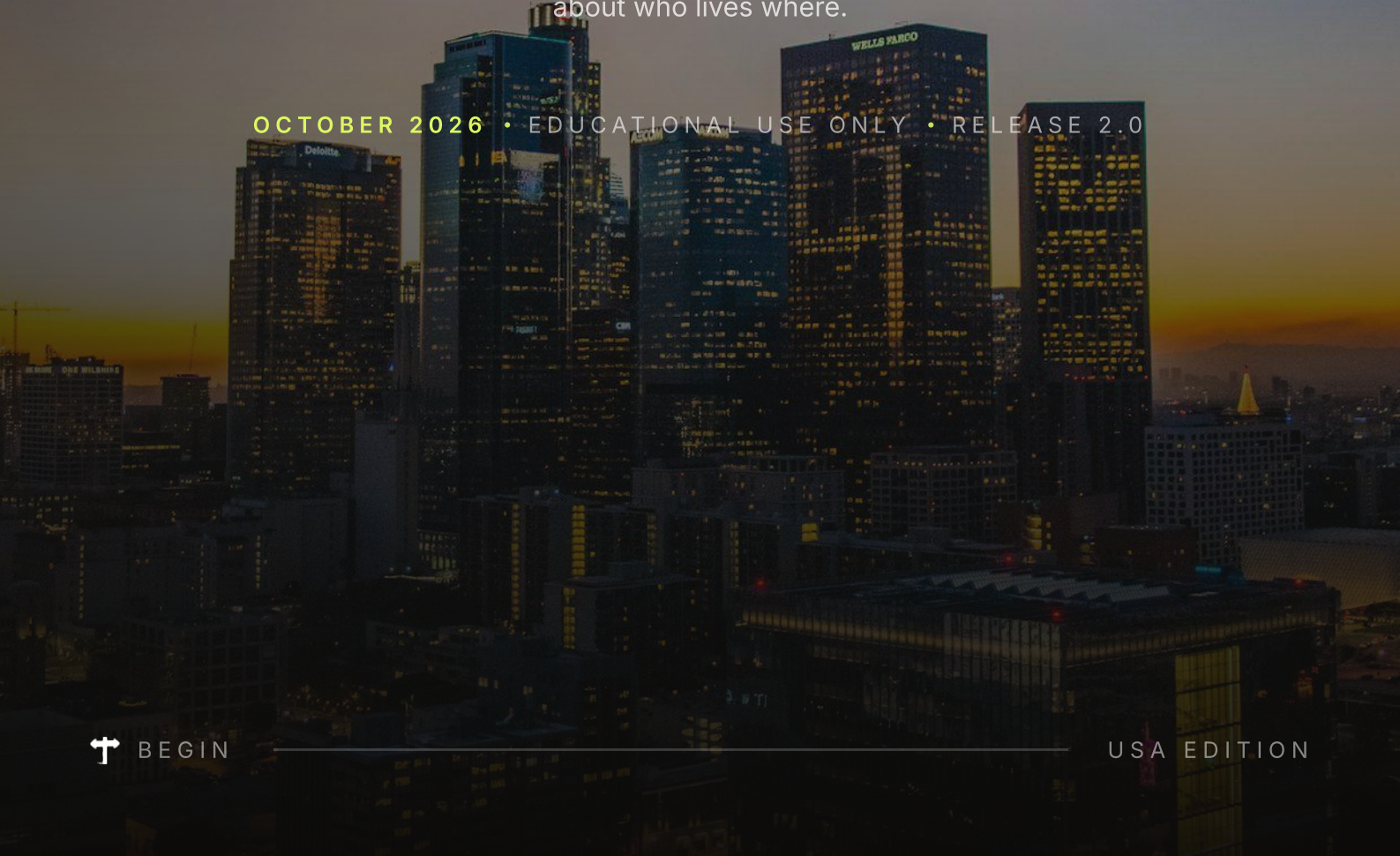
Los Angeles.
The Neighborhood Bible

A guide to living in the city — in twenty-three chapters. 114 neighborhoods · 3,857,897 people. Every figure from a free, public, primary source. No scores, no rankings, no opinions about who lives where.



OCTOBER 2026 • EDUCATIONAL USE ONLY • RELEASE 2.0

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Read it in any order. Every chapter stands alone, every figure is sourced, and where something could not be measured the page says so and says why.

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Los Angeles in twenty numbers

You can read this book in any order. This page is the shortest possible version of all of it.

MEASURE	FIGURE
People in the City of Los Angeles	**3,857,897**
Homes	**1,537,677**
Neighborhoods in this book	**114**
Median home value, citywide	**$879,500**
Cheapest neighborhood's median	**$500,441**
Dearest neighborhoods' median	**$2,000,000 +**
Median rent, citywide	**$1,879 a month**
Median household income, citywide	**$80,366**
Homes lived in by their owner	**36%**
Jobs located in the city	**1,979,997**
People living here who have a job	**1,789,892**
Registered businesses	**631,925**



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Los Angeles in twenty numbers

MEASURE	FIGURE
Registered independent artists and performers	**30,625**
Places to eat and drink	**15,879**
Mean commute, citywide	**31 minutes**
Households with no car	**12% — 167,394 of them**
Metro bus and rail stops inside the city	**7,142**
Homes in a mapped wildfire zone	**266,150**
Homes in a liquefaction zone	**479,770**
Net new homes permitted since 2023	**43,290, of which 30,146 are ADUs**

How to use this book

Read them in any order; each one stands alone. But they are arranged deliberately, in four movements:

- **Orientation** — this page, then Where to start looking, which applies eleven mechanical filters to all 114 neighborhoods so you have somewhere to begin, then Seven Los Angeleses.
- **The places** — Twenty-four neighborhoods, up close. The longest chapter in the book and the one most people will read first.
- **The subjects** — getting around, what it costs, what you will live in, work, eating, culture, everyday services, the oldest businesses, crime, air and ground, noise, fire and flood and quake, schools, and what is being built. One question each.
- **Deciding** — Twelve things to settle before you sign, then Write your dealbreakers down.
- **Reference** — the full index of all 114 neighborhoods, a page on where every number came from and how to check it yourself, and a glossary.

Three conventions worth knowing before you start. Nothing is ranked; every list in this book states its rule and then sorts alphabetically. Business counts are counts of registrations, not of doors you would recognise — a caterer working from a kitchen counts, a beloved unlicensed stall does not. And where a figure could not be obtained the page says so and says why, rather than quietly substituting a city average.

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Nine things that surprise people



- **Nearly a fifth of the city is in a wildfire zone.** 266,150 homes, across 48 of the 114 neighborhoods. Not the hills "somewhere" — Bel-Air, Beverly Crest and Hollywood Hills are each 100% of their homes.
- **Seven in ten new homes are backyard units.** Of 43,290 net dwelling units permitted since 2023, 30,146 are accessory or junior accessory dwelling units. Los Angeles is densifying through its own back gardens.
- **The flood maps barely mention the coast.** Only 1,549 homes sit in a FEMA special flood hazard area — a tenth of one percent of the city — and they are inland, along the creeks. The shoreline and the port are essentially unmapped.
- **Almost thirty thousand people are registered as artists.** Not as a hobby: 30,625 active business registrations in the City of Los Angeles are independent artists, writers and performers, alongside 15,119 film and video production businesses. The industry is not a district. It is a layer over the whole city.
- **Los Angeles is not a city of detached houses.** Only 36.4% of its 1,537,677 homes are detached single-family. Nearly half the city — 48.1% — lives in a building with five or more homes in it, and 35.4% of all homes are studios or one-bedrooms.
- **Only 4,613 empty homes in the city are for sale.** That is 3.9% of its 117,438 vacancies, in a city of nearly four million people, and it is most of what you need to know about why buying here feels the way it does.
- **Culture is the most unequally distributed thing in this book.** Sherman Oaks has 2,581 registered culture and entertainment businesses and Hollywood 2,244. Wilmington has 35. That is a ratio of seventy-four to one between neighborhoods of comparable size — and it measures where things get registered, not where people make things.
- **Transit does not follow money.** The three best-served neighborhoods in this book are Downtown, Koreatown and Historic South-Central, at 25.4, 23.9 and 21.5 stops per square kilometre. Two of the three are among the cheapest places in it. If you want to live here without a car, your options are mostly not the expensive ones.
- **The cleanest air is not where the money is.** The least polluted region of the city is the North Valley, at the 46th percentile of California; the Westside sits at the 59th. Echo Park, a million-dollar neighborhood, is the 92nd — among the worst air in the book. An earlier edition of this guide said otherwise, because it printed a state score that is half a description of the residents. The air, heat and ground chapter explains the difference, and why it matters.

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On the figures

Citywide figures are the Census Bureau's own. The median value, rent, income, owner share, commute and car figures in the table above are the Census's estimates for the City of Los Angeles as a whole. Every neighborhood figure in the book is rebuilt from census tracts, and that method reproduces the Census's city figures within their margins of error — the median home value comes out at $879,334 against the Census's $879,500.

A WORD ON WHAT THIS BOOK IS

Every number here comes from a free, public, primary source and can be checked. Nothing in it is a review, a rating or a ranking — there are no "best neighborhoods", no safety scores and no opinions about who lives where. Where a figure could not be obtained, the page says so and says why.

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PLATE 01



ORIENTATION · WHERE TO START LOOKING

Eleven mechanical filters, one way in.

Each filter states its rule, applies it to all 114 neighborhoods, and lists what comes out alphabetically.

🔍 Where to start looking

Fifteen chapters is a lot to hold at once. These are mechanical filters — each one states its rule, applies it to all 114 neighborhoods, and lists what comes out alphabetically. Nothing here is ranked and nothing is recommended. They are a way in, not an answer.

🪧 If you do not want a car

Rule: at least 20% of households already have no vehicle, and at least 100 places to eat within the neighborhood.

NEIGHBORHOOD	REGION	NO CAR	PLACES TO EAT	TYPICAL RENT
Downtown	Central	33%	881	$2,315
East Hollywood	Central	20%	227	$1,629
Hollywood	Central	22%	493	$1,900
Koreatown	Central	24%	599	$1,683
Pico-Union	Central	26%	198	$1,235
University Park	South Los Angeles	36%	120	$1,546
Westlake	Central	32%	282	$1,469



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Owner-occupied, typical value $900,000 or less

Rule: at least 60% owner-occupied, typical value at or below $900,000, at least 15,000 residents.

NEIGHBORHOOD	REGION	OWNER-OCC.	TYPICAL VALUE	POLLUTION
Arleta	North Valley	75%	$640,732	44th
Chatsworth	North Valley	68%	$894,195	44th
Granada Hills	North Valley	68%	$871,077	43th
Lake Balboa	South Valley	65%	$776,104	52th
Mission Hills	North Valley	73%	$653,567	64th
Montecito Heights	East Los Angeles	61%	$741,776	50th
Sunland	North Valley	61%	$716,629	20th
Sylmar	North Valley	66%	$630,841	46th

No home in any mapped hazard zone

Rule: not one home inside a mapped wildfire, fault, liquefaction, landslide, flood or dam inundation zone, and at least 10,000 residents. This is not a safety list. Shaking is not zoned, and a hazard nobody has mapped here is not a hazard that cannot happen here.

NEIGHBORHOOD	REGION	TYPICAL VALUE	OWNER-OCC.	POLLUTION
Harvard Heights	South Los Angeles	$967,708	16%	62th
University Park	South Los Angeles	$853,376	7%	73th
Westlake	Central	$809,964	6%	84th

Lowest pollution burden

Rule: pollution burden at or below the 25th percentile of California, at least 10,000 residents. A percentile is a rank against this state, not a dose — read the chapter on air, heat and ground before using this list.

NEIGHBORHOOD	REGION	POLLUTION	TYPICAL VALUE	PLACES TO EAT
Beverly Crest	West Los Angeles	9th	$2,000,000+	11

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Lowest pollution burden, continued

NEIGHBORHOOD	REGION	POLLUTION	TYPICAL VALUE	PLACES TO EAT
Sunland	North Valley	20th	$716,629	38
Tujunga	North Valley	18th	$806,992	59

Densest for eating out

Rule: at least 25 registered places to eat or drink per square kilometre. A count of registrations, not a verdict on any of them.

NEIGHBORHOOD	REGION	PLACES TO EAT	NO CAR	TYPICAL RENT
Beverly Grove	Central	170	8%	$2,430
Century City	West Los Angeles	61	12%	$3,500
Chinatown	Central	93	23%	$1,738
Downtown	Central	881	33%	$2,315
East Hollywood	Central	227	20%	$1,629
Fairfax	Central	133	10%	$2,670
Harvard Heights	South Los Angeles	93	21%	$1,460
Hollywood	Central	493	22%	$1,900
Koreatown	Central	599	24%	$1,683
Larchmont	Central	60	11%	$1,987
Palms	West Los Angeles	132	8%	$2,254
Pico-Robertson	Central	91	8%	$2,466
Pico-Union	Central	198	26%	$1,235
Sawtelle	West Los Angeles	228	9%	$2,395
University Park	South Los Angeles	120	36%	$1,546
West Los Angeles	West Los Angeles	70	7%	$2,939
Westlake	Central	282	32%	$1,469

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Room for a family, at or below the median neighborhood

Rule: at least half the homes have three or more bedrooms, typical value at or below the median neighborhood's typical value of $907,660 (the median of the 114 neighborhood medians, not the citywide median), at least 15,000 residents.

NEIGHBORHOOD	REGION	3+ BEDS	TYPICAL VALUE	INCOME	SCHOOLS
Arleta	North Valley	80%	$640,732	$98,315	38%
Chatsworth	North Valley	70%	$894,195	$124,285	44%
Granada Hills	North Valley	75%	$871,077	$111,463	49%
Lake Balboa	South Valley	64%	$776,104	$107,526	42%
Mission Hills	North Valley	67%	$653,567	$96,199	49%
North Hills	North Valley	54%	$728,123	$78,880	36%
Northridge	North Valley	52%	$897,312	$93,760	54%
Pacoima	North Valley	59%	$589,236	$75,527	28%
Reseda	South Valley	53%	$684,512	$77,259	38%
Sun Valley	North Valley	51%	$690,515	$72,625	31%
Sunland	North Valley	55%	$716,629	$94,182	45%
Sylmar	North Valley	64%	$630,841	$93,846	39%
Winnetka	South Valley	61%	$720,745	$85,377	35%

Where the backyard boom is

Rule: at least 400 accessory dwelling units permitted since 2023. If you are buying a house with a deep lot in one of these, so is your neighbour.

NEIGHBORHOOD	REGION	ADUS	ALL OTHER NET NEW	TYPICAL VALUE
Encino	South Valley	401	412	$1,334,001
Granada Hills	North Valley	845	281	$871,077
Highland Park	East Los Angeles	405	91	$980,887
Lake Balboa	South Valley	429	79	$776,104
Mid-City	South Los Angeles	577	888	$1,194,720

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Where the backyard boom is, continued

NEIGHBORHOOD	REGION	ADUS	ALL OTHER NET NEW	TYPICAL VALUE
North Hills	North Valley	539	225	$728,123
North Hollywood	South Valley	845	1,335	$826,261
Northridge	North Valley	643	639	$897,312
Pacoima	North Valley	543	194	$589,236
Reseda	South Valley	886	621	$684,512
Sherman Oaks	South Valley	570	174	$1,293,824
Sun Valley	North Valley	2,154	247	$690,515
Sylmar	North Valley	552	342	$630,841
Valley Glen	South Valley	652	249	$902,812
Valley Village	South Valley	577	63	$1,100,234
Van Nuys	South Valley	888	1,716	$718,124
West Hills	South Valley	601	221	$929,414
Westchester	West Los Angeles	404	1,713	$1,336,279
Winnetka	South Valley	651	89	$720,745
Woodland Hills	South Valley	787	1,824	$1,089,969

Best-served by transit

Rule: at least 12 stops per square kilometre AND at least 10 scheduled departures per stop in the morning peak. Both halves matter: a stop with no service on it is a map decoration. LA Metro only, so every figure here is a floor.

NEIGHBORHOOD	REGION	STOPS/KM²	AM DEPARTURES	TYPICAL RENT
Adams-Normandie	South Los Angeles	14.0	10.2	$1,469
Arlington Heights	South Los Angeles	15.3	11.9	$1,517
Beverly Grove	Central	13.3	13.1	$2,430
Carthay	Central	12.3	11.2	$2,484
Chesterfield Square	South Los Angeles	16.4	10.3	$1,757
Chinatown	Central	16.8	20.6	$1,738

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Best-served by transit, continued

NEIGHBORHOOD	REGION	STOPS/KM²	AM DEPARTURES	TYPICAL RENT
Cypress Park	East Los Angeles	22.1	13.8	$1,587
Downtown	Central	25.4	30.0	$2,315
East Hollywood	Central	20.5	14.3	$1,629
Exposition Park	South Los Angeles	17.4	15.0	$1,468
Fairfax	Central	13.5	11.7	$2,670
Florence	South Los Angeles	14.1	12.1	$1,480
Green Meadows	South Los Angeles	14.6	11.2	$1,657
Harvard Heights	South Los Angeles	16.9	13.7	$1,460
Harvard Park	South Los Angeles	15.0	12.2	$1,571
Historic South-Central	South Los Angeles	21.5	15.0	$1,399
Hollywood	Central	16.2	12.7	$1,900
Hyde Park	South Los Angeles	12.4	13.0	$1,376
Koreatown	Central	23.9	16.6	$1,683
Leimert Park	South Los Angeles	18.1	13.3	$1,654
Mid-Wilshire	Central	12.7	14.6	$2,479
Pico-Union	Central	23.0	13.5	$1,235
South Park	South Los Angeles	14.6	11.8	$1,521
University Park	South Los Angeles	23.2	14.5	$1,546
Vermont Knolls	South Los Angeles	12.4	10.5	$1,422
Vermont Vista	South Los Angeles	14.5	12.6	$1,443
Vermont-Slauson	South Los Angeles	15.7	11.1	$1,489
West Adams	South Los Angeles	15.1	13.6	$1,707
Westlake	Central	25.9	16.4	$1,469

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Shortest commutes

Rule: mean travel time to work of 28 minutes or less, at least 10,000 residents. A neighborhood average over everyone who lives there, including people who work from home most of the week — so treat it as a comparison between places, not as your journey.

NEIGHBORHOOD	REGION	MEAN COMMUTE	TYPICAL VALUE	JOBS HERE
Beverly Grove	Central	26 min	$1,508,120	37,163
Brentwood	West Los Angeles	24 min	$2,000,000+	19,896
Harbor City	Harbor	27 min	$647,939	7,607
Mar Vista	West Los Angeles	27 min	$1,772,636	5,234
Palms	West Los Angeles	27 min	$1,186,291	12,535
Pico-Robertson	Central	25 min	$1,836,827	6,820
Sawtelle	West Los Angeles	24 min	$1,160,761	42,002
University Park	South Los Angeles	26 min	$853,376	8,766
West Los Angeles	West Los Angeles	24 min	$1,365,396	6,215
Westwood	West Los Angeles	21 min	$1,459,557	87,581

Where people stay put

Rule: at least 94% of residents were in the same home a year earlier, at least 20,000 residents. Low turnover is not the same as contentment — it can mean a settled place, or one nobody can afford to move out of — but it is the closest this book gets to measuring stability.

NEIGHBORHOOD	REGION	SAME HOME	TYPICAL VALUE	OWNER-OCC.
Arleta	North Valley	97%	$640,732	75%
Broadway-Manchester	South Los Angeles	96%	$545,465	32%
Central-Alameda	South Los Angeles	95%	$542,901	31%
Florence	South Los Angeles	96%	$557,613	29%
Pacoima	North Valley	95%	$589,236	58%
Panorama City	North Valley	95%	$580,061	35%
South Park	South Los Angeles	95%	$601,763	24%

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Where people stay put, continued



NEIGHBORHOOD	REGION	SAME HOME	TYPICAL VALUE	OWNER-OCC.
Vermont Knolls	South Los Angeles	95%	$604,082	22%
Vermont Square	South Los Angeles	94%	$656,374	36%
Vermont-Slauson	South Los Angeles	96%	$592,496	34%
Wilmington	Harbor	94%	$601,285	37%

Quietest roads

Rule: no more than 3% of residents in modelled road noise of 60 dB or more, at least 10,000 residents. The second column is the other kind of noise — police noise calls per 1,000 residents — and the two barely agree. Read the noise chapter before using this list.

NEIGHBORHOOD	REGION	ROAD 60 DB+	NOISE CALLS /1,000	TYPICAL VALUE
Beverly Crest	West Los Angeles	0.6%	15.7	$2,000,000+
Hollywood Hills West	Central	1.8%	38.2	$2,000,000+
Northridge	North Valley	2.8%	7.3	$897,312
Reseda	South Valley	1.8%	9.2	$684,512

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ORIENTATION · SEVEN LOS ANGELESES

Not one market, one job market or one climate.

The City of Los Angeles runs seven Area Planning Commissions, and they are genuinely different places.

Seven Los Angeleses

The single most useful thing to understand about this city is that it is not one housing market, one job market or one climate. The City of Los Angeles runs seven Area Planning Commissions, and they are genuinely different places.

Everything in this chapter is the median of the neighborhoods inside each region, so a single number hides real variation — but the differences between the regions are larger than the variation inside them, which is the point.

REGION	NEIGHBORHOODS	PEOPLE	TYPICAL VALUE	OWNER-OCCUPIED	JOBS PER RESIDENT WORKER	POLLUTION BURDEN
Central	19	656,494	$1,498,826	24%	2.09	73rd
Westside	18	417,042	$1,567,451	46%	1.99	59th
South Valley	16	794,925	$916,113	47%	0.93	56th
North Valley	17	668,246	$728,123	68%	0.66	46th
Eastside	14	381,871	$929,578	39%	0.60	81st
Harbor	4	202,200	$676,944	42%	0.79	86th



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Seven Los Angeleses, continued

REGION	NEIGHBORHOODS	PEOPLE	TYPICAL VALUE	OWNER-OCCUPIED	JOBS PER RESIDENT WORKER	POLLUTION BURDEN
South LA	26	738,808	$656,992	32%	0.54	70th

NOTE

Pollution burden is a percentile against every census tract in California. An earlier edition of this table printed CalEnviroScreen's composite instead, which put the Westside at the 26th and South Los Angeles at the 88th and called it the widest division in the book. Most of that gap was not the air: the composite multiplies pollution by the health, education and income of the residents. On pollution alone the Westside is the 59th and South Los Angeles the 70th, and the cleanest region is the North Valley. The chapter on air, heat and ground has the arithmetic.

What each region is built out of

The table above is about price and burden. This one is about the buildings, and it explains more about how each region feels to live in than any price does. These are totals, not medians — every home in the region, summed.

REGION	HOMES	DETACHED HOUSES	BUILDINGS OF 50+
Central	341,750	12.6%	31.6%
South Valley	325,296	41.0%	16.2%
South LA	237,711	39.5%	4.7%
North Valley	210,032	60.3%	10.8%
Westside	209,454	32.2%	18.7%
Eastside	141,839	46.4%	6.1%
Harbor	71,599	41.7%	8.3%

Central Los Angeles is almost the inverse of the North Valley. One is an eighth detached houses and a third towers; the other is three-fifths detached houses. They are twenty miles apart, in the same city, under the same government, and almost nothing about living in one prepares you for the other.

South Los Angeles is the quiet surprise in that table: 39.5% detached houses and only 4.7% in large buildings — a lower share of apartment towers than anywhere except the Eastside. It is a region of houses, at the lowest typical values in the city.

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And where each is adding homes



Since 2023, the whole city has permitted a net 43,290 additional homes, of which 30,146 are accessory dwelling units. Split by region, the picture is not what the skyline suggests.

REGION	NET NEW HOMES	OF WHICH ACCESSORY	EVERYTHING ELSE
Central	13,347	2,686	+10,661
South LA	9,137	4,911	+4,226
South Valley	8,410	8,439	−29
Westside	6,290	3,230	+3,060
North Valley	2,731	7,606	−4,875
Eastside	2,165	2,475	−310
Harbor	1,210	799	+411

Three regions have a negative figure in the last column. In the North Valley, permits other than accessory units have removed a net 4,875 homes since 2023 while 7,606 backyard units went up: granny flats are not supplementing construction there, they are the only thing keeping the housing count rising at all. The South Valley is at dead level and the Eastside slightly below.

Only in Central Los Angeles is conventional construction still doing most of the work — and that one region accounts for 13,347 of the city's 43,290 net new homes on its own.

Central

Downtown and the ring around it. Two jobs for every employed resident and the lowest owner-occupancy in the city at 24% — this is the part of Los Angeles that fills up on weekday mornings with people who sleep elsewhere. It has the densest food in the city, the most bars, and the most new apartment construction. It is also where this book most often refuses to publish a crime rate, because dividing Downtown's incidents by its 61,902 residents describes almost nobody who is actually there.

The Westside

Hollywood out to the ocean. The highest values in the city — and not, as this guide used to say, the cleanest air: its pollution burden is the 59th percentile statewide, close to the city's median of 63. Nearly two jobs per resident worker, concentrated in a handful of enormous employment centres: Century City holds 17.5 jobs for every employed person who lives in it, Westwood 4.3, Westchester 3.9.

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The seven regions, described

South Valley

The valley floor over the hills, and the most populous region in the city. Family housing, middle-of-the-city prices, and the epicentre of the backyard-unit boom: Van Nuys, North Hollywood and Woodland Hills are all in the top six for net new homes.

North Valley

The far valley against the mountains. The highest owner-occupancy in Los Angeles at 68% — in West Hills it is 81%, in Chatsworth and Granada Hills 68% — and the largest base of owner-occupied homes anywhere in the city. Also the longest commutes and, along the northern edge, the wildland.

The Eastside

The hillside and riverside neighborhoods north and east of Downtown. Older housing, steeper ground, and the corridors where the flood maps actually run — Los Angeles' mapped floodplain is its creeks, not its coast.

Harbor

Four neighborhoods strung down a narrow corridor to the port, geographically cut off from the rest of the city. An economy visible in the data as transportation and warehousing, and the highest pollution burden of the seven, at the 86th percentile.

South Los Angeles

The flat grid south of the 10, and the largest region by neighborhood count. The lowest typical values in the city, and a pollution burden at the 70th percentile statewide — high, but below the Harbor, the Eastside and Central Los Angeles, which is not what the older score this guide printed suggested. It has 0.54 jobs per resident worker, which means most people who live here work somewhere else and commute to do it.

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THE PLACES · TWENTY-FOUR NEIGHBORHOODS

Nobody moves to Los Angeles.

They move to a neighborhood in Los Angeles, and then spend a year explaining to people back home which one.

Twenty-four neighborhoods, up close

Nobody moves to Los Angeles. They move to a neighborhood in Los Angeles, and then spends a year explaining to people back home which one. What follows is twenty-four of them in detail, chosen in two groups, by two different rules, both of which are printed here so you can see what each one does and does not catch.

The first twelve are the twelve people name. That is a rule about reputation, and reputation is not evenly distributed. When this guide carried only those twelve, it contained four neighborhoods from the Central area and three from the Westside — and not one from South Los Angeles or the North Valley, which between them are home to 1,407,054 people, more than a third of the city. A chapter of places to live that skipped a third of the city was making a judgment it had not declared.

So the second twelve are chosen mechanically to fix that. The rule: take the regions the first twelve under-cover, give each a share of the twelve in proportion to its population, and fill each share with that region's largest neighborhoods. No judgment, no reputation, no ranking. It produces four from South Los Angeles, four from the South Valley, three from the North Valley and one from the Harbor — and it leaves out Watts, which almost any human editor would have included. That is worth sitting with. A population rule is honest about what it measures and completely blind to what it doesn't.



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How each entry is built

Each entry gets the same treatment: what it is, what a day in it looks like, what it costs, what the data says that the reputation does not, and the oldest business still trading on its streets. That last line is a record of longevity, not a recommendation. The city's business register knows how long a place has held its address and nothing whatever about whether you will like it.

A NOTE ON THE COUNTS

"Places to eat", "culture businesses" and "everyday services" are counts of active business registrations, not of doors you would recognise from the pavement. A caterer working from a kitchen counts; a beloved stall with no licence does not. Densities are per square kilometre of the whole neighborhood, hills and freeway included, so a neighborhood with a canyon in it reads thinner than it walks.

Part one: the twelve people name

1. Downtown

BEST FOR LIVING WITHOUT A CAR

Downtown is the only part of Los Angeles that behaves like a conventional American downtown, and the numbers are emphatic. 33% of households here have no vehicle — the second-highest share in the city — the stops average 30 scheduled departures in the morning peak, more than anywhere else, and there are 25.4 transit stops per square kilometre against a city where most neighborhoods have fewer than eight.

A day here is the most walkable in Los Angeles and the least green. You have 881 places to eat, the largest count of any neighborhood; 34 of the city's 318 licensed bars; and, improbably, 149 of its 433 produce markets — the wholesale Produce District, trading since before dawn. You also have the worst air of the twenty-four: PM2.5 at the 97th percentile of California and diesel particulates at the 98th, which is what living inside a freeway interchange and next to a rail yard does.

It is the most lopsided place in the city. 317,316 jobs against 28,036 employed residents — eleven jobs for every working person who lives here. The largest employer is not finance or film but public administration, 94,110 jobs, 30% of the total: City Hall, the courts, the county.

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1. Downtown, continued



And you are not buying a house. 84% of homes are in buildings of 50 units or more, 53% are studios, and 34% of the housing stock was built in 2010 or later — the newest stock in the city, sitting alongside the 28% built before 1939. Only 9.9% is owner-occupied, the lowest here, and typical value is $756,804, below the city median, which surprises people until they understand they are pricing a flat in a tower.

WORTH KNOWING

Downtown is one of four neighborhoods where this book refuses to publish a crime rate at all. With eleven times more jobs than resident workers, dividing incidents by 61,902 residents describes almost nobody who was actually here when they happened. The counts are 9,140 property, 4,209 violent, 928 enforcement-driven — read them as counts, and read the crime chapter before you compare them to anywhere.

STILL TRADING

New England Tomato Co, a produce wholesaler at 1000 Lawrence Street since 1947 — the oldest business of any kind in this book outside San Pedro. Paul's Kitchen, 1968. Mikes Tailor Shop, 1971.

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2. Hollywood

BEST FOR BEING IN THE MIDDLE OF IT

Hollywood is what outsiders think Los Angeles is, and the data partly agrees. 2,244 culture and entertainment businesses — the largest count in the city — at 245.5 per square kilometre, including 1,111 independent artists and performers and 736 film and video production companies. Information is 32% of its 60,290 jobs. It is one of very few places that is genuinely both a residential neighborhood and an industry district.

A day here is dense and loud. 7,984 people per square kilometre, 16.2 transit stops per square kilometre, 493 places to eat and 23 bars. 21.7% of households have no car and 10.6% commute by transit, both high for Los Angeles.

It is also cheap by the standards of its fame: typical value $997,576, rent $1,900, and overwhelmingly rented at 8.3% owner-occupied. 46% of its homes are one-bedrooms and another 24% are studios — it is a neighborhood built for one or two people at a time, which is also roughly what its 1.79 average household size says.

And then the part nobody mentions. 16,943 Hollywood homes sit in a mapped wildfire zone — 37% of its stock — 5,354 across an active fault trace, and 18,473 inside a dam inundation boundary. The hills behind the sign are hills, with everything that implies.

Local reality. Being central in Los Angeles does not make you close to anything in particular. Hollywood's mean commute is 30.7 minutes, which is no better than the city at large and worse than Sawtelle's 23.7.

STILL TRADING

Micelis Hollywood, an Italian restaurant at 1646 N Las Palmas Avenue since 1951. Almor Liquor on Sunset, 1956. Paragon Quality Dry Cleaning/Laundry, 1974.

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3. Venice



BEST FOR WORKING FROM HOME BY THE SEA

Venice has the single most extreme working pattern in the city: 42.3% of its employed residents work from home, against 2.0% who take transit. There are 2.9 transit stops per square kilometre here — fewer than almost anywhere on this list — and it does not much matter, because a large share of the neighborhood never commutes.

What that buys is a day organised around the neighborhood itself: 953 culture and entertainment businesses at 121.1 per square kilometre, of which 474 are independent artists and performers and 323 are film and video production. 187 places to eat. Only 5 bars and 1 produce market, which tells you something about who this is for.

It is the most expensive place in this chapter and in this book. Typical value reaches $2,000,000, the ceiling at which the census stops reporting, so the true figure is higher and unknowable from public data. Rent is $2,717. Household income is $120,926 — but per-capita income is $104,988, which is the number that actually describes Venice: households of 1.82 people earning near the household figure each.

The oddity is the vacancy rate. 16.8% of homes here are vacant, the second-highest of the twenty-four, and the reason is not a slump: it is the mix of short-let and second-home use that the census files as seasonal or occasional.

⚠ THE HAZARD YOU CANNOT SEE

No wildfire zone reaches Venice, and almost no flood zone. But 18,542 homes — 83% of the stock — sit in a mapped liquefaction zone. This is beach sand with houses on it. Liquefaction is not about whether the ground shakes; it is about what the ground does afterwards.

STILL TRADING

La Cabana Restaurant at 738 Rose Avenue since 1963. Trading Post Liquor, 1973. Small World Books on Ocean Front Walk, 1978.

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 4. Silver Lake

BEST FOR AN OLD HOUSE ON A HILL

Silver Lake has the oldest housing stock of any neighborhood in this chapter: 48% of its homes were built in 1939 or earlier, and the median year built is 1947. Only 3% went up in 2010 or later. If you want a house with a history and a staircase, this is the statistical centre of that wish — 40% of its stock is detached single-family, unusual for somewhere this close in.

The day is quiet and car-dependent in a way its reputation does not suggest. Only 4.4% commute by transit and 8.6% of households have no car, with 7.1 stops per square kilometre. But 33.9% work from home, and the neighborhood supports them: 1,473 culture businesses at 208.7 per square kilometre, 900 independent artists, 392 film and video production companies — and only 137 places to eat and 8 grocery stores. You will drive to a supermarket.

It is expensive and tightly held. Typical value $1,452,365, rent $2,021, 38.1% owner-occupied, and a vacancy rate of 8.4%. Household income is $112,851.

The economy is almost entirely elsewhere. 6,531 jobs against 16,408 employed residents — 0.40 jobs per resident worker. Its largest local industry is accommodation and food services at 24%. People live here and work in other places.

⚠️ **READ THIS BEFORE YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH A VIEW**

12,478 Silver Lake homes — 81% of the stock — are in a mapped wildfire zone, and another 1,022 sit in a mapped landslide zone. The hills that make the neighborhood are the hazard. The fire, flood and quake chapter is about what that does to your insurance, and it is the chapter to read before you make an offer.

STILL TRADING

Astro Family Restaurant at 2300 Fletcher Drive since 1960. The 4100 Bar, 1967. Hi-Tech Automotive, 1986.

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5. Koreatown



BEST FOR DENSITY, AND FOR EATING

Koreatown is the densest neighborhood in Los Angeles: 14,636 people per square kilometre, more than three times the city's typical figure, in an area of 7.0 square kilometres holding 102,669 people. Nothing else in the city is packed like this.

It also has the most intense everyday-services provision anywhere here — 1,625 businesses at 231.6 per square kilometre — plus 599 places to eat at 85.4 per square kilometre, 49 grocery stores, 54 childcare businesses and 22 bars. A day in Koreatown involves less driving than almost anywhere in the city: 19.5% commute by transit, the highest share of the twenty-four, 24.2% of households have no car, and there are 23.9 transit stops per square kilometre.

What that density does not buy is space or ownership. Only 7.3% of homes are owner-occupied — the lowest figure in this chapter — 34% are studios, 38% are one-bedrooms, and 67% of the stock sits in buildings of 20 units or more. Typical value is $851,647 and rent $1,683, the cheapest rent of any neighborhood in this first twelve.

It is also where the city is building. 3,105 net new homes have been permitted here since 2023 — more than any other neighborhood in this chapter — against just 174 accessory dwelling units. This is tower construction, not backyard construction.

⚠ THE ENVIRONMENTAL COST OF BEING CENTRAL

Koreatown's pollution burden sits at the 71.5th percentile of California, with PM2.5 at the 88th and diesel particulates at the 84th. Heavy traffic through a dense grid is the same bargain here as everywhere: you pay for the location in air.

STILL TRADING

H M S Bounty, a restaurant at 3357 Wilshire Blvd since 1962. Monte Carlo on West 3rd, 1977. Western Produce on South Western, 1986.

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6. Highland Park

BEST FOR A HOUSE YOU CAN STILL AFFORD ON THE EASTSIDE

Highland Park is the most-rooted neighborhood in this first twelve: 90.7% of residents were in the same home a year earlier, and the vacancy rate is 4.7%, the tightest here. 40.1% owner-occupied, 48% of the stock detached single-family, 41% two-bedroom homes, and a median year built of 1943, with 46% of homes predating 1939.

Typical value is $980,887 against a household income of $90,205 — the closest thing to a conventional ratio on the Eastside — and rent is $1,789. The median property tax bill is $4,500, an effective rate of 0.459%, one of the lowest in this chapter, which is Proposition 13 describing a neighborhood where people have not moved in a long time.

A day here is quiet and local. 131 places to eat, 20 grocery stores, 5 bars, and 866 culture businesses at 98.7 per square kilometre — of which 543 are independent artists, which is what a neighborhood looks like when artists have been priced out of somewhere else. 22.6% work from home; only 6.7% take transit, with 7.6 stops per square kilometre. The mean commute is 32.5 minutes.

The local economy barely exists on paper: 7,044 jobs against 23,535 employed residents, 0.30 jobs per resident worker — the lowest ratio in this first twelve. This is a place people sleep and leave.

⚠ **THE HIGHEST FIRE EXPOSURE IN THIS CHAPTER**

17,893 Highland Park homes — 94% of every home in the neighborhood — sit in a mapped wildfire zone. A further 4,147 are across an active fault trace and 4,513 in liquefaction. Ninety-four per cent is not a typo and not an artefact: the neighborhood is hills, and the maps know it.

STILL TRADING

Galco Old World Grocery at 5702 York Blvd since 1956. Folliero Imported Italian Food on North Figueroa, 1968. Boulevard Hair Styling, 1984.

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7. Los Feliz



BEST FOR CULTURE WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE

Los Feliz has the highest concentration of culture and entertainment businesses of any neighborhood in Los Angeles: 1,726 of them at 254.0 per square kilometre, of which 1,084 are independent artists and performers and 453 are film and video production. On that one measure it beats Hollywood.

But the ordinary-life numbers are thin, and the contrast is the point. 108 places to eat, 6 grocery stores, 5 childcare businesses, 1 produce market — against Koreatown's 49 grocers and 54 childcare businesses. The culture is dense and the groceries are not. 37.0% work from home, the second-highest here, and only 6.4% take transit.

It is expensive: typical value $1,712,445, the second-highest in this chapter, rent $2,073, and only 25.5% owner-occupied. The housing stock is old — 33% pre-1939, median year built 1955 — and mixed: 26% detached houses, 28% in buildings of five to nineteen units. The median property tax bill is $8,738 at an effective rate of 0.510%. Household income is $106,527 with per-capita income of $79,364 and an average household of 1.94 — small, well-paid households, much like Venice and Silver Lake.

⚠ **HILLS AGAIN**

14,347 homes — 77% of the stock — in a mapped wildfire zone; 3,610 across a fault; 7,762 in liquefaction, which is 42% of every home here. The Hollywood Hills do not stop at Hollywood.

STILL TRADING

The Dresden Room at 1760 N Vermont Avenue since 1954. Tiki Ti on Sunset, 1961 — the oldest bar on the Eastside in this book. Maro Coiffure, 1976.

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8. Echo Park

BEST FOR AN OLD HOUSE NEAR THE MIDDLE

Echo Park has the oldest stock in the chapter after Silver Lake — 49% of homes built in 1939 or earlier — and the smallest footprint, 6.2 square kilometres holding 33,619 people. Median year built 1948. Typical value $1,150,594, rent $1,878, 26.0% owner-occupied, and a tight 6.5% vacancy rate.

Oddly for a neighborhood this small, it has 6 museums and galleries — more than Hollywood's four and Downtown's eight relative to its size — along with 991 culture businesses at 159.9 per square kilometre, 598 independent artists and 249 film production companies. There are 110 places to eat, 13 grocery stores and 4 bars.

Its biggest local employer is not film or food but educational services, 29% of 12,396 jobs — a reminder that in most of Los Angeles the real employers are schools and hospitals, whatever the neighborhood is known for. 0.74 jobs per resident worker. 9.2% commute by transit and 22.4% work from home, with 11.9 stops per square kilometre, better than most of the Eastside.

⚠ AIR, NOT FIRE, IS THE SURPRISE HERE

Echo Park's pollution burden is the 92.5th percentile of California — second only to Downtown among the twenty-four — with PM2.5 at the 96th and traffic density at the 81st. This is a million-dollar neighborhood with some of the worst air in this book, which the older screening score this guide used to print hid almost completely. And 10,888 homes, 71% of the stock, are in a mapped wildfire zone besides.

STILL TRADING

Taix French Restaurant at 1911 W Sunset Blvd since 1962. Maytag Laundry, 1982. Romeo's Tow, 1986.

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9. Sawtelle



BEST FOR A SHORT COMMUTE

Sawtelle has the shortest mean commute of any neighborhood in this chapter: 23.7 minutes, against a city where 30 to 33 is normal. That is the single most useful fact about it. 42,002 jobs against 22,336 employed residents — 1.88 jobs per resident worker — and the jobs are the kind that pay: professional, scientific and technical services at 18%, Information next, and 27,151 of its jobs in the highest earnings band.

A day here is mid-rise and walkable in patches: 228 places to eat at 32.8 per square kilometre, 1,116 culture businesses, 173 doctors' practices — the highest count in this chapter, which is the hospital district showing up — 18 grocery stores and 5 bars. Transit is poor: 4.5 stops per square kilometre, 5.3% commuting by transit, 8.9% of households without a car, and 28.8% working from home.

The housing is distinctive: 53% of all homes are in buildings of five to nineteen units — more than any other neighborhood here — and 42% of the stock was built between 1960 and 1979. Only 6% predates 1939. Typical value $1,160,761, rent $2,395, 22.0% owner-occupied. This is a neighborhood of mid-century apartment buildings, not of houses.

⚠ BELOW A DAM, ACROSS A FAULT

No wildfire zone reaches Sawtelle, but 13,492 homes — 62% of the stock — are inside a dam inundation boundary, 5,278 sit across an active fault trace, and 6,797 are in liquefaction. Dam inundation is the hazard readers have never heard of and the one that most often turns up in Westside paperwork.

STILL TRADING

Aki Restaurant at 11513 Santa Monica Blvd since 1967. Mikki Beauty Salon, 1978. Teddys Cafe on West Pico, 1988.

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10. San Pedro

BEST FOR A HOUSE, A YARD AND THE SEA

San Pedro is the most conventional-feeling neighborhood in this chapter and the one furthest from everything else: 27.9 square kilometres, 3,083 people per square kilometre, 43.8% owner-occupied, 42% detached single-family homes, 40% two-bedrooms and 27% three-bedrooms, and a 5.0% vacancy rate. Typical value is $800,409 and rent $1,714 — the cheapest combination in this first twelve for an actual house.

It is also where the city's commercial memory runs deepest. The Dalmatian-American Club of San Pedro, at 1639 S Palos Verdes Street since 1935, is the oldest business of any kind in this entire book, and Walkers Cafe at 700 W Paseo Del Mar, 1952, is the city's second-oldest bar.

The trade-off is isolation. 3.3 transit stops per square kilometre and 4.9 scheduled departures per stop in the morning peak — the thinnest service of the twenty-four — 3.5% commuting by transit, and a mean commute of 32.0 minutes that would be far longer if more people worked downtown. 14,252 jobs against 37,714 employed residents, 0.38 per resident worker. Business density is 194 per square kilometre against Downtown's 1,473. There are 194 places to eat, 21 grocery stores, 11 bars and 31 car-repair shops.

⚠ **THE PORT IS THE ENVIRONMENT — ON ONE SIDE OF TOWN**

San Pedro's pollution burden averages the 50.5th percentile, but its tracts run from the 16th to the 97th: the hillside towards Palos Verdes and the streets above the container terminals are different places to breathe. Hazardous waste sits at the 68th and cleanup sites at the 65th. Get the figure for your tract. Mapped hazard is comparatively light: 1,894 homes in a wildfire zone, 930 in landslide, 737 below a dam.

STILL TRADING

The Dalmatian-American Club of San Pedro, 1935. Marabella Vineyard, 1954. Esther A Beard, a restaurant on North Gaffey, 1966.

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11. Studio City



BEST FOR THE INDUSTRY, IF YOU CAN TAKE THE COMMUTE

Studio City is the most industry-concentrated neighborhood in Los Angeles: Information is 69% of its 59,202 jobs — 40,922 of them. No other neighborhood in the city is that dependent on one sector. It has 2.29 jobs per resident worker and 1,875 culture

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Studio City, continued

businesses, including 1,047 independent artists and 535 film and video production companies.

Now read the earnings. Of those 59,202 jobs, 29,093 — almost half — sit in the lowest earnings band, under $1,250 a month, against 21,112 in the highest. The middle is hollow. That is not a neighborhood of badly paid people; it is what a short-contract industry looks like in an annual dataset. The work chapter works through why, and it matters if your household income depends on this business.

Living here is comfortable and completely car-bound. Household income $125,605, typical value $1,629,736, 43.5% owner-occupied, median year built 1978, and 14% of homes with four or more bedrooms. Only 4.3% of households have no car, 2.1% commute by transit, there are 5.9 stops per square kilometre, and 30.5% work from home. There are 187 places to eat, 12 grocery stores, 2 bars and 9 car-repair shops in the whole neighborhood.

Not as clean as it was made to look. An earlier edition of this guide called Studio City the cleanest air of the twenty-four, on a score that was half about its residents. Its pollution burden is the 63.1st percentile, with traffic density at the 76th and PM2.5 at the 74th. What it unambiguously has is hazard: 12,692 homes, 61% of its stock, in a mapped wildfire zone and 16,571, or 80%, in liquefaction.

STILL TRADING

Art's Deli at 12224 Ventura Blvd since 1957. Janice Rome, 1974. Electro Leon, 1979.

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🔍 12. Westchester



BEST FOR UNDERSTANDING WHY CRIME RATES LIE

Westchester contains Los Angeles International Airport, and every number in its record is shaped by that. 76,366 jobs against 19,737 employed residents — 3.87 jobs per resident worker — of which 38,370, or 50%, are in transportation and warehousing. It is 28.2 square kilometres with only 1,533 people per square kilometre, the emptiest neighborhood in this chapter.

Then look at the property crime rate: 70.0 per 1,000 residents, by far the highest of the twenty-four and nearly double Venice's 36.3. Westchester is not twice as burgled as Venice. It is an airport with 2,999 recorded property incidents divided by the 43,232 people who sleep there, most of whom were nowhere near the terminal. This is the single clearest illustration in the book of why a rate needs the right denominator, and it is why the crime chapter exists.

As a place to live it is suburban and settled: 47.9% owner-occupied, 47% detached houses, 28% three-bedrooms and 15% four-or-more, and a remarkable 49% of the stock built between 1940 and 1959 — a single postwar tract, still standing. Typical value $1,336,279, rent $2,798 (the highest in this chapter), household income $129,324. Transit is almost absent: 0.8% commute by transit, the lowest here, with 4.1 stops per square kilometre. 27.5% work from home. There are 223 places to eat, 8 grocery stores and 1 cinema.

What the record will not tell you. Westchester publishes no mean commute time and no per-capita income in this book, because the ACS estimates for those fields did not clear our coverage threshold across its tracts. The entry says so rather than filling the gap with a city average. The choosing chapter explains what that threshold is and why a blank is more useful than a guess.

> 💡 **STILL TRADING**
>
> Panns Restaurant at 6710 La Tijera Blvd since 1958. Mr Purdy's, 1968. Status the Salon, 1980.

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Snaphomz



PART TWO · THE TWELVE THE FIRST TWELVE LEFT OUT

Chosen by population share, not by reputation.

Four from South Los Angeles, four from the South Valley, three from the North Valley, one from the Harbor.



13. Van Nuys

BEST FOR A CHEAP FLAT WITH A JOB NEARBY

Van Nuys is the largest neighborhood in the City of Los Angeles: 110,010 people across 23.39 square kilometres. It is also one of the few places in the city with roughly as many jobs as working residents — 50,870 jobs against 47,440 resident workers, 1.07 per worker — which in practice means a short commute is actually available here. The mean is still 33.5 minutes, because availability and use are different things.

The local economy is health care first — 12,625 jobs, 25% — then retail, construction and manufacturing. And the Valley's real trade shows up in the business register: 220 car-repair shops, the second-highest count in the city. There are 14,336 registered businesses at 613 per square kilometre, 365 places to eat, 34 grocery stores, 66 childcare businesses and 2 bars.

Housing is rental and modest: only 24.4% owner-occupied, 67% of homes in buildings of five units or more, 30% one-bedrooms and 14% studios, median year built 1978. Typical value $718,124, rent $1,741, household income $64,561, poverty rate 20.1%, and 33.5% of renters paying more than half their income in rent.

The dam number you should not skip. 34,747 Van Nuys homes — 87% of every home in the neighborhood — sit inside a mapped dam inundation boundary, and 14,682, or 37%, are in a liquefaction zone. No wildfire zone touches it and no fault crosses it. Hazard in the Valley floor is water and ground, not fire, and dam inundation is the one almost nobody asks about.

STILL TRADING

Bondy Haney Service, a laundry at 6900 Valjean Avenue since 1958. Gutierrez Produce, 1974. Bargain Books on Friar Street, 1975.

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14. North Hollywood



BEST FOR MAKING THINGS, CHEAPLY, IN THE VALLEY

North Hollywood holds the second-highest count of culture and entertainment businesses in the Valley — 1,618 at 106.4 per square kilometre, including 898 independent artists and performers and 417 film and video production companies — and it does it at a typical value of $826,261 and a rent of $1,942. That combination of industry density and price is why people move here.

It is a bedroom neighborhood by the numbers: 23,126 jobs against 42,161 employed residents, 0.55 per resident worker, and health care is its largest local sector at 24%. 19.7% work from home, 6.4% take transit, with 9.3 stops per square kilometre and 10.6 departures per stop in the morning peak — better than most of the Valley. Mean commute 30.2 minutes.

The housing is apartments: only 20.8% owner-occupied, 63% of homes in buildings of five or more units, 33% one-bedrooms and 37% two-bedrooms, median year built 1978. There are 265 places to eat, 30 grocery stores, 9 bars — the most of any Valley neighborhood here — and 115 car-repair shops.

One indicator the headline hides. North Hollywood's pollution burden is the 68.3rd percentile, which reads as unremarkable. But its PM2.5 exposure is at the 91.8th percentile of California — higher than Koreatown's. A middling headline can sit on top of a severe single indicator, which is the whole argument of the air, heat and ground chapter.

Also: 23,768 homes, 69% of the stock, sit in liquefaction.

STILL TRADING

Little Toni's Restaurant at 4745 Lankershim Blvd since 1951. Circus Liquors, 1956 — the city's joint-oldest liquor store. Lucky Liquors, 1973.

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15. Woodland Hills

BEST FOR A BIG HOUSE AND A HOME OFFICE

Woodland Hills is the richest neighborhood in this chapter by household income — $122,016 — and one of the roomiest: 38.30 square kilometres, 1,897 people per square kilometre, 51% detached single-family homes, 27.5% three-bedrooms and 25.0% four-or-more. Typical value $1,089,969, rent $2,718, 54.2% owner-occupied, median age 44.

It has the second-highest work-from-home share in this chapter at 25.6%, and essentially no transit: 1.3% commute by transit, 4.0 stops per square kilometre, 4.9 departures per stop in the peak. Only 4.8% of households have no car, and with 226 places to eat at 5.9 per square kilometre and 13 grocery stores across an area the size of central Paris, that is not optional.

There is a real local economy: 59,301 jobs, 1.81 per resident worker, led by health care at 20% and then — unusually for Los Angeles — finance and insurance at 9,910 jobs, the Warner Center office cluster. 37,087 of its jobs are in the highest earnings band.

The surprise in the housing data: 31.2% of all homes here are in buildings of 50 units or more. A neighborhood that reads as pure suburb is a third high-rise, concentrated in that same office core. It also has 12 bookshops and stationers, the most in this chapter.

Fire, then ground. 7,330 homes are in a mapped wildfire zone — 3,625 of them in the Very High class — 4,872 are in a mapped landslide zone, and 20,416, or 65%, are in liquefaction. Woodland Hills is where the Valley floor meets the Santa Monica Mountains, and it carries both sets of hazards.

STILL TRADING

Magic Razor Barber Shop at 4880 Topanga Canyon Blvd since 1969. Woodland Hills Wine on Ventura, 1978. Dans Super Subs, 1981.

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16. Sherman Oaks



BEST FOR THE INDUSTRY WITHOUT THE HILLS

Sherman Oaks carries 2,581 culture and entertainment businesses at 108.7 per square kilometre — the second-largest count in the entire city after Hollywood — including 1,468 independent artists and performers, the highest count of any neighborhood here, and 643 film and video production companies. If you want to know where the business actually lives rather than where it is photographed, this is one of the answers.

It is also the most work-from-home neighborhood in this chapter: 30.6%, against 1.8% commuting by transit and 5.4 stops per square kilometre. Household income $109,604, per-capita $79,854, average household 2.10.

Housing is apartments dressed as suburb: 34% detached houses but 60% of the stock in buildings of five units or more, 41% two-bedrooms, median year built 1960, 39.0% owner-occupied. Typical value $1,293,824, rent $2,275, median property tax $8,172. There are 253 places to eat, 22 grocery stores, 3 bars and 25 laundries and dry cleaners.

Note the construction numbers: 174 net new homes permitted since 2023, while 570 accessory dwelling units were permitted. The accessory units are part of that net figure — so every other kind of permit, taken together, removed 396 homes. Sherman Oaks is growing only through its back gardens, a pattern you will see again in the what's-being-built chapter.

Three hazards at once. 11,274 homes in a mapped wildfire zone, 7,964 of them Very High; 30,474 — 86% of the stock — in liquefaction; 16,794, or 47%, inside a dam inundation boundary; and 2,212 in landslide. Sherman Oaks is the most comprehensively hazard-mapped neighborhood in this chapter, and its traffic density sits at the 76.6th percentile besides.

STILL TRADING

The Barrel, a bar at 4547 Van Nuys Blvd since 1956 — the city's third-oldest. Casa Vega at 13301 Ventura Blvd, 1959. Mags, 1963.

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17. Florence

BEST FOR UNDERSTANDING WHAT THE CITY ASKS OF SOUTH LOS ANGELES

Florence holds 52,133 people in 7.24 square kilometres at 4.09 people per household — among the largest household sizes in the city — and 95.8% were in the same home a year earlier, the most rooted figure in this chapter. It is not a transient place. It is a place people stay.

It also carries real pollution. Its burden is the 81.5th percentile of California, with cleanup sites at the 91.8th — the highest of the twenty-four — PM2.5 at the 88.5th and hazardous waste at the 73.5th. And the housing is old: 35.8% of Florence's homes were built in 1939 or earlier, with a median year built of 1941, which is the fact that matters for lead paint. The air, heat and ground chapter is the one to read here, and it should be read before signing anything.

The local economy is thin: 7,802 jobs against 18,174 employed residents, 0.43 per resident worker, and the mean commute is 37.5 minutes, the longest in this chapter. 11.1% commute by transit and 12.9% of households have no car — so a meaningful number of people make that 37-minute journey on a bus.

What the neighborhood has is food shopping, not restaurants: 79 food shops at 10.9 per square kilometre including 48 grocery stores and 6 produce markets, against 157 places to eat, 0 bars and 30 culture businesses in the entire neighborhood. Compare Sherman Oaks' 2,581. There are also 71 car-repair shops.

Housing is comparatively affordable and comparatively owned: typical value $557,613, rent $1,480, 29.5% owner-occupied, 48% detached houses, and a median property tax bill of $3,013.

Why there is no hill here and the ground still matters. No wildfire zone, no fault, no flood zone, no dam. But 12,832 homes — 96% of every home in Florence — sit in a mapped liquefaction zone, the highest share in this chapter. Flat does not mean safe; it means the hazard is underneath.

STILL TRADING

Neelys Family Stores at 5950 S Broadway since 1961. Martys Liquor, 1972. Cecil G/Eleanor Derrick, a grocer on South Main, also 1972.

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18. Vermont Square



BEST FOR AN OLD HOUSE ON A SMALL BUDGET

Vermont Square has the oldest housing stock of any neighborhood in this entire chapter: 52% of its homes were built in 1939 or earlier, with a median year built of 1939 exactly. 46% are detached single-family houses and a further 13% are attached, so this is a neighborhood of houses, not apartments — 30% of them three-bedroom — at a typical value of $656,374 and a rent of $1,450, the cheapest rent of the twenty-four.

36.4% is owner-occupied — higher than Hollywood, Koreatown, Downtown, Los Feliz or Sawtelle — on a household income of $64,555. The median property tax bill is $3,578. 94.5% of residents were in the same home a year earlier, and the vacancy rate is 4.9%.

The pollution record is moderate — a burden at the 50.8th percentile, with PM2.5 at the 86th the one indicator to notice. The older screening score this guide used to print put Vermont Square at the 84th, and the difference was not the air: it was the score's second half, which measures the residents. What is not moderate is the age of the housing. More than half of it predates 1939, so if you buy here the lead-paint question is not theoretical, and a test answers it.

The local economy is the thinnest in this chapter: 5,742 jobs against 20,523 employed residents — 0.28 jobs per resident worker — and 46% of those jobs are health care, the highest single-sector share of the twenty-four. The mean commute is 35.7 minutes, and 16.0% of households have no car while 10.7% commute by transit, with 11.8 stops per square kilometre.

Commercially it is groceries and services, not eating out: 37 grocery stores and 54 food shops against 81 places to eat, 0 bars, 0 cafes and 94 culture businesses. There are 42 childcare businesses, which is more than Studio City, Los Feliz, Venice and Echo Park have between them.

One hazard, almost total. 12,814 homes — 84% of the stock — in a mapped liquefaction zone, and nothing else mapped at all. No fire, no fault, no flood, no dam. This is the single-hazard profile of the flat city, and The fire, flood and quake chapter explains why that is not the same as a low-hazard profile.

STILL TRADING

A W Market at 1582½ W Vernon Avenue since 1972. California Curtain/Drapery Cleaning, 1987. Mendoza Barber Shop on South Vermont, 1990.

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19. Historic South-Central

BEST FOR PROXIMITY, IF YOU CAN FIND THE SPACE

Historic South-Central has the largest average household in this chapter — 4.04 people — in the tightest housing market: a vacancy rate of 3.7%, the lowest of the twenty-four, with only 19.4% owner-occupied. 49,148 people live in 6.6 square kilometres. Typical value is $592,761 and rent $1,399, the lowest of the twenty-four on both counts, and the poverty rate is 29.1% with 33.5% of renters paying more than half their income in rent.

It is one of the best-connected neighborhoods in the city and almost nobody says so. 16.6% commute by transit — third-highest in this chapter, behind only Koreatown and Florence — 19.8% of households have no car, there are 21.5 transit stops per square kilometre and 15.0 scheduled departures per stop in the morning peak. On transit supply it beats Hollywood, Venice, Silver Lake and all four Valley entries.

The job numbers are close to balanced — 16,186 jobs against 16,838 employed residents, 0.96 per resident worker — led by educational services at 20% and health care next. The mean commute is still 33.7 minutes.

Commercially: 39 grocery stores, 9 produce markets, 145 places to eat, 47 car-repair shops, 28 childcare businesses, 2 bars and 67 culture businesses in the whole neighborhood.

The hazard is in the air and the walls, not the ground. Historic South-Central's pollution burden is the 80.7th percentile, with PM2.5 at the 93rd, hazardous waste at the 83rd and cleanup sites at the 82nd, and 45% of its homes were built in 1939 or earlier. Mapped physical hazard is almost nil — 16 homes in liquefaction and nothing else — which is exactly the point: no disclosure form will hand you any of this.

STILL TRADING

El Prinsipio Market at 2630 Maple Avenue since 1977. Irenes Beauty Shop, 1979. Vargas Market, 1982.

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🏠 20. Mid-City



BEST FOR AN OLD HOUSE WITH A SHORT DRIVE TO EVERYTHING

Mid-City is the most centrally placed neighborhood in this second twelve and reads like it: $1,194,720 typical value, $1,878 rent, 32.6% owner-occupied, household income $82,802, and a median year built of 1941 with 36% of homes predating 1939. 25% of the stock is in two-to- four-unit buildings and 30% in buildings of five to nineteen — the duplex-and-courtyard pattern of pre-war Los Angeles.

The day is a short drive rather than a walk. Mean commute 31.4 minutes, 8.0% on transit, 10.1% of households without a car, 11.4 stops per square kilometre, 18.8% working from home. There are 155 places to eat, 22 grocery stores, 5 bars, 66 car-repair shops and 614 culture businesses.

16,930 jobs against 25,106 employed residents, 0.67 per resident worker, health care largest at 28%.

The construction story is the one to notice: 888 net new homes permitted since 2023, of which 577 are accessory dwelling units — one of the highest ADU counts in the city relative to its size. Mid-City is being added to from the back garden.

Below a dam, across a fault, on soft ground. 11,994 homes — 59% of the stock — inside a dam inundation boundary; 9,362, or 46%, in liquefaction; 2,403 across an active fault trace. No wildfire zone. Pollution burden is the 81.3rd percentile, but its tracts run from the 32nd to the 98th, so the street matters more than the neighborhood.

> 💡 **STILL TRADING**
>
> Trina's Beauty & Salon at 4854 W Pico Blvd since 1968. Roberto Patino, 1983. Kinburg Auto Repair on West Pico, 1985.

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21. Sylmar

BEST FOR A HOUSE WITH LAND, IF YOU WILL DRIVE

Sylmar has the highest home-ownership rate of the twenty-four — 65.9% — the most family-shaped housing stock — 39% three-bedroom and 25% four-or-more — and 63% detached single-family houses across 32.2 square kilometres at 2,502 people per square kilometre. 7% of its homes are mobile homes, the highest share here. Typical value is $630,841 against a household income of $93,846: the most favourable price-to-income ratio in this chapter by a wide margin.

80,568 people, average household 3.67, 93.3% in the same home a year earlier, vacancy 4.3%.

The price of that is driving, absolutely and without exception. 1.5% commute by transit, the lowest of the twenty-four. 3.6 stops per square kilometre, 5.2 departures per stop in the peak, 4.9% of households without a car, mean commute 31.5 minutes. Across the whole of Sylmar there are 140 places to eat at 4.3 per square kilometre, 9 grocery stores, 0 bars — and 61 car-repair shops.

The local economy is industrial: 19,738 jobs, 0.52 per resident worker, led by manufacturing at 23% and then construction at 2,894 jobs. This is one of the few neighborhoods in Los Angeles where the largest employer makes physical things.

The ozone number. Sylmar's pollution burden is only the 46.1st percentile, but its ozone exposure is at the 92nd percentile of California — the highest in this chapter. Ozone collects against the mountains at the top of the Valley on hot afternoons, which is a summer-long fact rather than an event. It also carries 6,498 homes in a wildfire zone, 4,949 across a fault trace — the San Fernando fault runs through it — 1,870 in liquefaction and 1,030 below a dam.

STILL TRADING

Sylmar Cleaners at 13195 Gladstone Avenue since 1984. J/J Liquor, 1987. Paloma Skin Care on Foothill, 1995.

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22. Pacoima



BEST FOR STAYING PUT

Pacoima is the most rooted neighborhood in this book: 95.1% of residents were in the same home a year earlier. It also has the largest average household of the twenty-four at 4.34 people, 57.6% owner-occupied, 35% three-bedroom and 24% four-or-more homes, and 62% detached single-family houses. 74,774 people, vacancy 4.5%.

Typical value $589,236 — the second-cheapest of the twenty-four — against household income of $75,527. 43% of its homes were built between 1940 and 1959, a single postwar wave, and only 5% predate 1939.

It is the city's garage. 157 car-repair shops, and the register's other Valley entries are the same story: this is where Los Angeles maintains its cars. There are 177 places to eat, 22 grocery stores, 38 childcare businesses, 15 food trucks and street-food registrations and 1 bar. Culture and entertainment: 85 businesses in the whole neighborhood, against Hollywood's 2,244.

16,436 jobs against 31,108 employed residents, 0.53 per resident worker, health care largest at 16% — the least concentrated top industry in this chapter, meaning no single sector dominates. Mean commute 30.0 minutes, and only 5.8% work from home, the second-lowest here: these are jobs you have to physically attend.

Dam and ozone. 7,048 homes — 39% of the stock — inside a mapped dam inundation boundary, with almost no fire and no liquefaction. Pollution burden is the 61.8th percentile, with ozone at the 88th — the old screening score said the 84th, and most of that gap was about the residents rather than the air. Hansen Dam is the structure in question, and it is the reason this number exists; the fire, flood and quake chapter explains what an inundation boundary is actually for, which is not what most people assume.

STILL TRADING

Stylesville, a barber at 13161 Van Nuys Blvd since 1960. Lenchitas Tortileria, 1978. Lens Liquor on Laurel Canyon, 1982.

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23. Sun Valley

BEST FOR WATCHING THE ADU BOOM HAPPEN

Sun Valley has permitted 2,154 accessory dwelling units since 2023 — the most of any neighborhood in the City of Los Angeles — yet its net gain in homes is only 247. The accessory units are part of that net figure, so every other kind of permit together removed 1,907 homes: demolitions outran new building, and backyard units more than made up the difference. Nowhere else in the city shows the shift this starkly. If you want to see how Los Angeles is actually adding housing right now, it is here, one garage conversion and one backyard cottage at a time.

The neighborhood itself: 73,592 people over 24.2 square kilometres, 48.1% owner-occupied, 57% detached houses, 37% three-bedrooms, average household 3.61, 93.2% in the same home a year earlier. Typical value $690,515, rent $1,743, household income $72,625, and 34.7% of renters paying more than half their income in rent — the second-highest rent burden of the twenty-four.

25,560 jobs, 0.73 per resident worker, led by health care at 21% and then manufacturing at 5,062 jobs and construction at 2,490. And 188 car-repair shops, second in the city only to Van Nuys. Mean commute 28.9 minutes, the second-shortest in this chapter. 4.1% on transit, 6.6 stops per square kilometre.

Pollution that is industrial, not geological. Sun Valley's pollution burden is the 86.2nd percentile, with solid waste at the 78th percentile — the highest solid-waste figure of the twenty-four, and the signature of a neighborhood that has long hosted the region's landfills and recycling yards — plus cleanup sites at the 76th, PM2.5 at the 85th, and ozone at the 82nd. Mapped physical hazard, by contrast, is nearly nil: 286 homes in a wildfire zone and 50 below a dam. The hazard here is industrial, not geological, and no disclosure form covers it.

STILL TRADING

California Apple Products at 12031 Sherman Road since 1977. Vic's Food To Go, 1978. Canyon Liquor on Laurel Canyon, 1979.

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24. Wilmington



BEST FOR UNDERSTANDING THE COST OF THE PORT

Wilmington is where the Port of Los Angeles meets the people who work in it. 13,181 jobs, 0.62 per resident worker, led by transportation and warehousing at 19% and manufacturing at 2,108 jobs. 51,789 people across 23.9 square kilometres at 3.67 people per household, 94.5% in the same home a year earlier, and a vacancy rate of 3.4% — the tightest of the twenty-four.

It is also the least commercially provisioned neighborhood in this chapter by a long way: 2,899 registered businesses at 121 per square kilometre against Downtown's 1,473. 100 places to eat at 4.2 per square kilometre. 17 grocery stores. 1 bar. 0 bookshops. 0 produce markets. 0 cafes. 35 culture and entertainment businesses in the entire neighborhood — Sherman Oaks has 2,581. What it does have is 94 car-repair shops.

Housing is cheap and owned at a surprising rate: typical value $601,285, rent $1,410, 36.9% owner-occupied, 44% detached houses, 27% three-bedrooms, median year built 1951 with 35% of the stock built between 1940 and 1959. The median property tax bill is $3,118. But 35.7% of renters pay more than half their income in rent — the highest rent burden of the twenty-four — on a household income of $61,201.

Only 4.0% work from home, the lowest share in this chapter. These are jobs with a physical location, and the location is the port.

The environmental bill. Wilmington's pollution burden is the 84.9th percentile of California, with diesel particulates at the 83rd, hazardous waste at the 82nd, groundwater threats at the 76th and cleanup sites at the 71st. Mapped physical hazard is almost nothing — 978 homes in liquefaction, 29 in a wildfire zone, 1 in a flood zone. Like Sun Valley and Historic South-Central, Wilmington's risk is industrial, and like theirs it is invisible to the hazard disclosure a seller must give you.

STILL TRADING

Union Mutualista de San Jose at 1023 N Henry Ford Avenue since 1961. Guanajuato Meat Market on North Avalon, 1978. Econo Tune Up, 1986.

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⚖️ What twenty-four entries show that twelve did not

Read the two halves against each other and three things come out that no single entry states.

Culture and entertainment businesses are the most unequally distributed thing in this book. Hollywood has 2,244 and Sherman Oaks 2,581. Wilmington has 35, Pacoima 85, Vermont Square 94 and Historic South-Central 67. Sherman Oaks against Wilmington is seventy-four to one, between neighborhoods whose populations differ by a third. It is not a measure of whether people make things in those places; it is a measure of where things get registered as businesses, which is a different claim, and the culture chapter is about the difference.

Transit supply does not follow price. The three best-served neighborhoods here are Downtown, Koreatown and Historic South-Central — at 25.4, 23.9 and 21.5 stops per square kilometre. Two of the three are among the cheapest places in this chapter. The worst-served are San Pedro, Sylmar and Woodland Hills, at 3.3, 3.6 and 4.0, and one of those is the richest. If you want to live without a car in Los Angeles, your options are mostly not the expensive ones.

The old screening score made cheap neighborhoods look dirtier and dear ones cleaner than the air says. This guide used to print CalEnviroScreen's composite, which multiplies pollution by the health, income and education of the residents. Across all 114 neighborhoods, in the cheapest third that score ran an average of 17 points above the actual pollution burden; in the dearest third it ran 23 points below. Vermont Square fell from the 84th to the 51st once the residents were taken out of the number; Westchester rose from the 33rd to the 74th, Studio City from the 28th to the 63rd.

What the air actually tracks is freeways, rail and industry, and those do not respect price. The two most polluted neighborhoods of the twenty-four are Downtown (94.5th) and Echo Park (92.5th) — and Echo Park is a million-dollar neighborhood. The least polluted is Highland Park (39.7th), then Sylmar (46.1st). A buyer reading the old score would have had all four of those wrong — and a buyer reading it as a statement about a neighborhood's people, which is half of what it was, would have been reading exactly the kind of number this book exists to refuse. The air, heat and ground chapter has the arithmetic.

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YOU WILL NEED A CAR · UNLESS YOU LIVE AT THE CENTRE

Stops are not service.

Downtown averages 30 scheduled departures per stop in the morning peak; Beverly Crest averages 13.

You will need a car — unless you live at the centre

HIGHLIGHTS

- 12% of Los Angeles households have no car — 167,394 of them — and they are concentrated in a contiguous band through the centre of the city.
- Stops are not service. Downtown averages 30 scheduled departures per stop in the morning peak; Beverly Crest averages 13.
- The mean commute is 31 minutes and barely varies: 21 minutes in Westwood, 37.5 in Florence.
- Every transit figure here is a floor. LA Metro is counted; a dozen municipal operators are not.

People will tell you that you cannot live in Los Angeles without a car. About 167,000 households are currently proving otherwise, and they are not scattered — they are stacked into a narrow band through the middle of the city where the buses, the food and the shops all happen to be dense at the same time.

Everywhere else, they are right. You will drive, and you will drive for about half an hour, and so will everyone you meet.



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You can live car-free here, and realistically nowhere else

HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO VEHICLE

NEIGHBORHOOD	SHARE
University Park	36%
Downtown	33%
Westlake	32%
Pico-Union	26%
Koreatown	24%
Citywide	**12%**

These are not scattered. They are a contiguous band through the centre of the city, and they are the places where transit, food and services are all dense at once. If you intend not to own a car, this band is the answer and almost nothing else is.

Count the buses, not the bus stops

LA Metro runs 7,142 stops inside the city and 80,360 scheduled departures on a typical weekday morning peak. That is a real network, and two things about it are worth knowing before you plan a life around it.

Stops are not service. A neighborhood with many stops and a bus every forty minutes has worse transit than one with fewer stops and a bus every five. This book reports scheduled departures per stop for exactly that reason. Downtown averages 30 departures per stop in the morning peak; Beverly Crest, 13.

This count is a floor. LA Metro is the dominant operator but it is not the only one. LADOT's DASH and Commuter Express, Big Blue Bus, Culver CityBus, Foothill Transit and a dozen other municipal operators run inside the City of Los Angeles and are not counted here — there is no single regional feed for Los Angeles the way there is for the Bay Area. The shortfall is largest on the Westside and in the Valley.

A tell worth knowing. Only 9% of Downtown residents commute by transit — in the neighborhood with the most service in the city. Transit share is not a measure of how good the transit is. It measures how many people's journeys it happens to fit.

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Everyone drives about half an hour



The citywide mean commute is 30 minutes, and the spread between neighborhoods is narrower than people expect: from 21 minutes in Century City to 38 minutes in the Sepulveda Basin. Los Angeles does not really have a long-commute region and a short-commute region. It has a city where almost everyone drives half an hour.

What varies far more is when. A 30-minute mean is an average across the whole day, and the chapter this book cannot write for you is the one about your specific door at your specific hour. Drive it, at the hour you would actually drive it, before you decide.

A quarter of Downtown never leaves the building

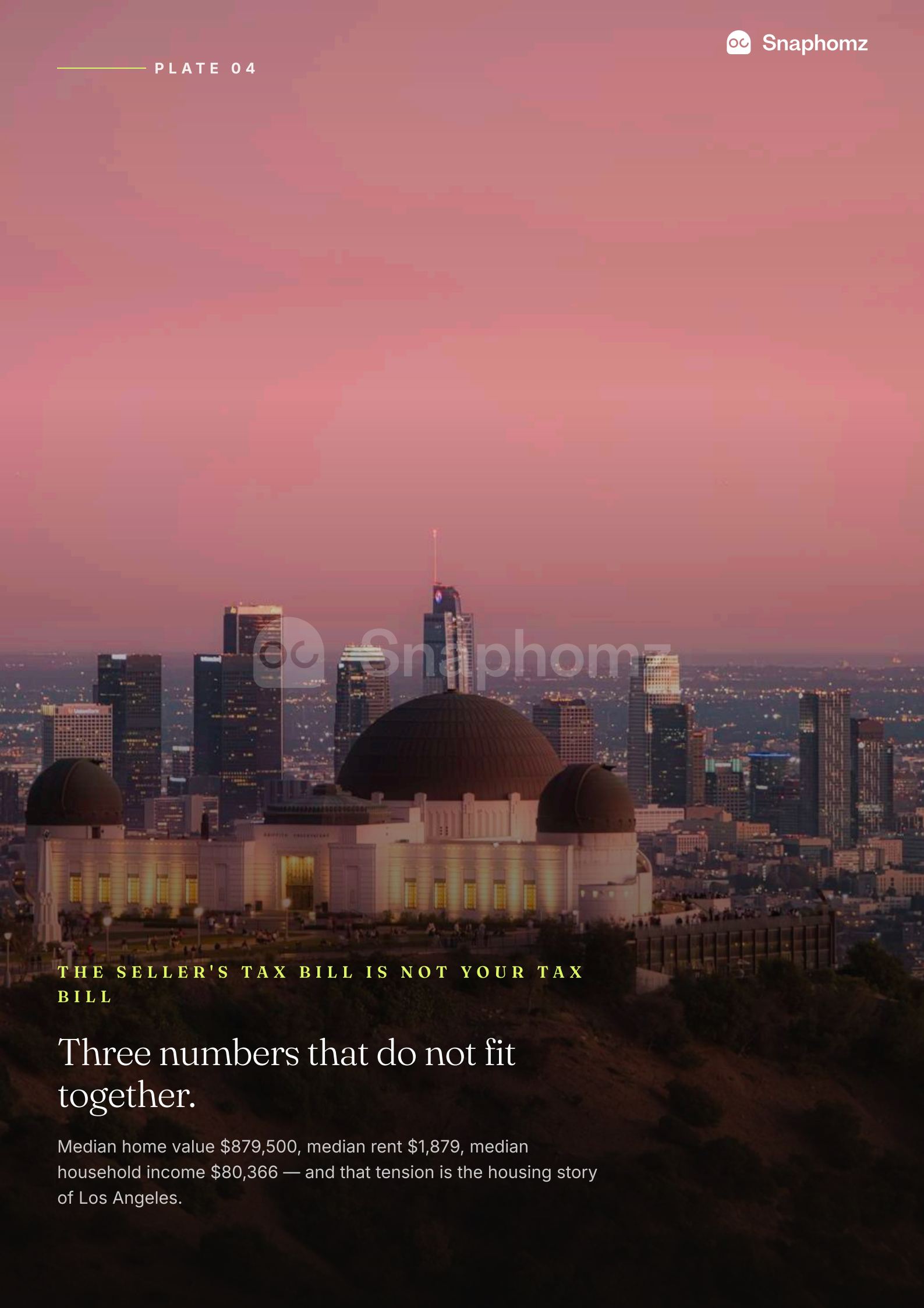
27% of Downtown residents work from home, and the citywide figure is substantial enough to change how you should read every commute number in this book. A mean travel time is calculated only over people who travel. The more of a neighborhood works from home, the fewer people that average describes.

What to check yourself

- [ ] Drive your actual commute at your actual hour. Not at ten in the morning, and not on a map.
- [ ] Check which operators serve the street, not just Metro — the municipal services are missing from every figure in this book.
- [ ] Look at parking at 7pm, when everyone is home. That is the number that decides whether a street works.
- [ ] If you are planning to be car-free, check the walk to the stop, not the distance to it. A freeway or a hill between you and a bus stop is not a short walk.

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THE SELLER'S TAX BILL IS NOT YOUR TAX BILL

Three numbers that do not fit together.

Median home value $879,500, median rent $1,879, median household income $80,366 — and that tension is the housing story of Los Angeles.

The seller's tax bill is not your tax bill

HIGHLIGHTS

- Median home value $879,500, median rent $1,879, median household income $80,366 — the Census's own citywide figures. Those three numbers do not fit together.
- Ten neighborhoods are reported at the $2,000,000 ceiling. That is a floor, not an estimate.
- California reassesses at your purchase price, so the current owner's bill tells you almost nothing.
- Owner-occupancy runs from 5% in Chinatown to 87% in Porter Ranch among neighborhoods of 10,000 people or more, and it predicts how a street feels better than price does.

Median home value across the city: $879,500. Median rent: $1,879 a month. Median household income: $80,366. Those three numbers do not fit together, and that tension is the housing story of Los Angeles.



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⚖️ Ten neighborhoods are reported at the ceiling

TYPICAL HOME VALUE

AREA	TYPICAL HOME VALUE
Pacific Palisades, Bel-Air, Brentwood, Venice and six others	$2,000,000 +
Citywide median	$879,500
The cheapest neighborhood median	$500,441

> ⚠️ **CAUTION**
>
> The + matters. The American Community Survey stops counting at two million dollars, so ten Los Angeles neighborhoods are reported at the cap. Those are floors, not estimates. Anything built on them — a budget, a comparison, a revenue model — understates.

👥 Ask who owns the street before you ask what it costs

Citywide, 36% of occupied homes are lived in by their owner. The range is enormous: 5% in Chinatown, 87% in Porter Ranch. Whole regions differ — 24% in Central, 68% in the North Valley.

This is the single best predictor of what a neighborhood feels like to live in that this book carries. Not because owners are better neighbours, but because tenure drives turnover, and turnover drives everything from how well you know the street to how often the shops change.

% What the tax actually runs at

Because California reassesses at purchase, the effective rate a household pays — its bill as a share of what the home is worth today — varies enormously across the city, and it is a map of who bought when rather than of where the rates are higher.

AREA	EFFECTIVE RATE	MEDIAN BILL
Citywide median	**0.591%**	**$5,540**
Lowest: Windsor Square	0.350%	
Baldwin Hills/Crenshaw	0.367%	
Pico-Union	0.371%	
Highest: Downtown	0.923%	
Sepulveda Basin	0.899%	
Porter Ranch	0.834%	

The neighborhoods at the bottom of that table are not cheaper to be taxed in. They are places where owners have held for a very long time. The ones at the top are where homes have changed hands or been built recently — Downtown's 0.923% is a neighborhood where 34% of the housing stock was built in 2010 or later, so most assessments are close to current value.

When you buy, you move to the top of that table, whichever neighborhood you buy in. Median bills across the city run from $2,507 to $10,001, and the one you inherit will be computed from your price, not the one on the page.

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Only 4,613 empty homes in the city are for sale



The other half of what it costs is what you are competing with. The city has 117,438 vacant homes, and here is what they are doing:

WHY IT IS EMPTY	HOMES	SHARE
For rent	43,831	37.3%
Other vacant	43,418	37.0%
Seasonal or occasional use	13,541	11.5%
Rented, not occupied	7,710	6.6%
For sale	4,613	3.9%
Sold, not occupied	4,325	3.7%

3.9%. In a city of nearly four million people, 4,613 empty homes are on the market at any one time. That single row explains more about how buying here feels than any price figure in this book — and it is also why the rental market behaves differently, with 43,831 homes listed to let, nearly ten times as many.

The housing-stock chapter takes apart that second row, "other vacant", which is as large as the rental listings and which nobody can explain.

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Get the current owner's itemised bill, then ignore the total

California reassesses a property at its purchase price, and then limits how fast the assessment can rise. Two consequences, both of which catch people:

- **The seller's tax bill is not yours.** An owner who bought in 1994 pays tax on a 1994 valuation plus small annual increments. You will pay on what you pay. Ask for the current owner's itemised bill, then work out what is reassessed and what is a fixed levy that transfers.
- **Two identical houses on one street can pay very different tax**, and neither number tells you anything about the third house.

Add to the headline price: reassessed property tax, insurance (see the fire chapter — in a fire zone this is not a formality), any special assessment or community facilities district on the bill, HOA dues and the HOA's reserve position, and maintenance appropriate to the age of the building.

What to check yourself

- [ ] Get the current owner's itemised tax bill and identify which lines transfer to you.
- [ ] Get a written insurance quote for the specific address before the inspection contingency expires.
- [ ] If there is an HOA, read the reserve study and the minutes, not the dues figure. Low dues with an underfunded reserve is a bill with your name on it.
- [ ] Treat any value reported at $2,000,000 as a floor.

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WHAT YOU WILL ACTUALLY LIVE IN

The detached house is a minority.

Only 36.4% of the city's 1,537,681 homes are detached single-family. The other 63.6% is something else, and most of it is a flat.

What you will actually live in

HIGHLIGHTS

- Los Angeles is not a city of detached houses. Only 36.4% of its 1,537,681 homes are detached single-family. The other 63.6% is something else, and most of it is a flat.
- 35.4% of all homes in the city are studios or one-bedrooms — 544,152 of them. If you are looking for three bedrooms, you are competing for 22.0% of the stock.
- Only 12.5% of the city's housing was built this century. Half of it went up between 1940 and 1979, and 19.2% predates 1939, which is the single best predictor of a lead problem.
- The largest category of empty home in Los Angeles is one the census cannot explain. "Other vacant" is 43,418 homes, 37.0% of all vacancies — exactly as many as are listed for rent.

Everything else in this guide tells you about neighborhoods. This chapter is about the thing inside them, because the single most common mistake people make about Los Angeles is imagining the building they will live in.



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The detached house is a minority

Say "Los Angeles" and people picture a low stucco house with a driveway. That house exists, 560,268 times. It is also only 36.4% of the city's homes.

WHAT IT IS	HOMES	SHARE
Single-family detached	560,268	36.4%
5 to 19 units	285,267	18.6%
50 or more units	248,252	16.1%
20 to 49 units	206,618	13.4%
2 to 4 units	138,896	9.0%
Single-family attached	87,832	5.7%
Mobile home or other	10,548	0.7%

Nearly half the city — 48.1% — lives in a building with five or more homes in it. And the geography of that is sharp. Of the city's seven planning areas, the North Valley is 60.3% detached houses and Central Los Angeles is 12.6%. Within that, the extremes are almost comic: Beverly Crest is 94% detached and Downtown is 2%. Downtown, meanwhile, is 84% buildings of fifty units or more; Florence, Leimert Park, Beverly Crest and Porter Ranch are all effectively 0%.

REGION	HOMES	DETACHED	50+ UNITS
North Valley	210,032	60.3%	10.8%
East Los Angeles	141,839	46.4%	6.1%
Harbor	71,599	41.7%	8.3%
South Valley	325,296	41.0%	16.2%
South Los Angeles	237,711	39.5%	4.7%
West Los Angeles	209,454	32.2%	18.7%
Central	341,750	12.6%	31.6%

There is also a part of the city nobody writes guides about: 10,548 mobile homes. They are concentrated at the top of the Valley and in the Harbor — Mission Hills 8%, Sylmar 7%, Harbor City 6%, Sunland 5% — and they are housing, with a tenure and finance structure entirely unlike everything else on this page. If you are shopping at the bottom of the market in those places you will meet them.

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How many bedrooms there actually are



SIZE	HOMES	SHARE
Studio	173,446	11.3%
1 bedroom	370,706	24.1%
2 bedrooms	471,563	30.7%
3 bedrooms	338,805	22.0%
4 or more	183,147	11.9%

35.4% of every home in Los Angeles is a studio or a one-bedroom. That is the stock the city mostly is. Two-bedrooms are the single largest group at 30.7%, and if you need three or more you are shopping in 33.9% of the market — which sounds fine until you notice where it is.

Studios cluster: Downtown 53%, Westlake 38%, Koreatown 34%, Pico-Union 31%. Four-or-more-bedroom homes cluster somewhere else entirely: Porter Ranch 55%, West Hills 52%, Bel-Air 52%, Beverly Crest 42%. In Downtown, 1% of homes have four bedrooms. In Porter Ranch, 1% are studios. These are not two price points in one market. They are two different markets that happen to share a city.

BEST FOR A FAMILY-SIZED HOME ON A NORMAL BUDGET

Of the places with 55% or more of their homes at three bedrooms or larger, the cheapest by typical value are in the North Valley. Sylmar is 39% three-bedroom and 25% four-or-more at a typical value of $630,841; Pacoima is 35% and 24% at $589,236. Compare Porter Ranch's or Bel-Air's share of large homes and then compare the price. The size you want exists; the question is which end of the Valley you are willing to live in.

The city is older than it looks

BUILT	HOMES	SHARE
1939 or earlier	295,595	19.2%
1940–1959	388,217	25.2%

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Built Homes Share

BUILT	HOMES	SHARE
1960–1979	408,599	26.6%
1980–1999	253,405	16.5%
2000–2009	86,386	5.6%
2010 or later	105,467	6.9%

51.8% of the city's homes were built between 1940 and 1979 — the three decades either side of the freeways. Only 12.5% has been built since 2000. For a city with a reputation for endless newness, Los Angeles is largely a mid-century city that has had things added to it.

Age is not a neutral fact. It predicts, in rough order: lead paint, unreinforced masonry and soft-story construction, single-pane glass, no central air, copper or galvanised plumbing, and an electrical panel that will not take an EV charger without a service upgrade. The air, heat and ground chapter covers the health end of that and the fire, flood and quake chapter the seismic end.

Why this book does not print a "lead risk" score. California's screening tool publishes one for every tract, and an earlier edition of this guide quoted it. It then turned out not to track the age of the housing very well — across the twenty-four neighborhoods in this guide, the rank correlation was only 0.50 — and OEHHA's own documentation explains why. The indicator is built 60:40 from the age of the housing and the share of households that are low-income and have a child under six, plus a small blood-lead term.

A household's children are a protected characteristic, and this book already refuses to publish them. So the score is gone, and with it any neighborhood-by-neighborhood lead figure. What remains is the part that is actually about the building: the year it went up. Lead was legal in residential paint until 1978. For an actual house, the only thing that answers the question is a test, and for anything built before 1978 the test is worth its cost.

What age does reliably predict is the paint. Lead was legal in residential paint in the United States until 1978, and the city's pre-1939 stock is 295,595 homes.

The oldest stock in the city, by median year built, is Fairfax, Hancock Park, Harvard Park, Manchester Square and Vermont Square — all at 1939 or earlier, with Fairfax at 57% pre-1939 and Hancock Park at 56%. The newest is Playa Vista, median year built 2003 — the only neighborhood in Los Angeles whose typical home was built this century — then Chinatown at 1985 and Downtown at 1982.

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The vacancy number that should bother you



The city has 117,438 vacant homes. Here is what the census says they are doing:

WHY IT IS EMPTY	HOMES	SHARE
For rent	43,831	37.3%
Other vacant	43,418	37.0%
Seasonal or occasional use	13,541	11.5%
Rented, not occupied	7,710	6.6%
For sale	4,613	3.9%
Sold, not occupied	4,325	3.7%

Only 3.9% of empty homes in Los Angeles are for sale. That is 4,613 homes across a city of four million people, which is most of what you need to know about why buying here feels the way it does.

But look at the second row. "Other vacant" is 43,418 homes — as many as are listed for rent — and it is a residual category. It is where the census puts an empty home that is not for rent, not for sale, not seasonal and not just sold: held off the market, tied up in probate, awaiting repair, condemned, being held by an owner who does not want to let it. The census does not ask which, so this book does not know, and neither does anybody else quoting this number at you.

Where it concentrates is still worth seeing: Manchester Square 85% of its vacancies, Central-Alameda 82%, El Sereno 74%, Highland Park 73% — against Downtown 11% and Sawtelle 14%. In the newer, denser, richer parts of the city an empty home is almost always between tenants. In older South and East Los Angeles, most empty homes are empty for a reason nobody has recorded.

What to do with this. Nothing, directly — it is not a hazard and it is not a score. But when you walk a street and count the shuttered houses, this is the row that your count belongs in, and the honest thing to say about it is that the published data stops exactly where your question starts. If it matters to your decision, the answer is a walk and a conversation with neighbours, not a dataset.

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How the city is actually adding homes

Since 2023 the city has permitted a net 43,290 additional homes. 30,146 of them are accessory dwelling units — granny flats, garage conversions, backyard cottages. That is 70%, and it is the most important shift in Los Angeles housing in a generation. (The permit file breaks accessory units out of its own net-change figure, so these are a share of the 43,290 and not an addition to it.)

Split it by region and it gets stranger.

REGION	NET NEW HOMES	OF WHICH ACCESSORY	EVERYTHING ELSE
Central	13,347	2,686	+10,661
South Los Angeles	9,137	4,911	+4,226
South Valley	8,410	8,439	−29
West Los Angeles	6,290	3,230	+3,060
North Valley	2,731	7,606	−4,875
East Los Angeles	2,165	2,475	−310
Harbor	1,210	799	+411

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Three regions have a negative figure in the last column. In the North Valley, permits other than accessory units have removed a net 4,875 homes since 2023, while 7,606 accessory units have been added. Backyard units are not supplementing construction there; they are the only thing keeping the housing count rising at all. The South Valley is at dead level and East Los Angeles slightly below it.

Only in Central Los Angeles — towers in Koreatown, Downtown and Hollywood — is conventional construction still doing most of the work, and that one region accounts for 13,347 of the city's 43,290 net new homes on its own.



Best for watching this happen

Sun Valley has permitted 2,154 accessory dwelling units while its net gain in homes is only 247 — the largest ADU count of any neighborhood in the city, with every other kind of permit together removing 1,907 homes. Sherman Oaks: 570 accessory units, a net gain of 174. If you are buying a house with a deep lot in the Valley, you are buying into this, whether you build one or your neighbour does.

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Checkpoint



Before you make an offer, write down the answers for the specific building:

Before you make an offer

- [ ] **What is it?** Detached, attached, a unit in a 2–4, or a unit in a tower? The answer changes your insurance, your maintenance liability and your resale market completely.
- [ ] **What year was it built?** Then read the air, heat and ground chapter on lead and the fire, flood and quake chapter on soft-story and unreinforced masonry. Pre-1939 and 1960s-70s apartment construction carry different and specific problems.
- [ ] **If it is a flat, is the building a condominium or a single owner's rental?** This book cannot tell you; the assessor can.
- [ ] **How many bedrooms does the neighborhood have?** If you want three and the neighborhood is 5% three-bedroom, you will be bidding against everyone else who wants the same thing for as long as you live there — and so will the person who buys it from you.
- [ ] **Is there room at the back?** Given the numbers above, the honest question about a Los Angeles lot in 2026 is not just what is on it but what can be added to it — by you, or next door.

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WHAT YOU WILL ACTUALLY LIVE IN · THE WORKING CITY

The city is not what it is famous for.

Health care, education, then the studios — and a workforce spread across the whole of a large city.

The biggest employer in Los Angeles is not the film industry

Highlights

- Health care employs 365,516 people here — nearly twice as many as Information, which is where film and television sit.
- The industry is not a district. 30,625 registered independent artists are spread across the whole city.
- Century City holds 17.5 jobs per resident worker; Mount Washington holds 0.15.
- A pay band belongs to the job, not the household — and in Century City it mostly measures contract length.

Everybody knows what Los Angeles does for a living, and everybody is wrong.

The largest employer in this city is health care, by a very wide margin. The second is education. The industry the place is famous for comes fourth. 1,979,997 jobs are located here against 1,789,892 employed residents — the city imports workers, but only just, at 1.11 jobs per resident worker against San Francisco's 1.68.



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Hospitals and schools, then the studios

SECTOR	JOBS IN THE CITY
Health care and social assistance	365,516
Educational services	198,176
Accommodation and food services	169,535
Information	164,777
Professional, scientific and technical services	160,594

The surprise on that list is the top of it. The largest employer in Los Angeles is health care, by a wide margin, and the second is education. The industry the city is famous for — Information, which is where film, television, music and streaming sit — is fourth.

That does not make the entertainment industry small. It makes it diffuse. It shows up in the business register rather than the jobs file: 30,625 registered independent artists, writers and performers and 15,119 film and video production businesses, most of them one or two people, spread across the whole city rather than concentrated in a district.

Find out whether your neighborhood fills up or empties out

NEIGHBORHOOD	JOBS	JOBS PER RESIDENT WORKER
Century City	91,055	17.50
Downtown	317,316	11.32
Westwood	87,581	4.34
Westchester	76,366	3.87
Playa Vista	15,432	2.53
Studio City	59,202	2.29
Citywide	1,979,997	1.11
Mount Washington	952	0.15

Above about 1.5 a neighborhood is an employment centre: it fills in the morning and empties at night. Below about 0.5 it is somewhere people sleep. Neither is better — they are different things to live in, and they change parking, shop opening hours, how busy a street is at nine in the evening, and how a crime rate should be read.

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⚖️ Check what happens if one employer leaves



NEIGHBORHOOD	LARGEST SECTOR	ITS SHARE OF LOCAL JOBS
Exposition Park	Educational services	87%
Studio City	Information	69%
Century City	Information	56%
Westchester	Transportation and warehousing	50%
Westwood	Educational services	48%

The institutions are visible without being named: Exposition Park's 87% is a university, Westchester's 50% is an airport. Concentration is the finding. A neighborhood where seven of eight jobs belong to one institution rises and falls with it, and if you intend to be there for twenty years you are making a bet on that institution whether you notice or not.

Read the bedroom neighborhoods the other way round. Mount Washington, Harvard Park and Manchester Square all show health care as their largest sector — not because they are medical districts, but because in a neighborhood with almost no jobs, the clinic and the home-care agency are what is left. A "largest sector" on a small base describes the exception, not the economy.

🪙 Why Century City looks like a low-wage district

The federal data splits jobs into three monthly earnings bands, and Century City produces the most instructive number in this chapter because it looks wrong.

CENTURY CITY	SHARE OF ITS JOBS
$1,250 a month or less	54%
$1,251 to $3,333	6%
More than $3,333	40%

Century City also has the highest business density in Los Angeles and 56% of its jobs in Information. A district of agencies and law firms reports more than half its jobs in the lowest pay band.

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Both figures are right

These are monthly earnings averaged across a quarter, so a job that lasted three weeks of it reports as a low-paid job at any day rate. Century City's 50,960 Information jobs and its 49,615 lowest-band jobs track almost exactly, and the middle band is hollow at 6% — the signature of an industry that hires in short contracts alongside permanent salaried staff.

A pay band belongs to the job, not to the person and not to the household. "Most jobs here are low-paid" is not "low-income people live here": that crosses from workplace to residence and from a wage to a household income, and in a city where almost everyone commutes between neighborhoods, both crossings are wrong.

KEEP IN MIND

A pay band belongs to the job, not to the person and not to the household. **"Most jobs here are low-paid" is not "low-income people live here."**

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WHAT YOU WILL ACTUALLY LIVE IN · EATING AND CULTURE

Follow the people, not the reputation.

Density of people predicts density of food better than any amount of fame does.

Koreatown has more places to eat per acre than anywhere else

Highlights

- 15,879 places to eat and drink hold an active registration in the city.
- Koreatown leads on density at 85 per km² — half again Downtown's, in a quarter of the space.
- Los Angeles has only 318 licensed bars, because most drinking here happens in restaurants.
- 433 produce markets, clustered exactly where the restaurants are. If you cook, that matters more than the restaurant count.

Ask anyone where to eat in Los Angeles and you will get a restaurant. Ask where to live if you want to eat, and the conversation gets vague fast. This chapter answers the second question, which is the one that matters if you are signing a lease.

It will not tell you which places are good. There is no public source for that, and a guide that invents one is worse than a guide that admits it. What it will tell you is where the food actually is, what kind, and which neighborhoods have been feeding people the longest.



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🔍 Follow the people, not the reputation

NEIGHBORHOOD	PLACES PER KM²	TOTAL
Koreatown	85.4	599
Downtown	58.3	881
Hollywood	53.9	493
Pico-Union	46.5	198
Harvard Heights	46.2	93
University Park	39.7	120

Koreatown is the food capital of Los Angeles on this measure and it is not close — half again the density of Downtown, in a neighborhood with 102,669 residents and only 7% of homes owner-occupied. Downtown has the larger absolute count at 899, but it is spread over far more ground.

Notice what else is on that list. Harvard Heights, Pico-Union and University Park are not places with restaurant reputations. They are dense, largely rented, central neighborhoods — and density of people turns out to predict density of food better than any amount of fame does.

🥞 There are almost no bars, and that is not a mistake

CITYWIDE REGISTRATIONS	COUNT
Full-service restaurants	6,733
Limited-service and quick-service	3,481
Cafes, juice and snack bars	218
Caterers and food contractors	4,493
Bars and drinking places	318
Mobile food services	592

Two of those deserve a second look.

Los Angeles has 318 registered bars. For a city of 3.86 million. Bars in the licensing sense — premises whose business is alcohol — are genuinely rare here, because most drinking happens in restaurants holding a food licence. Downtown has the most of any neighborhood.

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Find the produce market before the supermarket



And 592 registered mobile food services. Anyone who has spent a week in Los Angeles knows there are more taco trucks than that. What this number counts is trucks that hold a city business registration — not county health permits, not carts, not the informal trade that is a real part of how this city eats. Treat it as a floor and a geography rather than a census: Westlake (15), Van Nuys (11) and Canoga Park (11) lead it.

NEIGHBORHOOD	PER KM²	TOTAL
Downtown	17.2	259
South Park	16.2	59
Pico-Union	14.6	62
Harvard Heights	13.9	28
Central-Alameda	12.9	73
Koreatown	12.8	90

Citywide there are 1,702 grocery stores, 704 liquor stores, 433 produce markets, 231 specialist food shops, 203 butchers and fishmongers and 106 bakeries.

The produce markets are worth singling out. 433 of them is a lot for an American city, and they cluster in exactly the dense central and eastern neighborhoods that the restaurant density picks out. If you cook, that matters more than the restaurant count does.

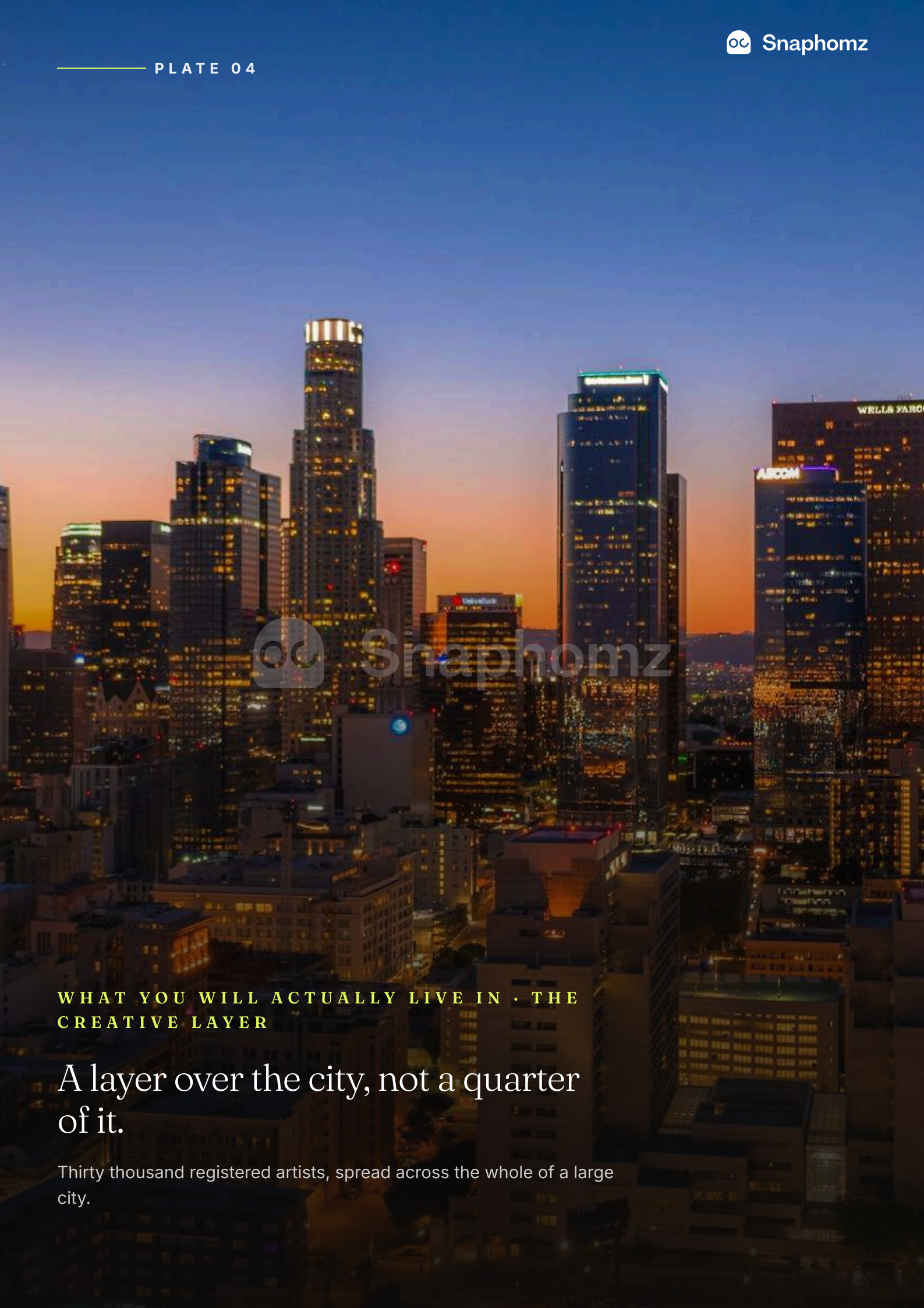
What a registration is and is not. Every figure here counts a business that filed a tax registration with the city and has not closed it. It is not a storefront: caterers and food contractors frequently register at home. It is not a quality signal. And it is a count, so a neighborhood with four hundred places is not necessarily somewhere you would rather eat than one with forty.

What to check yourself

- Walk the main commercial street at 7pm on a Tuesday. Twenty minutes tells you more than any count in this chapter.
- Count the empty units while you do it. Vacancy on a main street leads residential change by years, and no dataset carries it.
- If you cook, find the nearest produce market and the nearest full supermarket, and time the walk to both.

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WHAT YOU WILL ACTUALLY LIVE IN · THE CREATIVE LAYER

A layer over the city, not a quarter of it.

Thirty thousand registered artists, spread across the whole of a large city.

Twenty-nine thousand people here are registered as artists

Highlights

- 56,073 businesses in the city are arts, entertainment or recreation — nearly three times the number of places to eat.
- 30,625 of them are independent artists, writers and performers. Not a hobby: a tax registration.
- Los Feliz is the densest culture neighborhood at 254 per km², ahead of Hollywood.
- The industry is a layer over the city, not a quarter of it.

56,073 registered businesses in the City of Los Angeles are in arts, entertainment and recreation — more than three times the number of places to eat. This is the most distinctive thing in the city's data by a long way.

It is a layer over the city, not a quarter of it

CITYWIDE REGISTRATIONS	COUNT
Independent artists, writers and performers	30,625
Film and video production	15,119



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Los Feliz beats Hollywood per acre

CITYWIDE REGISTRATIONS	COUNT
Promoters and venues	2,447
Music production	2,509
Performing arts companies	1,678
Agents and managers	2,406
Spectator sports	728

Twenty-nine thousand people are registered with the city as independent artists, writers and performers. Not as a hobby — as a business, filing a tax registration. Add 15,119 film and video production companies, most of them one or two people, and you have a workforce the size of a small city that is spread across the whole of a large one.

This is why "where is the entertainment industry" has no useful answer in Los Angeles. It is a layer over the city, not a quarter of it.

NEIGHBORHOOD	CULTURE BUSINESSES PER KM²	TOTAL
Los Feliz	254.0	1,726
Hollywood	245.5	2,244
Silver Lake	208.7	1,473
Mid-Wilshire	171.6	1,234
Sawtelle	160.3	1,116
Echo Park	159.9	991

Hollywood has the most in absolute terms. Los Feliz has the most per square kilometre — and Silver Lake and Echo Park either side of it make a continuous creative belt running north-east of Downtown that is denser, per acre, than Hollywood itself.

Sawtelle on the Westside is the outlier on that list and the one worth knowing about if you have not lived here.

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Count the venues, not the bars



Los Angeles has 2,447 registered promoters and venues and 318 bars. The venue count is the one to pay attention to: it includes everything from a 6,000-seat theatre to a company that books two rooms a month, and it maps onto where live music and performance actually happen far better than the bar count does.

Cinemas and film exhibition are counted inside the 15,119 production figure in the city's classification and cannot be separated cleanly, which is an honest limitation rather than a finding.

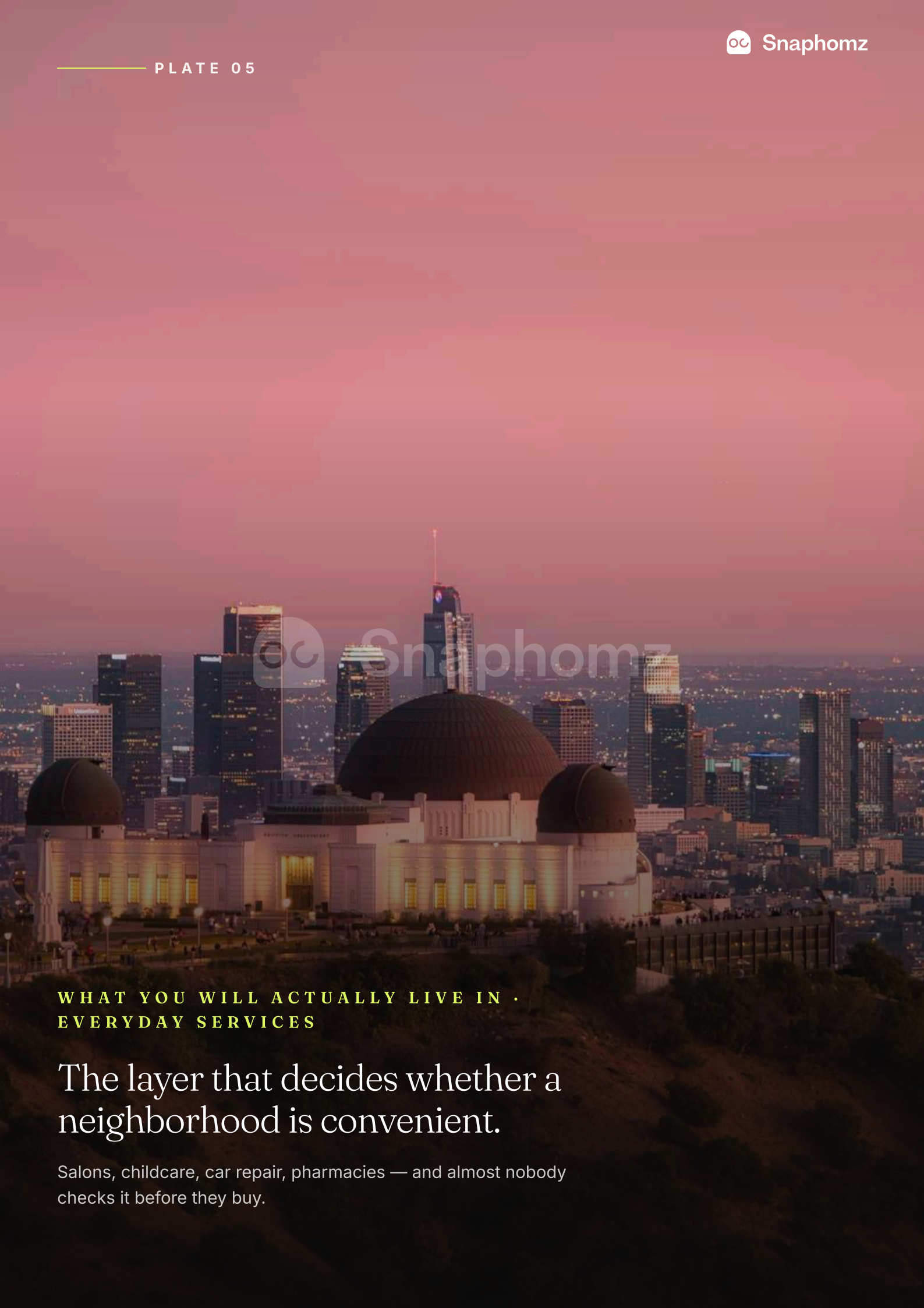
What this chapter cannot tell you

- **Whether any of it is good.** This book has no source for reviews, ratings or listings, and will not generate them. A count of registered businesses tells you where cultural activity is concentrated. It says nothing about quality, programming, ticket prices or whether you would enjoy a Friday night there.
- **What is on this week.** Nothing here is a listings guide and it would be out of date before it was printed.
- **The informal culture.** House shows, warehouse parties, swap meets, car clubs, church music — none of it registers as a business, and in Los Angeles a good deal of it is the actual culture.

What to check yourself

- Go on a Friday or Saturday night, and again on a Sunday morning. The gap between those two visits is the honest measure of a nightlife neighborhood.
- Check what is licensed nearby, not just what is open. A quiet street next to a site licensed for a venue is a future loud street.
- If you are moving for the industry, the density map above is a commute map, not a jobs board.

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WHAT YOU WILL ACTUALLY LIVE IN · EVERYDAY SERVICES

The layer that decides whether a neighborhood is convenient.

Salons, childcare, car repair, pharmacies — and almost nobody checks it before they buy.

Phone three nurseries before you make an offer

Highlights

- 61,036 registered businesses exist to do something ordinary for you — cut your hair, mind your child, fix your car.
- There are more hair and beauty businesses (8,060) than full-service restaurants (6,733) in Los Angeles.
- Childcare is the shock. 2,237 registrations for a city of 3.86 million, and availability is not the same as distance.
- The whole city has 7 registered cinemas, 14 petrol stations and 1 general store. Those are not errors — they are what a business register does and does not see, and the chapter explains which.

61,036 registered businesses in Los Angeles exist to do something ordinary for you: cut your hair, wash your clothes, mind your child, fix your car, fill a prescription. This is the layer that decides whether a neighborhood is convenient to live in, and almost nobody checks it before they buy.



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More salons than restaurants

CITYWIDE REGISTRATIONS	COUNT
Other personal services	37,203
Hair and beauty	8,060
Doctors	5,373
Car repair	3,404
Childcare	2,237
Grocery stores	1,702
Laundry and dry cleaning	1,200
Pet care	1,199
Dentists	1,048
Liquor stores	704
Pharmacies	595
Produce markets	433

Two readings of that table, and both matter.

Los Angeles has more registered hair and beauty businesses than restaurants of any single type — 8,060 salons, barbers and nail technicians against 6,733 full-service restaurants. That is a real feature of the city's economy, and it is overwhelmingly small, independent and local.

"Other personal services" is a catch-all, and it is enormous. 37,203 registrations, which is more than a fifth of everything this chapter counts. It absorbs a very wide range of sole traders under one federal code. Read it as a measure of how much of Los Angeles is one person with a business licence, not as a count of any particular trade.

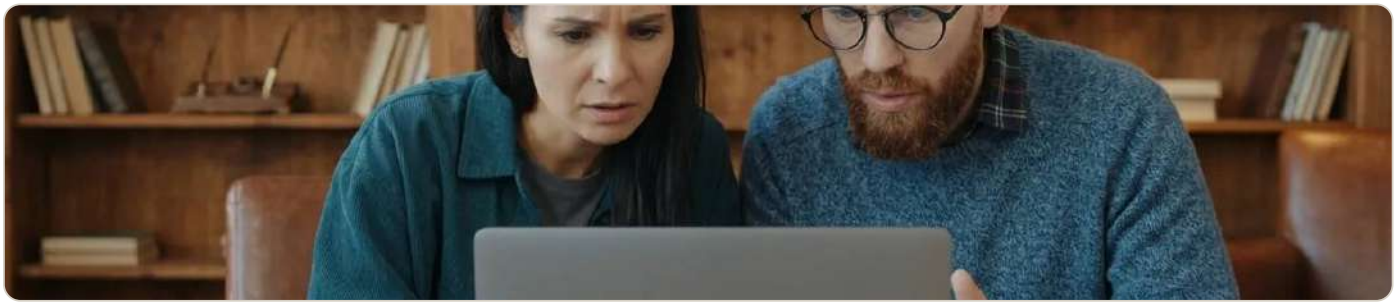
What a register sees, and what it does not

Before you use any of these numbers, look at the bottom of the list.

CITYWIDE REGISTRATIONS	COUNT
Butchers and fishmongers	203

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What a register sees, and what it does not



CITYWIDE REGISTRATIONS	COUNT
Corner shops	108
Bakeries	106
Museums and galleries	80
Clinics	61
Car parts	50
Hotels and motels	37
Petrol stations	14
Cinemas	7
General stores	1

Los Angeles plainly has more than 7 cinemas and more than 14 petrol stations. Nothing is broken. These counts are of businesses registered with the City under a particular federal industry code, and three things pull the numbers down: a chain files centrally rather than per site, a business classifies itself under a different code than you would expect, and some operations sit outside city registration altogether.

So the rule for this whole chapter — and for the eating and culture chapters — is: these counts are reliable for comparing neighborhoods with each other, and unreliable as an inventory of what exists. A neighborhood with 48 grocery registrations really does have more grocery shopping than one with 6. Neither number is the number of shops.

Four questions that beat any walkability score

The useful version of "is this neighborhood convenient" is not a score. It is four questions you can answer from a map in ten minutes and a walk in thirty:

1. Can I buy fresh food on foot? Not a convenience store — a supermarket or a produce market. Citywide there are 1,702 grocery stores and 433 produce markets, and they are emphatically not evenly spread.
2. Can I get a prescription on foot? 595 pharmacies in the whole city.
3. If I have children, is there childcare within a sane drive? 2,237 registrations citywide, and this is the one that most often fails in the low-density neighborhoods.
4. Is there anywhere to be outdoors that is not my own garden?

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⚖️ The city's everyday geography is lopsided

This book deliberately does not combine those into an index. Walk Score and its imitators do, and Chapter 3 of the companion volume explains why a composite built from someone else's weights is worth less than four questions you asked yourself.

Everyday services per square kilometre run from 231.6 in Koreatown down to 16.6 in Wilmington — a factor of fourteen. But density is the wrong lens on its own, because a dense neighborhood of flats needs different things from a spread-out one of houses. What is more telling is the mix.

Where the city fixes its cars: Van Nuys has 220 car-repair businesses, Sun Valley 188, Pacoima 157 — against Studio City's 9 and Los Feliz's 6. The Valley is where Los Angeles maintains its vehicles, and it is a real local economy employing real people.

Where the city shops for food rather than eats out: Florence has 48 grocery stores against 0 bars. Historic South-Central has 39 grocers and 9 produce markets. Compare Los Feliz: 6 grocers, 108 places to eat. Two entirely different relationships between a neighborhood and its dinner, and neither is the better one — but one of them is much cheaper to live in.

Where the childcare is, and is not: Van Nuys 66, Sun Valley 51, Koreatown 54, Vermont Square 42 — against Los Feliz 5, Sawtelle 11, Studio City 13. Several of the most expensive neighborhoods in this book have almost no registered childcare in them at all.

👥 Childcare is the thing people get wrong

2,237 registered childcare businesses for a city of 3,857,897 people is not many, and it is the single most common practical shock for people moving to Los Angeles with young children.

The registrations cluster where the density and the household sizes are. The hillside and the wealthier flat neighborhoods are thinner, which surprises people who assume that the expensive neighborhood is the well-provisioned one. If this applies to you, check it before you check anything else in this book — and check availability, not just distance. Waiting lists are real and they are long.

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Checkpoint



Before you make an offer

- [ ] Walk to the nearest supermarket and time it. Then do the same for a pharmacy.
- [ ] Count the empty shopfronts on the nearest commercial street. The register cannot do this for you and it is the fastest read on a street's health.
- [ ] If you have or want children, phone three nurseries before you make an offer. Not email. Ask about the waiting list, not the fees.
- [ ] Check what is open on a Sunday. A neighborhood that shuts is a different neighborhood from the one you viewed on a Saturday.
- [ ] Ignore any single count as an inventory. Use it only to compare one neighborhood with another.

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WHAT YOU WILL ACTUALLY LIVE IN · LONGEVITY

The city's memory is shallower than its myth.

A record of longevity and nothing else — the register knows how long a place has held its address.

The oldest businesses still trading

Highlights

- The oldest business still registered at its address anywhere in the City of Los Angeles is the Dalmatian-American Club of San Pedro, 1639 S Palos Verdes Street, since 1935.
- 610 businesses across 112 of the 114 neighborhoods qualify as the oldest of their kind on their own streets. Only 22 of them predate 1960.
- The city's commercial memory is much shallower than its myth: the modal decade for a surviving neighborhood landmark is the 1980s, not the 1940s.

This is a record of longevity and nothing else. The register knows how long a place has held its address. It knows nothing about whether you will like it.

Every other chapter in this guide measures something about a place. This one names things in it, which is harder than it sounds, because the moment a book starts naming the good restaurants it has started making claims no public dataset supports and no author should make on your behalf.

So here is the one honest way to name real places from public data. The City of Los Angeles publishes a Listing of Active Businesses: every business currently registered with the city, with the date that location was registered. Sort by that date and you get a question with an answer: what is the oldest business of its kind still trading on this street? Not the best. Not the most authentic. The oldest.



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The rules, so you can see what the list does and does not catch

115,307 registered locations opened before 2006 and are still active. From those, this guide takes the oldest in each category in each neighborhood — 610 businesses across 112 neighborhoods — and prints them at the foot of every neighborhood entry and throughout this book.

The date is when the location registered, not when the business was founded. Several of the places below are older than their date here, and some are considerably older — a business that moved, changed hands, or re-registered starts again as far as the register is concerned. Where a business's own account of itself and the city's record of its address disagree, this book prints the record, because the record is the part it can evidence. Treat every year here as "at this address at least since".

Chains, lodges and places of worship are filtered out. They are not what a reader means by the oldest place in a neighborhood. The filter has two parts, and the second exists because the first kept failing.

The first part is a list of names, and a list of names fails quietly. Once a stray backslash meant it matched nothing at all, so lodges and parishes sailed through as neighborhood landmarks. Then it failed on plurals: the register writes "McDonalds", and a pattern looking for "mcdonald" followed by a word boundary cannot match it, because the next character is a letter. Then it failed on a space: the register also writes "Mc Donalds". Each time, a 1963 or a 1973 McDonald's sat in the data as a neighborhood's oldest restaurant.

The second part does not depend on anybody's list. A business the register itself numbers — "Gelsons Market #391", "Vallarta Supermarket #7", "International House of Pancakes #2" — is one store of several, and is out. That rule was found the honest way: the same names kept turning up as "the oldest" in several neighborhoods at once, which an independent business cannot do. It removed Denny's, IHOP, the spaced McDonald's, and a set of regional chains no hand-written list had heard of. Only two names now hold a place in more than one neighborhood — a two-shop barber and the operator of the city's certified farmers' markets — and both are as local as anything here.

None of those chains reached a printed page, but only because no neighborhood holding one had been written up yet. That is luck rather than process, so the check that guards this chapter now fails if any business named here has left the register's list — not only if its year is wrong. Its first run caught a Koreatown grocer, newly identified as store #1 of a chain, and two names this book had quietly "corrected": a tortilleria whose register spelling has one l, and a curtain cleaner whose slash had become an ampersand. The register's spelling is what this book prints — including where the register drops an apostrophe, because "Lens Liquor" might be Len's and might not, and the register does not say. Casa Bianca Pizza Pie, 1955, stands for Eagle Rock.

A category with no entry gets no entry. Two neighborhoods — Griffith Park among them — produce nothing at all, because a park is not a place with shops.

Closure removes a place from the book. A business that stops trading leaves the register, so it leaves this list on the next build. Every name printed here was active as of 2 October 2026. Some of them will not be by the time you read it, and the honest thing to say is that a book cannot track a restaurant.

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The oldest in the city

SINCE	WHAT	WHERE
1935	The Dalmatian-American Club of San Pedro — bar	1639 S Palos Verdes Street
1947	New England Tomato Co — produce market	1000 Lawrence Street
1948	Valley Fruit & Produce — produce market	1601 E Olympic Blvd #300
1949	Beachwood Market — grocer	2701 Belden Drive
1949	Canters Fairfax — restaurant	419 N Fairfax Avenue
1950	Philippe the Original — restaurant	1001 N Alameda Street
1950	Vicente Foods — grocer	12027 San Vicente Blvd
1952	Walkers Cafe — bar	700 W Paseo Del Mar
1953	Sloans Dry Cleaners — laundry	3001 N Main Street
1956	Almor Liquor — liquor store	7855 W Sunset Blvd
1956	Circus Liquors — liquor store	5600 Vineland Avenue
1958	Bondy Haney Service — laundry	6900 Valjean Avenue
1958	Los Angeles Dodgers — sports club	1000 Elysian Park Avenue
1959	William Glasser — bookshop	939 Bluegrass Lane
1960	Stylesville — barber	13161 Van Nuys Blvd
1961	Jonyvonnes — barber	3911 W Jefferson Blvd

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The oldest in the city, continued



SINCE	WHAT	WHERE
1961	Neelys Family Stores — bookshop	5950 S Broadway

Two things in that table are worth stopping on.

The first is that the two oldest entries after the Dalmatian-American Club are produce wholesalers, both in the Downtown produce district, trading since 1947 and 1948. The oldest continuously registered commercial activity in Los Angeles is not glamour. It is fruit, at four in the morning, and Downtown holds 149 of the city's 433 produce markets to this day.

The second is the Los Angeles Dodgers, registered as a business at 1000 Elysian Park Avenue since 1958 — the year they arrived from Brooklyn. It is in this table because the register puts it there, filed under sports clubs, alongside a barber shop and a bookshop. There is something clarifying about a dataset that cannot tell the difference.

The oldest of each kind

KIND	OLDEST	THEN	THEN
Bar	The Dalmatian-American Club of San Pedro, 1935	Walkers Cafe, 1952	The Barrel, 1956
Restaurant	Canters Fairfax, 1949	Philippe the Original, 1950	Little Toni's Restaurant, 1951
Grocer	Beachwood Market, 1949	Vicente Foods, 1950	Galco Old World Grocery, 1956
Produce market	New England Tomato Co, 1947	Valley Fruit & Produce, 1948	Giumarra Bros Fruit Co, 1950
Laundry	Sloans Dry Cleaners, 1953	Bondy Haney Service, 1958	Heads Above, 1963
Liquor store	Almor Liquor, 1956	Circus Liquors, 1956	El Abajeno Restaurant, 1967
Barber	Stylesville, 1960	Jonyvonnes, 1961	Sheltons Barber Shop, 1961
Bookshop	William Glasser, 1959	Neelys Family Stores, 1961	Mags, 1963
Dry cleaner	S/a Button Dyers, 1964	Fazio Cleaners, 1965	Valentine Cleaners, 1967

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The oldest of each kind, continued

KIND	OLDEST	THEN	THEN
Nail salon	Chateau Salon of Beauty, 1965	Rochelle R Bradford, 1965	Koreas House of Styles, 1966
Garage	Arrow Trailer Supplies, 1965	Mark Christopher Auto Center, 1975	Sams Datsun, 1976
Butcher	Eastside Market, 1974	Chris McCord, 1989	Layne Milton Wootten, 2001
Performing arts	Gatti Productions, 1978	The Groundlings, 1979	Maysh, 1980
Museum	African American Firefighters Museum, 1997	The Air Museum, 1998	Curatorial Assistance Traveling Exhibitions, 2000

The pattern in that table is a pattern about trades, not about taste. Food and drink hold the oldest addresses — the bar at 1935, produce at 1947, restaurants and grocers at 1949 — with one non-food exception, a dry cleaner's at 1953. Personal services come next: barbers, cleaners and salons all cluster between 1960 and 1966. Garages arrive in 1965, which is roughly when the city's car population made them permanent fixtures. And the oldest butcher still at its address opened in 1974, with the next in 1989 — which is a fair sketch of what happened to independent butchers once supermarkets arrived.

The city's memory is shallower than its myth

Here is the whole 610 by decade, and it is the most surprising table in this chapter.

LOCATION REGISTERED	NEIGHBORHOOD LANDMARKS SURVIVING
1930s	1
1940s	3
1950s	18
1960s	54
1970s	100
1980s	195
1990s	188
2000s	51

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What to do with this chapter



Only 22 of the city's 610 neighborhood landmarks were registered before 1960. The modal decade is the 1980s. More than half of everything this chapter can call old was registered after 1980.

That is not a statement about Los Angeles being young. The city is not young. It is a statement about what the register can see — and the register sees a current address, not a history. A business that moved across the street in 1992 reads as a 1992 business. A business that changed hands and re-registered reads as new. A restaurant founded in 1931 in Boyle Heights that moved to Fairfax in 1949 reads as 1949.

So the shallowness is partly real and partly an artefact, and the honest position is that this dataset is a good instrument for "still here" and a poor one for "how long". Which is worth knowing before anybody quotes a neighborhood's "historic businesses" at you as evidence of anything.

And only four neighborhoods in the whole city have a surviving landmark from before 1950: Downtown (New England Tomato Co, 1947), Fairfax (Canters Fairfax, 1949), Hollywood Hills (Beachwood Market, 1949) and San Pedro (the Dalmatian-American Club, 1935).

Use it as a walking list, not a ranking. The names in the neighborhood chapter are addresses you can stand in front of, and standing in front of things is the part of choosing a neighborhood that no dataset in this book replaces. A street with four businesses that have held their addresses since the 1960s feels different from a street where the oldest thing is a 2004 registration, and you will know which you are on within a block.

But hold two caveats while you walk.

Longevity is not quality. Some of these places are institutions and some are simply premises with a long lease. The register cannot tell you which, this book will not guess, and the fact that it appears in a table here is not a recommendation.

Longevity is not permanence, and it is not always good news for you. A street of forty-year-old businesses can mean a stable neighborhood. It can also mean one where nothing has turned over because nothing can afford to, or one about to turn over all at once. The what's-being-built chapter is about reading change, and this chapter is one input to it rather than an answer.

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Checkpoint

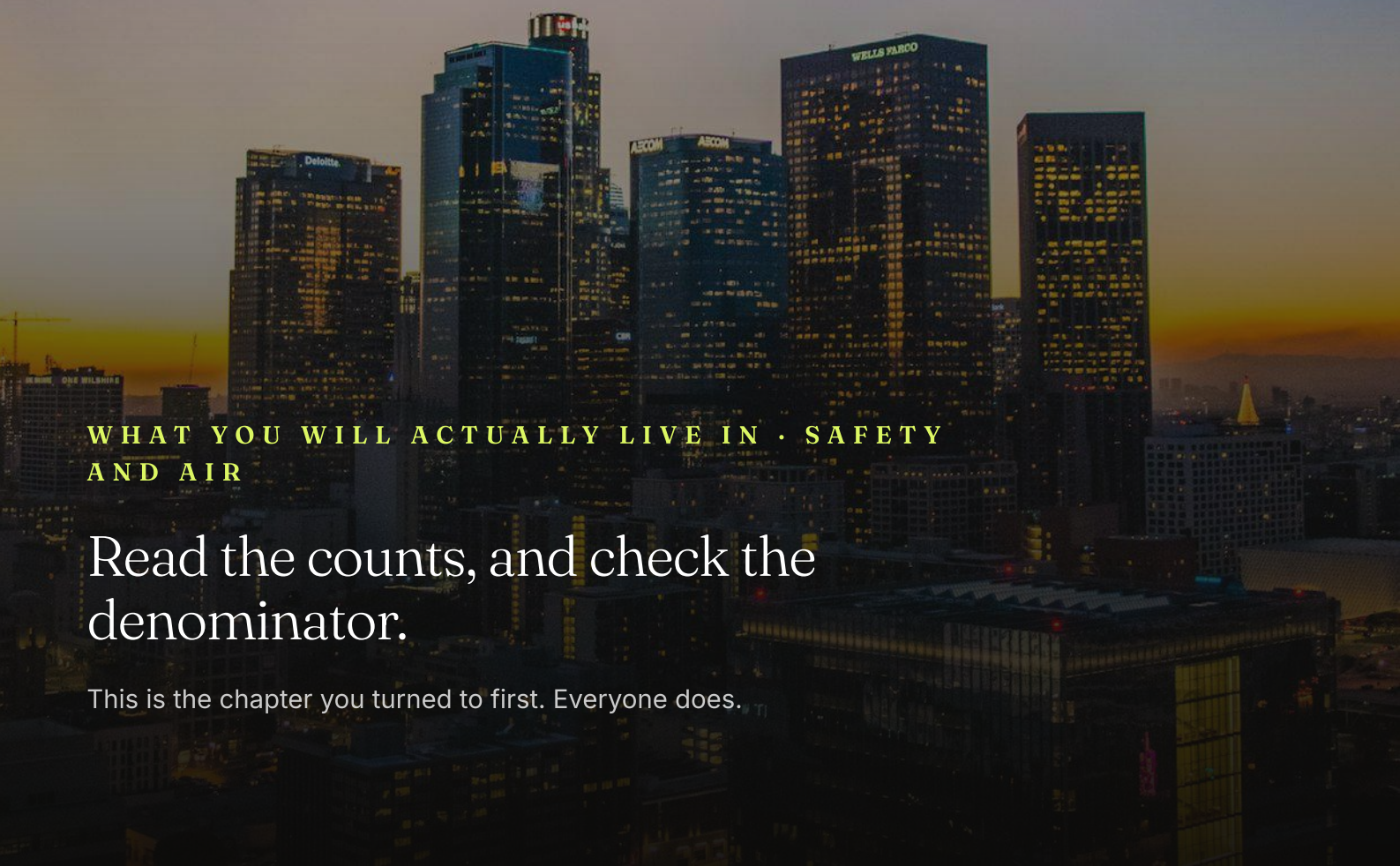
Before you make an offer

- [ ] Walk the three or four oldest addresses listed for your neighborhood in the neighborhood chapter. Are they busy? Are they the kind of thing you would use?
- [ ] Count the chains on the main commercial street yourself. The register will not do it for you, because this chapter deliberately filters them out.
- [ ] Ask one of them how long the street has been like this. This is the single highest-value research action in the entire book, it costs nothing, and no amount of public data substitutes for it.

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WHAT YOU WILL ACTUALLY LIVE IN · SAFETY AND AIR

Read the counts, and check the denominator.

This is the chapter you turned to first. Everyone does.

Read the counts, and check the denominator

Highlights

- Police recorded 174,662 incidents in 2025: 111,527 property, 50,348 violent, 10,362 enforcement-driven.
- Four neighborhoods get no per-resident rate in this book, because the people affected are mostly not residents.
- Enforcement-driven offences measure policing as much as behaviour, and are counted separately here.
- LAPD snaps every location to the hundred block. No figure here should be read at block resolution.

This is the chapter you turned to first. Everyone does.

It is also the one that every neighborhood guide gets wrong, usually in the same three ways, and usually while sounding extremely confident. Los Angeles police recorded 174,662 incidents in 2025 — 111,527 property, 50,348 violent, 10,362 enforcement-driven. Before any of those numbers is worth anything to you, three things have to be true about how you read them.



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⚖️ Three things to know before you look at any number

Counts are not rates, and rates need the right denominator. Downtown recorded 9,140 property incidents and has 61,902 residents. Divide and you get 148 per 1,000, which is arithmetically correct and describes almost nobody — because Downtown also holds 317,316 jobs. The people affected are overwhelmingly not residents. This book refuses a per-resident rate in four Los Angeles neighborhoods for that reason and prints counts instead.

Enforcement-driven offences measure policing as much as behaviour. Drug possession, weapons carrying, disorderly conduct and prostitution are recorded when officers go looking for them. A neighborhood with heavy foot patrol will out-count an identical one with none. The FBI's own classification draws this line — NIBRS calls them crimes against society — and this book reports them separately. Folding them into one "crime" total is the most common way a neighborhood guide manufactures a bad reputation.

The locations are approximate by design. LAPD snaps every published coordinate to the hundred block: 191,904 offences in 2025 resolve to just 35,233 distinct positions, about 18% unique. San Francisco's police leave 32%. Attribution near a boundary is correspondingly less reliable here, and no figure in this book should be read at block resolution.

⚖️ The top of the list is a denominator problem

Among neighborhoods with at least 20,000 residents and a publishable rate, per 1,000 residents in 2025:

NEIGHBORHOOD	VIOLENT	PROPERTY
Westchester	11	70
Hollywood	26	53
Beverly Grove	12	57
University Park	14	53
…		
Porter Ranch	4	14
Westwood	4	13
Tujunga	4	11
Pacific Palisades	1	8

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What you will not find here



Westchester tops the property list and contains an international airport. Hollywood tops the violent list and has four times as many visitors as residents on a Saturday night. Both are the denominator problem in a milder form than Downtown's, and both are reasons to read the counts and the context together rather than ranking the column.

No safety score. Not one number here ranks neighborhoods against each other, and there is no index combining violent and property crime into a single figure. The two behave differently, respond to different things, and matter differently to different households.

No comparison with other cities. Los Angeles records offences under NIBRS; San Francisco's categories are not the same categories. Putting them on one axis would be meaningless, and this book does not.

No crime trend. California's police agencies moved to NIBRS on a staggered schedule, which breaks the series across the transition. A chart showing crime rising or falling through those years would be measuring the paperwork.

Nothing about who. No victim or suspect characteristic appears anywhere in this book. The older Los Angeles crime file publishes victim descent and sex, and the NIBRS victims dataset is never fetched at all.

What to check yourself

- Read counts where the rate is withheld, and read the reason given.
- Separate the enforcement-driven column before you compare anywhere to anywhere.
- Go at night. A Friday at 11pm and a Sunday at 8am tell you things no dataset carries.
- Ask neighbours what actually happens, not whether the area is "safe" — the second question gets you an opinion and the first gets you information.

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Check your own tract, not your neighborhood

Highlights

- The median Los Angeles neighborhood sits at the 62.8th percentile of California for pollution burden. The range runs from the 9th to the 98th.
- The most polluted region is the Harbor (85.5th); the least, the North Valley (45.9th). Not the Westside, and not South Los Angeles.
- An earlier edition of this guide printed a score that made the Westside look like the cleanest air in the city and South Los Angeles the dirtiest. Most of that gap was a measurement of the residents, not the air.
- A percentile is a rank, not a dose, and one number for a neighborhood is true of none of its tracts.

This is the lens with the strongest research behind it and the weakest public awareness. Air quality and proximity to traffic have measurable effects on respiratory and cardiovascular health that are better established than most of what this book covers — and almost nobody checks them before buying.



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Where the air is actually worst

REGION POLLUTION BURDEN, CALIFORNIA PERCENTILE

REGION	POLLUTION BURDEN	WHAT THIS GUIDE USED TO PRINT
Harbor	85.5th	85.6th
Eastside	81.0th	75.7th
Central	73.2nd	52.0th
South Los Angeles	70.2nd	88.5th
Westside	59.0th	26.4th
South Valley	56.2nd	49.0th
North Valley	45.9th	64.1st

The right-hand column is CalEnviroScreen's composite, which this guide and its companion atlas printed as "environmental burden" until this edition. The composite multiplies pollution by a second half that describes the people who live somewhere — asthma, low birth weight, education, linguistic isolation, poverty, unemployment. California built it to send money to places that are both polluted and vulnerable, and for that job the multiplication is the point. As a description of the air at an address, it is half something else.

Read the two columns against each other. The Westside moves from the 26th to the 59th; South Los Angeles from the 88th to the 70th. The thirty-three points the Westside gains and the eighteen South Los Angeles loses are not pollution. They are income, education and health. Across all 114 neighborhoods, the old score ran 17 points above the real pollution burden in the cheapest third and 23 points below it in the dearest — a tilt that followed price almost exactly.

So this guide now prints pollution burden: OEHHA's own formula, which this project first reproduced exactly for all 9,106 tracts in California, re-run without one input. That input is lead, and the reason is two sections down.

At the extremes, Elysian Park sits at the 98.5th percentile and Chinatown at the 98.4th — both at the 98th for fine particulates, with Chinatown at the 95th for diesel and Elysian Park at the 94th for cleanup sites — and Beverly Crest at the 9th. Same city, same air basin.

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⚠️ Three ways a screening score will mislead you



A percentile is a rank, not a dose. "Worse than 80% of California" says nothing about whether an exposure is high in absolute terms, and California contains both the dirtiest air in the United States and some of the cleanest. The rank is only meaningful against this state.

Any single score hides the exposure. Even pollution burden averages a dozen different things, and a neighborhood can sit mid-table overall while being near the top of the state for one specific pollutant — North Hollywood's burden is the 68th percentile and its fine particulates the 92nd. Always read the components.

One number describes none of the tracts. A Los Angeles neighborhood is built from many census tracts and the screening tool scores each one separately. Mid-City's run from the 32nd percentile to the 98th. A single figure for the neighborhood is true of none of them, and where the range is wide the range is the finding. Every neighborhood entry in the companion atlas prints the range beside the average for this reason.

🔍 What is measured, and what is not

Measured, and published here: what is in the air, the water and the ground — diesel particulates, fine particulates, ozone, drinking water contaminants, traffic density, hazardous waste, cleanup sites, groundwater threats, solid waste, pesticides, toxic releases.

Measured, and deliberately not published here — including one thing this guide used to publish. The screening tool's lead indicator, "Children's Lead Risk from Housing", is not a lead measurement: by OEHHA's own description it is built 60:40 from the age of the housing and the share of low-income households with a child under six, plus a small blood-lead term. A household's children are a protected characteristic, and this guide already refuses to publish them; it cannot publish them relabelled as lead. For lead, the honest instrument is the year a building went up — residential lead paint was legal until 1978 — and, for an actual house, a test.

The other refused half is the screening tool's population characteristics, which is health outcomes — asthma, cardiovascular disease, low birth weight — and socioeconomic indicators. Those are facts about the people living somewhere rather than about the ground, they correlate strongly with protected characteristics, and attached to a place in a buyer's guide they work as a proxy whatever the intent. The refusal is printed in every neighborhood entry with its reason.

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What is not measured at all

Not measured at all, anywhere useful: indoor air, which is where you will spend most of your time and which depends on the building. Radon, which is a question about your specific house and is answered by a test. And distance to a specific freeway — the health evidence on living within a few hundred metres of a major road is strong and the effect falls off sharply, and a tract-level score cannot resolve it. You can measure that one yourself on a map in about a minute, and you should.

Fifteen degrees in twenty miles

Los Angeles is not one climate. The difference between a coastal neighborhood under the marine layer and a valley floor twenty miles inland is routinely fifteen degrees on a summer afternoon, and it compounds with tree cover, which this book does not carry at neighborhood level. If you are moving between the two, visit in August before you commit, and ask what the cooling costs.

What to check yourself

- [ ] Read the component indicators, not any single score — and never the CalEnviroScreen composite, which is half about the residents.
- [ ] Get the figure for your own tract where the neighborhood's range is wide.
- [ ] Measure the distance to the nearest major road yourself.
- [ ] Plan a radon test rather than looking for a radon score.
- [ ] Visit in August, if you are coming from the coast to the valley or the other way.

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THE AIR, THE GROUND, THE NOISE

Same city, same air basin.

What is measured at the tract is not the same as what is measured at the neighborhood — and the difference is the finding.

⚠ Noise, and where the data was hiding

HIGHLIGHTS

- **356,738 people in Los Angeles — 9.0% of residents — live with modelled road noise at 60 dB or more, and 143,489 at 70 or more.** Rail and aircraft add far fewer: 16,097 and 11,571 at 60 dB.
- **LAPD took 35,161 noise calls in twelve months.** An earlier edition of this guide said that number did not exist. It does; police file noise as code 507, and a search for the word "noise" cannot find a number.
- **88% of those calls are about amplified music and parties — and they come from different places than traffic noise.** The quietest roads in the city, in Beverly Crest and Hollywood Hills West, sit beside some of its highest party-call rates.
- **The two measures barely agree — a rank correlation of 0.16.** Noise is two problems, and you need to check for both.

Noise is one of the few things that reliably ruins a home, and this chapter used to say that Los Angeles publishes no data about it. That was wrong, and how it was wrong is worth a page, because you will meet the same trap in every city you ever look at.



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What happened the first time

The obvious source is the city's 311 service-request file, which is where most American cities log noise complaints. MyLA311 accepts 63 kinds of request, and exactly one concerns sound: "Nuisance Barking Dogs." Parties, amplified music, construction and car alarms are not 311 matters in Los Angeles. A search of the city's open-data catalog for "noise" returns a 2015 pedestrian survey and nothing else.

So this guide concluded that the calls went to the police and that the police published nothing. The second half was false. LAPD publishes every call for service — more than four million of them since January 2024, updated weekly, with older years going back to 2014. What it does not do is call anything "noise". It files noise under a number:

LAPD CODE	WHAT IT IS	CALLS, TWELVE MONTHS
507R	Amplified music ("radio")	17,122
507P	Party	13,788
507C	Construction	2,151
507F	Fireworks	1,755
507V	Vehicle alarm	219
507	Minor disturbance	90

The lesson, which is worth more than this chapter. A keyword search finds what an agency names, not what it records. Police, fire, courts and health departments file by code, and the code is not the word. When a source appears to be missing, the next question is not "where else?" but "what would they have called it?" — and the answer is usually in the agency's own code list, not in a catalog search box.

The 415 codes — "disturbing the peace" — are left out on purpose. Read the list and they are overwhelmingly people in conflict, armed or fighting, which is a different thing from noise and belongs in the crime chapter.

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⚖️ Two kinds of noise, measured two ways



Traffic, trains and aircraft are modelled by the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Transportation Noise Map, which estimates the 24-hour average sound level from every road, rail line and flight path in the country. Researchers at the University of Washington have counted how many people in every census tract live in each band of it, and this guide apportions those counts to neighborhoods exactly as it does census figures.

Everything human — parties, music, building sites, fireworks — appears only when somebody is bothered enough to phone the police.

They are not the same problem, and the data shows it. Across the 108 neighborhoods where both can be measured, the rank correlation between a neighborhood's police noise-call rate and its share of residents living with loud road noise is 0.16 — barely related at all.

Where the traffic is loudest (share of residents at 60 dB or more from roads): Chinatown 25.9%, Rancho Park 25.8%, Elysian Valley 23.4%, Vermont Vista 18.4%, Echo Park 17.7% — neighborhoods built tight against freeway corridors.

Where it is quietest (neighborhoods of 10,000 people or more): Beverly Crest 0.6%, Hollywood Hills West 1.8%, Reseda 1.8%, Northridge 2.8%.

Where the police get called most (noise calls per 1,000 residents): Hollywood Hills West 38.2, Venice 17.5, Beverly Grove 17.4, Fairfax 16.9, Hollywood 16.9, Beverly Crest 15.7. In Hollywood Hills West, 413 of its 600 calls were about parties.

Where they get called least: Playa Vista 2.2, Pacific Palisades 2.7, Cheviot Hills 3.8, Toluca Lake 3.8.

Put the two lists side by side and the point makes itself. The hills above Hollywood are the quietest roads in the city and among its noisiest nights. A buyer who checked only the traffic map would call them silent; a buyer who checked only the police calls would call them rowdy. Both are true, about different hours.

🪧 Aircraft, and where the planes actually are

Aircraft noise reaches far fewer people than traffic — 11,571 residents at 60 dB or more across the whole city — but it is concentrated. The largest numbers are under the Valley's airports, not LAX: Lake Balboa (2,608 people, 9.4% of residents) and Van Nuys (2,462) sit beside Van Nuys Airport, a general-aviation field busy with private jets and helicopters, and Sun Valley (1,963) lies under the approach to Hollywood Burbank. Westchester (1,871, 4.5%) and Playa del Rey (677, 6.0%) are the LAX neighborhoods.

The model is a 24-hour average, which flattens aircraft — a jet every two minutes at dawn and nothing at noon averages to less than it feels like. If a flight path matters to you, the airports publish their own contour maps: Los Angeles World Airports issues a quarterly map of LAX's 65 dB community noise contour, and the FAA publishes an annual summary of helicopter noise complaints in Los Angeles by ZIP code. Neither is a dataset this guide could apportion to neighborhoods — one is a PDF map, the other is by ZIP — so they are listed here as places to look rather than numbers to print.

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The twenty-four neighborhoods

NEIGHBORHOOD	ROAD 60 DB+	RAIL 60 DB+	AIRCRAFT 60 DB+	NOISE CALLS PER 1,000	CALLS	MOST COMMON CALL
Downtown	14.6%	2.9%	0.0%	withheld	1,693	amplified music
Hollywood	13.7%	0.0%	0.0%	16.9	1,244	amplified music
Venice	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	17.5	669	amplified music
Silver Lake	9.2%	0.0%	0.0%	9.2	268	amplified music
Koreatown	4.7%	0.0%	0.0%	7.5	784	amplified music
Highland Park	9.1%	0.9%	0.0%	10.5	535	amplified music
Los Feliz	7.5%	0.0%	0.0%	5.7	187	party
Echo Park	17.7%	0.0%	0.0%	11.0	368	amplified music
Sawtelle	13.7%	0.6%	0.2%	8.4	330	amplified music
San Pedro	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	7.0	579	amplified music
Studio City	10.9%	0.0%	0.0%	5.4	217	party
Westchester	8.6%	0.0%	4.5%	6.0	256	party
Van Nuys	6.9%	0.5%	2.2%	6.7	733	amplified music
North Hollywood	6.2%	0.5%	0.9%	10.7	831	amplified music
Woodland Hills	7.4%	0.0%	0.0%	6.3	453	party

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The twenty-four neighborhoods, continued



NEIGHBORHOOD	ROAD 60 DB+	RAIL 60 DB+	AIRCRAFT 60 DB+	NOISE CALLS PER 1,000	CALLS	MOST COMMON CALL
Sherman Oaks	12.2%	0.0%	0.0%	6.8	477	amplified music
Florence	7.9%	0.2%	0.0%	9.9	508	amplified music
Vermont Square	8.2%	0.0%	0.0%	10.5	526	amplified music
Historic South-Central	9.6%	0.2%	0.0%	13.1	640	amplified music
Mid-City	13.3%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1	552	amplified music
Sylmar	9.5%	0.4%	0.0%	9.5	794	party
Pacoima	11.5%	0.5%	0.0%	11.6	895	party
Sun Valley	9.7%	0.5%	2.7%	7.3	548	amplified music
Wilmington	11.2%	0.2%	0.0%	7.6	388	amplified music

Downtown's rate is withheld, for the same reason as its crime rate: 317,316 jobs against 61,902 residents, so dividing its 1,693 calls by the people who sleep there describes almost nobody who was there when the music started. The count is printed; the rate is not.

What each number is, and is not

The traffic figure is a model. It is built from modelled traffic volumes, rail schedules and flight tracks, and the Department of Transportation says plainly that it should not be used to judge the noise at an individual address. A neighborhood share is the scale it supports. The three sources are never added together, because the same person can be in the road band and the aircraft band at once.

The call figure counts callers. It records that somebody was bothered enough to phone the police, which depends on who is awake, who is renting, who expects to be answered and who has given up. It is not comparable with San Francisco, where noise goes to 311 instead — a different department, a different threshold for calling, and a different number entirely. A product that ranks the two cities against each other on "noise complaints" is comparing their switchboards.

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Neither measures the house

Neither measures the house. A neighborhood at 10% road noise contains streets at 0% and streets at 70 dB. The figure tells you whether to worry; only the street tells you whether you should.

The rule that survives the correction. The most dangerous missing dataset is the one missing in only some places, because then the places with data look worse than the places without. Los Angeles 311 still takes no noise complaints, and any national product that scores noise from 311 still ranks every Los Angeles neighborhood as near-silent. The data was always at the police department. The products never looked there — and neither, at first, did this book.

So how do you actually find out if somewhere is loud

You go and stand there — but now you know what to listen for.

What to check yourself

- [ ] Check both numbers for the neighborhood in the table above or in the companion atlas: one for traffic, one for people.
- [ ] Go three times: a weekday morning, a weekday evening, and after eleven on a Friday or Saturday. The traffic number is a daytime problem and the call number is a night-time one. The viewing is always on Sunday afternoon, which is the one time neither shows.
- [ ] Stand outside for ten minutes with your phone in your pocket. Count what passes. The freeway will be a constant floor under everything if it is close enough to matter.
- [ ] Look up. Police, news and medical helicopters are invisible on every map in this book. The FAA's helicopter complaint summaries by ZIP code are the closest public record.
- [ ] Find the nearest bar, venue, school, fire station and party house. The last one is a real category in Los Angeles: in the hills, the call data says, it is most of the problem.
- [ ] Open a window. Much of the city's housing is old and single-glazed — the housing-stock chapter has the figures — and the difference between a closed and an open window is most of the difference between a quiet and a loud house.
- [ ] Ask the neighbours, neutrally. "What's it like here at night?" gets a better answer than "is it noisy?"

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Checkpoint

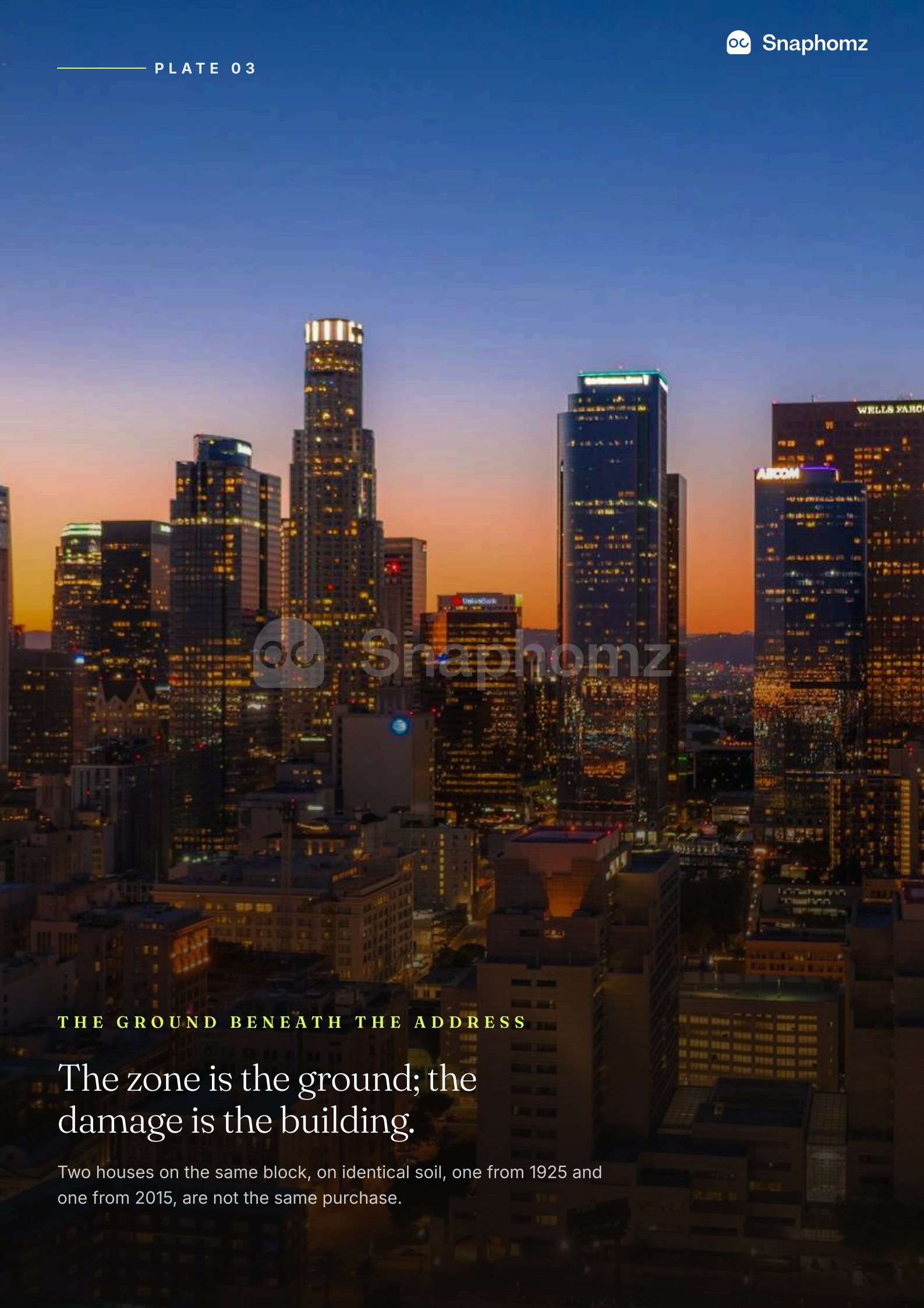


Noise

- [ ] What share of the neighborhood lives with loud road noise, and how close is the nearest freeway to the actual address?
- [ ] What is the police noise-call rate, and what are the calls about? Parties and music mean nights; construction means mornings for a year or two.
- [ ] Is there a flight path? Check the airport's own contour map, not the 24-hour average.
- [ ] Have I been to the address after eleven at night? Not the neighborhood. The address.
- [ ] What is the glazing? It is the cheapest thing on this list to fix and the one most likely to change how the house feels.

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THE GROUND BENEATH THE ADDRESS

The zone is the ground; the damage is the building.

Two houses on the same block, on identical soil, one from 1925 and one from 2015, are not the same purchase.

Get the insurance quote before you fall in love

HIGHLIGHTS

- **266,150 homes are in a mapped wildfire zone — 17% of the city, 48 of 114 neighborhoods.** Bel-Air and Beverly Crest are 100%.
- **479,770 homes are in a liquefaction zone, and 41,549 sit across an active fault trace.**
- **280,222 homes are below a dam — 180 times the number in a flood zone, and nobody reads that line.**

For most buyers the fire zone arrives through insurance long before it arrives through fire.

Here is the sentence that catches people. For most buyers in Los Angeles, the fire zone does not arrive as a fire. It arrives as a phone call from an insurer, three weeks before closing, and by then the house is already the house you want.

266,150 homes here are in a mapped wildfire zone — 17% of the city, across 48 of its 114 neighborhoods. 479,770 are in a liquefaction zone. 280,222 sit below a dam. If you read one chapter before making an offer, make it this one.



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The class matters, not just the zone

HOMES IN A FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONE

NEIGHBORHOOD	HOMES IN A FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONE
Hollywood Hills	14,460 — 100%
Eagle Rock	11,913 — 100%
Pacific Palisades	10,670 — 100%
Hollywood Hills West	8,669 — 100%
Bel-Air, Beverly Crest	100%, all Very High
Citywide	266,150 — 17%

The zones are classed Moderate, High and Very High, and the class matters — collapsing them into "in a fire zone" throws away the only part you can act on. Bel-Air and Beverly Crest are 100% Very High. Hollywood Hills is 100% across all three classes.

Three things a zone is not. It is not a prediction — it describes the hazard a location is exposed to over time, not the probability of a fire next year. It is not about your house: roof class, vent screening, eaves and the first five feet decide an ember-driven fire, and none of them is in the map. And it is not accurate to the metre; zones are drawn at quadrangle scale and a parcel near an edge has to be checked directly.

The part that costs money. For most buyers the fire zone arrives through insurance long before it arrives through fire. Insurance is a condition of lending, so an address that cannot be insured usually cannot be bought with a mortgage. The seller's premium is not your premium — rates are set at binding. Non-renewal is the most informative fact available about an address and it is in no dataset; the only way to learn it is to ask the seller. And California's FAIR Plan is a floor, not a substitute: it covers fire and a narrow set of perils, and ordinary coverage has to be bought alongside it.

The flood map is a map of the creeks

Only 1,549 Los Angeles homes sit in a FEMA special flood hazard area — 0.10% of the city, in nine neighborhoods. For a city on the Pacific with a port, that reads as impossible until you understand what the map is for.

A flood map is an insurance instrument, not a description of water. It maps the 1% annual chance riverine and coastal floodplain, inside which flood insurance is mandatory on a federally backed mortgage. It does not map rainfall and street flooding, it does not map the future, and **Zone X — most of what the file contains — is the designation for land outside the hazard area.**

What Los Angeles' flood map actually follows is its creeks. The shoreline and the port are essentially unmapped; the inland channels are not.

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The bigger water hazard is above you



280,222 Los Angeles homes — 18% of the city — sit inside an approved dam inundation boundary, 180 times the flood figure. Carthay is 100%, North Hills 98%, Lake Balboa 96%. These are mapped by the state, they are a statutory item on the disclosure you will be handed, and almost nobody reads that line.

The zone is the ground; the damage is the building

41,549 homes sit across a mapped active fault trace — an Alquist-Priolo zone — in 27 neighborhoods: Sawtelle 24%, Lake View Terrace 24%, Highland Park 22%, Sylmar 22%. An Alquist-Priolo zone is about rupture, not shaking. It marks where the ground surface itself may tear. Shaking reaches far beyond any fault zone, and being outside one tells you nothing about how hard a place will shake. What the zone does do is restrict new habitable building across the trace, trigger disclosure, and potentially block an addition, an ADU or a rebuild after a loss. If you are buying a house you intend to extend, ask about the setback before you buy it.

479,770 homes are in a liquefaction zone — 32% of the city. Valley Village, Florence, Watts and Playa Vista are each at 100%. And 39,735 are in an earthquake-induced landslide zone, concentrated in the hills: Bel-Air 64%, Beverly Crest 59%.

A zone of required investigation is a legal trigger, not a risk rating. California's liquefaction and landslide maps exist to oblige a builder to study the ground before adding to it. Being inside one does not rank your address against anyone else's.

The zone is the ground. The damage is the building. Two houses on the same block, on identical soil, one from 1925 and one from 2015, are not the same purchase. Ask the year built and the structural system before you ask anything else.

Read the disclosure the day it arrives

California's Natural Hazard Disclosure Statement is delivered in most residential sales and covers six items: special flood hazard area, area of potential flooding behind a dam, very high fire hazard severity zone, wildland fire area, earthquake fault zone and seismic hazard zone. Most states have nothing equivalent.

It has two limits. It is yes/no per item — no class, no share, no distance to the boundary. And it is usually prepared by a third-party vendor from the same public maps this book uses: a lookup, not an investigation.

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What to check yourself

Hazard and insurance

- [ ] Get the class for your parcel — Moderate, High or Very High — not a neighborhood label.
- [ ] Get a written insurance quote for the specific address before the inspection contingency expires, and ask the seller directly whether any carrier has declined or non-renewed.
- [ ] Read the dam inundation line on the disclosure. It reaches 180 times as many homes as the flood zone.
- [ ] In a fault zone, find out what the setback does to anything you plan to build.
- [ ] Ask the year built and the structural system, and whether a soft-storey retrofit was required and done.
- [ ] Read the disclosure the day it arrives, not at closing.
- [ ] Treat "no mapped zone" as not measured here, never as safe.

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THE SCHOOLS, THE PERMITS, THE STREET

A neighborhood does not have a school quality.

The school is the unit, and there is no substitute for looking up the specific one.

A school rating mostly measures who already goes there

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Across 773 Los Angeles schools, results and socioeconomic disadvantage correlate at r = −0.76 — the strongest relationship in this book.**
- **Aggregate those schools to their neighborhoods and the correlation with neighborhood median income is +0.81.** A neighborhood's average school result is, to a first approximation, a restatement of its income.
- **And yet inside Palms the schools run from 4.3% to 86.3% meeting standard — an 82-point spread in one neighborhood.** There is no such thing as "the schools in a neighborhood".
- **446 of the 773 schools — 58% — serve intakes that are more than 90% socioeconomically disadvantaged.** Some of them post results above the city average anyway.

There is one number in this chapter and everything else is a footnote to it. Across the 773 Los Angeles public schools that publish results, how well students score and how many of them are socioeconomically disadvantaged correlate at r = −0.76. That is the strongest relationship anywhere in this book — stronger than anything in crime, housing or hazard — and it means a raw school score is mostly a measurement of who already walks through the door.



Roughly 58% of the variation in results between Los Angeles schools is explained by intake, before anything the school does.

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Aggregate to a neighborhood and it gets worse

Take each of the 104 neighborhoods with schools in them, average the results of the schools located there, and compare that average to the neighborhood's median household income. The correlation is r = +0.81.

Squared, that is about 65% of the variation between neighborhoods' school averages explained by income alone. A "neighborhood school score" is, to a very good approximation, a second way of printing the neighborhood's income — which means paying a housing premium for it is paying twice for the same thing.

NEIGHBORHOOD	SCHOOL AVERAGE	MEDIAN INCOME
Cheviot Hills	90.4%	$200,000
Hollywood Hills West	90.4%	$146,861
Bel-Air	84.0%	$200,000
Beverlywood	76.0%	$193,230
…		
Downtown	23.6%	$62,203
Harvard Heights	22.0%	$56,220
Chesterfield Square	20.4%	$80,700
Gramercy Park	15.5%	$68,838

The comparison with San Francisco is instructive. The same calculation there gives r = +0.47 across 34 neighborhoods — much weaker. Not because San Francisco is fairer, but because SFUSD assigns by lottery across the whole city, which mechanically decouples the school a child attends from the neighborhood they live in. Los Angeles Unified runs attendance zones. The tighter correlation here is partly a measurement of that difference in policy, not only of inequality.

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But a neighborhood does not have "a school quality"



This is the part that the aggregate hides, and it is the most practically useful finding in the chapter.

NEIGHBORHOOD	SCHOOLS	WORST	BEST	SPREAD
Palms	6	4.3%	86.3%	82.0 points
Chatsworth	9	0.0%	76.9%	76.9 points
Mar Vista	7	8.3%	83.0%	74.7 points
Valley Village	5	9.1%	80.3%	71.2 points
North Hollywood	11	26.8%	97.7%	70.9 points

In Palms, one school has 4.3% of students meeting standard and another has 86.3%. They are a few streets apart. The neighborhood's "average" of the two describes neither, and any product that prints one number for Palms is throwing away the only information that would have helped you.

The same is true where it matters most. Downtown's ten schools run from 3.8% to 61.9%. Historic South-Central's twenty-one run from 1.6% to 54.6%. Westchester's ten run from 20.5% to 81.2%. Neighborhood averages are the wrong unit. The school is the unit, and there is no substitute for looking up the specific one.

The schools that beat their intake

446 of the 773 schools in this dataset — 58% — have intakes more than 90% socioeconomically disadvantaged. Given a correlation of −0.76 you would expect all of them to post low results. Most do. Some emphatically do not:

SCHOOL	MEETING STANDARD	DISADVANTAGED INTAKE	STUDENTS TESTED
Hoover Street Elementary	68.5%	97.3%	259
Math, Science, & Technology Magnet	63.4%	91.3%	134
Alliance Dr. Olga Mohan High	61.9%	96.2%	116
Charles H. Kim Elementary	60.8%	95.2%	208
ICEF Vista Middle Academy	60.4%	97.4%	193

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The school on the corner may not be yours

This is a table of published results, not a recommendation, and the cohorts are small enough that a single year moves them. But it is the direct answer to the obvious objection to everything above: if intake explains 58% of the variation, something else explains the other 42%, and these are schools sitting in it.

It is also the reason this book publishes results only beside the intake they track, never as a grade and never as a ranking. A ranking would place every school in that table near the bottom.

Los Angeles Unified does run attendance zones — unlike San Francisco — but they are redrawn, they do not follow neighborhood boundaries, and magnet, charter and permit-with-transfer places move a large share of children out of their zoned school.

So everything in this book is "schools located here", which is a weaker and different claim from "your school". Both the record and the profiles say so on every schools field.

Do not pay a premium for a score

Paying a housing premium for a neighborhood because of a school score is the most expensive mistake in this chapter, for four reasons:

1. The score is mostly intake — r = −0.76 at school level.
2. At neighborhood level it is mostly income — r = +0.81 — so you are paying for the income of your neighbours, twice.
3. The neighborhood average may be nowhere near the specific school, which can differ by 82 points inside one neighborhood.
4. Assignment may not follow the address, and all of it can change while your mortgage cannot.

Checkpoint

- [ ] Confirm assignment with the district for the specific address, in writing. Not the listing, not a school-rating website, not the agent.
- [ ] Look up the individual school, never the neighborhood average. This chapter's whole argument is that the average is the wrong unit.
- [ ] Read the result beside the intake. A school at 60% with a 95% disadvantaged intake and a school at 60% with a 20% disadvantaged intake are not the same school.
- [ ] Prefer growth measures to levels if you can get them. A school moving students forward is a different thing from a school that enrolled them already ahead.
- [ ] Ask about magnet and choice deadlines. They fall long before you will be thinking about them.
- [ ] Visit on a school day and ask to see a classroom.

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WHAT IS BEING BUILT NEXT TO YOU

Seven in ten new homes are in someone's back garden.

A city of four million is densifying through its own back gardens, and no skyline shows it.

Seven in ten new homes are in someone's back garden

HIGHLIGHTS

- **241,721 permits since January 2023, for a net 43,290 new homes.**
- **30,146 of them — 70% — are accessory dwelling units.** Los Angeles is densifying through its own back gardens.
- **Two different cities at once: towers in Koreatown, granny flats in Van Nuys.**
- **A filed permit is an intention, not a building.**

The most important thing happening to housing in Los Angeles is invisible from the street, and it is happening behind about thirty thousand houses.

The city issued 241,721 building permits since January 2023, netting 43,290 new homes. 30,146 of them — seventy percent — are accessory dwelling units: granny flats, garage conversions, backyard cottages. A city of four million is densifying through its own back gardens, and no skyline shows it.



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Two completely different cities at once

This is the most important thing happening to Los Angeles housing and it is almost invisible from the street.

NEIGHBORHOOD	NET NEW HOMES	OF WHICH ADUS
Koreatown	+3,105	174
Westlake	+2,735	181
East Hollywood	+1,861	260
Woodland Hills	+1,824	787
Van Nuys	+1,716	888
Westchester	+1,714	402
North Hollywood	+1,335	845
Citywide	+43,290	30,146

Two completely different things are happening at once.

In the central neighborhoods — Koreatown, Westlake, East Hollywood — it is ground-up apartment buildings. Koreatown's 3,105 net homes include just 174 ADUs.

In the Valley it is back gardens. Van Nuys added 888 accessory units, North Hollywood 845, Woodland Hills 787. Sun Valley permitted 2,154 accessory units against a net total of only +247, because the rest of its activity was demolition.

A city that adds seventy percent of its housing through existing owners building in their own gardens is densifying in a way no zoning map predicts and no skyline shows.



One thing this city gets right

A technical note that is worth a paragraph because it is unusual.

Most permit files make you infer how many homes a project adds, and in San Francisco the obvious method invents housing: its proposed_units column means homes being built on a new-construction permit and homes already in the building on an alteration, so differencing the two produced 10,155 phantom homes in one neighborhood from two real permits. Los Angeles publishes the net change directly, with accessory units broken out. Nothing has to be inferred. Same permission system, two publishers, and only one of them leaves that trap lying around.

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Read a permit as a floor, never a forecast



A filed permit is an intention. Permits are withdrawn, expire and are refused. Read them as the floor of what is coming and the ceiling of what anyone has committed to — never as a forecast.

Zoning is the ceiling; permits are the floor; and they diverge. A neighborhood zoned for a great deal of change can receive none of it, and a neighborhood zoned for almost nothing can transform because one large site came up. The two look identical on a price chart and are opposite situations for anyone planning to be somewhere for a decade.

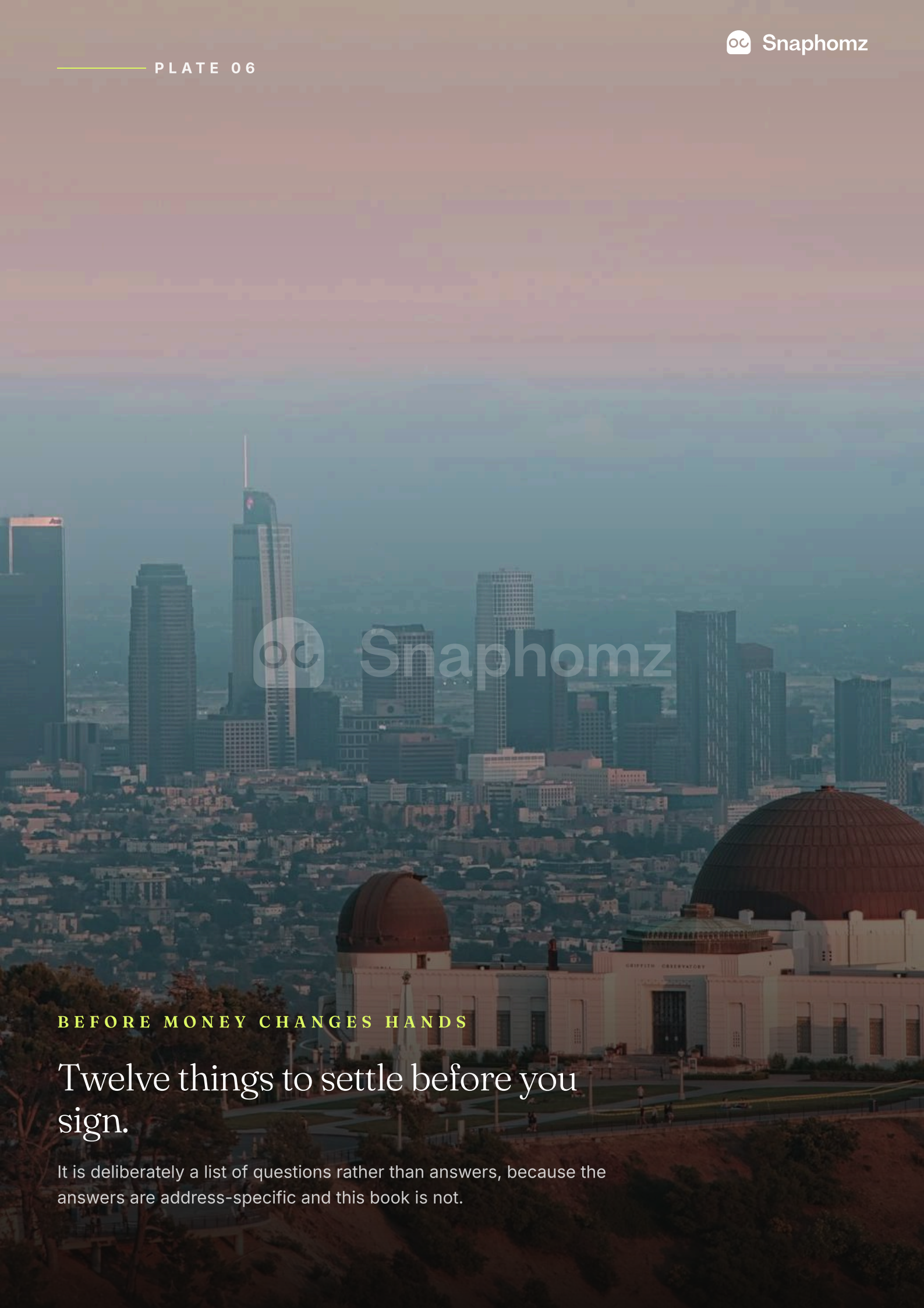
This book does not carry Los Angeles zoning. The permit file records a zone code, but counting zones from permits tells you what is being built on, not what the city is zoned for — and the divergence between those two is exactly the thing worth knowing. Rather than approximate it, the figure is withheld. Read the zoning for your parcel yourself, and for the parcels around it. A surface car park zoned for six storeys is a six-storey building that has not happened yet.

What to check yourself

- [ ] Read the zoning for three parcels: yours, the ones adjoining, and anything across the street that is currently low-rise.
- [ ] Look at what is currently filed nearby, not just what is built.
- [ ] If you are buying partly for the garden, check what an ADU would require — and whether a fault zone or a hazard setback rules it out.
- [ ] Walk the main commercial street and count the empty units. It leads residential change by years and no dataset carries it.

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BEFORE MONEY CHANGES HANDS

Twelve things to settle before you sign.

It is deliberately a list of questions rather than answers, because the answers are address-specific and this book is not.

Twelve things to settle before you sign

HIGHLIGHTS

- **The property tax bill you inherit is not the one the seller pays.** Across the 114 neighborhoods the median effective rate is 0.591% of value, but it runs from 0.350% in Windsor Square to 0.923% in Downtown — and the low end means long-held homes, not a bargain available to you.
- **479,770 homes in Los Angeles — 31% of every home in the city — sit in a mapped liquefaction zone.** It is the most widespread mapped hazard here and the one buyers ask about least.
- **Only 1,549 homes are in a mapped FEMA flood zone.** That is 0.1% of the stock, and it should make you suspicious rather than relieved.
- **Every transit figure in this book is a floor, because only LA Metro's feed is counted.** If you are moving to the Westside or the Valley, a municipal operator probably serves your street and does not appear here.

This is the practical chapter. Everything above tells you how to read a neighborhood; this is the list to work through once you have found a specific address and before money changes hands. It is deliberately a list of questions rather than answers, because the answers are address-specific and this book is not.



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1. Re-run the tax number for your purchase price

Under Proposition 13 a property is reassessed when it changes hands, so the figure on the seller's bill tells you about their purchase date, not your future cost. The spread in this book is the evidence: the neighborhoods with the lowest effective rates — Windsor Square at 0.350%, Baldwin Hills/Crenshaw at 0.367%, Pico-Union at 0.371%, Elysian Park at 0.386% — are the ones where owners have held longest. The highest are where homes have turned over recently or were built recently: Downtown at 0.923%, Sepulveda Basin at 0.899%, Porter Ranch at 0.834%.

The median bill across the city is $5,540 and runs from $2,507 to $10,001. Yours will be computed from what you pay. Add any special assessment, any Mello-Roos district and any bond measure on top. The chapter on what it costs works the arithmetic.

2. Get the insurance quote before you are emotionally committed

Not an estimate. A quote, on the actual address. 266,150 homes in the city are in a mapped wildfire zone — and in the hills it is most of the neighborhood, not a corner of it: 94% of Highland Park, 81% of Silver Lake, 77% of Los Feliz, 61% of Studio City. An address in a Very High severity zone can be declined by the standard market, which puts you in the surplus lines market or the state FAIR Plan at a materially different price.

This is the single most common way a Los Angeles purchase goes wrong late, and it is entirely preventable by making one phone call early. The fire, flood and quake chapter is the one to read first.

3. Read the hazard disclosure, then read what it leaves out

California requires a Natural Hazard Disclosure. Here is what is mapped across the city, so you know what the form can and cannot be about:

MAPPED HAZARD	HOMES	SHARE OF THE CITY'S 1,537,677
Liquefaction	479,770	31.2%
Dam inundation	280,222	18.2%
Wildfire severity zone	266,150	17.3%
Active fault trace	41,549	2.7%
Landslide	39,735	2.6%
FEMA flood zone	1,549	0.1%

Two things to take from that table.

Liquefaction is the big one and nobody asks about it. Nearly a third of the city's homes are on ground mapped as liable to behave like a liquid in a strong earthquake. In Florence it is 96% of homes, in Sherman Oaks 86%, in Venice 83%.

The flood row is too small to believe. 1,549 homes in a city of a million and a half, in a basin that floods, is not a description of flood risk — it is a description of where FEMA has drawn and updated maps. Storm-drain capacity, debris flow after a fire and street flooding are all real here and none of them are in that number. Treat a clean flood disclosure as the absence of a mapped designation, not the absence of water.

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🔍 4. Ask what is not in the disclosure at all



Three of the twenty-four neighborhoods profiled in this guide — Wilmington, Sun Valley and Historic South-Central — carry almost no mapped physical hazard and carry pollution burdens at the 84.9th, 86.2nd and 80.7th percentiles of California. Their burden is industrial: diesel, hazardous waste, cleanup sites, solid waste. None of that is on a hazard disclosure form. The air, heat and ground chapter is where to go, and the instruction there is to check your own census tract rather than your neighborhood, because the variation inside a neighborhood is often larger than the gap between neighborhoods.

✒️ 5. Confirm the school assignment with the district, in writing

Attendance boundaries are not neighborhood boundaries, they are redrawn, and magnet and choice programmes mean the nearest school is often not the assigned one. This book will not tell you which school you are in; the district will. The schools chapter explains why a published school rating mostly describes the families already enrolled, which is the single most misread number in residential real estate.

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6. Work out the actual transit situation, not the one in this book

Every transit figure here counts LA Metro only. LADOT's DASH and Commuter Express, Big Blue Bus, Culver CityBus, Foothill Transit and the other municipal operators all run inside the City of Los Angeles and are not in these counts. The record says so on every transit field. The shortfall is largest on the Westside and in the Valley.

So the stop density in this book is a floor. For a specific address, check the operators that actually serve it — and then check the schedule, because San Pedro averages 4.9 scheduled departures per stop in the morning peak and Downtown averages 30.0. A stop on the map is not a service.



7. Drive the commute at the hour you will drive it

Mean commute times in this book run from 23.7 minutes in Sawtelle to 37.5 in Florence, and they are averages over everyone in the tract, including people who work from home three days a week. They are not your commute. Drive it on a Tuesday at eight and again at six.



8. Find out what can be built next to you

The city has permitted a net 43,290 additional homes since 2023, and 30,146 of them are accessory dwelling units. If the house you are buying has a deep lot, so does your neighbour. The what's-being-built chapter has the regional breakdown; the thing to do for a specific address is to look up open permits on adjacent parcels, which the city publishes.

Note also that this book publishes no zoning land-share figure at all. The reason is printed in the record: the zone codes we hold are counted from permits, which describe what is being built on, not what the city is zoned for. The two diverge. For a specific parcel, the city's zoning information map is the source, and it is free.



9. Go at night, and go in August

Noise comes in two kinds and the noise chapter has a number for each: the share of residents living with loud road, rail and aircraft noise, and the rate at which neighbors phone the police about parties and music. They barely agree — the quietest roads in the city sit beside some of its busiest party nights — and neither describes a specific street. Check both numbers, then go after eleven on a Friday.

Heat is the same kind of gap in a different direction. A viewing in March tells you nothing about a west-facing room in a 1950s house with no central air in August, and the Valley neighborhoods in this book run considerably hotter than the coastal ones. Ask what the cooling is and what it costs to run.

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10. Count the empty houses on the street yourself



37.0% of the city's 117,438 vacant homes — 43,418 of them — fall into the census's residual "other vacant" category, which is neither for sale, for rent, seasonal nor just sold. In parts of South and East Los Angeles it is most of the local vacancy: 85% in Manchester Square, 82% in Central-Alameda, 74% in El Sereno. Nobody publishes why. If shuttered buildings on a street would change your decision, the only instrument is your own eyes and a conversation.

11. Decide what you will do about the commercial street

The counts in the twenty-four neighborhoods are counts of business registrations, not of doors you would recognise. Wilmington has 35 culture and entertainment businesses and Sherman Oaks has 2,581; Florence has 0 bars and 48 grocery stores. Those gaps are real, but a registration count cannot tell you whether the street feels alive. Walk the oldest addresses listed for the neighborhood — the oldest-businesses chapter explains how that list is built and what it is worth.

12. Write the dealbreakers down before you look at anything else

This is the instruction the choosing chapter opens with and it belongs here too. Decide, in writing, before you see a house you love: the maximum commute, the minimum bedrooms, whether a Very High fire zone is acceptable at any price, whether you will accept an unmapped industrial burden, and what the insurance quote has to come in under.

People do not abandon their criteria because the criteria were wrong. They abandon them because they saw a kitchen. Writing them down first is the cheapest protection in this book.

Checkpoint

- [ ] Quote the insurance on the address. Before the offer.
- [ ] Re-compute the tax at your purchase price, plus assessments.
- [ ] Read the hazard disclosure; separately ask about liquefaction, which is the city's most widespread mapped hazard.
- [ ] Check the pollution indicators for your tract, not your neighborhood — the components, not a single score.
- [ ] Confirm the school assignment with the district in writing.
- [ ] Identify every transit operator on the street, then read the timetable.
- [ ] Drive the commute at the real hour.
- [ ] Pull open permits on the adjacent parcels.
- [ ] Check both noise numbers — traffic and police calls — then visit after dark, and in the heat.
- [ ] Ask one long-standing local business how the street has changed.

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📋 Write your dealbreakers down before you look at anything

HIGHLIGHTS

- Decide in three passes: gates, then trade-offs, then the visit. Never a score.
- A gate is binary, unfixable and yours. Two or three is normal; nine means they are preferences.
- Compare on the two or three things that vary between your candidates, not all sixteen chapters.
- Visit at five different hours. The weekday midday one is the one renters never bother with and buyers regret skipping.

There are 114 neighborhoods in this book and you are going to live in one. This chapter is about getting from the first number to the second, and its first job is to talk you out of the thing that feels most natural: adding everything up.

⚖️ Why there is no score anywhere in this book

The lenses in this guide are not the same kind of thing. Some are gates: true or false, and false ends the conversation. Some are trade-offs: continuous, and yours to weigh. A weighted sum treats a gate as tradeable — it lets a good restaurant count offset an uninsurable address — which is exactly backwards.

So the decision runs in three passes, in this order.

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Pass one: the dealbreakers



A gate is binary, unfixable, and yours specifically. Not “bad” — disqualifying for you. The test is whether you can do anything about it after you move in.

CANDIDATE GATE	WHY IT IS A GATE
Insurance unavailable at any price	You cannot buy your way out, and it blocks most lending
A hazard you could not absorb financially	Liquefaction and fault zones do not get fixed
Requires a car you will not have	A daily condition, not an occasional one
A commute above your real tolerance	Not your stated tolerance — the one you will still accept in year three
Childcare you cannot actually get	Availability, not distance
Above your budget once carrying costs are added	Reassessed tax, insurance, assessments, age-appropriate maintenance

Write yours down before you look at candidates. A gate discovered after you have fallen for a place stops being a gate, which is a fact about people rather than about houses. Two or three is normal. If you have nine, they are preferences.

⚖️ Pass two: the trade-offs

What survives the gates gets compared — on the two or three things that actually vary between your candidates, not on all fourteen chapters of this book.

Four rules carry over from everything above:

- **Compare like with like.** Same boundary, same vintage, same denominator.
- **Read components, not composites.** North Hollywood's pollution burden is the 68th percentile; its fine particulates are the 92nd. And never read the CalEnviroScreen composite as a fact about a place: half of it is about the people who live there.
- **Check the margin.** A difference inside two overlapping margins of error is not a difference.
- **Apply each chapter's own correction.** School results beside intake. Crime split from enforcement. Business counts read as registrations.

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Pass three: go and stand there

No dataset in this book replaces this, and the pattern is not negotiable.

WHEN	WHAT IT REVEALS
Weekday, 8–9am	Commute reality, school traffic, parking as people leave
Weekday, 6–8pm	Parking when everyone is home — the number that matters. Cooking smells, noise through walls, whether the block feels comfortable after dark
Friday or Saturday night	Bars, restaurants, music, the 2am emptying-out
Sunday morning	The baseline. What is open, what is walkable
Weekday, midday	Construction, deliveries, collections, and what the block does when it is empty

Two additions that cost nothing: stand still and silent for two minutes in the room you would sleep in, and open the windows. Every viewing happens with them closed, and you will not live that way in August.

The same data, two households, opposite answers

Two people reading this book about the same three neighborhoods should often reach different conclusions, and that is the design working.

A car-free couple working Downtown have a gate — the car — that rules out most of the North Valley however attractive its prices and its 68% owner-occupancy. A family of four with two cars, a child and no capacity to absorb an uninsured loss has a different gate — hazard exposure — and it moves Bel-Air and the Hollywood Hills to the front of the queue for scrutiny rather than the front of the queue for viewing.

Neither is right. They have different gates, so they get different answers from identical data, and any product that ranked those neighborhoods would have had to be wrong for one of them.

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The last word

This book cannot tell you which one to buy, and that is deliberate. A verdict is a function of your constraints and it does not have them.



What it can do is make sure that when you choose, you are choosing with the real numbers, that you know which of them are weak, and that nothing has been hidden from you — including the things this book declined to measure, which are listed on the opening pages with their reasons.

KEEP IN MIND

There is no score anywhere in this book, and there never will be. The decision runs in three passes — gates, then trade-offs, then the visit — and the last of the three cannot be done from a dataset.

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THE 114, AT A GLANCE

Every neighborhood, grouped, never ranked.

The table that follows is a reference, not a verdict — it is not ranked and never will be.

 The 114, at a glance

Every neighborhood in the City of Los Angeles as the Los Angeles Times' Mapping L.A. defines it, grouped by Area Planning Commission and then alphabetical. This table is not ranked and never will be.

Hazard flags: F wildfire · Q earthquake fault · L liquefaction · S landslide · W flood · D dam inundation. A flag means at least one home sits in a mapped zone; the share is in the atlas volume. A dash means nothing is mapped here, which is not the same as safe.

 Central

NEIGHBORHOOD	PEOPLE	VALUE	OWN	JOBS/WKR	EAT	HAZARDS
Beverly Grove	21,096	$1,508k	26%	2.94	170	LD
Carthay	4,747	$2,000k+	44%	2.42	27	LD
Chinatown	18,460	$821k	5%	1.71	93	FLS
Downtown	61,902	$757k	10%	11.32	881	LS
East Hollywood	62,676	$1,010k	8%	1.03	227	WD
Fairfax	12,366	$1,821k	29%	1.82	133	LD
Griffith Park	4	—	—	4.88	5	FQLS
Hancock Park	10,085	$2,000k+	40%	1.33	41	D

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The 114, at a glance

NEIGHBORHOOD	PEOPLE	VALUE	OWN	JOBS/WKR	EAT	HAZARDS
Hollywood	72,983	$998k	8%	1.44	493	FQLD
Hollywood Hills	21,572	$1,869k	43%	0.83	36	FQLSD
Hollywood Hills West	14,284	$2,000k+	61%	0.42	37	FQLS
Koreatown	102,669	$852k	7%	1.07	599	D
Larchmont	8,214	$1,488k	27%	0.39	60	D
Los Feliz	32,730	$1,712k	26%	0.47	108	FQLS
Mid-Wilshire	44,372	$1,490k	18%	1.03	146	D
Pico-Robertson	18,231	$1,837k	22%	0.76	91	QLD
Pico-Union	36,367	$785k	10%	0.59	198	W
Westlake	108,370	$810k	6%	1.47	282	—
Windsor Square	5,366	$1,994k	40%	1.50	27	D

East Los Angeles

NEIGHBORHOOD	PEOPLE	VALUE	OWN	JOBS/WKR	EAT	HAZARDS
Atwater Village	13,533	$1,163k	35%	0.96	58	FQL
Boyle Heights	88,808	$628k	24%	0.87	279	LS
Cypress Park	8,204	$793k	34%	0.74	28	FL
Eagle Rock	32,772	$1,186k	55%	0.62	112	FQLSD
Echo Park	33,619	$1,151k	26%	0.74	110	FLS
El Sereno	38,918	$778k	51%	0.54	69	FLS
Elysian Park	2,128	$878k	11%	0.70	5	FLS
Elysian Valley	6,584	$868k	41%	0.55	14	FL
Glassell Park	21,459	$1,021k	43%	0.64	74	FQLSD
Highland Park	50,043	$981k	40%	0.30	131	FQLSD
Lincoln Heights	26,568	$671k	26%	0.81	88	FLSD
Montecito Heights	16,200	$742k	61%	0.21	19	FLSD

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 The 114, at a glance

NEIGHBORHOOD	PEOPLE	VALUE	OWN	JOBS/WKR	EAT	HAZARDS
Mount Washington	13,195	$1,202k	62%	0.15	9	FLS
Silver Lake	29,840	$1,452k	38%	0.40	137	FLSWD

 South Los Angeles

NEIGHBORHOOD	PEOPLE	VALUE	OWN	JOBS/WKR	EAT	HAZARDS
Adams-Normandie	16,587	$900k	23%	0.43	37	L
Arlington Heights	19,343	$1,076k	17%	0.38	62	D
Baldwin Hills/Crenshaw	32,238	$915k	32%	0.65	72	FQLS
Broadway-Manchester	28,778	$545k	32%	0.20	43	L
Central-Alameda	42,707	$543k	31%	0.62	83	L
Chesterfield Square	7,429	$621k	52%	0.70	24	L
Exposition Park	33,699	$730k	24%	2.22	69	L
Florence	52,133	$558k	29%	0.43	157	L
Gramercy Park	9,933	$670k	64%	0.33	31	—
Green Meadows	34,822	$547k	43%	0.27	53	L
Harvard Heights	17,659	$968k	16%	0.61	93	—
Harvard Park	11,442	$608k	49%	0.16	25	L
Historic South-Central	49,148	$593k	19%	0.96	145	L
Hyde Park	35,687	$782k	46%	0.40	85	QLW
Jefferson Park	23,760	$910k	31%	0.37	51	LW
Leimert Park	12,316	$979k	39%	0.63	47	L
Manchester Square	13,235	$658k	46%	0.19	38	L
Mid-City	48,145	$1,195k	33%	0.67	155	QLD
South Park	34,441	$602k	24%	0.33	76	L
University Park	24,044	$853k	7%	1.28	120	—
Vermont Knolls	23,431	$604k	22%	0.29	42	L

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The 114, at a glance

NEIGHBORHOOD	PEOPLE	VALUE	OWN	JOBS/WKR	EAT	HAZARDS
Vermont Square	51,385	$656k	36%	0.28	81	L
Vermont Vista	26,048	$560k	42%	0.22	43	L
Vermont-Slauson	30,385	$592k	34%	0.37	65	L
Watts	38,737	$500k	30%	0.28	44	L
West Adams	21,276	$917k	34%	0.50	61	LWD

Harbor

NEIGHBORHOOD	PEOPLE	VALUE	OWN	JOBS/WKR	EAT	HAZARDS
Harbor City	25,116	$648k	47%	0.66	50	FL
Harbor Gateway	39,220	$706k	40%	1.91	100	QL
San Pedro	86,075	$800k	44%	0.38	194	FLSD
Wilmington	51,789	$601k	37%	0.62	100	FLW

West Los Angeles

NEIGHBORHOOD	PEOPLE	VALUE	OWN	JOBS/WKR	EAT	HAZARDS
Bel-Air	7,165	$2,000k+	75%	0.84	5	FLS
Beverly Crest	10,174	$2,000k+	86%	0.48	11	FLS
Beverlywood	6,583	$2,000k+	70%	0.30	5	Q
Brentwood	33,307	$2,000k+	52%	1.20	73	FQLS
Century City	6,548	$1,489k	57%	17.50	61	Q
Cheviot Hills	6,892	$2,000k+	74%	0.54	15	SD
Del Rey	29,890	$1,307k	40%	0.62	69	LD
Mar Vista	35,440	$1,773k	39%	0.31	66	LD
Pacific Palisades	23,717	$2,000k+	78%	0.63	38	FQLSD
Palms	40,645	$1,186k	14%	0.54	132	D
Playa Vista	14,465	$1,292k	33%	2.53	34	LD

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Playa del Rey	11,311	$1,086k	45%	0.27	22	LSW
Rancho Park	4,648	$1,646k	47%	1.63	17	D
Sawtelle	39,200	$1,161k	22%	1.88	228	QLD
Venice	34,342	$2,000k+	36%	1.10	187	LD
West Los Angeles	14,873	$1,365k	40%	0.82	70	QLD
Westchester	43,232	$1,336k	48%	3.87	223	L
Westwood	54,610	$1,460k	33%	4.34	146	FQLSD

South Valley

NEIGHBORHOOD	PEOPLE	VALUE	OWN	JOBS/WKR	EAT	HAZARDS
Canoga Park	61,379	$640k	27%	0.82	239	FLD
Encino	48,051	$1,334k	59%	1.36	143	FLSD
Lake Balboa	25,367	$776k	65%	0.63	72	LD
North Hollywood	74,657	$826k	21%	0.55	265	L
Reseda	68,361	$685k	51%	0.47	168	LD
Sepulveda Basin	292	$816k	58%	4.45	8	LD
Sherman Oaks	68,816	$1,294k	39%	0.87	253	FLSD
Studio City	40,516	$1,630k	44%	2.29	187	FLSD
Tarzana	37,624	$1,219k	57%	0.94	131	FLSD
Toluca Lake	9,692	$1,306k	38%	0.47	44	FL
Valley Glen	56,338	$903k	34%	0.52	188	LD
Valley Village	27,872	$1,100k	28%	0.38	69	L
Van Nuys	110,010	$718k	24%	1.07	365	LD
West Hills	42,068	$929k	81%	0.72	52	FLSD
Winnetka	51,218	$721k	55%	0.41	99	LD
Woodland Hills	72,664	$1,090k	54%	1.81	226	FLS

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 The 114, at a glance

 North Valley

NEIGHBORHOOD	PEOPLE	VALUE	OWN	JOBS/WKR	EAT	HAZARDS
Arleta	32,117	$641k	75%	0.20	52	D
Chatsworth	48,985	$894k	68%	1.59	118	FLS
Chatsworth Reservoir	82	$1,582k	92%	0.04	—	FL
Granada Hills	55,856	$871k	68%	0.48	126	FQLSD
Hansen Dam	33	$1,096k	96%	0.75	2	FL
Lake View Terrace	12,236	$699k	80%	0.20	13	FQLS
Mission Hills	19,225	$654k	73%	1.15	48	LD
North Hills	57,204	$728k	46%	0.41	109	SD
Northridge	64,970	$897k	47%	1.07	261	LD
Pacoima	74,774	$589k	58%	0.53	177	FQD
Panorama City	65,328	$580k	35%	0.53	166	D
Porter Ranch	24,591	$982k	87%	0.38	32	FLS
Shadow Hills	14,672	$908k	76%	0.96	23	FLSWD
Sun Valley	73,592	$691k	48%	0.73	205	FSD
Sunland	16,087	$717k	61%	0.30	38	FQLSD
Sylmar	80,568	$631k	66%	0.52	140	FQLSD
Tujunga	27,926	$807k	54%	0.35	59	FQLSD

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PLATE 02



WHERE EVERY NUMBER CAME FROM

Every figure can be checked by you.

Nothing here sits behind a paywall or a licence — the sources are free, public and primary.

Where every number came from

Every figure in this guide comes from a free, public, primary source, and every one of them can be checked by you. This page is generated from the same record the rest of the book is generated from, so it cannot drift out of date relative to the figures it describes.



The record holds 114 neighborhood profiles. Each carries its value, its source, its vintage and its basis — how directly the number was measured — and no field is ever left empty. Where something could not be established, the field holds the reason instead.

The sources

SOURCE	WHAT IT GIVES	THIS BOOK VINTAGE
LEHD LODES8 WAC and RAC, ca_*_S000_JT00_2023	Jobs by workplace and by residence, by industry and earnings band, at census-block level	2023
LA Metro GTFS static (gitlab.com/LACMTA) — LA Metro bus, LA Metro rail	Stop locations and scheduled departures	fetched 2026-09-13

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Where every number came from

SOURCE	WHAT IT GIVES	THIS BOOK VINTAGE
City of Los Angeles — Listing of Active Businesses	Every business registered with the city, with the date its location registered	2026-10-10
City of Los Angeles — Building and Safety, Building Permits Issued 2020 to present (data.lacity.org pi9x-tg5x)	Permits issued, with the net change in dwelling units and the accessory-unit breakout	permits issued 2023-01-01 onward
California DWR — Approved Dam Inundation Boundaries (1 October 2025)	Mapped inundation boundaries below state dams	—
CalEnviroScreen 5.0 (OEHHA), calenviroscreen50_070126.csv, via data.ca.gov	Pollution-burden indicators by tract; the headline burden is recomputed without the lead indicator	2026-07-01 release
CAASPP 2025 research file (Smarter Balanced), all students, all grades, percentage meeting or exceeding standard; school locations from the CA public school directory	School results, meeting or exceeding standard	2024-25 school year; directory 2025-26
LAPD NIBRS Offenses Dataset (data.lacity.org k7nn-b2ep)	Reported offences, geocoded	2025
CAL FIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zones — Local Responsibility Area (2025)	Fire hazard severity zones	—
CGS Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones	Mapped active fault traces	—
FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer (Esri mirror of NFHL)	Special flood hazard areas	—
CGS Seismic Hazard Zones — Liquefaction	Mapped liquefaction zones	—
CGS Seismic Hazard Zones — Earthquake-Induced Landslide	Mapped earthquake-induced landslide zones	—

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SOURCE	WHAT IT GIVES	THIS BOOK VINTAGE
U.S. DOT Bureau of Transportation Statistics, National Transportation Noise Map 2020 (LAeq, 24-hour), as overlaid on 2020 census tracts by the University of Washington (Seto & Huang 2023), ArcGIS feature service 'Estimates of Population Highly Annoyed by Transportation Noise in the US', layers 14-16	Residents in each modelled road, rail and aircraft noise band	BTS 2020 noise layers; 2020 census tracts
LAPD Calls for Service 2024 to Present (data.lacity.org xjgu-z4ju), call type 507 'minor disturbance'; LAPD reporting districts from the City of Los Angeles GeoHub	Noise calls to the police, filed as code 507	2025-10-01 to 2026-10-01 (twelve complete months)
MyLA311 Cases (data.lacity.org 73a2-6ar5 and 2cy6-i7zn), case type 'Nuisance Barking Dogs'	Barking-dog reports — the only sound category 311 takes	2025-03-28 onward
American Community Survey, 5-year	People, households, income, housing stock and commuting, by tract	2019-2023

The ACS figures come from 22 tables: B01002, B01003, B07003, B08013, B08201, B08301, B11001, B11002, B17001, B19001, B19313, B25001, B25002, B25003, B25004, B25024, B25034, B25041, B25063, B25070, B25075, B25103.

How a tract becomes a neighborhood

Neighborhood boundaries here are the Los Angeles Times' Mapping L.A. definitions. Almost every statistical source publishes by census tract instead, and tracts do not nest inside neighborhoods, so each tract is apportioned by the 2020 census block population falling inside the neighborhood rather than by area — because weighting by area counts Griffith Park and the rail yards as though people lived there.

Three rules follow, and they are why some figures in this book differ from the ones you will see elsewhere:

- Counts are summed with those weights.
- Rates apportion their numerator and denominator separately and then divide. Averaging tract percentages is wrong and common.
- Medians cannot be apportioned at all. Every median here — value, rent, income, year built — is reconstructed by summing weighted bracket counts and interpolating.

Where a neighborhood's tracts are too thinly covered to support a figure, the field says so instead of guessing. That is why Westchester publishes no mean commute time.

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What this book refuses to publish

Sentinels in the record, counted across all 114 neighborhoods:

REASON A FIELD IS NOT FILLED	FIELDS
Deliberately refused — see below	684
Not yet ingested — named rather than hidden	683
Refused: the data cannot support the claim	342
Looked for, not located	143
Too old to rely on	114
Not published at neighborhood level by anyone	13

Refused by policy

These are the fields this book could have filled and chose not to. Each reason below is quoted verbatim from the record, so a reader who notices the gap finds a sentence explaining it rather than a blank. (Chapter numbers inside these quotations refer to the companion method volume, not to this guide.)

environment.refused_indicators — The CalEnviroScreen COMPOSITE score, which multiplies Pollution Burden by Population Characteristics. The Children's Lead Risk from Housing indicator, which OEHHA builds partly from the share of households that are low-income and have a child under six. And Population Characteristics -- asthma, low birth weight, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, education, linguistic isolation, poverty, unemployment, housing burden -- and all race and age composition columns. Health outcomes are facts about the people living somewhere, correlate strongly with protected characteristics, and in a buyer's guide attached to a place they function as a proxy. The exposure half describes the ground, which is what a reader is buying.

population.disability — Fair housing. Disability is a protected class under the FHA and FEHA.

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Refused by policy



population.familial_status — Fair housing. Households with children under 18 is a protected-class figure under the FHA. Marketing language about which households a place suits is steering, whatever adjective it uses, so the figure is excluded rather than published with a caution.

population.race_ethnicity — Fair housing. Racial, ethnic, ancestry, religious and national-origin composition is excluded from every profile, ranking and score in this book. The data is public (ACS B02001/B03002) and Chapter 17 says where to find it; publishing it beside a neighborhood assessment would make this document a steering instrument regardless of intent.

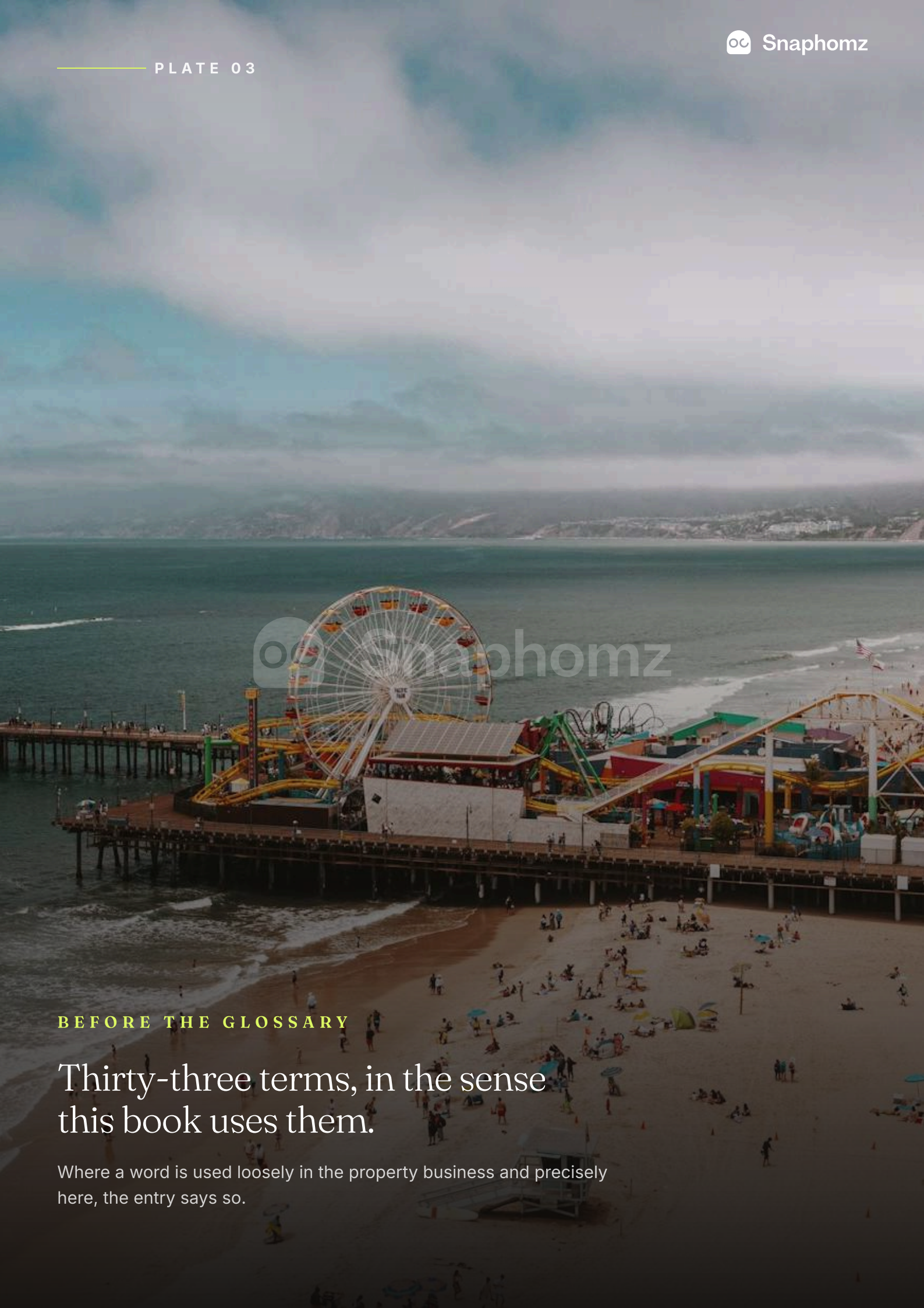
Checking any of it yourself

Nothing here sits behind a paywall or a licence. The Census Bureau's API, the state's open-data portal and the City of Los Angeles' own Socrata endpoints are all free, and the identifiers in the table above are the ones you would type. If a figure in this book disagrees with one you pull yourself, the most likely causes are, in order: a different vintage, a different boundary, or an averaged rate. The second is the usual one.

And if it is none of those, the book is wrong, and we would rather know.

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BEFORE THE GLOSSARY

Thirty-three terms, in the sense this book uses them.

Where a word is used loosely in the property business and precisely here, the entry says so.

A short glossary

Thirty-three terms that appear in this book, in the sense this book uses them. Where a word is used loosely in the property business and precisely here, the entry says so.

Accessory dwelling unit (ADU). A second, smaller home on a lot that already has one: a converted garage, a backyard cottage, a unit above a workshop. A junior ADU is one created inside the existing house. Since 2023 they are 30,146 of the city's 43,290 net new homes.

Apportionment. The arithmetic that turns tract figures into neighborhood figures. Counts are summed with population weights; rates have their numerator and denominator apportioned separately and then divided; medians cannot be apportioned at all and are rebuilt from bracket tables.

Area Planning Commission (APC). The city's own seven planning regions. This book calls them regions and uses them to group the 114 neighborhoods.

Basis. A field in every record saying how directly a number was measured, from direct_measure at the strong end down through apportioned and modelled_by_source to name_matched. Two numbers with the same value and different bases are not equally trustworthy.

CalEnviroScreen (CES). California's screening tool, published by OEHHA at census-tract level. Its composite score multiplies a Pollution Burden half by a Population Characteristics half — asthma, low birth weight, education, linguistic isolation, poverty, unemployment — because it was built to direct money to places both polluted and vulnerable. This book does not print the composite, because half of it describes the residents. An earlier edition did, and it overstated pollution in cheap neighborhoods and understated it in dear ones.

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Children's Lead Risk from Housing. A CalEnviroScreen indicator built 60:40 from housing age and the share of low-income households with a child under six. Not a lead measurement, and refused here because a household's children are a protected characteristic. For lead, read the year a building went up, and test.

CAASPP. California's standardised assessment. Results here are the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standard, all grades, all students.

Census tract. The statistical unit almost everything is published at: roughly 1,200–8,000 people. Tracts do not nest inside neighborhoods, which is why apportionment exists.

Dam inundation boundary. The area that would be flooded if a given dam failed. It is a worst-case engineering map required by the state, not a probability — but it shows up in disclosure and in insurance. 280,222 homes in the city are inside one.

Effective tax rate. The property tax bill as a share of the home's current value. Under Proposition 13 it falls the longer an owner holds, so a low neighborhood figure means long tenure, not a local discount.

FHSZ — Fire Hazard Severity Zone. CAL FIRE's mapped classification: Moderate, High, Very High. Published separately for State and Local Responsibility Areas, and a fetch that takes only one of the two returns nothing for a city and reads as "no hazard".

Group A offences. The serious-offence categories agencies report under NIBRS. This book counts incidents, not charges, and excludes Group B.

Jobs per resident worker. Jobs located in a neighborhood divided by employed people living in it. Above 1 is a place people travel to. It is the number that decides whether a crime rate per resident means anything.

Liquefaction zone. Ground mapped as liable to behave like a liquid in strong shaking. The most widespread mapped hazard in Los Angeles — 479,770 homes, 31% of the stock — and the least asked about.

LODES / LEHD. The federal dataset of where jobs are and where the people holding them live, at block level. The source for every jobs figure here.

Mapping L.A. The Los Angeles Times' neighborhood boundaries, which this book uses. The city has no single official neighborhood map, so any book must choose one and say which.

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Margin of error (MOE). The uncertainty the Census Bureau publishes beside every ACS estimate. Small-area estimates have large ones. Where an MOE is too large relative to its value, a figure is excluded rather than printed.

Median. The middle value, not the average. Half of everything is above it. A median cannot be averaged or apportioned, which is the most common arithmetic error in neighborhood data products.

Mello-Roos. A community facilities district levy that funds local infrastructure, charged on top of property tax. It transfers to you with the house.

NAICS. The federal industry classification. Business counts here are built from it, and two vintages coexist in the city register — 7,290 restaurants are filed under the 2007 code and 309 under the 2017 one, so a query that takes only the current code finds four per cent of them.

NIBRS. The incident-based crime reporting standard. California agencies transitioned to it on different dates, which breaks comparison across agencies and across time.

Owner-occupied share. The proportion of occupied homes lived in by their owner. The best single predictor in this book of what a street feels like, because tenure drives turnover.

Pollution burden. This book's headline environmental figure: OEHHA's own Pollution Burden formula — the mean of the exposure percentiles plus half the mean of the environmental-effect percentiles, over one and a half, ranked against every California tract — re-run without the lead indicator. This project first reproduced OEHHA's published version exactly, for all 9,106 tracts, before changing anything.

Percentile. A rank, not a quantity. "88th percentile" means 88% of California tracts score lower. It says nothing about the absolute level, and percentiles of percentiles are meaningless.

Proposition 13. The 1978 measure that assesses property at purchase price and caps how fast assessments rise. The reason the seller's tax bill is not yours.

Registration. Throughout this book, business counts are counts of active business registrations with the City of Los Angeles, not of premises. A caterer working from a home kitchen counts; an unlicensed stall does not; a chain may file once centrally for many sites.

Rent burden. The share of renting households paying more than half their income in rent. Half, not the conventional thirty per cent — this book uses the severe threshold.

Sentinel. A value that records why a field could not be filled rather than leaving it blank: not_checked, not_found, refused_by_policy, not_published_at_this_geography, and others. Nothing in the record is ever null.

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A short glossary



Socioeconomically disadvantaged. The state's school-level measure of intake. It correlates with results at r = −0.76, which is why this book never publishes a school score without it.

Steering. Directing someone towards or away from a neighborhood on the basis of a protected characteristic. It is unlawful, it is often done with adjectives rather than data, and it is the reason this book carries no composition figures and no rankings.

Vacancy, "other". The census's residual category for an empty home that is not for rent, for sale, seasonal or just sold. 43,418 homes, as many as are listed for rent, and no published reason for any of them.

WAC and RAC. The two halves of LODES: Workplace Area Characteristics — jobs where they are — and Residence Area Characteristics — workers where they sleep.

ZHVI. Zillow's modelled home value index. It is a model output against a boundary Zillow does not publish, joined to this book's neighborhoods by name, which makes it the weakest link in any record here and it is marked as such wherever it appears.

KEEP IN MIND

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