary funds that its respective councilperson can deploy to meet urgent or emerging needs in their jurisdiction. Los Angeles's Great Recession-fueled budget crisis led to council districts' overreliance on these unpredictable and unequal funds to finance public services. Communities in higher-income parts of the city—including CDs 2, 3, 6, 7, 12, and 14—have access to about $52.4 million in these funds, while South LA council districts have access to $2.8 million in discretionary funds. This equals just one-ninth of the per-resident spending in these higher-income communities. From this analysis, researchers concluded that "inequitable access to discretionary funds can explain why some South LA communities have higher service requests for community amenities—street cleaning, sidewalk repair, street lights, etc."[246] As a result, the growing needs of the community and inequitable investment by local government feed on each other like a vicious cycle.



Equal funding across city council districts is not enough to address the legacy of disinvestment in South LA. For this reason, South LA-based coalitions and organizations, such as the UNIDAD Coalition, Community Coalition, the Los Angeles Equity Alliance, and others, have been at the forefront of campaigns calling for equity in development, school funding, and climate investments (which will be discussed further in Chapter 4). However even with equity wins in place, history demonstrates the need for community involvement in implementation and enforcement. For example, in 2018, community-based organization Community Coalition along with a South LA parent won a groundbreaking settlement forcing the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) to comply with the education finance reform law known as the Local Control Funding Formula, which is intended to increase resources for high-need students. As a result of this legal settlement, and years or community organizing, over $150 million will go towards new services for high-need students, including restorative justice initiatives and parent and community engagement.[247] This win demonstrates the need for multiple strategies—organizing, advocacy, legal, etc.—to advance a systems change approach that erodes the history of exclusionary public investment and development patterns.

A SHARED LEGACY:

THE BLACK JOB CRISIS AND THE PROLIFERATION OF LOW-WAGE WORK

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING PROCESS THAT BEGAN IN THE LATE 1960S CANNOT BE OVERSTATED. In 1960, over 20% of Los Angeles Black workers were employed in the manufacturing sector—by 2014, this number had fallen to 5%.[248] As a result of deindustrialization, job security was undermined for many Black workers who had middle class jobs and high rates of union density.[249] During this period, Los Angeles emerged as a "key testing ground for employer-initiated deunionization efforts and related workplace restructuring strategies in the 1970s and 1980s—what have come to be called 'low-road' managerial strategies—that would soon spread to workplaces nationwide."[250] Case studies from multiple industries in Los Angeles indicate that denunionization and low-road strategies supported the rampant growth in low-skilled, low-wage, non-union jobs in the region, attracting immigrant labor that was more easily exploitable and intentionally increasing competition for jobs among Black and Latinx workers.[251]

Exclusionary hiring and weakened labor unions in the construction, janitorial, transportation, and garment industries led some Black workers to once again seek employment in low-wage service sector work. Without the stability of union jobs, unemployment rates for Black workers—who were typically the last hired and first fired—rose significantly. At the same time, the corporate political agenda also focused on privatization, targeting the public sector, which was an important source of employment for Black workers who were shut out of entire industries due to rampant discrimination in the private sector.

A 2017 report by the UCLA Labor Center and the Los Angeles Black Workers Center documenting the extent of the crisis also points out that qualified Black workers seeking work often face discriminatory hiring practices. For instance, research has shown that resumes with "Black-sounding" names are less likely to receive calls back,[252] that unemployed African Americans are disproportionately being discouraged from applying for jobs,[253] that most African Americans lack family and social connections to private employers,[254] and that some employers harbor the stereotype that Black workers are less hard-working, less productive, or less personable.[255]

Educational attainment for African Americans has steadily improved since 1980; the number of African Americans across Los Angeles County without a high school diploma has shrunk by one-third to 10% and the number of those with a bachelor's degree or higher has doubled. Yet, facing employment discrimination across industry, African Americans find themselves underrepresented in better-paying professional, manufacturing, and construction jobs. Even when they are hired, they face pay inequities. Black workers earn only three-quarters of what their White counterparts make in similar positions. The wage gap widens even more for Black women. Black workers also face racial discrimination, such as hate speech and symbols in the workplace. Black workers experiencing this discrimination have few recourses, as local agencies are either unable to address discrimination due to state preemption or lack of resources. For instance, the City of Los Angeles currently invests less than 1% of its law enforcement budget on enforcing laws that protect workers.[256]

While South LA's Latinx workers do not face the same employment discrimination as their Black counterparts, Latinx workers, and particularly Latinx immigrants, are still left in an economically precarious position. Significant declines in wages in the service-sector industries coincided with the surge of immigrant workers in the region. The growing immigrant Latinx population was more likely to fill non-union jobs because employers saw them as cheap and exploitable labor.[257] So while unemployment rates in the Latinx community have been substantially lower than those for African Americans, wages have also been lower. In 2013, the median wage for Latinx workers was $10 per hour compared to $18 per hour for Black workers. And while it is true that on average the Latinx community has a younger age profile and lower educational attainment, wage disparities still exist between the two groups when controlling for both age and educational attainment.[258]

"YOU HARDLY SEE ANY BLACK WORKERS IN CONSTRUCTION OR IN CITY WORK. THE CITY IS FORCING US OUT OF THE LABOR FORCE. WE CANNOT PROTECT OUR CHILDREN IF WE DON'T HAVE A COMMUNITY. BEING A BLACK MAN HERE, I CAN SEE A LOT THAT'S HAPPENING. WE'VE BEEN TREATED VERY UNFAIRLY AND VERY UNJUSTLY."

—South LA community member and focus group participant

Over time, and especially as Latinx immigrant communities have become more settled, Latinx workers in Los Angeles have been key to building worker power in low-road industries and have become some of the leaders in labor movements of today. But still, South LA's Latinx workers struggle to make ends meet: more than a third of full-time workers live below 150% of the poverty level and overall poverty rates match those of their Black neighbors.[259] Persistent inequities in job quality hold little promise for Latinx workers, and wage disparities can be identified as a main driver of income inequality for the region's Latinx community.[260] Countywide, both Black and Latinx workers have the lowest access to high-opportunity jobs—quality jobs with promising growth in wages and number of jobs—across educational attainment levels.[261] While the Los Angeles region has continued to experience moderate job growth in recent years, most of it is clustered among the low-wage service jobs in which low-income Latinx workers are concentrated. Additionally, the wage growth of these jobs is not keeping pace with that of high-wage jobs.[262] As a result, both Black and Latinx workers toil in sectors with low union density, few worker protections or benefits, and low wages, such as retail, janitorial, and security jobs.

"Since I was released I have 4 AAs and a BA and I still have a hard time getting a job, getting into a hospital, etc. They want to employ me but they need certificates of rehabilitation. I go from not welcome because of my charge to being overqualified."

—South LA community member and focus group participant

ADVANCING A POLICY MODEL THAT ADDRESSES JOB ACCESS IN SOUTH LA

South LA residents and community-based organizations have been at the forefront of shaping workforce policy and programs in key growth sectors that target workers who have been shut out of employment and face multiple barriers to reemployment.

South LA community-based research and organizing, led by Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education (SCOPE), was essential to the coalition-building and campaign efforts that resulted in the City of Los Angeles's Green Retrofit and Workforce Program and the Utility Pre-Craft Trainee Program, jointly operated by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 18. These two public sector green job workforce programs incorporated ground-truthed best practices, including targeted hiring, paid training, union representation, and the development of career pathways, providing an example for workforce development in a growing industry.[263], [264]

Similarly, South LA community advocates and residents have been involved in shaping workforce strategies in the growing transportation sector. In 2012, the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Agency (Metro) adopted a five-year agreement that put a master project labor agreement (PLA) coupled with a Construction Careers Policy (CCP) in place for transit projects—the first of its kind for a regional transportation agency. The agreement included a targeted hiring requirement of 40% of workers from high-poverty zip codes, 10% of whom were disadvantaged workers.[265], [266] The PLA and CCP provided an opportunity for low-income, disadvantaged workers to benefit from increased investment in public transportation, the vast majority of which has been generated from public tax dollars and fares disproportionately paid by low- and middle-income residents. Additionally, Los Angeles Black Worker Center and community partners saw the agreement as an opportunity to "help reverse the underrepresentation of Blacks in public construction and improve the lives of individuals and communities through quality jobs," noting that Blacks comprise just 3% of the workforce on local large-scale public construction projects, despite making up 9% of the trained apprentices in the region and 8% of the city's population.[267]

Understanding the need for community stakeholder involvement from the policy's development through implementation, the LA Black Worker Center launched a Community Compliance and Monitoring Project (CCMP) to monitor, document, and assess the outcomes of Metro's first project to break ground under the agreement—the Crenshaw/LAX Transit Corridor, a light rail line that runs through neighborhoods in South LA that are 60-80% Black. The CCMP found that 16% of cumulative work hours completed on the project were performed by Black workers, a marked improvement, but short of the organization's 25% goal for the South LA transit project. The CCMP also found low and varying rates of Black workers hired on other Metro projects, indicating the need for continued "advocacy and co-enforcement" to ensure Black workers are being hired.[268] The UCLA Labor Center and Black Worker Center additionally recommend expanding hiring targets to underrepresented workers to ensure targeted hiring policies are in fact reaching job-seekers with the highest need.[269]

While public sector construction careers show growth and promise, the complex connection between investment and the subsequent criminalization and displacement of low-income communities of color cannot be overlooked. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Measure M, which directs sales tax revenues to fund expansion and maintenance of the county's public transportation system, does not include anti-displacement measures to protect small businesses, homeowners and renters impacted by rising property values. This tension between the extreme need for community investment and quality employment opportunities and the gentrification that accompanies public and private investment in low-income communities of color is being felt across Los Angeles. With the post-recession influx of public investment across the region, South LA is well-positioned to lead the expansion of well-tested community power-building strategies to ensure equitable investment outcomes that truly do no harm to historically marginalized communities.

WITH THE POST-RECESSION INFLUX OF PUBLIC INVESTMENT ACROSS THE REGION, SOUTH LA IS WELL-POSITIONED TO LEAD THE EXPANSION OF WELL-TESTED COMMUNITY POWER-BUILDING STRATEGIES TO ENSURE EQUITABLE INVESTMENT OUTCOMES THAT TRULY DO NO HARM TO HISTORICALLY MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES.

THE SPATIAL MISMATCH: JOBS & TRANSPORTATION

There has been a long-standing need for a public transportation system that better serves South LA residents. In a region as spread out as Los Angeles, transportation access is critical to accessing housing, employment, and education opportunities. The last chapter introduced the symbiotic relationship between low-income communities and public transit: Low-income communities rely heavily on public transportation, and public transit cannot thrive without the presence of low-income communities. In South LA, car ownership rates are lower than in the rest of Los Angeles.[270] Close to a quarter of South LA residents commute to work by walking, biking, and public transportation,[271] and one in five households do not have regular access to a car.[272] An efficient and affordable public transportation system is therefore crucial to many workers in South LA who depend mostly on buses to get to work. A 2015 national transit study by the University of Minnesota found that while Los Angeles ranked second in total employment among major U.S. metropolitan areas, the city ranked fifth in transit-accessible jobs (falling from third in the previous year).[273]

The spatial mismatch theory, first documented in the late 1960s, suggests that low-income residents of color are increasingly separated from job opportunities. While South LA was once well-connected by a street car system, with the rise of the freeway, "South LA not only lost these older transit lines as a resource but also became physically divided by major roadways routed through and around it. Despite the previously mentioned recent investments in public transit, the reality remains that lacking a car can severely limit access to job opportunities, as well as educational and learning opportunities for young children."[274] Research has shown that in Los Angeles, lower car ownership rates significantly increase unemployment rates.[275] For years, low-wage service industry jobs have been dispersed across the county, including in wealthy suburban areas, while affordable housing has been concentrated in historically low-income communities of color in the urban core.[276] However, the jobs and housing mismatch is changing with revitalization efforts and gentrification; hence the growing demands for affordable housing near transit described in the previous chapter. This trend highlights the need for integrated, multi-sector advocacy approaches to define equity, shape investment implementation, and monitor outcomes so that current and future transportation investments remediate rather than exacerbate poor policy decisions of the past.

"Where are the Black workers doing Metro construction? These are well-paying jobs, but you don't see Black workers. How impactful are local hire programs? How do we keep local hire programs accountable?"

— South LA community member and focus group participant

TRANSFORMING SYSTEMS: INTEGRATING THE REENTRY POPULATION

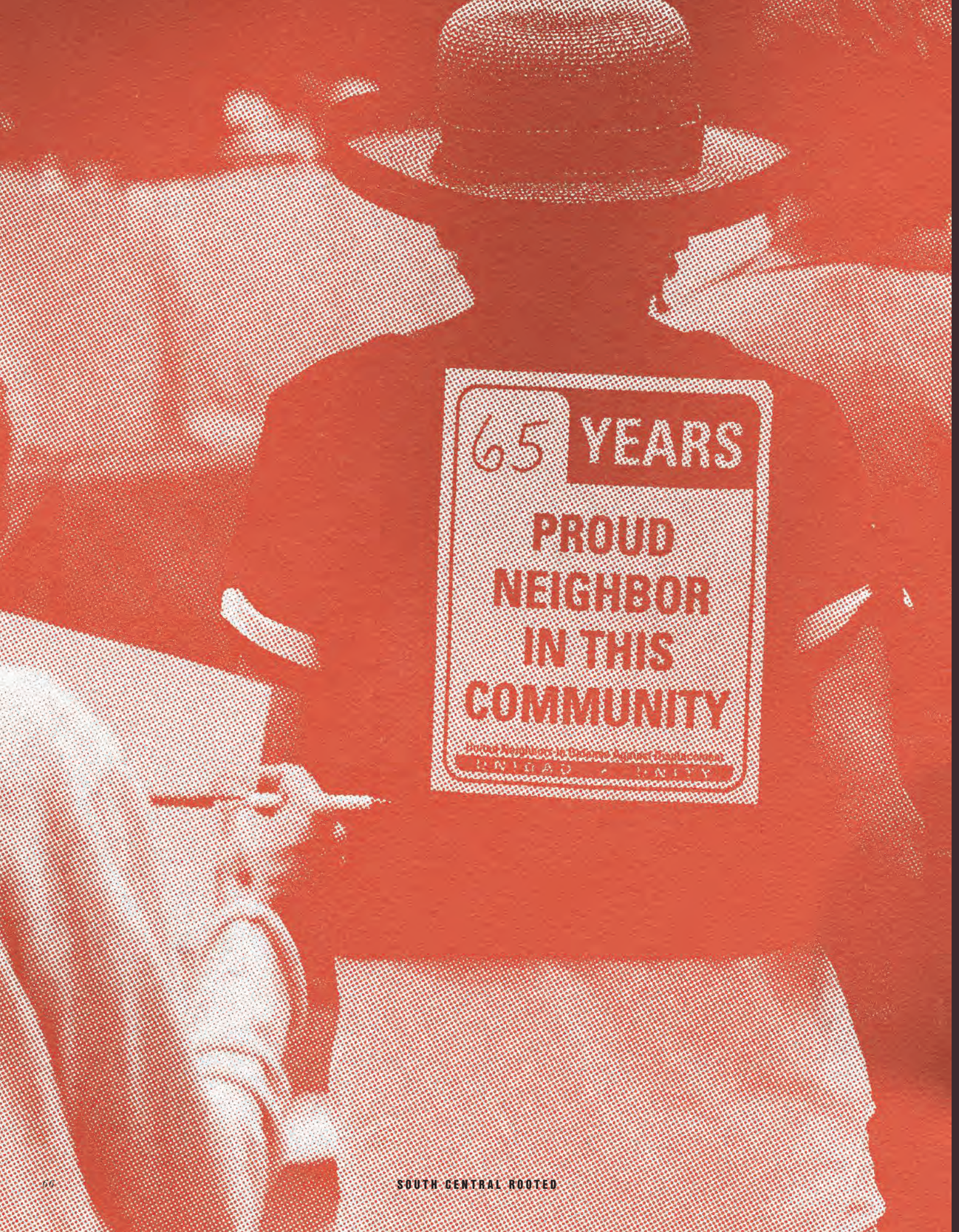
The California Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation estimates that about a quarter (25%) of all inmates in the state are paroled to Los Angeles County after release. Supervisorial District 2 (largely South LA) receives 8,117 of these parolees, by far the highest number among all supervisorial districts. When formerly incarcerated individuals return to the community, many remain jobless and living in poverty after their release. Unemployment is not only a contributing factor to economic hardship and poor health, but also to recidivism.

While the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) has partnered with community service providers to begin reentry services prior to an inmate's release in order to help them ease back into their community (also known as "jail in-reach"), a 2013 study by the Vera Institute of Justice found that these programs were hampered by inadequate funding; understaffing; limited communication and coordination between LASD, other government agencies, and community service providers; and lack of capacity to evaluate reentry services.[277]

Without adequate reentry support, people who return to their community in South LA from prison face unique barriers to employment because of their conviction history. Formerly incarcerated individuals may be automatically shut out of job opportunities by hiring policies that prohibit employees from having a conviction history, particularly in higher-paid sectors, even if the crime was minor, nonviolent, or from a long time ago.[278] Worse, job seekers in many industries are asked to disclose any conviction history in the first steps of the job application process. Thus, formerly incarcerated applicants may be judged solely on that criteria and eliminated from the prospect pool before anyone seriously considers the value they might add to the workplace. As a result, more than 150 cities and counties in the U.S. have approved policies, commonly known as "Ban the Box," to prevent public agencies from asking about criminal record histories on job applications.[279] Early research suggests effectiveness of this policy. Since the City of Durham, NC, adopted this policy in 2011, about 97% of applicants with criminal records were recommended for hire. As a result, the overall proportion of people with criminal records hired by the city has increased nearly seven times.[280] The City of Los Angeles has only recently released rules and regulations to implement a similar "Ban the Box" policy, called the Fair Chance Initiative for Hiring ordinance, that applies to both city agencies and their contractors. However, the ordinance does not include other public entities, such as the county and state governments and their contractors. In addition, formerly incarcerated individuals are also prevented from securing occupational licenses that are mandatory in many living-wage careers.[281]

Proposition 47, which passed with wide support in 2014, expands the opportunity for job access and economic stability for individuals criminalized by the war on drugs and crimes of poverty. Prop 47 reduces seven non-serious, nonviolent drug and property crimes from a felony to a misdemeanor, allowing individuals with a prior felony record for these offenses to apply to change their record. Those that are currently incarcerated for these crimes can petition to be resentenced and released. Because individuals with felony convictions in California face thousands of restrictions that limit their access to employment, the expungement of a felony record removes significant barriers to jobs as well as other education and training opportunities.

South LA community-based organizations, reentry service providers, and policy and legal advocates understood the significance of Prop 47 for criminalized and disinvested communities. Many of these stakeholders educated South LA voters and have worked since its passage to ensure full and successful implementation. In 2015, the Los Angeles Proposition 47 Record Change and Resource Fair, held in South LA and anchored by South LA Building Healthy Communities Initiative organizations, was a historic effort reaching nearly 5,000 people that wanted to learn about Prop 47, get help with the record change process, or connect with other community and public resources.[282] While additional resources and coordination are needed to ensure all those who are eligible to change their records are able to do so, a portion of savings from reduced incarceration costs is funding programs aimed at stopping the cycle of incarceration. In 2017 alone, savings from Prop 47 allowed for $6 million to be reinvested in Los Angeles for a program that helps justice-affected individuals find and retain employment.[283]



COMING UP...

The criminal justice system, including but not limited to law enforcement, reinforces the legacy of exclusionary housing, promotes gentrification as described in Chapter 1, and perpetuates the conditions of poverty in South LA described in this chapter. Furthermore, criminalization limits education and employment opportunities, especially for young people. This next chapter will explore the pervasiveness of the police presence in South LA neighborhoods, on public transit, and in schools as a means to surveil, segregate, and push out predominantly youth of color and other vulnerable populations.

3

Policing, Suppression, Deportation, and Mass Incarceration

DRIVER THREE

HOW DOES THIS DRIVER IMPACT COMMUNITY HEALTH?

The American Public Health Association states in one of its 2016 policy statements that "harassment and violence by law enforcement officers result in deaths, injuries, trauma, and stress, which disproportionately affect people of color and other marginalized populations such as immigrants, individuals experiencing homelessness, members of the LGBTQ community, and individuals with mental illness." This culture of abuse is intensified by policies and laws that target immigrants and criminalize drug users, sex workers, and the homeless.[284] The Vera Institute of Justice also characterizes mass incarceration as an "epidemic" that poses some of the greatest public health challenges in the U.S. today.[285]

The experience of being locked up exacerbates chronic illness and both physical and mental health challenges for multiple reasons. First, prison populations mostly come from impoverished communities with already high rates of chronic and infectious diseases, drug abuse, mental health problems, and poor access to care.[286] Recent data suggest the stigma of incarceration worsens physical and mental health disparities that only become apparent upon release, while drastically reducing opportunities for employment, housing, and other stabilizing structures.[287] In addition, incarceration has been shown to exacerbate health disparities due to terrible conditions within county jails and state prisons. Public health scholarship demonstrates that inmates are often deprived of adequate medical care, with more than two-thirds of local jail inmates receiving no medical examination for injuries or persistent conditions.[288] Documented denial of physical and mental health care persists in LA Sheriff's Department. Even as the LASD moved to adopt "gender responsive incarceration" and develop prison policies and programming that address the particular needs of incarcerated women and their distinct pathways to crime, women of color continue to suffer from this medical neglect.[289] And these patterns are not limited to county jails. The state's prison system has been sued in the largest-ever class action lawsuit for its failure to provide adequate medical attention and in a separate case for rampant overcrowding. Its population routinely faces epidemics of diseases nearly invisible outside of the prison walls, like Valley Fever and Hepatitis C.[290]

Negative health impacts are not limited to the experience of incarceration. Research has shown that aggressive policing and pervasive surveillance creates a stressful atmosphere in a neighborhood. This can lead to psychological distress, feelings of anxiety and worthlessness, and other mental health problems for residents,[291] as well as increased risk of diabetes and high blood pressure.[292] This is especially true for young men of color, who are often targets of overpolicing.[293] In addition, the constant threats confronting the undocumented population have also been shown to negatively impact mental and emotional health leading to depression, anxiety, and other physical manifestations of stress.[294] Furthermore, since the 1990s, increasingly punitive immigration laws have both blocked immigrants from utilizing some public health resources or generated fear about the use of health services overall.[295]

DRIVER THREE

HOW IS SOUTH LA DOING?

SOUTH CENTRAL ROOTED

Overall, arrests by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) have declined in this decade. From 2010 to 2015, felony arrests decreased by 29% and misdemeanor arrests fell 32%. Traffic and other citations issued by LAPD officers saw a steep decline as well, from about 600,000 in 2010 to 269,500 in 2015 (about 55%). Between 2013 and 2015 alone, LAPD arrests declined by 25%. Similar declines in arrest rates were reported by the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD) and many law enforcement agencies throughout the state.

LAPD credits police reforms for the decline in arrests. For instance, the department has embraced community policing and moved away from its past preference for more repressive approaches. Additionally, police officers are exercising more caution in light of the recent string of highly publicized civilian killings by law enforcement officers both locally and nationally.[296] However, such restraint does not apply to every community equally.

Number of Arrests

	2010	2015	% CHANGE
LAPD	145,354	100,346	-31.0%
LASD	138,511	99,478	-28.2%

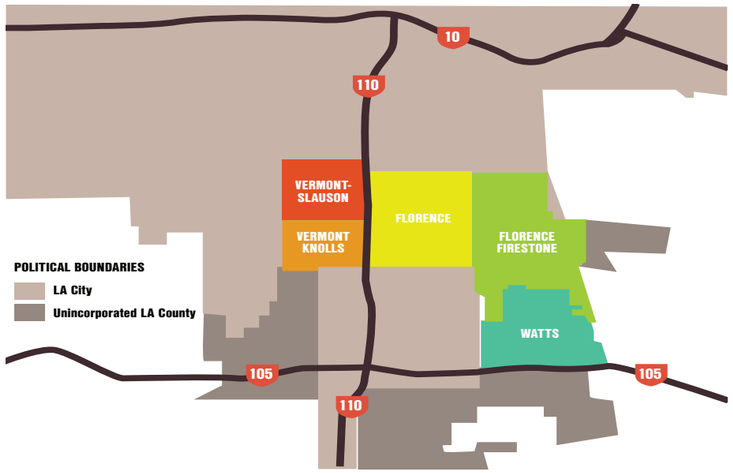
Sources: LAPD, L.A. County Sheriff's Department

The South LA community has witnessed firsthand the brutal public killings of civilians by police, such as the murder of 25-year old Ezell Ford Jr. (which resulted in the $1.5 million settlement to the family) in 2014, and 18-year old Carnell Snell Jr. and others in 2016.[297] Blatant police brutality can have ripple effects, such as triggering "race-based traumatic stress" in the rest of the community.[298]

Furthermore, for one group, arrests are actually on the rise. Using LAPD data, a recent UCLA study found that arrests of homeless people have increased since 2014 at a faster rate than the growth of the homeless population in Los Angeles, though overall LAPD arrests continued to decline in 2016 and 2017. Homeless people were 17 times more likely to be arrested than the general population. And African American and Latinx homeless people were disproportionally affected. According to the study, arrest rates for Latinx homeless people doubled between 2011 and 2016. African Americans represented 37% of homeless arrests in 2016, more than any other racial group.[299] Furthermore, the most likely arrest charge against a homeless person in 2017, at 22%, was "Failure to Appear" (i.e. related to a previous charge/citation), as compared to only 10% for possession of a controlled substance, 7% for petty theft or shoplifting, and 6% for trespassing.[300]

> "Law enforcement always asks, "Was it justified?" Communities want to ask, "Was it avoidable?"
>
> —*South LA community member and focus group participant*

SOUTH LA NEIGHBORHOODS WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBERS OF JAIL DAYS AND ARRESTS



Overpolicing also impinges on the health and well-being of South LA residents in less public ways. One such example is the use of gang injunctions and gang databases, which can directly impact the future prospects of residents. LAPD is in the practice of secretly placing into the CalGang database any residents stopped or questioned on the suspicion of gang-related activities or association. Once entered into CalGang, individuals become identified as "known" gang members without ever having been accused or convicted of criminal activity or having their gang membership verified. This includes children as young as ten who were questioned about their neighbors, people photographed (sometimes without their knowledge or consent) near "known" gang members or wearing gangs colors, and the friends and family members of "known" gang members. These overgeneralized criteria mean that 11% of all African American and 4% of all Latinx Angelenos aged 20 to 24 are in this database.

Gang injunctions are similarly and disturbingly broad. They function like group restraining orders that designate a geographic zone, supposedly associated with the territory of a particular gang. Within that zone, police have broad latitude to track and surveil suspected gang members and associates, and stop, interrogate, and arrest people named in the injunction for non-criminal activity. South LA is covered by a broad, overlapping patchwork of gang injunctions against 46 separate gangs.[301] Moreover, CalGang is widely shared by state, federal, and international law enforcement entities, but the LAPD is not required to notify listed individuals that they are included in the database. According to a UCI School of Law report, LAPD can list individuals in gang injunctions and the CalGang database on the "subjective belief of officers in the field" without providing evidence of gang involvement or convictions for gang activity. But, on the basis of their CalGang listing alone, individuals may be repeatedly arrested, repeatedly stopped, repeatedly questioned, repeatedly patted down, and repeatedly photographed and surveilled online and in person without being given any way to exonerate and de-list themselves.[302] Yet, these systems are widely used in neighborhoods like South LA to deny housing, employment, and immigration benefits. The negative externalities experienced by young people involved in these systems include challenges at school, fragmented community ties, and deportation.[303] These disparities in turn contribute to a higher likelihood of incarceration for South LA residents.

Policies and funding decisions made by state and county governments, elected and appointed city leaders, and even schools contribute to this all-encompassing carceral state, which is supported by public dollars that could just as easily be used to divert individuals through less punitive programs and services. Not only would this benefit the individuals involved, but it would also ease the strain on the community from incarceration costs and lost productivity. For instance, between 2010 and 2015 the neighborhood of Florence-Firestone alone accumulated 188,607 jail days and 7,401 arrests at a cost of $20.3 million. In Watts, 4,318 arrests and 104,001 days in jail cost $11.3 million. Residents of the Vermont Slauson, Vermont Knolls, and Florence neighborhoods combined spent more than 106,190 days in jail from 4,663 arrests, at a cost of $11.6 million.[304] In comparison, from 2010 to 2015 residents in the more affluent Windsor Square neighborhood on the other side of the 10 Freeway spent only 420 days in jail from 26 arrests, costing $47,894. While South LA lagged behind other areas of Los Angeles in public dollars spent on social programs and infrastructure as described in the previous chapter, public expenditure on law enforcement and criminal justice is disproportionately high.

POLICIES AND FUNDING DECISIONS MADE BY STATE AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTS, ELECTED AND APPOINTED CITY LEADERS, AND EVEN SCHOOLS CONTRIBUTE TO THIS ALL-ENCOMPASSING CARCERAL STATE, WHICH IS SUPPORTED BY PUBLIC DOLLARS THAT COULD JUST AS EASILY BE USED TO DIVERT INDIVIDUALS THROUGH LESS PUNITIVE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

DRIVER THREE

WHAT ARE THE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THIS DRIVER IN SOUTH LA?

THE PERVASIVENESS OF SURVEILLANCE

POLICE PRESENCE PERMEATES SPACES IN SOUTH LA WHERE RESIDENTS, PARTICULARLY YOUTH, ACCESS BASIC SERVICES, INCLUDING PUBLIC HOUSING, SCHOOLS, AND TRANSIT. Consistent with a national pattern, police presence is also disproportionate in parts of South LA undergoing gentrification, even where there is no evidence of increasing criminal activities. Moreover, policing of South LA residents is not only conducted by official law enforcement, such as the LAPD, but also by school police, armed private security, probation officers, and Metro staff who have the authority to cite and arrest riders. For instance, through a memorandum of understanding between the LAPD and the University of Southern California (USC), "armed USC public safety officers have powers of arrest and patrol the campus and off-campus areas in vehicles, on bicycles, and on foot."[305]

In South LA, young people in particular experience the cumulative effects of overpolicing on a daily basis. A study of South LA schools reports, "A common experience in many low-income Black and Latino neighborhoods is for a student to walk out their door in the morning and run a gauntlet of LAPD in their neighborhood, then LASD patrols on public transit, then LASPD (Los Angeles School Police Department) and Probation at their school all day, at the front gate, in the halls, the cafeteria at lunch, in random bag searches during their classes. At the end of the day, they must pass through the same gauntlet in reverse to get home."[306] Part of why both "everyday" policing and mass incarceration systems disproportionately affect South LA is that—as a wide body of research has demonstrated—these systems are deeply tied to racialized discrimination.[307]

This section describes the role of policing (by the LAPD and other enforcement agents) in gentrification, in public transportation, and in education.

"THEY'RE ALWAYS IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD. IT'S LIKE THEY'RE ALWAYS THERE. WE HAVE THE CAMERAS ON US WHETHER WE KNOW IT OR NOT. THE MAJORITY OF THE STORES WE GO IN, WE'RE CAMERA'D"

— South LA community member and focus group participant

GENTRIFICATION

"Broken windows" approach to policing is based on the theory that stopping minor and nonviolent infractions in a community would prevent them from escalating into more serious crimes that could threaten the safety of residents in that community. Former LAPD Chief William Bratton championed it in Los Angeles (2002-2009), after he implemented it in New York during his tenure as police chief of NYPD (1994-1996, 2014-2016). Aggressive enforcement of "broken windows" is the primary mechanism for overpolicing of communities like South LA. As in many cities that subscribe to this theory, in Los Angeles this type of policing has resulted in the "hyper-surveillance" of the African American and working-class communities, leading residents to fatal encounters with the police in very public spaces in their own neighborhoods.[308] As one journalist states, "When the police are trained to watch for certain suspicious behaviors, and they primarily watch people from one community, and those behaviors considered suspicious include walking too quickly or standing for too long, sitting alone too quietly or hanging out too noisily with others, driving too fast or running too suddenly, then every move made by members of this community can easily conjure up the subtext of a larger drug deal, the context for an unfolding crime, a pretext for arrest, probable cause. This is how an entire community can be criminalized."[309] One scholar observes that charges brought against residents under "broken windows" policing are often "poverty violations" that "would not attract any police attention at all if they took place in suburban cul-de-sacs, college fraternity houses, or on the docks of private yacht club."[310]

Critics of this approach argue that "broken windows" does not preserve safety in a community. A study of the LAPD (under Chief Bratton) in 2008 by the ACLU found that Black people stopped by the LAPD were 127% more likely to be frisked than Whites who were stopped, but they were 42% less likely to have a weapon found on them, 25% less likely to be found with drugs, and 33% less likely to be found with anything that would provide a legitimate reason for frisking. The report also found that stop, frisk, search, and arrest rates for Black and Latinx people could not be explained by the fact that they lived in areas with higher crimes.[311] In fact, overpolicing could make the community less safe and more stressful. A review of "Safer Communities Initiative" in L.A.'s Skid Row under Chief Bratton concludes, "...the stop-and-frisk policies and the arrests that accompany them on Skid Row actually promote disrespect for the law: They rely on racial profiling, provoke frequent, random, and indiscriminate confrontation with citizens who have engaged in no criminal activities, and make residents feel like interlopers in their own neighborhoods. Police stops, questionings, and arrests interfere with people's daily routines, while constant disruption and dispersion fragment social ties. Scholarly studies show clearly that harassment and discrimination make people frustrated, angry, fearful, sad, depressed, detached, and isolated." The author further concludes, "Police officers on Skid Row do not so much fight crime as fabricate it. They increase the misery of residents, undermine their dignity, and make their everyday lives chaotic. They produce a kind of anarchy in the name of order."[312]

Rather than stemming from a need for public safety, overpolicing is often explicitly part of a gentrification agenda, especially as it was implemented under Bratton, whose imprints persist in LAPD's practices today. By criminalizing poor people for minor infractions, "broken windows" is a "model of using the police to clear public space and also to clear people from their homes."[313] The same study on L.A.'s Skid Row states, "It's not the criminality of Skid Row residents that gets them arrested, but rather their powerlessness—their status as people with problems but without property who inhabit an area that wealthy elites wish to redevelop."[314]

Mechanisms like the gang injunctions noted earlier in this chapter lead to continual surveillance. Gang injunctions are not necessarily imposed on communities with increasing crimes. Notably, in South LA the densest concentration of

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(Photo/Mike Dennis)

these injunctions are in the neighborhoods that adjoin wealthy Culver City—not where gang violence presents the biggest threat to public safety.[315] In another instance, the 2013 gang injunction on Echo Park was imposed at a time when the neighborhood was experiencing record-low homicide rates. Gang injunctions criminalize residents for behavior that is not a crime elsewhere, like standing in a public place for more than five minutes or congregating in groups of two or more, and destroy the community's social networks.[316] The LAPD can add a young person to the injunction for living with, hanging out with, or talking to another person who is already named in the injunction.[317] One activist observes, "In most neighborhoods where gang injunctions have been implemented, people have been displaced...Displacements through broken windows policing has not reduced violence in LA, it has displaced it to other California cities like Lancaster, San Bernardino, Riverside, Palmdale, and Victorville...They're not solving the problem; they're just displacing it."[318]

AGGRESSIVE ENFORCEMENT OF "BROKEN WINDOWS" IS THE PRIMARY MECHANISM FOR OVERPOLICING OF COMMUNITIES LIKE SOUTH LA. AS IN MANY CITIES THAT SUBSCRIBE TO THIS THEORY, IN LOS ANGELES THIS TYPE OF POLICING HAS RESULTED IN THE "HYPER-SURVEILLANCE" OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN AND WORKING-CLASS COMMUNITIES, LEADING RESIDENTS TO FATAL ENCOUNTERS WITH THE POLICE IN VERY PUBLIC SPACES IN THEIR OWN NEIGHBORHOODS.

While the almost $800-million price tag for this policing budget was justified by increasing safety in the transit system, most citations and arrests are for behaviors that do not pose dangers to riders. Rather, ticketing on Los Angeles's public transit system has criminalized behavior associated with poverty, like lengthy public presence or inability to pay for a Metro fare.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

In 2017, Metro approved a $646 million annual multiagency contract with LAPD, LA Sheriff's Department and Long Beach Police Department for transit policing. In addition to this, Metro also spent $70 million in hiring its own Metro police and another $82 million to contract private security firms. While the almost $800-million price tag for this policing budget was justified by increasing safety in the transit system,[319] most citations and arrests are for behaviors that do not pose dangers to riders. Rather, ticketing on Los Angeles's public transit system has criminalized behavior associated with poverty, like lengthy public presence or inability to pay for a Metro fare.[320] Consistent with the "broken windows" theory, this policing approach to punish "small behaviors that don't hurt anyone" has been adopted by public transportation systems in many cities across the U.S.

The Los Angeles Metro system running through South LA is one place where South LA residents have been targeted for fees and fines. In the first nine months of 2012, the LA County Sheriff's Department issued nearly 5,000 citations for eating, smoking, vandalism, or possession of vandalism tools.[321] Other behavior categories are vague and subjective, including "Gross/Repulsive Odor," "Failure to Control Child," "Disturb Others' Noise," and "Unsafe Conduct," and allow a wide berth for law enforcement to target specific groups.[322] Compared with other Metro service areas, the Blue and Green lines that pass through South LA serve a higher concentration of families living in poverty and tend to have a disproportionate share of ticketing. The targets of such policing tend to be people of color, especially the homeless and youth.[323]

The recent surge in homelessness (as detailed in Chapter 1) has forced many homeless people to find refuge in Metro stations or on the buses or trains themselves. On any given night, it is not uncommon for the police to sweep more than 100 people from buses and trains on their final stops of the night. Metro has reported an increase in complaints from riders about sanitation and safety, though many homeless people only want to find a safe place to sleep. Whether they present any actual threat to riders' safety, their presence increases the likelihood of confrontations with law enforcement. This criminalization makes it harder for the homeless to escape their plight. Increasing police presence also makes Black and Latinx riders feel intimidated because of their experience with racial profiling.[324]

Fare evasion was a significant category of violation that targets low-income riders, especially students. In 2015, the average household income was $19,374 for train riders and $14,876 for bus riders. For those living in poverty, public transportation is not a choice, but a necessity to maintain a job, go to school, or to access health care or other social services. Fare evasion was the top reason for citations for youth under 18. In a survey of 2,680 youth in Los Angeles County, almost one out of five (18%) have been ticketed for fare evasion. The same percentage of youth respondents also reported having been accused by the police for not having a valid pass (even though they had a valid pass), and 5% reported having their valid passes confiscated.[325] Metro was estimated in 2014 to lose about $5 million due to fare evasion,[326] a small fraction of the policing budget that was used as a primary means to control it (and not including the budget it takes to process these citations).

"Why do you need an armed officer, with a dog, to check to see if you paid your fare? What are they reducing our lives to? $1.75?"

—South LA community member and focus group participant

Furthering the atmosphere of intimidation, a rider doesn't have to appear to be violating a rule to be stopped. Rather, law enforcement has "full discretion to decide when and where checks will be employed and who will be stopped and questioned, at any given point." Riders in South LA reported that such targeted surveillance is an intimidating and demeaning experience that creates "a pervasively hostile experience" at train stations.[327]

In a 2016 civil rights complaint to the U.S. Department of Transportation, activists and community leaders further charged that Metro policing demonstrates "a pattern and practice of criminalization, 'stop and frisk' fare enforcement and other 'quality of life' citations and arrests on public transportation that systematically and egregiously target Black riders."[328] Based on Metro's own data, activists cited how Black riders represented at least 50% of citations and 58% of arrests on the transit system while accounting for only 17% of bus and 19% of rail ridership. The complaint also contended that this civil rights violation "has transpired in connection with other city and county governmental agencies that have an explicit vested interest in a gentrified reshaping of Los Angeles, of which the culminating result is a mass push-out of the Black community from highly desirable and densely populated land in Central and South LA."[329]

While community pressure resulted in a diversion program for the transit system, researchers have found that it has been slow to be implemented and requires extensive reconsideration.[330] Specifically, Metro established a transit court in 2012 to divert riders who are cited from the county court system, and hired civilian non-sworn officers to be the first point of contact for fare enforcement. Unfortunately, critics argued that the transit court "lacks the due process protections formerly afforded in the LA Superior Court" and does not deter "the highly discretionary mechanisms in place for fare enforcement." Furthermore, the citation rate of Black riders by Metro's own staff is even worse, when compared to that by the LASD. The disparities for Black riders have only increased since the implementation of these measures.

EDUCATION

YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE BEEN DEEPLY IMPACTED BY THESE REGIMES OF POLICING, DIMMING THEIR FUTURE PROSPECTS AND CAPABILITY TO LEAD HEALTHY AND PRODUCTIVE LIVES. As discussed in the previous chapter, barriers to employment go up as soon as someone acquires a criminal record, even for minor infractions, nonviolent offenses, or "poverty crimes." As many as 20,000 youth pass through Los Angeles's juvenile halls each year, which have been documented in LA County reports as having "unacceptable" and "deplorable" conditions. Still, as the largest system of its kind in the country, it costs $233,000 for each young person to cycle through its doors.[331]

Similar to the "broken windows" approach in law enforcement, "zero tolerance" policies in schools were designed to punish students' micro behaviors before they escalate. Most of these behaviors fall in the "willful defiance" category, which LAUSD broadly and vaguely defined as any behavior that defies the authorities of school staff.[332] Typical rebellious behavior by youth, such as smoking, skipping class, or vandalism, that would likely result in school-based punishments or referrals to supportive services in wealthier White suburban schools became criminalized in schools where the demographics were majority students of color. A study found that "the vast majority of LASPD's arrest and tickets in 2011-2012 were for behavior that posed little to no serious threat to the physical safety of students or staff members."[333] Along with the extensive increase in police presence on school campuses, such

TYPICAL REBELLIOUS BEHAVIOR BY YOUTH, SUCH AS SMOKING, SKIPPING CLASS, OR VANDALISM, THAT WOULD LIKELY RESULT IN SCHOOL-BASED PUNISHMENTS OR REFERRALS TO SUPPORTIVE SERVICES IN WEALTHIER WHITE SUBURBAN SCHOOLS BECAME CRIMINALIZED IN SCHOOLS WHERE THE DEMOGRAPHICS WERE MAJORITY STUDENTS OF COLOR.

"Thomas Jefferson High School hubo una pelea muy grande y por primera vez vi como la policía trata a la comunidad, llego el militar. Me di cuenta que la policía no está aquí para ayudarnos."

— *South LA community member and focus group participant*

TRANSLATION:

"Thomas Jefferson High School had a big fight, and for the first time I saw how the police treated the community. They came in like the military. I realized that the police are not here to help us."

policies raised the likelihood that students in South LA would become involved with the criminal justice system at a young age. Furthermore, these policies created a direct "pipeline" between school institutions and the prison system,[334] while also dramatically exacerbating racialized academic achievement gaps.[335] The level of policing has increased so dramatically as early as middle school that many elementary school students entering that environment have found it shockingly hostile and chaotic.[336]

Data suggest that disparities in punishment are not caused by differences in student behaviors, but by adult responses to those behaviors. Certain racial demographics and family income levels are associated with the higher likelihood of students being reported to the police, rather than having the problem handled by the school.[337] The overuse of suspension and expulsion has been demonstrated to lead to school dropout, which in turn lowers future income and educational attainment.[338] One study in California found that students with one or more suspension have a 60% graduation rate, compared to 83% for students without any suspension.[339] Even students who have never been ticketed or arrested are subject to random searches, drug-sniffing dogs, intimidation, etc. For them, the dominance of the police presence on campus creates a tense and hostile environment for academic pursuits. Black and Latinx students who have a learning disability, are LGBTQ, homeless, and/or in foster care are especially at risk of school push-out.[340]

In response to this over-policed environment, education advocates successfully pressed LAUSD in 2007 to adopt the School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (SWPBIS) framework, which is a three-tiered approach for improving school relationships, student behavior and learning outcomes. Despite some initial decline in suspensions and expulsions, South LA parents continued to find disparities in school discipline, particularly for Black students, as well as a lack of parent involvement in SWPBIS implementation. In 2011-2012, several years after the adoption of the SWPBIS, LAUSD still had the highest Student Criminalization Rate, among similar large school districts. Specifically, LAUSD students were cited, tick-

"The police's lane is not our children's schools. I'm watching them take away money from the schools and they're giving [it] to the police for some cameras that aren't even working. That money is like money going to the trash when our children have needs. They aren't giving our kids what they need with counselors to make sure they aren't getting suspended, arrested, etc."

—South LA community member and focus group participant

eted, and arrested at five times the rate of their peers in New York City and nine times the rate of students in Miami-Dade.[341]

As a result, a broader coalition of parents and advocates drafted the School Climate Bill of Rights with stronger measures to achieve the original SWPBIS goals.[342] Among other things, the Bill of Rights would drop "willful defiance" suspensions in favor of more restorative justice approaches. As the LAUSD board deliberated on the bill in 2013, even then-superintendent John Deasy urged the board to end "early criminalization and the school-to-prison pipeline" by addressing the disproportional impact of "willful defiance" violations, where Black students were nine times more likely to be suspended than their White peers.[343] As a result, LAUSD approved the Bill of Rights that year, a move widely praised by educators and experts.[344]

Even after the Bill of Rights was passed, activists continued to push for the district to show more commitment to reducing law enforcement presence at schools. The Los Angeles School Police Department (LASPD) receives $70 million of Los Angeles Unified School District budget, but only $14 million goes to restorative justice and other Climate Bill programs.[345] And it was only in 2016 that LAUSD returned the last of a large stock of deadly weapons obtained through the Department of Defense 1033 program, a national program that has given more than $5 billion in surplus military equipment and arms to local and school police forces since the 1990s.[346]

Now, more than 10 years after the adoption of the SWPBIS framework and five years since the passage of the School Climate Bill of Rights, these policy changes have demonstrable success, but also room for improvement. A recent review of the implementation showed that LAUSD suspensions have declined dramatically from 73,000 in 2005 to just 8,000 in 2014. However, the improvement was not evident for every group. In South LA, African American students made up 50% of the suspensions, though only 12% of enrollment. They were more than seven times more likely than their Latinx and White peers to be suspended. Parents complained that instead of the vague willful defiance offenses, Black students were charged with more egregious violations to justify suspension or school police involvement. The disparity was equally stark by grade levels. More than three-quarters (77%) of suspensions took place in middle schools, though middle school students only made up one-quarter of the enrollment in South LA.

Schools are generally compliant in discipline practices, such as hiring restorative justice staff and training teachers and students in restorative justice. However, they have been less invested in other aspects of SWPBIS that focus on school climate as well as school accountability, reduced presence of school police, and collaboration with families and community. In reviewing the level of fidelity and rigor that SWPBIS was implemented with in South LA schools, the study further found that an overwhelming majority of the schools demonstrated only limited or insufficient implementation.[347]

Another punitive measure that stymied the academic progress and future prospects of students of color was the daytime curfew law. Until February 2012, LAUSD ticketed more than 10,000 students every year, 90% of whom were students of color and nearly half were aged 14 and younger, for being absent or late to school. This law was the most common cause for police to refer students into the juvenile justice system. Many families could not afford to pay the $250 ticket (or the additional $1,000 in court fees) or to miss work to attend court hearings. Because of unpaid fines, 300,000 youth over the years were denied driver's licenses through their adulthood. Community activists were successful in advocating the Los Angeles City Council to amend the law. Between 2009-2010 and 2012-2013, truancy and tardy citations declined by 94%. Students with attendance problems were sent to counselors instead of being ticketed and diverted to the juvenile justice system.

However, this improvement has not benefited all youth equally. Latinx students are still more than twice as likely to be ticketed and arrested compared with White students. The ratio of citations per Black students to White students actually increased from 3.8 in 2010-2011 to 5.8 in 2012-2013, even after the daytime curfew law was amended. This led activists

"The image of jails, metal detectors is internalized because it was part of my daily experience. Other campuses are wide open and [I understood] right then the inequalities."

—South LA community member and focus group participant

to question whether the implementation of the policy continues "to criminalize Black and Latino youth for behaviors that are considered normal and acceptable for White students."[348]

CRIMINALIZATION OF TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

African Americans, young men of color in general, and the homeless have been the primary targets of excessive policing, but other groups can also be vulnerable. The transgender population, for instance, has unique interactions with the police. In 2011, 38% of Black transgender and gender nonconforming people who interacted with the police reported harassment. High rates of harassment and sexual assault by law enforcement among this population have been linked to the wide epidemic in suicide attempts among transgender and gender nonconforming adults in the U.S.[349] As one activist explained, "When a police officer stops a transgender person and demands to see an ID, and if, to that officer's mind, the ID doesn't match the person's gender, intense harassment and violence can result: everything from strip searches to the humiliation of having one's identity denied."[350]

THE OVERLAPPING OF IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS

Excessive policing has been the pipeline between criminalization and deportation for undocumented immigrants. The 287(g) program, established in 1996, deputizes local police with some immigration enforcement authority. Under the guise of cooperation with ICE, law enforcement agencies in some local jurisdictions have been accused of racial profiling. As a result, 35 287(g) agreements were rescinded or not renewed in the past decade.[351] A research study by the University of Illinois at Chicago has shown that Latinx residents, whether citizens or noncitizens, are "less likely to volunteer information about crimes because they fear getting caught in the web of immigration enforcement themselves or bringing unwanted attention to their family or friends." This study found that 70% of undocumented immigrants and 44% of Latinxs are less likely to go to law enforcement if they believe officers will question their immigration status.[352] Despite such threats to community safety, the Trump administration has increased the number of 287(g) agreements with local law enforcement agencies. Forty-seven of the 76 current 287(g) agreements (over 60%) were signed under the Trump administration, and that number is likely to escalate.[353] This is reflected in the increase in the average daily population of detained immigrants from approximately 5,000 in 1994, to 19,000 in 2001, and to over 39,000 in 2017.[354]

The integration of immigration enforcement and criminal justice systems has become so pronounced in the past two decades that one legal scholar describes how these "overlapping realms have fostered an inferior system of rights for immigrants by importing the punitive apparatus of the criminal justice system, while rejecting its protective features, such as appointed counsel and other constitutional protections."

THE TWO LARGEST PRIVATE PRISON COMPANIES, CORRECTIONS CORPORATION OF AMERICA (CCA) AND THE GEO GROUP, OPERATE EIGHT OF THE 10 LARGEST DETENTION CENTERS IN THE U.S. BOTH COMPANIES HAVE DOUBLED THEIR REVENUES SINCE 2005.

Currently, the U.S. government detains nearly 400,000 people every year in over 200 immigration detention centers across the country. Many of these immigrants have lived in the U.S. for many years and may be charged for a minor crime (such as a misdemeanor) or none at all.[355] The integration of immigration enforcement and criminal justice systems has become so pronounced in the past two decades that one legal scholar describes how these "overlapping realms have fostered an inferior system of rights for immigrants by importing the punitive apparatus of the criminal justice system, while rejecting its protective features, such as appointed counsel and other constitutional protections."[356] A joint report by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Center for Migration Studies concluded that, while U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) does not have the authority to incarcerate immigrants but only to hold them while the courts make a decision about their status, "the U.S. detention system has long operated like a prison system, but without the benefit of civil rights case law or the same levels of proficiency and professionalism as most correctional systems."[357] Once detained, immigrants have fewer due process protections than even convicted criminals, including the right to a lawyer and to a speedy trial or to access language interpretation. Some have been arbitrarily kept in solitary confinement for months at a time, which amounts to torture by United Nations standards.[358] For instance, immigrant detention center staff have been found to misuse solitary confinement to deter detainees from filing grievances.[359] In addition, immigrants are often detained for months and sometimes over a year, longer than those who have committed violent crimes. Immigrants may also be deported for minor and nonviolent crimes.[360]

Detained immigrants have to consistently endure inhumane living conditions in detention facilities. Multiple research studies including those conducted by both the Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice and investigative journalistic reports have documented unsanitary conditions, including insufficient hygiene supplies; unsafe, inadequate or inedible food; receiving food on dirty trays; bugs and worms found in the faucets; and overcrowded conditions to the point of 10 men in one cell with only one toilet. Other widespread problems include waiting weeks or months for medical care; lack of outdoor recreation time or access to sunlight or fresh air; and separation from their families due to not only their incarceration, but also to the remoteness of detention facilities.[361] Women and LGBTQ inmates also suffered

from physical abuse and sexual harassment from both staff and other inmates.[362] All of these discriminatory treatments compromised both the mental and physical health of the detained immigrants. Since 2003, 180 people have reportedly died while in custody in these facilities.[363]

There had not been many immigration detention centers until about 15 years ago. The proliferation of these facilities coincided with the increasing criminalization of immigrants. Because of the explosion of immigration detention, the federal government contracts out both the detention function and related services (such as food, guard, and medical care) to private companies. For instance, two private prison companies currently administer and profit from 73% of detention beds (up from 49% in 2009).[364] The two largest private prison companies, Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) and the GEO Group, operate eight of the 10 largest detention centers in the U.S. Both companies have doubled their revenues since 2005. CCA, for instance, earned over $195 million in 2016, compared to $133 million in 2007.[365] Because the primary motive of these private companies is profit, they aim to increase their profit margins by maximizing the number of detainees and cutting costs, even critical services, at the expense of the health, safety, and overall well-being of the people under their custody.[366] In 2018, a report from Department of Homeland Security found that ICE does not have the capacity to monitor these contractors. This means the current administration has no way to make sure contractors are complaint with detention standards nor are they able to enforce correction of identified deficiencies.[367]

The increasing reliance on private firms for immigration detention under the Trump administration was a reversal from an announcement in August 2016 by the Department of Justice to phase out these contracts, "the combined result of a decrease in the number of people incarcerated in federal facilities, a critical report by the DOJ Office of Inspector General, damning investigative reporting on deaths as a result of medical neglect and other serious deficiencies, years of careful research and advocacy by nonprofit organizations, and organizing and resistance by the people incarcerated in the facilities."[368] In other words, these practices have been well documented, and they are allowed to persist in spite of it. The current controversy about separating children from their parents at these detention facilities is once again raising public awareness of these deplorable conditions and the lack of public accountability on the part of the private prison companies.

Some U.S. citizens, including children of immigrants, are also at risk of ICE arrests and deportations. A review of the Department of Justice records by The Los Angeles Times found that ICE mistakenly arrested more than 1,480 U.S. citizens and had to release them from its custody and "uncovered hundreds of additional cases in the country's immigration courts in which people were forced to prove they are Americans and sometimes spent months or even years in detention." One man, a naturalized citizen from Jamaica, was imprisoned by ICE for almost three and a half years.[369]

South LA is home to a large population of undocumented immigrants. As of 2013, 48% of Latinx immigrants in the area were undocumented, and only 26% were naturalized citizens.[370] Even though Los Angeles County dropped its 287(g) agreement with the federal government in 2015, the pernicious impact of police-community relations has taken time to repair. However, the county still allows jail employees to communicate with immigration officials.[371] These populations are particularly vulnerable to deportation, given the cross-section of criminal justice and immigration policing since the 1990s, as well as the fact that cities like Los Angeles that have pledged to protect immigrants have been particularly targeted for federal immigration raids.[372] Legal permanent residents could be deported for a wide range of violent and non-violent offenses. This led one scholar-activist to conclude, "The war on crime and broken windows policing has provided a huge reservoir of people whom the government can target for exile as desired."[373]

It is not surprising that many immigrants avoid interaction with government agencies, even when they can benefit from their services and protection. Not only are undocumented immigrants fearful of utilizing public health care under this climate, but the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has likewise excluded undocumented residents from eligibility. Further, state legislators were poised to include undocumented individuals in the state insurance system, but had to withdraw under federal threats in 2017.[374]

Immigration status also affects undocumented people's (and mixed-status households) ability to utilize other public benefits to which they are otherwise entitled, including food stamps and child care. These residents' fears are justified. Immigrants' already tenuous situation has already worsened under the Trump administration.[375] In other words, South LA residents' fundamental stability and security are at risk through the significantly increased policing of immigrant communities. This danger requires immediate policy responses. In addressing how numerous policing mechanisms converge upon and are utilized in South LA, policymakers must thus pay attention to how these intersect with other statuses and identities. To seriously address health disparities and their impact on immigrant families, Black transgender residents, women of color, or those with mental health issues requires sustainable, evidence-grounded solutions.

SOUTH LA RESIDENTS' FUNDAMENTAL STABILITY AND SECURITY ARE AT RISK THROUGH THE SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED POLICING OF IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES.

THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM PERPETUATES POVERTY

Initial contact with the police (stops, frisks, citations, arrests) is just the beginning. The bias against people of color and poor people is exacerbated throughout the criminal justice process. Extensive research from the Sentencing Project suggests that racial discrimination manifests at multiple key decision points: arrest; arraignment, release, and pre-adjudicatory decisions; adjudication and sentencing; use of probation and alternatives; prison custody and parole.[376] Beyond focusing on reforming arrest procedures, research suggests multiple promising avenues to tackle issues in each of these area, such as:

Pre-Trial Detention: Research has found that most decisions to detain someone accused of a crime are based "on whether the arrestee has enough money to meet bail," leaving those who cannot pay locked up at cost to taxpayers. This results in detention overcrowding and negatively affects both trial and health outcomes.[377] While the state has control over bail, the county can elect to end pre-trial detention or to invest in proven pre-trial diversion programs, like the one in Hennepin County, Minnesota, where certain classes of offenses ordinarily detained for pretrial are offered community-service alternatives. There is a more recent debate around reforming the bail system, which will be explored more fully later in this section.

Trial Processes: The blocking of those with felonies from serving on juries limits the ability of jurors to receive a true "jury of their peers" and widens disparities in criminal justice.[378]

Sentencing Reform: California's voters have recognized the troubling effects of discriminatory systems of policing, passing Proposition 47 (2014) to reduce numerous classes of nonviolent felonies to misdemeanors, and Proposition 64 (2016) to legalize marijuana—both of which apply retroactively. Despite the fact that applying to reduce a felony to a misdemeanor is time-limited, Proposition 47 has generally been slow to roll out due to a lack of agency coordination.[379] Expungement of records is also complex and requires numerous fee waivers. Both sentencing reductions and expungement suggest the need for adequate public legal support in these processes, which many communities lack.[380]

As introduced in the previous chapter, discrimination in the criminal justice system against people of color and poor people in South LA makes it harder for already economically disadvantaged people to become self-sufficient. As one scholar states, "Broken windows policing compels impoverished people to spend money on bail bonds, legal transcripts, appeals, attorney's fees, and visits to prisons. Mass incarceration drives children into foster homes, interrupts work histories, and disrupts social networks. Jail time and fines increase the likelihood of eviction and shelter insecurity, and each eviction imperils future housing opportunities."[381]

While the murder of civilians by law enforcement is brutal and traumatic, what most South LA residents are exposed to on a daily basis is a different, more persistent kind of violence. One researcher explains, "The modal case in the criminal justice system is an arrest for a misdemeanor, which then goes through a low-level court, and then requires having to pay fees and fines. This is the modal case. By focusing on the modal we have to start recalibrating our own sensibilities about what constitutes unacceptable violence. In the typical misdemeanor arrest, the violence levied against people is deep, frightening, and costly. The cost of being arrested, even, in many places, just once, even if charges were dropped, means that you will still have an official rap sheet. A potential employer could just search for your name online and find you...This is destructive to people's lives. I want us to focus on that violence and say that is a form of violence."[382]

In Ferguson, Missouri, where the police killing of African American teenager Michael Brown sparked massive protests, the U.S. Department of Justice found that the town uses fines against its citizens to generate revenues to address its budget shortfalls.[383] A report by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights concludes that, such practices in Ferguson "are chillingly similar" in California. The report states, "Here, as in Missouri, a litany of practices and policies turn a citation offense into a poverty sentence: The revenue incentives of fine collection lead to increased citation enforcement, add-on fees for minor offenses double or quadruple the original fine, and people who fail to pay because they don't have the money lose their driver's licenses...In fact, over 4 million people, or more than 17% of adult Californians, now have suspended licenses for a failure to appear or pay. These suspensions make it harder for people to get and keep jobs, if not impossible to overcome."[384] Suspension of driver's licenses has little to do with public safety (i.e. taking dangerous drivers off the roads), since it has become a tool to regulate behavior unrelated to driving, such as truancy and vandalism. The report continues to explain that these policies disproportionately affect people of color, as they are most likely to have initial contact with law enforcement. The report concludes, "The police, DMV, and courts spend millions arresting, processing, administering, and adjudicating charges for driving on a suspended license. Add in the cost of jailing drivers whose primary fault was failing to pay, and we have a costly debtors' prison."[385]

BAIL REFORM

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), there were 693,300 people incarcerated in local jails in December 2015 in the U.S., but a majority of them had not been convicted of any crime. About 62% were waiting for a trial. Detaining people before their trials cost taxpayers $14 billion a year.[386] The Prison Policy Initiative estimates that 70% of pretrial detainees in 2017 were charged with nonviolent crime.[387] These people could not get out of jail not because they were guilty of a crime, but because they could not afford to post bail.

Analyzing BJS data, another Prison Policy Initiative study found that people in jail had a median annual income of $15,109 prior to their incarceration, which is less than half (48%) of the median for non-incarcerated people of similar ages. People in jail are even poorer than people in prison and are drastically poorer than their non-incarcerated counterparts."[388] This impacts African Americans and Latinxs, of all genders, disproportionately. In Los Angeles, county courts levied over $19 billion in bail on persons arrested by the LAPD between 2012 and 2016. For those who paid bail, they collectively paid about $17.5 million to the courts on their own or almost $194 million in non-refundable deposits to the bail insurance industry. Of the latter amount, Latinxs accounted for 48% and African Americans another 21%. The burden of bail bonds is likely to be borne by women in these communities; that is, the wives, mothers, grandmothers, aunts, or friends who contracted the bail bond agent on behalf of the accused. As mentioned in the previous chapter, South LA had four of the top five zip codes in Los Angeles County for the highest total bail levied and non-refundable bond paid in 2012-2016. In these four zip codes almost $17 million was taken out of the community and transferred into the coffers of the bail insurance industry.[389]

Pretrial detainees drove jail growth over the last 15 years, at a time when the number of convicted people in jails has been relatively stable. This leads the researchers to conclude, "Although, on paper, it is illegal to detain people for their poverty, such detention is the reality in too many of our local jails.

Mass incarceration drives children into foster homes, interrupts work histories, and disrupts social networks. Jail time and fines increase the likelihood of eviction and shelter insecurity, and each eviction imperils future housing opportunities.

Our country now has a two-track system of justice in which the cost of pretrial liberty is far higher for poor people than for the well off."[390]

The differential treatment of those with resources and those without has received mainstream attention lately. An NBC report states, "The poor are far more likely to get stuck in jail, which makes them far more likely to get fired from jobs, lose custody of children, plead guilty to something they didn't do, serve time in prison and suffer the lifelong consequences of a criminal conviction. Those who borrow from a bail bondsman often fall into crippling debt. At the same time, the wealthy can buy their way out of pretrial detention on just about any offense, including murder."[391] Even the Department of Justice filed an amicus brief in 2016, arguing that a bail system that doesn't consider ability to pay violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.[392]

Research also suggests unfair trial outcomes for detainees who cannot post bail. One study found that pretrial detention leads to a 13% increase in conviction, which is largely explained by an increase in guilty pleas among defendants who otherwise would have been acquitted or had their charges dropped.[393] The author cites research that supports the idea that an innocent person would accept a guilty plea to avoid certain pretrial detention: "Any plea deal that involves immediate release from jail would be very tempting, even if the deal involved onerous probation requirements, heavy fines, and negative impacts on future labor market prospects or access to public benefits. It may be that some of the disruptions induced by incarceration have already occurred. When this includes the loss of jobs or housing and the initial adjustment to life behind bars, the incentives to fight the charges are lower. Jail may affect optimism about the likelihood of winning the case, or may affect risk preferences in such a way that the certainty of a plea deal seems preferable to the gamble of a trial."[394]

Like other mechanisms described in this section, the bail system puts people of color and poor people into deep debt and limits their abilities to become or remain self-sufficient. Efforts at reforming the bail system have gained momentum both nationally and in California in recent years. Although bail reform legislation failed in 2017 in the California legislature due to pressure from the bail bonds industry, it has begun to win backing from influential policymakers, including former Governor Jerry Brown and U.S. Senator (and former state's attorney general) Kamala Harris, who introduced similar legislation in Congress this year.[395] More recently, after much advocacy, the Chief Justice of California Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye concluded through a workgroup she had established to study the bail system that "money bail should be replaced by a risk-based assessment and supervision program that determines whether to jail defendants before trial based on their threat to public safety and their likelihood of making a court appearance."[396]

"Although, on paper, it is illegal to detain people for their poverty, such detention is the reality in too many of our local jails. Our country now has a two-track system of justice in which the cost of pretrial liberty is far higher for poor people than for the well off."

OLYMPICS 1984 AND 2028: KEEPING THE PAST FROM BECOMING OUR FUTURE

The return of the Olympics to the City of Los Angeles in 2028 should be a clarion call to both community advocates and policymakers to make sure that excessive policing does not escalate in preparation for the international games, the way it did in 1984. As a political science professor who has studied Olympic planning in Rio de Janeiro (2016), London (2012), and Vancouver (2010), observed, "The Olympics is like a private ATM machine for the police."[397] The 1984 Olympics certainly lived up to this analogy. The Olympic Committee at that time spent about $11.7 million for police security services during the event lasting less than a month, or an equivalent of $27.5 million in 2017.[398] This paid for escalated policing in poor communities of color, especially in South LA, in two different ways.

First, policing was used to remove poor people, especially youth, who did not fit a "positive" image of Los Angeles that its leaders wanted to project to the rest of the world. One scholar wrote, "To ensure that these African American and Latino youths did not embarrass Los Angeles on the world stage, local lawmakers, national security administrators and officials from the Los Angeles Police Department invested heavily not in jobs programs or addiction services, but in get-tough policing and security measures. As a result, for many poor African American or Latino youths living in the South Central neighborhoods surrounding the Coliseum—the venue that hosted opening and closing ceremonies as well as track and field events—the Olympic Games did not lead to prosperity, but...to the greater possibility of police harassment, arrest, and incarceration."[399]

Second, the investment in LAPD had a ripple effect long after the games were over and athletes and visitors left Los Angeles. The police department became militarized with the windfall from the games, purchasing "an arsenal of machine guns, infrared-enhanced viewing devices, and a radio system for its SWAT teams," and fast-tracking a new wave of recruits for its gang and drug sweep program.[400] The "Olympic gang sweeps" became not only a precedent for later paramilitary actions in communities like South LA, but also an insti-

The "Olympic gang sweeps" became not only a precedent for later paramilitary actions in communities like South LA, but also an institutional practice. Three years after the games, an emboldened Chief Darryl Gates established a series of anti-gang sweeps known as Operation Hammer. By 1990, Operation Hammer had arrested over 50,000 people, the highest number of people arrested in a single police operation since the 1965 Watts riots.

tutional practice. Three years after the games, an emboldened Chief Darryl Gates established a series of anti-gang sweeps known as Operation Hammer. By 1990, Operation Hammer had arrested over 50,000 people, the highest number of people arrested in a single police operation since the 1965 Watts riots.[401] People were often arrested without cause and detained for 24 hours in a facility at the Coliseum specifically constructed to hold them.[402] Despite the unprecedented number of arrests, not many people were actually charged with a crime.[403] At the height of Operation Hammer in 1988, about 1,000 LAPD officers arrested 1,453 people in South LA in a single weekend, but only filed charges in 32 instances.[404] Between 1984 and 1989, there was a 33% increase in citizen complaints of police brutality and excessive force. However, of the officers investigated, less than 1% were prosecuted.[405] Gates made no excuses for his approach, which kept South LA and other poor communities under what was, in essence, police occupation. He said, "I think that people believe that the only strategy is to harass people and make arrests for inconsequential types of things. Well, that's part of our strategy, no doubt about it."[406] Community discontent with this level of dehumanization and aggression simmered during the years after the 1984 Olympics and boiled over in the 1992 riots.[407]

While Gates was the mastermind behind Operation Hammer, the operation was carried out with the support of politicians and judges. Operation Hammer was also not unique to Los Angeles. In subsequent years, other Olympic hosts have used similar tactics to harass, criminalize, and "clear out" poor people and people of color. For the 2028 Olympics, Los Angeles is projected to spend $2 billion on security costs, much of which will be paid for by the federal government.[408] In addition to local law enforcement officers, federal agents, like the Secret Service, the FBI, and FEMA will also contribute to the security effort.[409] Even assuming a kinder and gentler LAPD, such an investment in policing, at a larger scale than even the 1984 Olympics, is likely to result in increased abuse and brutalization in South LA, especially given the number of sports venues in South LA that would become attractions during the games.

EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY-BASED CRIME PREVENTION

This chapter discusses how law enforcement and the criminal justice system criminalizes the poor and the working class, people of color (especially African Americans), the homeless, and young people by punishing "crimes" that pose little or no danger to public safety. To do so, these systems take up tremendous resources, including taxpayer dollars that could be used more constructively to improve the quality of life in South LA communities without breeding residents' distrust of authorities.

In public schools, the budget for mental health providers, nurses, counselors, and teachers—adults who could meaningfully support students through their many challenges at home, at school, and in the neighborhood—has been slashed, while resources for police and juvenile courts has increased to deal with these undersupported students. Recent protests over the proposed constructions of new county jails, one of which would cost $2 billion, to house inmates with mental health and medical problems, once again highlights how county officials apply public resources to fund criminal justice solutions to public health problems.[410]

In recent years, policymakers have made—admittedly slow—progress toward restorative justice in public schools. Other metropolitan cities in the U.S. have offered reduced fares or free public transportation to students during school hours. South LA activists contend one simple restorative justice tactic would be to use some of Metro's $800 million law enforcement budget to make such a program cost-effective as an alternate way to reduce fare evasion.[411]

In the Los Angeles public transit system, in response to the growing homelessness crisis, Metro piloted a modest program in 2018 to subcontract social workers to reach out to the homeless population riding the red, gold and green lines, in an attempt to connect them to services.[412] Months later, Metro considered proposals to add mobile shower stations to some transit stops.[413] Both examples, though inadequate for the growing problem of homelessness, represent positive steps toward less punitive approaches to working with this population.

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The momentum for bail reform offers some glimmer of hope that our society's approach to criminal justice could be changing. The treatment of women of color in our jail system is also gaining more public attention. As far back as 1998, the National Institute of Justice and public health researchers have called for alternatives to incarceration, particularly for women, in order to ameliorate the dire health impacts and living conditions in many women's facilities.[414] Given the documented human rights abuse and violence against women in Los Angeles, shuttering "women's jails," which disproportionately affect Black women with mental health issues (who comprise 41% of this population), and replacing these with community-based alternatives can provide an immediate solution to protect a vulnerable population's health.[415]

At the same time, private technology companies and government officials are exploring new surveillance technology, such as electronic ankle bracelets, sensors, and conducted energy devices as an alternative to brick-and-mortar prisons. On the one hand, it could lead to closure of most prisons in the U.S.,[416] and "inmates" could take jobs, spend time with family members, and take part in most community activities. Monitoring also decreases the likelihood of parole violation.[417] However, some activists worry that this will not improve the problematic relationship between law enforcement and communities like South LA. Instead, home surveillance will add burden to communities that are already oversurveilled, and shift the costs associated with housing and caring for incarcerated people from prisons to individual families. As one writer states, "As an idea, the Panopticon remains embedded in our notion of state discipline. Now, it is spreading out of the prison and into the neighborhood and the home, which is hardly surprising in a society in which surveillance and monitoring are becoming the accepted norms of everyday life."[418] Technological advances have already made widespread camera-based surveillance cost-effective enough to cover entire

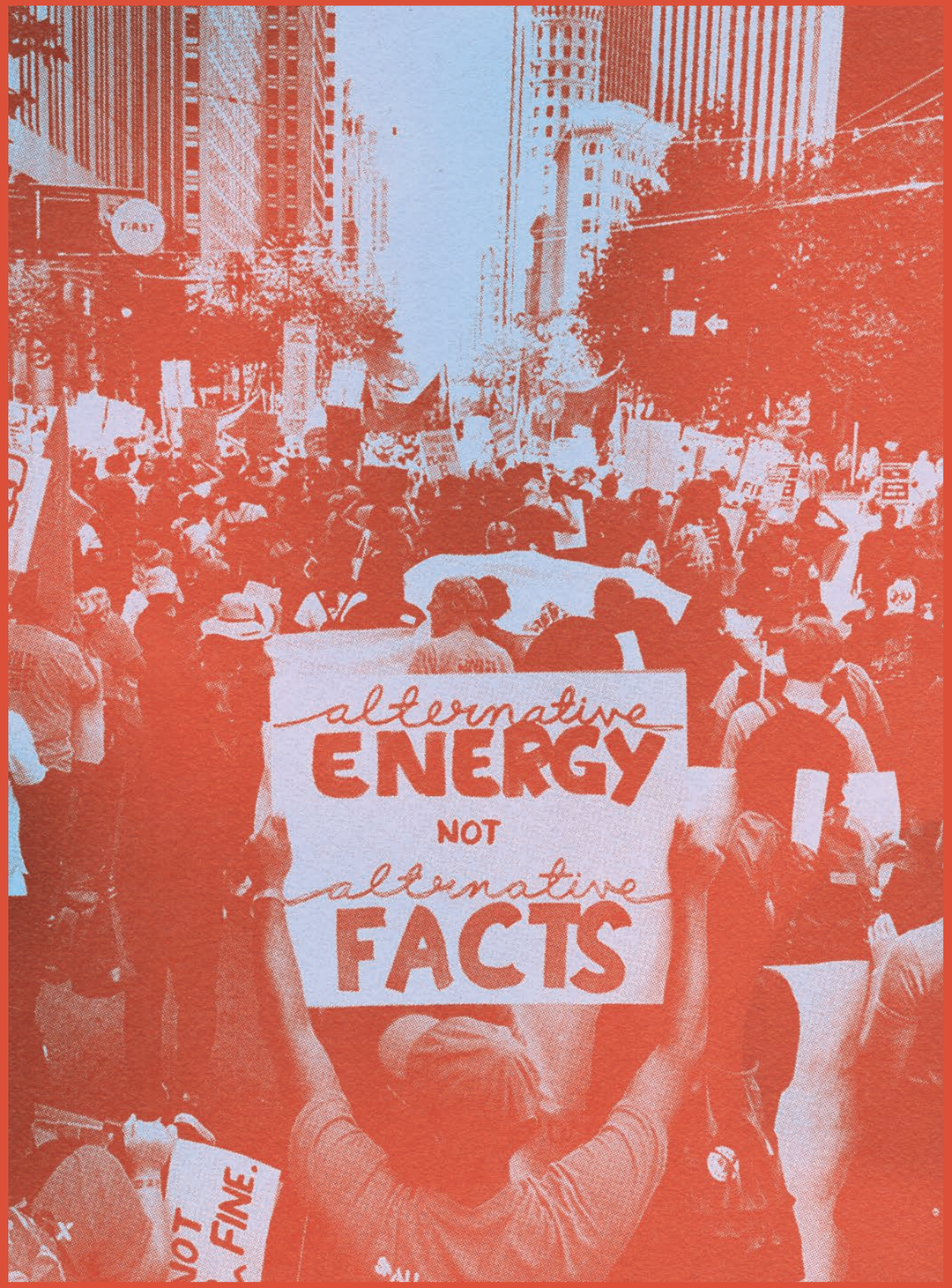
neighborhoods like South LA. Furthermore, the presence of this surveillance equipment has become normalized by its ubiquity and its impersonal and often secretive nature.[419] The growing use of this type of technology will fuel inevitable investment by technology companies in alternatives to prisons. Community advocates need to pay attention to the development of this technology and the policies surrounding its use.

An additional upcoming opportunity requires vigilant monitoring from community advocates. The aforementioned Proposition 47 redirects funds that would have been spent on housing those with felony convictions into the State's Safe Neighborhood and School Fund (SNSF) in order to support restorative justice and youth development programs. The first deposit based on Proposition 47 was $29.3 million, though the state's Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) suggests that the account should contain $100 million in addition to what has already been deposited.[420] While Proposition 64 will be fully implemented in January 2018, the bill promises to produce, according to the LAO, up to "tens of millions" in reduced costs from policing as well as up to $1 billion from a retail sales and cultivation excise tax.[421] Both the SNSF and Proposition 64, which includes stipulations that funds go toward communities affected by past drug policies, come with key opportunities to invest in community-defined prevention and safety. However, this will not come immediately, and will require community mobilization to redirect these funds to areas like South LA that disproportionately bear the effects of overpolicing.

RECENT PROTESTS OVER THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTIONS OF NEW COUNTY JAILS, ONE OF WHICH WOULD COST $2 BILLION, TO HOUSE INMATES WITH MENTAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL PROBLEMS, ONCE AGAIN HIGHLIGHTS HOW COUNTY OFFICIALS APPLY PUBLIC RESOURCES TO FUND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SOLUTIONS TO PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEMS.

COMING UP...

As demonstrated throughout this report, racist policy and land use decisions have been made for decades at the expense of South LA residents. These decisions include the siting of harmful industrial activities that pollute neighborhoods, lower home values, and directly threaten the health of nearby residents. Gentrification, poverty, and overpolicing can push South LA residents to settle in areas that are especially vulnerable to environmental hazards and harms. Perhaps the least studied of the four drivers, but no less integral to the current conditions in South LA, the next and final chapter will explore how environmental racism has shaped South LA and how local residents are developing intersectional approaches to address harmful environmental problem and conditions.



4

Environmental Racism

DRIVER FOUR

HOW DOES THIS DRIVER IMPACT COMMUNITY HEALTH?

Research indicates that community health is affected through multiple environmental systems and pathways of exposure, including industrial pollution, traffic density, housing quality, food access, and water quality, among others.[422] Exposure to pollution, from both outdoor and indoor sources, is connected to higher rates of asthma, elevated blood lead levels, cardiovascular disease, respiratory illness, cancer and other chronic health problems. In addition, pollution and chemical exposure is correlated with negative birth outcomes, such as infant mortality, birth defects, and low birth-weight, and is particularly harmful to early childhood development.[423,424]

Across California, communities of color are exposed to pollution and environmental hazards at a higher rate than their White counterparts. A 2018 report from California's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment estimated that 1 in 3 African American residents and 1 in 3 Latinx residents live in one of the top 20% most polluted census tracts in the state, while only 1 in 14 White residents live in these areas.[425] These statistics are indicative of the role race plays in determining the location of unwanted land uses, like power plants and landfills. This pattern also stems from a systemic lack of access to planning, land use, and environmental regulatory decision-making processes for low-income communities of color.[426] National and regional studies, including a recent analysis of racial disparities in the built environment in Los Angeles County, point to a link between low rates of civic engagement and poor environmental quality.[427],[428],[429] As a result, the highest risk of pollution and environmental disaster is assigned to Black and Brown communities.[430]

However, poor neighborhoods and people of color are not only more exposed to environmental hazards, but they are also more vulnerable to their impacts due to external risk factors resulting from socioeconomic conditions.[431] Furthermore, research demonstrates that as climate change exacerbates air pollution and the health hazards associated with it, these same communities stand to face even greater health impacts.[432] At the same time, low-income communities and communities of color often lack the adequate investment in infrastructure needed to mitigate pollution exposure and protect community health, such as clean energy technologies and green space. Given this triple threat, this final chapter explores how South Los Angeles communities are advancing key changes in policy, planning and governance to dismantle the legacy of environmental racism.

DRIVER FOUR

HOW IS SOUTH LA DOING?

While Los Angeles County's air quality has improved over the last few decades, in 2017, the American Lung Association (ALA) gave Los Angeles's air quality a grade F. In its annual State of the Air Report, ALA ranked Los Angeles as the metropolitan area with the highest ozone levels and fifth-highest particulate matter pollution levels in the country.[433] The State of the Air Report credits many improvements in air quality across the country to the provisions in the federal Clean Air Act. However, much of Los Angeles County is still out of compliance with the act and was granted 12 years longer than the rest of the country to meet federal air quality standards.[434],[435]

As the map below shows, large contiguous parts of South LA rank among the top 10% most polluted census tracts in California.[436] In South LA, more than 24,000 people live within 500 feet of a major truck route and are therefore constantly exposed to particulate matter from diesel exhaust.[437] In addition, well over 21,000 residents in population-dense South LA neighborhoods live within 500 feet of: manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, oil refining or chemical plant sites.[438] In South Central LA, there are also 585 sensitive land uses (such as schools, churches, hospitals and clinics) within 500 feet of hazardous sites.[439] The most common pollutants associated with these types of industrial sites are volatile organic compounds (VOC's), diesel, particulate matter, and toxic chemicals, including formaldehyde, phthalates, and toluene.

Evidence collected by community-based researchers and analyzed by Occidental College and other academic institutions suggests that the actual impact of the excessive number of pollution sites is underreported by official data. A 2010 study concluded that hazardous emission facilities are both more numerous and closer to

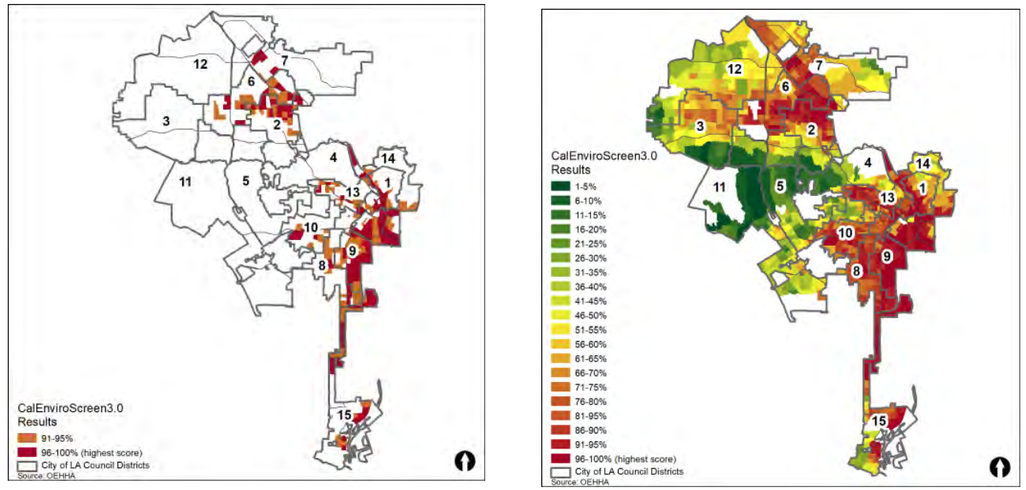


Figure 1: Areas of the City of Los Angeles with highest combined rates of environmental and social vulnerability

sensitive land uses in South LA and other vulnerable communities than regulatory data sources capture. For instance, researchers found 26 more sensitive land uses around high-polluting facilities along the Figueroa Corridor in South LA than were recorded in government and commercial data sources, including three schools, one senior center, four health clinics, five daycare centers, and 13 churches.[440] Recent participatory research efforts led by Physicians for Social Responsibility–Los Angeles in collaboration with South and Southeast LA community members support these findings. In an analysis of five South LA census tracts, 58% of land uses, or 107 individual locations, were misidentified in official land use data sources. Over 64% of the misidentified land uses documented in these efforts were actually industrial uses.[441]

Research links industrial pollution exposure to significant health impacts, including low birth-weight, heart attack, stroke, and the development of chronic diseases such as asthma, cancers, learning disabilities, and reproductive problems.[442] Unsurprisingly, disparities between South LA and the rest of Los Angeles exist in each of these health outcomes.[443] In 2013, more than 8% of babies were born with low birth-weight in South LA, compared to 7% countywide. However, some zip codes within South LA had low birth-weight rates between 11% and 12%.[444] For African Americans in South LA, the low birth-weight rate was almost double that of the general population in the county at 13%. The coronary heart disease death rate in South LA was also among the highest in the county at about 148 per 100,000 residents. Similarly, the stroke death rate for South LA was the highest in the county—40 per 100,000 residents versus the county's average of 33 per 100,000 residents. Ultimately, on average a South Central resident will live 5 years less and a Watts resident will live nearly 8 years less than the average LA City resident.[445]

In 2015, 8% of children ages 0-17 living in South LA were diagnosed with asthma, which was slightly higher than the county's rate (7%).[446] While the prevalence rate was similar, evidence suggests that the asthma conditions in South LA are more severe, as rates of asthma hospitalization and asthma-related emergency room visits for both adults and children were among the highest in the county and state in 2015.[447] Another study suggests that environmental factors account for 30% of the total childhood asthma burden in California, but in places where pollution is acute, environmental factors could be responsible for up to 41% of that burden.[448]

In addition to industrial and mobile (transportation) pollution exposure, a growing body of research indicates that "the air within homes and other buildings can be more seriously polluted than the outdoor air in even the largest and most industrialized cities."[449] In South LA, indoor air quality is affected by outdoor industrial and transportation-related pollution as well as lead, mold, and pest dangers commonly found in substandard housing. These exposures are compounded by the prevalence of chemical and toxics exposure from products used in the home and workplace, and higher levels of exposure to tobacco smoke in the home.

The pressures of housing insecurity and gentrification detailed in Chapter 1 often lead low-income families to settle for substandard housing or housing in areas that have histories of industrial use. In a 2010 survey of over 140 downtown and South LA tenants conducted by the Healthy Neighborhoods Same Neighbors Collaborative, 45% of tenants reported having mold in their units, 39% reported leaks from pipes and plumbing within their homes, and 47% reported having broken plaster or peeling paint.[450] From 2006 to 2010, South LA had the highest number of lead-poisoning cases reported across the county, which were largely attributed to peeling lead paint or lead paint dust in workplaces and homes.[451] A wealth of research supports the link between lead exposure early in life and multiple physical, mental, and behavioral health concerns, including damage to the kidneys, central nervous and reproductive systems, decreased intelligence, violence, and aggression.[452],[453] However, research suggests that pervasive undertesting for low-income children on Medi-Cal and problems with accurate exposure detectability means many cases of lead exposure and poisoning go unidentified.[454],[455]

While facing chronic overexposure to industrial and environmental hazards, South LA residents also face a lack of access to infrastructure that can protect against the impacts of these exposures, such as outdoor green space. In South LA there are 0.9 acres of open green space per 1,000 people, well short of the 10-acre target, a standard set up by Los Angeles City Council in 2016 to determine adequate levels of park services.[456] In 2015, nearly 87% of children in LA County reported that they could easily get to a park, playground, or other safe place to play, compared to 79% of children in South LA. In fact, South LA had the lowest park access rates among all service planning areas in the county. Similarly, only 15% of adults in LA County reported that their neighborhoods did not have access to walking paths, parks, playgrounds, or sports fields, compared to 22% of adults in South LA.[457]

DRIVER FOUR

WHAT ARE THE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THIS DRIVER IN SOUTH LA?

Consistent with general research about environmental justice, communities of color in South LA suffer disproportionate exposure to pollution and other environmental hazards. Racialized land use decisions, systematic exclusion from decision-making processes, and the pervasiveness of industrial exposure and contamination have shaped South LA's environmental landscape. Intersecting issues related to housing, gentrification, transportation, and climate change contribute to an increasingly complex system of inequality. This section considers some of the key factors that contribute to environmental inequality and shape intersectional campaigns for environmental justice in South LA.

STRUCTURAL RACISM & THE PERVASIVENESS OF INDUSTRIAL EXPOSURE

A meta-analysis of six research studies on environmental racism in Los Angeles showed that "most industrial hazards in southern California are concentrated in the greater central and southern part of Los Angeles County." This includes a major cluster that "forms a wide swath from downtown to the harbor," which encompasses much of South LA. The fact that this and other clusters are mostly inhabited by people of color suggests that "such patterns are not the result of any single decision or particular act. Instead, they are the result of urban development in a highly racialized society over the course of 150 years."[458] This study asserts that planning decisions on the distribution of pollution sites have been made to privilege industry profits and White residents at the expense of poor people and people of color throughout Los Angeles County.

As described in Chapter 1, restrictive housing covenants and discriminatory real estate practices cemented a pattern of exclusionary development that allowed for White home ownership in suburban areas while concentrating industrial activity in areas of Los Angeles dominated by non-White and immigrant residents, including South LA.[459] By the 1920s, these patterns were violently enforced and codified in zoning law. The rapid suburbanization of Los Angeles continued through the post-World War II era, eventually expanding the opportunity for home ownership to White working class residents who lived in the inner industrial suburbs that neighbored South LA. As White workers moved out, Black workers from across the country moved into South LA and its surrounding areas to pursue the area's employment opportunities. Zoning laws at the time allowed for the production of multifamily units as well as a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial uses in South LA and other communities of color. By extension, these zoning laws protected White suburban areas from the overcrowded conditions and overexposure to industrial hazards felt by these communities.[460]

This pattern was further entrenched by the exodus of the defense and auto industries in the late 60s and early 70s. As discussed in Chapter 2, the level of joblessness, poverty, disinvestment, lack of services, and land contamination left in the wake of deindustrialization made it difficult to attract private developers or growth sectors into South LA's vacant industrially zoned land. This enabled the growth of small polluting

activities and large-scale hazards, such as incinerators.[461] At the same time many residents who were able to do so moved their families out, creating space for Los Angeles's growing Latinx immigrant population to put down roots in South LA.

Thus more complex than any single siting decision, environmental racism in the South LA context reveals how varying forms of racism "operate over time and space."[462] For example, Black Angelenos' exposure to environmental hazards is largely a function of enforced residential segregation combined with "the historic practice of locating hazardous land uses in Black areas."[463] And while the Latinx population in Los Angeles is more geographically dispersed, the Latinx community and particularly Latinx immigrants share in this legacy of racialized environmental inequality—both as a function of the industries in which they have been able to find employment and the neighborhoods in which they can afford to live. Together, structural racism in housing, labor, and land use policy have set the conditions for environmental injustice. Given this history, scholars note that South LA's contribution to the broader environmental justice movement includes combining "issues of race, concentrated poverty, social isolation, and environmental health...effectively challenge[ing] an overly narrow definition of 'the environment.'"[464]

TOGETHER, STRUCTURAL RACISM IN HOUSING, LABOR, AND LAND USE POLICY HAVE SET THE CONDITIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE.

The Complex Legacy of Environmental Racism in South LA

Jordan Downs, a large-scale redevelopment project in the Watts neighborhood, provides an excellent example of the intersectional nature of environmental justice issues, which organizations are working to connect and address holistically. Originally built as housing for factory workers during World War II, Jordan Downs was converted into public housing in the 1950s. For decades, the housing units were immediately abutting industrial land—once the site of a steel mill, then later used for trucking operations and waste storage.[513] The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) has been in the process of trying to redevelop the public housing units and adjacent industrial land for over a decade. However, funding gaps and environmental remediation concerns have led to delays and disputes. In 2014, with a cleanup and redevelopment plan underway, soil samples from the industrial site revealed high levels of lead, arsenic, diesel fuel, oil, and polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB). However the Department of Toxic Substances Control decided that the levels were within acceptable limits and that no further action was necessary.[514] Environmental justice advocates and residents living in the adjacent housing units questioned this decision, concerned that the existing contamination in the soil and groundwater could spread to nearby gardens, community areas, and playgrounds. Environmental health concerns have also been exacerbated by studies documenting high rates of brown, rusty or murky tap water in area households.[515] As redevelopment plans move forward, state and local agencies remain in disagreement with some residents, advocates, and an adjacent high school on whether the cleanup is adequately protecting the health of nearby residents, students, and workers.[516],[517]

However, health concerns are not the only threat to current residents, who are among the poorest in the city and over 50% of whom are children. As Jordan Downs is converted from public housing into a mixed-income development, local residents are contending with fears of displacement. While more recent data remains unavailable, in the first half of 2013, Jordan Downs had the highest eviction rate of any development in the city.[518] As a result, transparency and trust concerns have been raised by Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) and the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA), who are working as a part of the LA Human Right to Housing Collective to organize Jordan Downs residents around housing and health issues as the redevelopment process continues.

In 2018 HACLA, as part of the Watts Rising Collaborative, was awarded $35 million from the state's Transformative Climate Communities Program (which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter) to include new affordable housing units within the redevelopment as well as other green infrastructure investments which may mitigate some existing environmental hazards. While the future of Jordan Downs' redevelopment is not yet written in stone, this award may be a turning point for the multiple integrated policy, investment, and community engagement strategies needed to address the legacy of environmental racism and housing discrimination in South LA.

THE LINK BETWEEN DISPLACEMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE

Research shows that as cities begin to address a history of environmental racism through the cleanup of various polluting practices and the adoption of equity-minded environmental policies, once-polluted neighborhoods near the urban core have become more desirable, attracting wealthier, often White residents. Termed "environmental gentrification," in 2006 the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council, a community-based stakeholder committee that helps shape EPA policies, described the challenge: "[F]rom the perspective of gentrified and otherwise displaced residents and small businesses, it appears that the revitalization of their cities is being built on the back of the very citizens who suffered, in-place, through the times of abandonment and disinvestment. While these citizens are anxious to see their neighborhoods revitalized, they want to be able to continue living in their neighborhoods and participate in that revitalization."[465]

The literature in community planning, environmental ecology, and real estate economics supports "a strong correlation...between urban land cleanup, investment in park or open space creation or rehabilitation, waterfront redevelopment, or ecological restoration; and changes in demographic trends and neighborhood property values."[466] In other words, the remediation of contaminated or polluted areas by public agencies and private developers does not seem to benefit those originally exposed to the environmental hazard. Recent research in planning and urban geography suggests that environmental gentrification is often embedded in sustainability planning—pointing to an intentional agenda set in policy and in discourse that results in "the environmental and social cleanup of entire neighborhoods inhabited by low-income residents and minorities and of their industrial legacy."[467]

In 2017, the California Air Resources Board commissioned research to study the relationship between transit-oriented development, a key strategy to achieve the state's greenhouse gas reduction goal, and displacement. The report's findings confirmed much of the previous research on displacement (see Chapter 1). For instance, the report concludes that in neighborhoods surrounding fixed-rail transit "housing costs tend to increase, changing the demographic composition of the area and resulting in the loss of low-income households."[468] Additional national research shows low-income residents have lower rates of vehicle ownership and demonstrate higher rates of ridership in transit-oriented development neighborhoods. This suggests that the benefits of access to transit and reduced vehicle miles traveled will be diminished if residents with low rates of vehicle ownership are displaced—a key consideration for environmental and social justice advocates alike.[469,470]

In South LA, the pressures of gentrification and overpolicing have pushed low-income residents, and Black residents in particular, out of the area's historic neighborhoods as they become more attractive to developers and residents who have been priced out of other areas of the city. As a result, housing near industrial uses continues to grow denser and former industrial lands are increasingly redeveloped for housing, as demonstrated in the Jordan Downs example. Without adequate environmental and anti-displacement protections, redeveloping contaminated land and placing new developments next to industrial sites threatens to both push out long-term residents and create environmental hazards to both new and existing residents who remain.[471]

The pervasiveness of industrial pollution exposure is not only a result of poor, racialized land use decisions, but also a lack of political accountability in the face of powerful industry interests, as demonstrated by South LA residents' long fight against the oil industry.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SOLUTIONS REQUIRE A SYSTEMS CHANGE APPROACH

Environmental justice solutions inherently require a systems change approach in order to fundamentally shift the exclusionary decision-making processes that lead to inequitable land use, development, and public investment patterns. To this end, South LA and other environmental justice communities are pushing for change at multiple levels to realize a grassroots environmental justice agenda. This section explores current challenges, opportunities, and active campaigns on the South LA landscape, including urban oil drilling, regulatory reforms, investment in parks, and new models for community-led development.

ENDING URBAN OIL DRILLING

The practice of urban oil drilling in South LA has been identified by academic and community-based research efforts as a contributor to localized poor health outcomes and is a growing concern among residents. Oil and gas industries create more solid and liquid waste than all other municipal, agriculture, mining, and industrial wastes combined.[472] In South LA and other urban areas with oil fields, oil has to be extracted using extreme drilling techniques. These methods produce wastewater that is high in chemical additives and heavy metals.[473] Extreme drilling methods also inject a mixture of chemicals back into the ground. These chemicals can affect sensory organs (like skin and eyes), as well as nervous, immune, cardiovascular, and endocrine systems, causing cancer and genetic mutations.[474] A report that analyzed chemicals that were released from oil drilling sites in Los Angeles since June 2013 found air toxins and other chemicals that are known carcinogens, reproductive toxins, endocrine disruptors, and mutagens. However, the list did not include other chemicals that do not have to be reported to the South Coast Air Quality Management District under the "trade secrets" protection.[475]

In a 2015 study that profiled five Los Angeles neighborhoods surrounding oil drilling sites (three in South LA), researchers found resident complaints about nausea, nosebleeds, stomachaches, headaches, heart palpitations, and body spasms, symptoms that are consistent with those triggered by exposure to chemicals and air pollution related to oil extraction.[476] In comparing communities surrounding oil drilling sites in South LA to South LA neighborhoods without drilling sites and LA County at large, a 2017 study also found that asthma rates were higher within 1,500 feet of oil drilling sites. Moreover, 45% of survey respondents were unaware of the presence of oil drilling and 63% of residents were unsure of how to contact relevant regulatory authorities about their complaints.[477]

The pervasiveness of industrial pollution exposure is not only a result of poor, racialized land use decisions, but also a lack of political accountability in the face of powerful industry interests, as demonstrated by South LA residents' long fight against the oil industry. Neighborhood oil drilling is pervasive across Los Angeles—countywide 580,000 residents live within a quarter mile of active oil and gas wells. Research conducted by Community Health Councils found that oil drilling sites in low-income communities of color, like South LA and Wilmington, were on average closer to homes, had fewer protections such as air monitoring or buffers, and had more violations and complaints on record.[478] At South LA drilling sites, the average distance to the closest sensitive use was only 85 feet, compared to 570 feet at West LA drilling sites. A case study of three oil drilling sites in South LA (Allenco in University Park and Jefferson and Murphy in Historic West Adams) showed that residents within 1,500 feet of these oil wells tended to have a higher proportion of people of color, people who live below 200% of poverty line, renters, linguistically isolated households, and people with less than a high school education than Los Angeles County, Los Angeles City, and even other areas within the same buffer distance from an oil well.[479] The areas surrounding the three sites also had a much higher population density, which means the pollutants affect more people.[480]

Only after hundreds of complaints from residents over two years, coupled with involvement from state elected officials, citation and fines imposed by the Environmental Protection Agency for non-compliance with the federal Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, as well as a lawsuit from the LA City Attorney, did the Allenco oil drilling site in the University Park neighborhood shut down in 2016.[481] Because this legal action did not guarantee that the site would never reopen, the People Not Pozos campaign against Allenco, led by Esperanza Community Housing and its grassroots members, is continuing to document the impacts of neighborhood oil drilling with the help of community health workers (Promotores de Salud) and working in coordination with the Stand Together Against Neighborhood Drilling (STAND-LA) Coalition to effectively end neighborhood oil drilling in the City of Los Angeles.

The STAND-LA Coalition, which includes several South LA community-based organizations, is currently waging a campaign to end the practice of neighborhood oil drilling across the City of Los Angeles by requiring a 2,500-foot health and safety buffer between oil wells and sensitive land uses—a policy solution that is gaining traction across the state. The Coalition recently pushed for the Department of Public Health to study the public health and safety risks of neighborhood oil drilling.[482] The study's findings confirmed much of the existing literature, supporting the need to expand the minimum distance between oil wells and sensitive land uses.[483] If the ordinance passes, it will be a significant win for those facing cumulative environmental hazards and heightened vulnerability across the city, signaling a shift towards community health-informed planning and land use decisions.

One national study found that increased enforcement was not linked to the level of community risk, but rather to the presence of environmental justice advocacy organizations.

ADDRESSING THE SYSTEMIC LACK OF TRANSPARENCY & ENFORCEMENT

As demonstrated by the Allenco example, even with policies and regulations in place, research indicates that regulatory agencies do not apply enforcement mechanisms evenly across environmental justice communities. One national study found that increased enforcement was not linked to the level of community risk, but rather to the presence of environmental justice advocacy organizations.[484] Another review of the literature found that regulations are inequitably enforced, particularly in poor communities of color.[485] Large-scale disasters, such as the contamination of Flint, Michigan's water supply and the decades-long contamination of Southeast Los Angeles neighborhoods from the Exide battery plant, indicate that it is not only reckless polluters who are responsible for environmental injustice. The state shares part of the blame for failing to provide equal services, infrastructure, and enforcement of existing regulations. The actions of both the state and polluters systematize vulnerability and contamination.[486]

While the broader environmental justice movement nationally and in the state of California has had significant policy wins, research on the efficacy of environmental justice wins in implementation and practice suggests that national and state agencies have failed to "embrace the notion that distribution of environmental benefits and burdens is based on race, income, and political power."[487] For example, in 2016, after securing significant environmental justice policy wins, the statewide organization California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) developed principles to guide policy implementation from an environmental justice perspective. Using these principles, CEJA developed an agency assessment tool to evaluate regulatory agency action. According to CEJA's assessment, the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and the California Public Utilities Commission failed to advance environmental justice in policy implementation. CEJA based these scores on a documented lack of responsiveness to community input, inadequate communication and information provided to the public, and opaque decision-making processes, among other reasons.[488] This assessment has helped push forward a policy proposal to create an oversight board at DTSC—a structural change to increase accountability and transparency and protect the health and rights of all residents.[489]

In spite of the lack of accountability from regulatory agencies, South LA has a history of activism around noxious land uses. In one prominent example, a group of predominantly African American women overcame significant industry opposition to prevent the City of Los Angeles from locating a waste-to-energy incinerator in South LA.[490] In a similar grassroots-led victory, a South LA immigrant mother led the fight to relocate Palace Plating, a metal finishing facility generating hazardous waste across the street from one of the largest elementary school campuses in the nation. South LA students, teachers, and families were the determining factor in forcing city government and state regulators to take action after years of testing and fines resulted in little improvement.[491] These examples underscore the role of community voices and grassroots organizing power in securing environmental justice wins, but also point to the need for monitoring these wins, while continuing to push for upstream policy solutions that advance long-term systems change.[492]

FUNDING PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

In the context of Los Angeles, the broader social system that worked to the benefit of Whites along with explicit environmental racism has not only resulted in an inequitable distribution of environmental burden, but also an inequitable distribution of environmental amenities, including parks.[493] Parks offer many benefits for nearby residents, including improved physical and mental health outcomes, reduced heat island effect, reduced air and soil pollutants, as well as additional economic and social benefits.[494]

Research shows that assessing existing park distribution is not enough to gain an understanding of adequate access to parks. For instance, in 1992, LA County voters approved Proposition A, the Safe Neighborhood Parks Act, to invest in park-related projects, such as walking and hiking trails, tree planting programs, senior centers, graffiti removal, and playground and fitness equipment as well as restoration of rivers, streams, and beaches. In 1996, Los Angeles City voters once again approved a park funding measure, Proposition K, which along with Proposition A funds, resulted in $369.5 million in park funding for the city. The three council districts that comprise South LA (CD 8, 9, and 10) combined received just 16% of this allocation, less than half of what CD 4 (Central LA and the southern part of the San Fernando Valley) received (38%). This translates into just $77 per resident in South LA, compared to $568 in CD 4. Furthermore, about half of the South LA allocation went to Exposition Park, which is a point of interest for all of Los Angeles residents and tourists.[495] A 2002 study concluded that park inequality was actually exacerbated by these investments, which focused on existing parks rather than the development of new parks in areas of need.[496] As a result of this study and others, it became evident that procedural and structural changes in park funding and development were needed to ensure more equitable environmental outcomes.

In 2015, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved a motion to conduct a countywide park needs assessment to better understand the scope, scale, and location of park need in the county. Shifting the paradigm on parks, recreation, and open-space development, the Park Needs Assessment used new metrics to determine need, supported a need-based allocation of funding, and emphasized community priorities and input.[497] The Park Needs Assessment proved to be a useful tool to facilitate engagement between policymakers, advocates, community-based organizations and residents, and led to the development of Measure A, the Parks and Open Space Parcel Tax, which was approved by county voters in 2016.

Measure A is estimated to generate over $94 million annually for parks, recreation, open space, and veteran and youth programs. It marks a significant departure from past public- investment strategies. However, an analysis conducted by the Advancement Project suggests that Measure A alone will not close the park equity gap. Despite lagging behind the rest of LA County in park space per resident, only 13% of revenues under Measure A will be allocated to prioritized projects in South LA, even though it represents 15% of total population in the County. Like Proposition A before it, Measure A represents a significant improvement, but it still doesn't address past inequity. It even falls short of equality in funding among all council districts. That is, the average spending in other areas of the city is budgeted at $828 per resident, $98 more than South LA, which is estimated to receive $730 per resident.[498]

While South LA-based equity stakeholders are currently involved in shaping the implementation of Measure A, they are also working to identify complementary strategies to address park inequities. A report by the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust identified the many vacant lots in South LA as an opportunity, stating that "an underutilized publicly-owned vacant lot can become the next tree-lined park that provides safe space for neighbors to gather or the next community garden that teaches a child how to grow vegetables."[499] Analyzing the level of need, surrounding land uses (to ensure land use compatibility) and parcel size, the report identified a handful of sites in low-income communities of color throughout Los Angeles, including three in South LA, that were most suitable for conversion into green space.[500] Given the history of socioeconomic and land use disparities in South LA, the redevelopment of these sites with the input and leadership of local communities has the potential to promote a new model for community-led transformation.

(Photo/Mike Dennis)

AS THE REALM OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CONTINUES TO EXPAND, ADDITIONAL WORK IS NEEDED TO BUILD THE COMMUNITY POWER NECESSARY TO HOLD DECISION-MAKERS ACCOUNTABLE ACROSS ISSUE. SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF A SOUTH LA ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AGENDA REQUIRES AN INTERSECTIONAL SYSTEMS CHANGE APPROACH THAT SHIFTS LONG-STANDING POWER STRUCTURES THAT EXCLUDE AND EXPLOIT LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES OF COLOR.

TOWARDS A SOUTH LA GREEN ZONE

As one might expect, exposure to a cluster of pollution sources can make health impacts more severe than the potential health damages of individual pollution sources alone.[501] Researchers have also found residents in South LA experience triple jeopardy as a result of "the cumulative effects of poverty, lack of access to adequate health care, and illnesses that can leave individuals more vulnerable to the toxic effects of pollution."[502] This research along with an understanding of the historical context of environmental racism has led to the documentation of cumulative impacts—the environmental, health, and social stressors—disproportionately faced in low-income communities of color. Applying a cumulative impacts approach has led to the development of data-driven policy tools, such as CalEnviroScreen (see p. 88), more accurate identification and understanding of environmental justice communities, and the implementation of targeted policy models, such as "green zones."[503]

A framework championed by environmental justice organizations, "green zones" are a place-based strategy that uses community-driven approaches to identify local needs, priorities and solutions in communities overburdened by pollution.[504] In Los Angeles County, the green zones framework has influenced the Department of Regional Planning's efforts to engage community members in identifying incompatible land uses with the help of community-based organizations.[505] Similarly, at the city level, the Department of City Planning recently adopted a Clean Up Green Up Ordinance, which subjects new and expanding businesses in three highly polluted and socially vulnerable neighborhoods to stricter development standards and restrictions, including setbacks and buffers between their operations and nearby homes. The identification of these three pilot neighborhoods[506] and the adoption of the Clean Up Green Up Ordinance was the result of a long campaign by local environmental justice activists and advocacy groups seeking to reduce pollution, improve health, and support and sustain the small businesses that often struggle to clean up their polluting practices.[507] In its pilot year, the ordinance applied to the predominantly low-income Latinx neighborhoods of Boyle Heights, Pacoima, and Wilmington. The ordinance will be expanded to include South LA via the City's Sustainability Plan update.[508]

While the use of targeted, place-based strategies in community development is not new, environmental justice communities are helping to shape more responsive and forward-thinking planning, environmental, and climate policies. In 2016, environmental justice advocates worked with state policymakers to develop the Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) Program, a $140 million climate investment program targeted at the state's most disadvantaged communities. The TCC Program provides communities with the opportunity to develop and implement community-led "'neighborhood-level, transformative climate community plans' that reduce greenhouse gas emissions while providing local economic, environmental, and health benefits to disadvantaged communities."[509] Multiple South LA community-based organizations working on issues of transportation, environmental, and economic justice helped shape the program's guidelines. As a result of robust community engagement in the development of the program, TCC is a promising model for equitable and inclusive green development without displacement.[510],[511] The final TCC guidelines require investment projects not only to develop pollution-reducing strategies, but also complementary economic, workforce development, and anti-displacement strategies. Specifically, the TCC guidelines state that applicants must include a Displacement Avoidance Plan that includes some of the following elements: production of new affordable housing; preservation of existing affordable housing; tenant protections; neighborhood stabilization and wealth building strategies; protections for small businesses; micro-lending opportunities; worker cooperative development; and contracting and hiring targets.[512]

While TCC and other similar "green zones" policies indicate a progression toward more equitable land use, they also reveal an increasingly complex environmental justice agenda that integrates issues of economic development, displacement, and health. As the realm of environmental justice continues to expand, additional work is needed to build the community power necessary to hold decision-makers accountable across issue. Successful implementation of a South LA environmental justice agenda requires an intersectional systems change approach that shifts long-standing power structures that exclude and exploit low-income communities of color

SOUTH LA IS THE FUTURE

South LA has been shaped by a century-long history of policy decisions that privilege corporations, developers, and White residents at the expense of communities of color, and Black and immigrant residents in particular. Abetted by elected officials and law enforcement, at multiple points in this history, public policies have led to the neglect, criminalization, exclusion, or displacement of low-income communities of color, creating the structural foundation upon which racial and economic injustice continue to operate to this day. However out of necessity, South LA has become a testing ground for innovative solutions. And while there is still a long way to go, South LA provides lessons for organizers, advocates, and funders working to advance long-term systems change.

Given its history, the story of South LA also demonstrates how the underlying drivers of disparity intersect to create a complex web of inequity that cannot be untangled by addressing any one issue alone. The drivers laid out in this report are intricately entwined in the daily lives of South LA residents. As conversations with residents demonstrate repeatedly, a young person of color does not experience any one driver separately. Neither does an immigrant, a transgender person, a single parent, or a formerly incarcerated individual trying to reintegrate themselves into the community. The reality of living in South LA means experiencing different factors from these four drivers throughout the course of a single day.

These sustained conditions have created a pressure cooker of social, economic, health, and environmental inequality with few release valves. While flash points like the Watts Rebellion in 1965 and the LA Uprising in 1992 make headlines, residents seeking outlets for their grief and frustration have long organized other forms of protest and resistance, and have accumulated the collective wisdom that comes with this experience. In the decades following the Uprising, South LA (and Los Angeles at large) became fertile ground for the development of organizations and alliances grounded in community-led visions and values. With the goal to "build an ecosystem not an empire," South LA residents, activists, and community organizations were at the forefront of campaigns using innovative solutions, including community benefit agreements, local hiring policies, and decriminalization measures.[519] At the same time, these organizations and coalitions pioneered movement-building strategies and tools, such as the power analysis, that were indicative of a growing sophistication and understanding of power structures. South LA has been a local laboratory where these approaches and solutions, once considered fringe ideas, were tested and refined before they were replicated statewide and even nationwide.

For instance, South LA social justice organizations have led the narrative shift on school climate campaigns, originating the concept of the "'school-to-prison pipeline" years before academic and mainstream media claimed the idea. While others were talking about student expulsion rates, South LA organizations were discussing student push out. Some of these organizations began advocating for restorative justice approaches to school discipline as far back as the 1990s.[520] These local campaigns have led to state legislation to improve school climate as well as school district policies to allocate school funding more equitably.

Meanwhile, South LA organizations have been experimenting with building and exercising electoral and political power. Beginning in 2001 with the first and unsuccessful run of Antonio Villaraigosa for mayor, South LA leaders began building towards an inside-outside strategy, with the idea that community-based organizations could build power inside the halls of government while also organizing and mobilizing community on the outside to continue pushing for accountability and transformation. The election of now Congresswoman Karen Bass to the state assembly signaled an opening for a South LA grassroots political leadership pathway that has been followed by others into city council and public agencies and commissions.

Notably, at the same time, testing, expansion, and success of integrated voter engagement models grew out of South LA into the statewide coalition California Calls, which is credited with building a progressive voter base among underrepresented voters, particularly from low-income communities of color. These examples from discourse, policy, and elections demonstrate what it takes to advance long-term change at a structural level. In developing, exercising, and learning from systemic change approaches, South LA's leadership is codifying its vision and values, shifting narratives, and building and contesting power at multiple levels. These contributions led activists to proclaim at the 25th anniversary of the LA Uprising: South LA is the future!

At the same time, this report also demonstrates that we still have a long road ahead to build power at the scope and scale needed to address the root causes of inequality. Right now, both individuals and corporations with vested interests in the status quo are doubling down in their fight to maintain power. In this moment, it is critical to name what low-income communities of color like South LA are truly up against. For this reason, this report serves to reground readers in the shared conditions facing low-income communities of color and the structures of oppression in which they are rooted. We hope that this analysis informs intersectional approaches to systems change and is a call to action for current and future leaders and their allies in philanthropy and government. Ultimately, the future of South LA lies in building broader, deeper, and bolder configurations of power in multiple arenas, and in strengthening a South Central-rooted movement for social change.

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Hamilton wrote, "The explanation given—and accepted—is that conditions of severe poverty routinely plague the 'underclass,' a group separate from the general population whose problems are largely a consequence of their own cultural past and habits. Even the McCone Commission identified 'marginal people, the unemployed, ill-educated, delinquent, uprooted sector,' whom they dismissed as 'small and unrepresentative.' 'Underclass,' of course, is simply the latest rationalization for the racism and neglect of the larger society. It conditions both residents of South Central and the public at large to accept government passivity, corporate hostility, and citizen apathy to conditions of homelessness and unemployment. Furthermore, it prepares the population to accept repressive legislation—everything from L.A.'s police sweeps to the mayor and police chief's order to sweep the homeless away from downtown business fronts."

[78] "de la Cruz-Viesca, M., Ong, P. M., Comandon, A., Darity Jr., W. A., & Hamilton, D. (2018). Fifty years after the Kerner Commission report: place, housing, and racial wealth inequality in Los Angeles. RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences, 4 (6),160-184. Retrieved from *https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/rsf.2018.4.6.08#metadata_info_tab_contents*

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Franklin wrote, "Today, many Americans still see working-poor Blacks through [LAPD] Chief [William] Parker's dystopian lens—dangerous, irredeemable, and prone to violence—notwithstanding quality-of-life improvements and demographic shifts in many cities. This view is shrouded in an anti-interventionist attitude that has no appetite for energetic federal solutions to mitigating urban poverty. My research drawing from the National Opinion Research Center's 2000–2012 General Social Science Surveys found that [W]hites, compared to Blacks and Latinos, are more critical of federal assistance to cities. The more Americans believed in the trope of Black pathology, the more opposed they were to the kinds of federal action [Bayard] Rustin and [Dr. Martin Luther] King championed. Not surprisingly, [W]hite America's skepticism toward federal aid to cities also increased after the urban rebellions of the 1960s. Yet the influence of the Reagan presidency made anti-interventionism—he called it "devolution"; others spoke of "decentralization"—a bipartisan governing philosophy, which has lingered long after he left office. Joshua Sapotichne and Samuel Workman's study of 6,500 congressional hearings between 1946 and 2004 assessed the lasting impact of decentralization on American political culture. They found that "Reagan-era urbanism," which tempered domestic policymaking after the 1970s, discouraged Congress from using the federal government's energies to reconstruct urban communities.»

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The White flight following the 1965 and 1992 unrest is consistent with the economists' theories of neighborhood "tipping," which posit that "as the neighborhood proportion of non-White racial and ethnic groups increase past a certain threshold, a rapid out-migration of other (White) groups will ensue. That "threshold" depends on various attributes of the neighborhood but tends to be lower in areas with "high levels of discrimination, large homicide rates, and a history of racial riots."

See also Zuk, M., Bierbaum, A. H., Chapple, K., Gorska, K., Loukaitou-Sideris, A., Ong, P., & Thomas, T. (2015). Gentrification, displacement and the role of public investment: a literature review. Working Paper 2015-05. Retrieved from the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco website: *https://www.frbsf.org/community-development/publications/working-papers/2015/august/gentrification-displacement-role-of-public-investment*

[83] Frieden, B. J., & Sagalyn, L. B. (1989). Downtown, Inc.: How America rebuilds cities. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

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South LA became the epicenter of the crack epidemic for a curious confluence of reasons. First, high unemployment and residential segregation fostered an environment where the epidemic could thrive. Second, the crack epidemic was enabled by CIA support for its suppliers, the Nicaraguan Contras, who had a logistical pipeline into South LA. See Hannaford, A. (2015, March 21). The CIA, the drug dealers, and the tragedy of Gary Webb. The Telegraph (U.K). Retrieved from *https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/11485819/kill-messenger-gary-webb-true-story.html* ; and Grim, R., Sledge, M., & Ferner, M. (2017, December 6). Key figures in CIA-crack cocaine scandal begin to come forward. Huffington Post. Retrieved from *https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/10/gary-webb-dark-alliance_n_5961748.html*

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[91] Jennings, A. (2016, March 18). How the killing of Latasha Harlins

changed South L.A., long before Black Lives Matter. Los Angeles Times. Retrieved from *http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-0318-latasha-harlins-20160318-story.html*

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See also: Sims, J. R. (2016). More than gentrification: geographies of capitalist displacement in Los Angeles 1994-1999. Urban Geography, 37(1), 26-56.

Sims wrote, "The significant loss of wealth and the transfer of property from Black and Latino homeowners in South LA to new owners, many of them investors, during the 1990s lends itself to a notion of displacement that combines historical racialization processes with structural forces rooted in finance and capital."

[99] For instance, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in December 2017 used eminent domain to seize a property in South LA that has sat unused for about two decades while under the ownership of a development company. See: Barragan, B. (2017, December 6). LA county votes 5-0 to use eminent domain to take South LA property from developer. Curbed Los Angeles. Retrieved from *https://la.curbed.com/2017/12/6/16742386/la-county-eminent-domain-south-la-vermont-manchester*

[100] Hamilton, C. (1987). Apartheid in an American city: the case of the Black community in Los Angeles. Retrieved from The Labor/Community Strategy Center (Original work published in The L.A. Weekly).

Even in the late 1980s, Hamilton predicted that the means of disinvestment to push out existing residents in these areas would be the modus operandus for the other gentrifying areas in South LA for years to come. She wrote, "The projection of South Central residents now is that the area will experience little new housing construction and service maintenance until there is a demographic transformation. This has been the case in gentrified area like West Adams that were allowed to deteriorate until costs are lowered and new residents moved in; afterward, city services, including police protection, were resumed."

[101] Sims, J. R. (2016). More than gentrification: geographies of capitalist displacement in Los Angeles 1994-1999. Urban Geography, 37(1), 26-56. doi: 10.1080/02723638.2015.1046698

Sims identified the following forms of subprime and predatory lending: exotic mortgages, zero-down-payment mortgages, loan flipping, and outright fraud and abuse, such as "requiring borrowers to waive their right to legal redress, intentional discrimination against protected groups, and abuse that originates from services once the loans have been scrutinized."

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For the following: "[T]he average value of assets for Black and Latino households in the country increased dramatically from 1989 to 1998. However, while the average value of assets increased, Black households actually saw their average housing equity decline 18% from $33,700 to $27,700 during the same period. The same source shows that the median Black household debt increased dramatically during the 1990s from $1,400 in 1989 to $7,400 in 2001, an increase of 429%."

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The study described the widening wealth gap between Whites and people of color as a result of the housing crisis: "In 2010, three years after the housing crash, the average White family now has 6.4 times more wealth than the average non-Hispanic Black family and 5.8 times more wealth than the average Hispanic family. Between 2004 and 2010, the housing bubble peaked and burst. White families lost only 1 percent of their wealth, while Black families lost 23 percent of their wealth and Hispanics lost 25 percent of their wealth."

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The article cited Paul Butler, a former federal prosecutor in Washington, D.C. and author of Chokehold: Policing black men (The New Press, 2017), about how misdemeanor arrests in these gentrifying communities "are more reflective of police presence than the total number of infractions committed in an area." He said, "It's not a question of how many people are committing the crime—it's a question of where the police are directing their law-enforcement resources. Because wherever they direct the resources, they can find the crime."

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The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defined cost-burdened families to be those who spend more than 30% of their monthly household incomes or rent or mortgages, thereby leaving few resources for other basic needs. The Blackstone Group is a Wall Street equity firm that has been called "America's landlord" because of its vast real estate holdings and its lion share of the single-family rental market. Its subsidiary, Invitation Homes, was the first to securitize single-family rental homes in 2013. The Blackstone Group owns more than 14,000 rental properties in California, a significant portion of which are in low-income communities of color where the housing crisis had hit the hardest. Other equity firms include: American Homes 4 Rent, Colony Financial, Silver Bay, Starwood Waypoint, American Residential Properties, Sylvan Road Capital, and Hyperion Homes. The merger between Invitation Homes and Starwood Waypoint in November 2017 created a conglomerate that controls more than 82,000 single-family rental properties across the U.S.

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c. Receiving public assistance;
d. Lacking GED or High School Diploma;
e. Having a criminal record;
f. Suffering from chronic unemployment;
g. Emancipated from foster care;
h. Being a veteran of the Iraq, Afghan war, or
i. Being an apprentice with less than 15% of the hours required to graduate to journey level

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