

Exploring Space, Place, And Displacement in Commercial Corridors

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of  
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of The Requirements for the Degree  
Master  
Of  
Urban and Regional Planning

By  
Jennifer Lopez

2025

## **Committee Membership**

**THESIS:** Exploring Space, Place and Displacement in Small Business Corridors

**AUTHOR:** Jennifer Lopez

**DATE SUBMITTED:** Summer 2025

Department of Urban and Regional Planning

Dr. Alvaro Huerta, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Urban and Regional Planning

Thesis Committee Chair

Dr. Annette Koh, Ph.D.

Adjunct Faculty, Urban and Regional Planning

Dr. Johnny Ramirez, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, Department of Education

## Acknowledgements

*Para mis **Bellos**, mi estudio y mi intento de seguir la lucha por la población mayor de edad es por ustedes. Sus pasos en Los Ángeles y Boyle Heights son los mismos que seguiré caminando y mejorando. En otra vida continuaremos con nuestras aventuras a Tom's Burgers en la Primera, Las Cemitas en La Indiana y el parque Hollenbeck de los "qua quas." En paz descanses, mi **Boshi**.*

*Para mi **Madre**, los 30 años en tu propia lucha me ayudaron a cumplir esta maestría. Tus consejos me guiaron durante mis días en la Universidad. Gracias, Mami.*

*Para **mi Papá y hermano Gera**, gracias por sus sacrificios durante mi vida y por darme razones para luchar por mis sobrinos y el futuro.*

*Para **Rali**, gracias por ir a mis conferencias en la primaria y por ser el responsable. Que todos tus sacrificios, amor y apoyo se reflejen en mi trayectoria académica y profesional hermano.*

To my partner **Eva**, thank you for the endless support, love, laughs and most importantly patience when I would lose my patience with myself. Thank you for being in my corner while I seek a better future for us.

To my ancestors and homies, thank you for continuing to protect me from systemic and institutional entities as I climb up my own "escalera." An extreme gratitude to now disseminated Women's and Gender Studies Department at Sonoma State: **Dr. Don Romesburg, Dr. Charlene Tung, Dr. Lena McQuade, Dr. Patricia Kim, and Dr. Daniel Malpica**. Thank you for giving me my first set of intersectional advocacy tools to begin my urban planning journey. It is departments like WGS at SSU who empower and bridge individuals to fields where they are not as visibly represented. I hope to find you at the next place that truly values the essential talent and qualities

you bring to the world. Thank you to **Dr. Alvaro Huerta, Dr. Anette Koh, Professor Johnathan Bell, and Dr. Johnny Ramirez** for demystifying and bridging urban planning with other interdisciplinary fields which invite a reparative planning approach for individuals who come from communities like Boyle Heights and East Los Angeles. And lastly, thank you **Dr. Mariana Ramirez** for making me do my first Service-Learning Project (SLP), it was through early introductions to GIS but empirical research that allowed me to land right where I was destined to be.



### **Abstract:**

Commercial Corridors around Boyle Heights, Los Angeles have offered much more than a place of business; they are time capsules of spaces of belonging through the ability to shop, network, be in community, and most importantly, feel at "home" even when not physically in one. Recent conversations have focused on changes in mixed-use commercial zones within a current Latino-majority neighborhood, such as Boyle Heights (Gay, 2001), alongside advocacy against new housing developments. Local community members attempt to revitalize and create spaces for the community, however for Latinos attempting to revitalize the neighborhood who embrace Latino social mobility and investing in Economic and Community Development efforts get labeled as "gente-fiers," pivoting an analysis on how other planners and urban researchers bridge belonging and exclusion to find ways to minimize the feeling of "othering."

This study examines how past spaces in Cesar Chavez Avenue, formerly known as Brooklyn Avenue (1994), continue the business legacy through Latino Commercialism (Lara, 2018). This study utilized auto-ethnography, archival search, and case study methodological approaches for data collection and unit analysis (Cahuas, 2021). By conducting semi-structured interviews and informal and formal *Platicas* (conversations) with different community members along Cesar Chavez Avenue and/or First Street in the Los Angeles Boyle Heights neighborhood, it is evident that Cesar Chavez holds significance through former and current small businesses. An interdisciplinary analysis indicates how a lack of acknowledgment of past barriers to community engagement, urban planning, and housing development contributes to mistrust of plans for the neighborhood. Highlighting how some aspects of immigrant history, related to spaces and places

in everyday life, become forgotten unless actively documented or preserved, underscores the need for local historians and urban planners to collaborate in finding ways to document invisible histories. Recommendations from this study: a small-business analysis to explore how short-term maintenance over time, through place-making, can contribute to the preservation of Latino Urbanism (Rojas, 1991) within Cesar Chavez Avenue. To minimize confusion in a predominantly Spanish-speaking community, an effort should be made to establish a Spanish community-based coalition, inviting Latino Planners. Lastly, when implementing the new Boyle Heights Specific Plan (2024), a call for a more inclusive approach through community engagement workshops with clear goals and policies for the future of Boyle Heights is recommended, as outlined in the Latinos in Planning Community Engagement Guide (2024).

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Exploring Space, Place, And Displacement in Commercial Corridors .....	ii
Committee Membership .....	iii
Acknowledgements .....	iv
Abstract: .....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	viii
List of Tables .....	xii
List of Figures .....	xiii
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
Rationale .....	2
Importance of Study .....	2
Scope of Study .....	3
Research Questions .....	7
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	8
Neighborhoods in Los Angeles .....	8
Unity, Displacement and Seeds of Gentrification in Boyle Heights .....	12
Housing Gaps and Concerns .....	15
Residential Gentrification vs Commercial Gentrification .....	19
Transit Oriented Communities .....	24

Mom-and-Pop Businesses History in Boyle Heights.....	27
Past Community Engagement Efforts and Gaps.....	31
Mapping Displacement Activism: Social and Physical Networks .....	36
Place Keeping by Latinos and Feminist .....	38
Critique about Planners from The Outside .....	40
<b>Chapter 3: Methodology .....</b>	<b>43</b>
Semi-structured interviews.....	44
Auto-Ethnography.....	45
Archival Research.....	46
Oral Histories .....	47
Geographical Location and Site: .....	48
Recruitment Technique.....	48
Snowball Sampling .....	49
Demographic Characteristics .....	50
Promotional Flyers for Small Businesses.....	50
<b>Chapter 4: Invisible Narratives Lost Space and Place .....</b>	<b>52</b>
Archival Research .....	53
The Chicano Resource Center Archives .....	56
Ethnographic Research .....	67
Social Media to Network.....	70
Site Visit: “At La Chispa De Oro Everyone is Family” .....	74

Interviews .....	82
EastLosHeart Interview .....	83
Viva Padilla .....	85
Intergenerational Skills: Magda, Linda, Rebecca.....	86
Reporting & Dissemination .....	89
Chapter 5: Discussion and Analysis .....	90
Background of Boyle Heights .....	90
Tactile Community Engagement: A Call for Power in Place for Place-Keeping.....	94
Language Barriers in Planning.....	94
Connection to Cesar Chavez Ave .....	106
Limitations.....	107
Suggestions for Future Research.....	107
Conclusion.....	110
Works Cited .....	115
APPENDIX A: IRB Approval Modification .....	122
APPENDIX B: Spanish Recruitment Flyer .....	123
APPENDIX C: English Recruitment Flyer .....	124
APPENDIX D: Interview Questions English .....	125
APPENDIX D: Interview Questions Spanish and English .....	128
APPENDIX E: Debrief Statement.....	131

APPENDIX F: Spanish Translation Debrief .....	132
APPENDIX G: Instagram Photo Consent .....	133
APPENDIX G: Spanish Recruitment.....	134
APPENDIX H: English Recruitment Form .....	136

## **List of Tables**

Table.1: FY 2025 Public Housing & Section 8 Income Limits (Source: The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) .....	17
Table 2 – Summary Timeline of Redevelopment in Boyle Heights from 2000-2016 Source: Boiling Heights: Diverging Politics and Anti-Gentrification Activism in the Boyle Heights Neighborhood of Los Angeles.....	30-33
Table 3: La Chispa De Oro Customer Concerns, Needs and Wants.....	77
Table 4: Boyle Heights Demographic Profile 2022 (Source: 2022 City Of Los Angeles - Department of City Planning) .....	88

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Los Angeles City Council Boundaries(Source: Los Angeles City Planning).....	7
Figure 2:Colorcoded Los Angeles City Council Boundaries (Source: Los Angeles City Planning) ...	7
Figure 3:Los Angeles City Council Districts (Source: Los Angeles City Planning Department) .....	7
Figure 4: Kernal Density Analysis of Gang-Related Crime in Boyle Heights, 2005 and 2012(Source: Pat Brown Institute for Public Affairs Dr. Shiau,2017) .....	11
Figure 5:Aecom Boyle Heights Economic Report for Specific Plan 2023 .....	16
Figure 6: Commercial Gentrification in Los Angeles (Source: Urban Displacement Project,2017) .....	20
Figure 7: Foreign-Born Population Statistics for Boyle Heights1950(Source: Chicano Resource Center) .....	29
Figure 8:Grocery Stores in Boyle Height (Source: Radell,1961) .....	30
Figure 9: Screenshot of Map Indicating Ongoing Displacement in Los Angeles-Gentrification and Displacement (Source: The Urban Displacement Project) .....	43
Figure 10: VHS Film “Meet Me at Brooklyn and Soto (Source: California State Archives: Boyle Heights) .....	53
Figure 11: JonSon Market (Source: The Chicano Resource Center) .....	58
Figure 12: Boyle Heights Community Plan 1974 (Source:The Chicano Resource Center) .....	59
Figure 13: Newspaper Archive of Boyle Heights Suggestions for Redvelopment Around Neighborhood (Source: The Chicano Resource Center) .....	60
Figure 14: Newspaper Archive: Letters to the Editor About Changing Brooklyn Ave to Cesar Chavez (Source: The Chicano Resource Center).....	61



Figure 15: Scan of Boyle Heights: El Poder del Lugar Spanish Translated Flyer (Source: The Chicano Resource Center from The Japanese American Museum) .....	62
Figure 16: Local Libraries/Local Knowledge Archive (Source: The Chicano Resource Center) ....	63
Figure 17: Newspaper Article Titled: Heart of The Eastside (Source" The East Los Angeles County Library the Chicano Resource Center) .....	64
Figure 18: Newspaper Archive. Title: Take My Picture, Gary Leonard. Above Caption: In Search of The Last Jews of Boyle Heights (Source: The Chicano Resource Center) .....	65
Figure 19: Small Business Before Latino Commercialism (Source: The Chicano Resource Center) .....	66
Figure 20: Streetview on Cornwell St. Facing West .....	67
Figure 21: Big Buy Market Side Profile (Source: Yelp) .....	71
Figure 22:Figure 13: Best Buy Grocery Store Front and Breed Street View (Source: Yelp 2009)	72
Figure 23: Front View of <i>La Chispa De Oro</i> 2025 .....	74
Figure 24:Boyle Heights Beat Article on Public Hearing for Mixed-Use Development .....	79
Figure 25: Commercial and Industrial Zoning (Source: Boyle Heights Community Plan Area).	80
Figure 26:One of Emmanuel's Paintings at Ramona Gardens (Source: The Getty).....	85
Figure 27: Boyle Heights Foreign Born Graph (Source: Los Angeles County Community Health Profiles: Boyle Heights, 2024) .....	92
Figure 28:Who Can Afford Rent in Los Angeles County (Source: CHPC Los Angeles County Needs Report 2025) .....	100
Figure 29: Quote from Artist Sergio Robleto for L.A Taco(Source:L.A Taco).....	103

## Chapter 1: Introduction

"You always felt at home and very comfortable, like you belonged. That's the secret of Boyle Heights. We belonged. If I were to say anything about the whole life of which I was proudly a part, it was belonging."

- *Boyle Heights: The Power of Place* from the Japanese American Museum

The streets of Boyle Heights, for those who grew up in the neighborhood, often evoke a mixture of feelings, but for the most part, many will describe it as *home*. The scents and sights captured by one's senses and stored as memories, informally coded into the mind and tied to the geographic coordinates of a place, create a personal story-map. Places around the neighborhood hold significance not solely because of their physical presence, but because of the people who occupy and shape those environments. Home is not only defined by physical infrastructure, but also by community and a sense of belonging, even if that belonging exists within the context of exclusion.

In Boyle Heights, it is rare to hear someone say they do not feel like they belong. For decades, the neighborhood has been known as a sanctuary, welcoming newcomers from different countries, states, and, most importantly, cultures. Contemporary conversations about changes to commercial corridors, such as César Chávez Avenue, and the lack of community spaces open a deeper discussion: How will future infrastructure and housing developments not only address housing needs, but also foster collaboration to preserve a sense of belonging, especially when immigrant-owned businesses continue to face daily barriers?

## **Rationale**

Neighborhoods in Los Angeles such as Boyle Heights hold significant history of multiracialism and multiculturalism. Negative rhetoric lead by poverty and crime statistics combined with neglect from local government officials over time snowballs into opportunism to invest in local real estate, local partnerships, and new businesses. Speculations about gentrification by infill developments through Metro's Joint Development Program or affordable housing projects increase mistrust by residents without knowing when the next public hearing for a project is, continues questions about planning. Community interest in learning about new developments coming into the neighborhood and how to apply lead to conversations about how outreach about these is how housing projects done. How is history and lives of people's contribution to the neighborhood being preserved as new goals and policies through an updated Boyle Heights Community Plan (2024)?

## **Importance of Study**

When working with predominately Latino communities, using interdisciplinary praxis, identity politics, and a community-based planning approach can enhance community development by initiating urban planning conversations among marginalized groups who often feel urban planning is not suitable for them as community members. This research attempts to bridge prior social science theories to present day urban planning theories to highlight how former traditional urban planning community engagement outreach in Latino neighborhoods such as Boyle Heights need to be updated through building upon concurrent formal and informal networks.

## Scope of Study

In 1994, Brooklyn Avenue, a commercial corridor in Boyle Heights, was renamed in honor of United Farm Workers labor leader César Chávez. The change reflected shifting demographics and ongoing community activism. For long-time Jewish residents, it marked a loss of the Boyle Heights they knew; for the now predominantly Latino community, it symbolized an open invitation for a sense of cultural and economic belonging.

This study examines how patterns of injustice in urban planning continue to disrupt senses of belonging and living stability in Boyle Heights. It calls for using an interdisciplinary approach grounded in Ethnic Studies and Planning. Drawing on local journalism, such as *Boyle Heights Beat*, and community networks to understand how and why housing and tenant rights groups operate across different spaces can contribute to community-based place-making. Recommendations from study include small-scale revitalization for commercial corridors, such as Cesar Chavez, funded through public grants or private small-business investments, can be strengthened through workshops. This approach can also explore the possibility of creating a Boyle Heights Micro Metro Zone to assist with connectivity around commercial and inner residential corridors to minimize car and parking tension between neighbors around Cesar Chavez. Revitalization and preservation efforts, supported by local academic and non-academic partnerships, can intentionally expand education and community engagement materials as the new Boyle Heights Community Plan (2024) begins implementation. Suggestions from community members for inclusive engagement, preservation in Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing

(NOAH), and support for anti-displacement strategies can help current residents feel a sense of belonging in the ever-changing landscape of Cesar Chavez Avenue.

The chronological order for this thesis is intentional for insiders and outsiders of the neighborhood. The next chapters introduce the rationale for choosing Cesar Chavez Ave as a site. Using Chicana Urbanism as a praxis was insightful to contextualizing mistrust and expanding qualitative approach to community engagement with different neighborhood members. In a comprehensive literature review that incorporates urban planning theories such as Latino Urbanism by James Rojas (1993) and Latino Commercialism by Jesus J. Lara (2018) to larger scope of Los Angeles planning and zoning policies, which have shaped the future of housing, parking, and most importantly, land use within Boyle Heights.

Another scope of the literature primary intention of pulling from non-traditional forms of qualitative interviews, such as *Chisme*(gossip) (Gutierrez, 2020) to hear storytelling from people who are day-to-day on the ground attempting to survive within commercial zoning and may have a better understanding at how social and economic intersect with other identities such as income-level, race, gender, nationality, immigration status. A small sample size, as stated by academic Mario Small (2009), was most relevant for this study to highlight importance of qualitative research to rationalize the feeling of loss of space and community. A further look at the difference in residential and commercial gentrification in local commercial and mixed-use zoning and how the changes in housing around the neighborhood limit preserving mom-and-pop businesses.

Chapter three explains methodology chosen for study to advocate for interdisciplinary forms of engagement to build trust with local community members and spark conversations about planning, including how residents can access housing resources. The chapter also explains the importance of adopting an ethnographic approach through qualitative, semi-structured, and informal interviews. Throughout this research, learning about one's positionality while conducting urban planning research (Beejuan, 2022) introduced an unprecedented internal barrier: imposter syndrome. This feeling was counterbalanced by the fulfillment of witnessing Latinx joy—especially when local community members expressed enthusiasm about participating in planning conversations.

Chapter four presents the findings and discussion. In the chapter, exploring Cesar Chavez and *La Chispa De Oro* as an urban planning researcher, the positionality of being the researcher brought in different senses as most feminist scholars call "Affect Theory" (Dighton, 2019) learning about the lost spaces and places that community members who have lived, worked, or hung around Cesar Chavez over the last three decades 1990's-2025. The informal conversations that emerged from consistently and authentically showing up around Cesar Chavez Avenue, while returning to the neighborhood with a renewed perspective on planning and housing, allowed for an advocacy assessment, seeing how grassroots activists fight for a small restaurant. Examining how the necessity for housing on a state, county, and city level triumphs local advocacy. This reflection aimed to avoid contributing to the stereotype of urban planners as "know-it-alls" with little regard for alternative narratives. An argument of bettering language services for public

meetings and a call for more affordable housing units from the community is overshadowed by evident rage and “out-of-place decorum.”

Finally, chapter five explores future suggestions to mitigate some connectivity and community engagement gaps when the time to implement the Boyle Heights Specific Plan becomes a reality. Most notably, the last chapter offers a glimpse of hope for planners from similar neighborhoods who wish to get involved, through the praxis of Embedded Planning (Bell, 2019). It is important to note that similar academics and organizers have been calling out urban planners for their lack of community-based planning approaches. It is through institutionalization and the coining of the term "embedded planning" that individuals who are unfamiliar with how to maintain authenticity as they navigate a system that is unfamiliar to them. Utilizing street knowledge in conjunction with planning theory and credentials can enhance the forms of neighborhood planning, thereby limiting social, political, and economic gaps. auto-ethnography and interviews introduce how Cesar Chavez has changed or is changing from 2010 to 2025. The people who have left, or the new arrivals in the neighborhood, attempt to begin their efforts in Latino Entrepreneurship. Drawing back from my own experience doing a Service-Learning project in my junior year at Math Science Magnet Technology Academy at Roosevelt High School, where the school has had contract with ESRI through the in hopes that inviting younger generations into urban planning conversations.

## Research Questions

1. How does displacement in small business corridors such as Cesar Chavez affect the spatiality and social cohesion of current long-term residents?
2. How should future urban planners consider going beyond current rhetoric about marginalized communities and providing better agencies to minimize displacement in the immigrant majority communities?

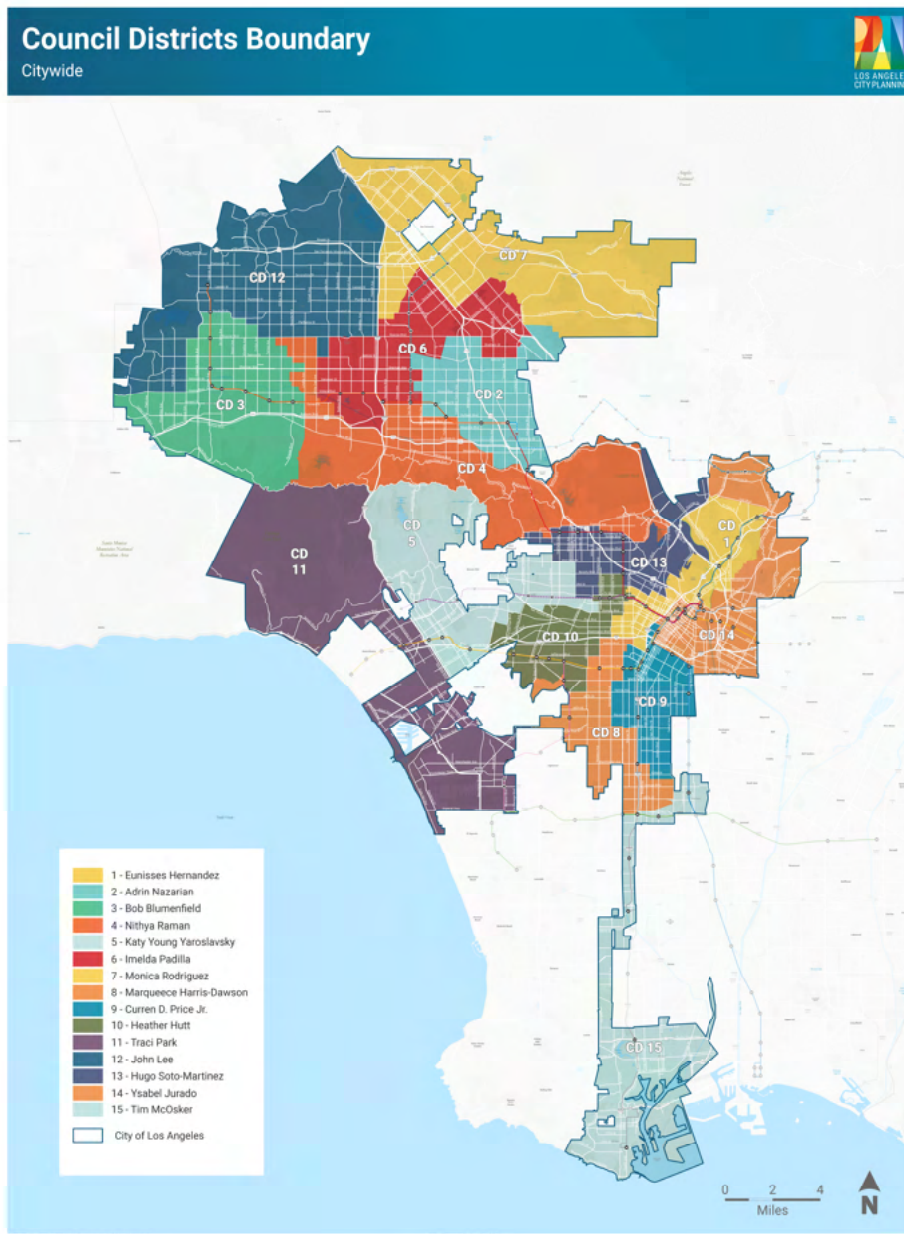


Figure 1: Los Angeles City Council Boundaries (Source: Los Angeles City Planning)



## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Neighborhoods in Los Angeles**

To set the geographic scene, the first step is to understand the difference between Los Angeles County and Los Angeles as a city. Los Angeles County has five supervisory districts (LA Almanac, 1998). For this study, the city of Los Angeles, as a jurisdiction and its districts, will be the center of the study. As a municipality, the City of Los Angeles is composed of 14 neighborhood districts as seen in Figure 1 above, stretching from the San Fernando Valley to the East Side, including Boyle Heights, the second-oldest neighborhood in the city, which was initially established as Paredon Blanco, "White bluff," by Spanish colonists (Sanchez, 2021). Born and raised here, it has become evident some Angelinos take immense pride in being from the City of Angels but more specifically they embrace a strong sense of neighborhood pride. Suppose answers, ranging from the street they grew up on or now live on, if they are familiar with local street politics, or the neighborhood in which they currently reside, one was to ask an Angelino, "Where are you from?" The pride that one holds for their neighborhood is also recognized in Chapter 5 Urban Form and Neighborhood Design Introduction and Summary of Issues Identity section from the Los Angeles General Plan Framework Element recognize the importance of neighborhood pride:

#### **Identity**

1. Many residents do not identify with the city, but, instead, with their own neighborhood.
2. The existing and planned transit system (both fixed rail and major bus routes), as well as corresponding concentrations of development, provide a structure for defining the City's form.

- By recognizing that Los Angeles is comprised of neighborhoods, planning measures can reinforce those neighborhoods and connect them to one another and to larger districts, thereby defining a citywide structure.

District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6	District 7	District 8	District 9	District 10	District 11	District 12	District 13	District 14
Glassell Park	North Hollywood	Canoga Park	Hancock Park	Bel Air	Van Nuys	Pacoima	Baldwin Hills	Downtown Los Angeles (western section)	Arlington Heights	Brentwood	Chatsworth	Silver Lake	Downtown
Cypress Park	Studio City	Reseda	Hollywood	Beverly Crest	Arleta	Lake View Terrace	Chesterfield Square	South Los Angeles	Koreatown	Del Rey	Granada Hills	Echo Park	Boyle Heights
Highland Park	Sun Valley	Tarzana	Hollywood Hills	Beverlywood	Lake Balboa	Sunland-Tujunga	Crenshaw		Mid-City	Mar Vista	North Hills	Elysian Valley	Eagle Rock
Mt. Washington	Valley Glen	Winnetka	Larchmont Village	California Country Club	Sun Valley	Mission Hills	Leimert Park		Olympic Park	Marina del Rey	Northridge	Glassell Park	El Sereno
Sycamore Grove	Valley Village	Woodland Hills	Los Feliz	Carthay Circle	Panorama City	North Hills	Jefferson Park		Palms	Pacific Palisades	Porter Ranch	Atwater Village	Garvanza
Solano Canyon	Van Nuys		Miracle Mile	Century City	North Hills East	Shadow Hills	West Adams		South Robertson	Playa del Rey	Reseda	Hollywood	Glassell Park
Elysian Park			Sherman Oaks	Cheviot Hills	Hollywood	Sylmar			West Adams	Playa Vista	West Hills	East Hollywood	Lincoln Heights
Echo			Silverlake						West Pico	Venice		Koreatown	Monterey Hills
									Wilshire	West Los Angeles			

*Table 1: Table of Neighborhoods in The Los Angeles City Council District Boundaries*

With the city's boundaries incorporating diverse demographics and cultures, the foundation of Los Angeles's social fabric relies on diversity. As urban planners, our mission is usually based on understanding the laws and frameworks that shape the public's environment. If not, most often, the overarching goal we all carry is that there is a greater scope for planning for the future. As professionals with knowledge of zoning, land use, housing, and transportation, it is a privilege that not many constituents of a city or neighborhood may have, unless they possess the capacity to understand urban planning. For planners working in the public sector, knowledge of jurisdictions is essential to plan for a better future for the public, informed by both past and present realities. Planning frameworks, such as Historic Preservation, Affordable

Housing, Transportation, Community Engagement, and Community Development, invite planners as professionals to implement these components in jurisdictions like cities and counties. However, what happens when communities, neighborhoods, districts, and city residents have limited knowledge about what planning is? How do they receive public notifications about new projects entering their neighborhood? Who do they go to when the building they have been living in for over 30 years is suddenly being sold and forecasted to be demolished?

### **Neighborhood Barrios**

Living in Los Angeles offers a unique experience and often includes a unique migration story for each resident. If one is a “Transplant” as described by planning scholar Jane Jacobs (1961), being self-propagated into another cultural and economic ecology, calls for the transplant to emerge into that unknown environment and familiarize itself with the living-established environment. Based on Jacobs' theory, if one is not an original steward of the Los Angeles Land, such as the Tongva-Gabrielinos were, then the sociology of entering a new environment entails acclimation beyond the physical dimensions. Los Angeles residents who move to the city may be asked where they are from in various ways. The answer can range based on the individual's social location: place of origin, nationality, and ethnicity. However, if someone were to ask where a native Angeleno is from, the answer may be more geographically specified. Self-identifying Angelenos carry immense pride not only for their city, but in most, if not all, cases, the neighborhood with which the individual is familiar.

According to the academic literature, a barrio is an area primarily populated by Spanish-speaking individuals with at least one generation assimilating into American culture (Lipsitz &

Villa, 2000). When looking at Los Angeles Planning Historical Housing Land Use Study (2024), the definition of a barrio is a slum: “...a derogatory term used to describe areas or neighborhoods containing substandard housing, unsanitary conditions, and often overcrowding; historically, the term was often associated with neighborhoods in which communities of color lived.” Urban Studies literature also recognizes a barrio as a product of historical exclusionary zoning practices, such as redlining (McKnight, 1960).

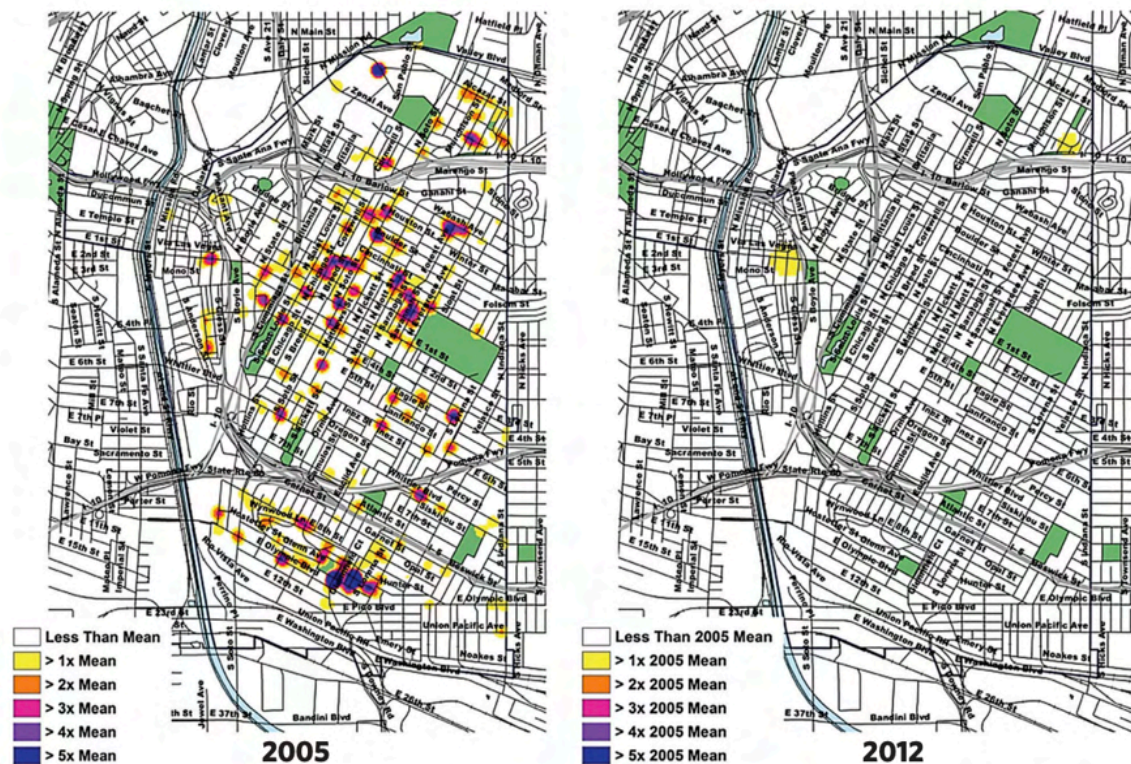


Figure 3: Kernel Density Analysis of Gang-Related Crime in Boyle Heights, 2005 and 2012

(Source: Pat Brown Institute for Public Affairs Dr. Shiau, 2017)

Some people, if gang affiliated, might have lost as we say in the neighborhood, a “homie.” Boyle Heights and Cesar Chavez have a history of gang violence. In a community engagement Through Participatory Mapping: Community Safety in Boyle Heights (Shiau,2017) shows that in the intersection of Cesar Chavez and Soto, running west down the commercial corridor, the kernel density becomes darker indicating that high number of crimes within those streets from 2005-2012 were high enough to map. The importance of bringing up the history of violence in Cesar Chavez Ave. is to highlight how crime rates in a specific corridor can snowball into negative rhetoric about the area thus making it less investible or a high area of interest by some in hopes that investing in real estate and supporting programs or art studios can help with preserving some form of community.

### **Unity, Displacement and Seeds of Gentrification in Boyle Heights**

For this essay, only some chapters of Sanchez’s recent book will be used for literature review, how Boyle Heights came to be through the first wave of takings. While also painting the image of what Boyle Heights was prior to settlers and urbanism. In the next chapter, with the expansion of the gold line to the east side, uncovers how immigrant’s labor is forgotten until attempting to enhance transportation then intersects with the meeting of expanding transportation connectivity. Chapter ten introduces the foundation to modern day conversations around gentrification. A glance into the social fabric and historical legacy of multiracialism and multiculturalism reveals how mutual aid and care are organically adopted, setting the stage for the contemporary display of neighborly behaviors through mutual aid and care. Parallels

between past and present federal policies reveal how these continue to jeopardize the livelihoods of specific demographics in neighborhoods such as Boyle Heights.

The introduction to the book *Boyle Heights: How a Los Angeles Neighborhood Became the Future of American Democracy* paints a mental picture of the multiracialism that has historically occurred within Boyle Heights (BH). The author USC Historian George J. Sanchez in 2021 acknowledges the multiple organizations, people, institutions, and museums that helped him conduct research over the last twenty-five years. Upon thanking these multiple sources, he credits The Japanese American National Museum for archiving and recording the stories of Japanese Americans and their ancestry. Sanchez highlights historical ties to multiculturalism and multiracialism to demonstrate the various forms of mutual aid, solidarity, and coalition politics throughout Boyle Heights. Sanchez explains how Boyle Heights historically racialized and displaced bodies, beginning with the banishment of the Tongva-Gabrielinos (1781) by the first Spanish settlers to the East Side of the Los Angeles River, which is now known as contemporary Boyle Heights. Through the exclusionary federal takings clause, the first waves of racialization. Additionally, the first forms of zoning exclusions through social impositions are seen when some Gabrielino-Tongva Indian Tribe are sent to Boyle Heights “El Paredon Blanco” after bathing in the Los Angeles Canal (BoyChik Word Press).

The first chapter of the book highlights how historical and oral projects such as the one’s that Sanchez has dedicated his academic career towards; was not a single-entity work. The significance in understanding who and how prior groups living in Boyle Heights carry their own legacies in the streets and when properly preserved with the axis of multiple partnerships, the

possibility to complete a multi-decade project is doable. Furthermore, it is important to conduct a new oral histories project and community preservation for concurrent residents who have been living in BH but perhaps missed the last project.

In a dissertation at the University of Southern California, Fumiko Fukuoka (1937) goes into depth on the different forms of mutual aid committed by first-generation Japanese immigrants developing to survive in a foreign country but simultaneously highlighting how prior to Japanese Internment Camps, how Japanese Mutual Aid networks allowed for the reign in now Latino run commerce. In her essay, she begins with a rundown of how Japanese immigrant communities were at the forefront of Southern California's economic and occupation market. This highlights how for the survival of a community to prosper in their mutual aid takes intergenerational leadership. First-generation Japanese immigrants declined government needs because of the harsh ways Americans had treated them. Communal Japanese Self-Help programs established grassroots praxis and Collective Care. Black families taking care of their Japanese neighbor's property during Japanese Internment Camps, Homeboy Industries was created out of Collective Care to halt intercommunal violence in Aliso Villa and Pico Gardens. The natural care for another ethnicity arises from the first waves of exclusion from the majority culture, in the context of Boyle heights, history of redlining, legalized segregation brought by the government in 1939. The outlines of maps highlighting red shaded areas like Boyle heights was a way real estate and federal governments

The thesis above contributes to this study by going into a deep study of how prior to a dominant Latino population in Boyle Heights, mutual aid as a practice exists in different

marginalized groups within the Boyle Heights geographic boundary. Mutual aid services in The Japanese community are like mutual aid practices seen in the Latino community, especially in the recent Homeland Security ICE raids. In June and July when families were afraid of leaving their homes for necessities such as groceries and social activities. Questions from the essay include what are similar ways that the Latino community is contributing to the Mutual Aid legacy? Are there similar systems of care seen in economic and social development networks?

### **Housing Gaps and Concerns**

A need for housing in California has been a prevalent hot topic from all levels of CA legislation. The expansion for affordable housing in the great cities of Los Angeles has been an outcry from the public towards city officials every year. As urban planners, in the profession we learn the foundations of the development process and feasibility of projects to an extent. We firsthand have an idea of how to navigate conversations.

According to California's Housing and Community Development RHNA page, an explanation on what RHNA is and refers to regarding housing:

Since 1969, California has required that all local governments (cities and counties) adequately plan to meet the housing needs of everyone in the community. This process starts with HCD determining how much housing at a variety of affordability levels is needed for each region in the state. Then the regional governments develop a methodology to allocate that housing need to local governments. California's local governments then adopt housing plans (called housing elements) as part of their 'general



plan’ (also required by the state) to show how the jurisdiction will meet local housing needs.

In Figure 5., Aecom contracted by the city of Los Angeles to show upcoming market-rate feasibility for potential projects in the community. In broader context for the neighborhood, the median income in the neighborhood is Boyle Heights is \$52,246(BestNeighborhood.org). Indicating that a percentage of residents may not be eligible to apply for subsidized housing not meeting the AMI threshold or afford market-rate units.

## Market Assessment

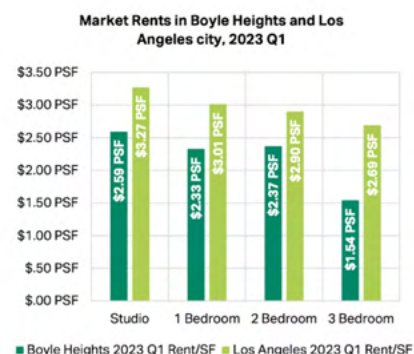
### Incomes Needed to Achieve Rent by Unit Size

The table below quantifies the annual income that is needed to afford average rents within Boyle Heights and the City of LA. This analysis assumes that households spend 30% of their income on housing expenses, which aligns with HUD’s definition of housing cost burdens – in other words, households that spend more than 30% of their income on housing are considered to be cost burdened. This creates challenges for households as they attempt to cover other costs, such as healthcare, education, groceries, clothing, and other living expenses.

As of 2023, the median household income for Boyle Heights households was \$52,349 (ESRI Business Analyst). Contextualized with the most recent data from CoStar on current market asking rents (as shown in the chart on the right), this implies the following rental cost-burden, by unit type<sup>1</sup>:

- Studio → 22%
- 1 Bedroom → 31
- 2 Bedroom → 40%
- 3 Bedroom → 45%

Given the large average household size in Boyle Heights (approximately 3.8 persons/HH), the cost burden of the studios and 1 Bedroom units underplay the severity of the cost burden many households face.



Rental Rates vs Income Needed to Afford Rent						
# of Bedrooms	2023 Avg Rent	City of Los Angeles		Annual Income Needed to Afford Rent	Boyle Heights	
		Rent / Income			Rent / Income	Annual Income Needed to Afford Rent
Studio	\$1,599	30%		\$63,960	30%	\$39,160
1 bedroom	\$1,999	30%		\$79,960	30%	\$54,640
2 bedrooms	\$2,804	30%		\$112,160	30%	\$69,800
3 bedrooms	\$3,372	30%		\$134,880	30%	\$78,720

Source: CoStar - Los Angeles city, CA (USA) Multi-Family, Housing Element Table 1.25

**Page 7** (1) While the 30% of household income for housing costs is HUD’s standard for assessing cost-burden, many rental agreements do not include utility costs. As such, the cost-burden is often higher than what the prevailing rent indicates.

Figure 4: Aecom Boyle Heights Economic Report for Specific Plan 2023

In adjacent fields such as Property and Land Use Law, institutions like *Columbia Law Review* have recognized the importance of shifting property takings toward local governments.

Serkin (2007) states, “A local solution to the takings problem is particularly appropriate because of competition between local governments.” According to Charles Tiebout’s hypothesis, local governments compete for residents who, in effect, “vote with their feet” by choosing to invest in a particular municipality. In other words, individuals decide where to live—and developers where to build—based on the mix of taxes and services a local government provides. For families, the decision often hinges on the quality of local schools and property tax rates. Developers, meanwhile, can choose among incentive packages or fee structures offered by competing municipalities, depending on the desirability of the development and the expected costs and benefits.

The dominant message encourages individual and familial social mobility, raising the question of why we should aspire to leave rather than take pride in our origins. This hope implies that individuals should explore beyond their immediate surroundings. Learning about Boyle Heights’ historical context within the Latino experience illuminated how geographical identities shape community self-perception and external views. A place’s identity is profoundly influenced by those presenting it, the audience, and the surrounding discourse, all of which can reinforce, challenge, or redefine those identities. Questions around having the ability to come back with a higher income, increase with shows like *Vida* (2018) and *Gentefied* (2020) sometimes highlighting how there’s criticism around those trying to embrace modernity.

After returning to BH years later, trying to explore how to not perpetuate the similar behaviors as those depicted in pop-culture like “*Vida*” although different circumstances, understanding that having the privilege to do research can also paint someone as being an

outsider. As I explored the Chicano Resource Center at the East Los Angeles Library, the first book I serendipitously retrieved was Dr. Alvaro Huerta's work, "Defending Latina/o Immigrant Communities," it instantly struck a chord. As an emerging planner from the Eastside, I deeply recognized the shared experience of feeling like "another poor Mexican from the East Side." This sentiment resonates with those who venture beyond the familiarity of their neighborhoods. Recently, a social media meme suggested that "inner-city kids need to be taught geography because people think their neighborhood is a city." As someone born and raised in Boyle Heights, I often see calls for change within the community yet overlook the historically significant barriers to social mobility that its residents face. But hey, that could be the academic in me theorizing everything.

## **Residential Gentrification vs Commercial Gentrification**

Gentrification describes the process wherein higher-income individuals move into a community, resulting in increased service costs, rent hikes, and potential conflicts among community residents. In recent years, gentrification in Boyle Heights has manifested through a co-opting of linguistic play and accountability with the term “gentefication” (Uribe, 2007). The speculation of gentrification tied to economic development in the area, along with opportunistic partnerships aimed at altering the urban landscape of neighborhood businesses and residential spaces, significantly contributes to rapid displacement. This analysis can demonstrate how some community members can interpret social mobility as a threat to the living-stability for extremely low-income individuals. In Urban Displacement Project (2017) argues that the defining commercial gentrification becomes a slippery slope since there can be a multitude of influences or slow transition out of the neighborhood.

Discourse on gentrification in areas like Boyle Heights increases by the real-time displacement in commercial, residential, and mixed-use zoning. Displacement connects to colonial roots, reflecting the histories of settler conquests. It describes how settler colonialism contributes to systemic and environmental racism, which, through the exploitation of natural resources, forces many North and Central American immigrants to migrate for survival. As Dr. Hernández discusses in *Fresh Banana Leaves* (2022), crossing transnational borders often becomes a last resort for immigrants fleeing poverty, war, domestic violence, or other crises. Regardless of the reasons for migration, the cumulative social stresses faced during migration and acclimatization become even more challenging when entering a new environment due to

various systems of power. Present-day displacement is multifaceted, often manifesting through gentrification (Glass, 1964).

Using maps from The Urban Displacement Project (2017) the map below illustrates commercial gentrification throughout the city of Los Angeles.

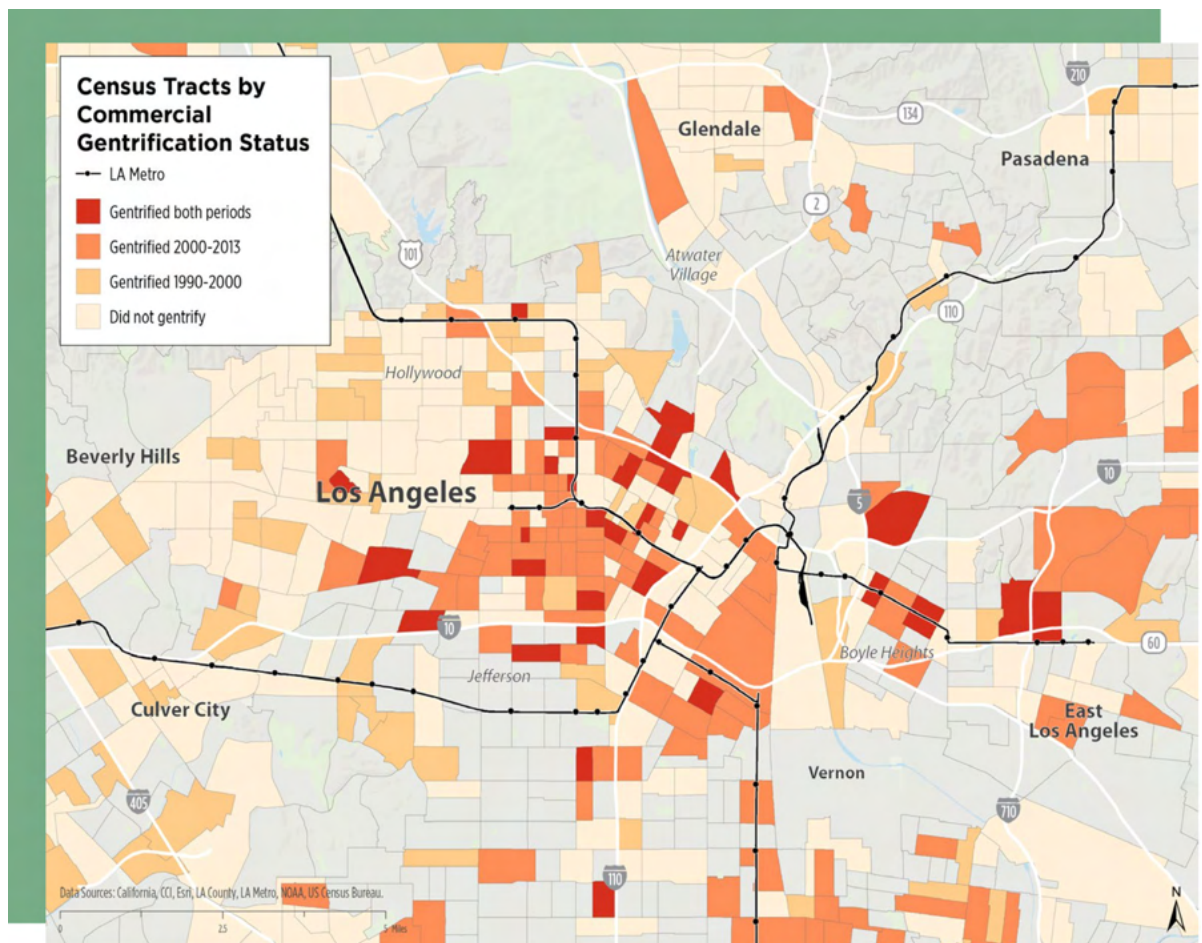


Figure 5: *Commercial Gentrification in Los Angeles (Source: Urban Displacement Project, 2017)*

Furthermore, in "Gentrify? No! Gentrify? Sí!": Urban Redevelopment and Ethnic Gentrification in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles (2015) author Ahrens examines how as the twenty-

first century takes a further step into the effects of neoliberalism and urbanization. As well as how this urbanization begins to have a toll within the community by different Latino populations depending on their economic status. The original intention may be to assist with revitalization, but Ahrens addresses how sometimes the opening of “modern” bars that appeal to outsiders not as an invitation for gentrification but sometimes the hopes the rhetoric of areas such as Boyle Heights get gets revamped through social spaces. The blame of gentefication if not only those who have the upward mobility but sometimes as stated on page twenty-one of the text as greater systemic force such as the foundation of neoliberalism. Through free range markets, as stated in the text:

What is more, not only real estate developers as such but also local governments often support and promote urban boosterism. Like gentrification and gentefication, this development needs to be understood within the context of neoliberal urbanization. The shift of blame then incorporates local governments seeping themselves into interests of different housing for their constituents with sometimes the intention of for-profit.

Prior research has shown gentrification is one of leading conversations and worries by renters in Boyle Heights. Questions to be considered: How do we increase community conversations and participation with youth, young adults, elders, immigrants and non-native English speakers, and small business owners? The proposed outcome of this would be to do a workshop or presentation to community members who would like to know more about planning.

Research by Michael S. Barton focuses on the relationships between gentrification and the connections to gang-activity, and non-gang related homicides within East Los Angeles. Barton states within this research that “state-based gentrification [...] was positively associated with gang homicide” (Smith, 2014). Looking at Figure 2., it visible that gang violence and activity occur in commercial corridors such as Cesar Chavez.

Housing and economic development are primary influences on the Barrio economy and gentrification, given the limited support for marginalized communities in public and federal policies. In Chapter Ten: *Remembering Boyle Heights* (Sanchez, 2021) cites sociologist Alfredo Huante, who theorizes that the entry of “gentrification” began during Tom Bradley’s term from 1971 to 1993. Bradley, who wanted to expand economic development during his term as Mayor, began the redevelopment process in the central business district (CBD), but, as Huante states, failed on various occasions. Continuing into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Huante states that the 1970 Boyle Heights Specific Plan, under Bradley’s oversight, was shifting towards a “use value” to counter the community's rhetoric of facing “urban blight” and being worth investing in new infrastructure.

In this section, the further context behind neighborhood pride in one of the oldest neighborhoods in the City of Los Angeles is explored through various forms of resistance. Different levels and scales of pushback to defend Boyle Heights, Los Angeles, to keep it as they remember. For those of us who had the ability to leave and even greater privileged to return to the “hood” as most of us called it, poses the question if returning to the community with hopes

of bringing in more resources and participating in buying property, make one apart of their “others” that community members advocate against?



## **Transit Oriented Communities**

When connecting our conversation to some of the noticeable transportation barriers while walking in Cesar Chavez, it becomes clear that Latinos unless having access to personal vehicle, public transportation, walking, bus, and cycling are often the main forms of transportations for Latinos (Lara, 2018). Boyle Heights being surrounded by LA Metro Bus and Train stations have allowed Metro as a transportation agency to enhance local transpiration and through recent years assisted with increasing housing in the area.

According to Metro's Joint Development (JD) Program, the aim is for Metro's real estate development efforts to enable collaboration with developers to construct transit-oriented developments (TODs) on Metro-owned sites—often on empty lots or through infill near existing transit stations, including leftover parcels from transit construction. These JD sites offer the unique opportunity to promote community development and serve as gateways to the Metro transit system through partnerships with local cities, community stakeholders, and private or nonprofit developers. Metro provides a concise definition of the program's framework and purpose, along with an interactive map that allows the public to access basic information on JD projects in their neighborhoods (Metro Joint Development Webpage, 2025). LA Metro, as stated on its site, is committed to growing its housing portfolio to 10,000 homes by 2031, with 5,000 of these homes to be income restricted. Metro has identified 20 new development opportunities ("10KSites") that will be made available for competitive developer proposals in the coming years.

Given Los Angeles's status as a transit-oriented city facing an acute housing needs crisis, programs like Metro's JD Program and the City's Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) incentive system play pivotal roles. Locally, the Los Angeles City Planning Department's Housing Progress Dashboard (2019) tracks housing development near transit. The city adopted the TOC Incentive Program on September 22, 2017, as per Measure JJJ, which was approved by voters in November 2016, to encourage affordable housing near transit through a tiered system of incentives. Qualifying projects may request additional building capacity in exchange for setting aside a certain number of affordable units. The city also applies a Density Bonus incentive, permitting developers to increase unit counts if they include affordable units.

At the state level, Senate Bill 73 authored by Scott Weiner (2025) proposes allowing transit-adjacent housing developments as permitted uses on any site zoned for residential, mixed, or commercial development—provided they meet specified conditions. These conditions include compliance with density, height, and floor area requirements based on proximity to transit-oriented development (TOD) stops. The bill also allows for streamlined, ministerial approvals and imposes certain anti-displacement and demolition standards. Additionally, local governments that reject compliant projects in high-resource areas could be presumed to violate the Housing Accountability Act and incur penalties beginning January 1, 2027. These provisions would take effect for local agencies starting July 1, 2026, unless otherwise specified:

(1) In a full text: Requirements that a housing development project, as defined, within a specified distance of a transit-oriented development (TOD) stop, as defined, be an allowed use as a transit-oriented housing development on any site zoned for residential,

mixed, or commercial development, if the development complies with applicable requirements, as specified.

Among these requirements, the bill would establish requirements concerning height limits, density, and floor area ratio in accordance with a development's proximity to specified tiers of TOD stops, as provided. The bill would provide that, for the purposes of the Housing Accountability Act, a proposed development consistent with the applicable standards of these provisions shall be deemed consistent, compliant, and in conformity with prescribed requirements, as specified.

The bill would provide that a local government that denies a project meeting the requirements of these provisions located in a high-resource area, as defined, would be presumed in violation of the Housing Accountability Act, as specified, and immediately liable for penalties, beginning on January 1, 2027, as provided. These provisions would not apply to a local agency until July 1, 2026, except as specified.

The bill would specify that a development proposed pursuant to these provisions is eligible for streamlined, ministerial approval pursuant to specified law, except that the bill would exempt a project under these provisions from specified requirements and would specify that the project is required to comply with certain affordability requirements, under that law.

This bill would require a proposed development to comply with specified demolition and anti-displacement standards; to not be located on sites where the development would require

demolition of housing, or that was previously used for housing, that is subject to rent or price controls; and to include housing for lower income households, as specified. The bill would also authorize a transit agency's board of directors to adopt transit-oriented development zoning standards for district-owned real property located in a transit-oriented development zone, which establish minimum zoning requirements for an agency TOD project, as specified (CALMatters Digital Democracy,2025)

### **Mom-and-Pop Businesses History in Boyle Heights**

In Mom 'N' Pop" Grocery Stores in the Boyle Heights Section of Los Angeles, California: A Study of Site and Situation (Radell, 1961), accessed through the Chicano Resource Center Boyle Heights Archive, this study examines a range of commercial grocery stores during the 1960s in Boyle Heights. The Radell examines how each grocery store conducted their businesses, ranging from urban design, infrastructure, commercial goods/services, location, and interactions with current demographics in the community. The characteristics of each grocery store, with the mention of chain stores such as Safeway, once being in the neighborhood, furthermore, Radell maps different characteristics that attracted customers to each store. Along the analysis of each grocery store Radell mentions how some small mom-and-pop mini-marts and corner stores would sometimes buy from bigger chain stores if cheaper to get items rather than being imported. More importantly, the author analyzes how new zoning and land use regulations caused some mom-and-pop stores to close their business, often leading to displacement from the community since some store owners lived above storefronts in the mix-ed apartments such as the corner store on 4th and Matthews in Boyle Heights.

To tie it back to the relevancy of this essay, similar behaviors can be seen by current mom-and-pop stores within Cesar Chavez depend on getting produce from local grocery stores to cook their dishes. In Radell's analysis the counting of various stores once the community show that at one point grocery stores were more accessible in Boyle Heights. How many of those markets can now be considered legacy business? What caused the chain-grocery stores such as Safeway to leave the area? How did residents react when they noticed their favorite store closed in the neighborhood.

In the academic essay from 1960, Radell (1961) includes 1960 Census Population and demographic change. See Figure 5. At first glance, census markers can show how rhetoric towards Mexican Americans and Latin American immigrants becomes seen as generalizing. To only group Spanish speaking people as Mexican carries the same implications as Planners referring to Boyle heights solemnly based on their race rather seeing sub-groups of multi-nationalism and multi-regionalism if immigrants who do comes from the same nation; may come from different regions of their home country. When looking at it through a historical context, the census table in Figure 5. Indicates the early signs of demographic shift between Eastern European and Mexicans in the area, in addition to seeing how at one-point Mexicans and Latinos in the neighborhood part of a rising minority-majority community were kept through hyper-segregation.

This study is relevant to this research as it documents how changes in zoning regulations in Boyle Heights through community and Los Angeles planning can contribute to commercial and residential displacement. This research examines how changes in local zoning and density in

commercial corridors through Boyle Heights, such as Avenida Cesar Chavez up, can also be suitable for closure and displacement. Additionally, this dissertation gives readers the glimpse of how racial categories in prior data did not incorporate a sense of belonging for other nationalities from federal, state and local jurisdictions for people of color. As seen in Figure 4. Mexican and Southern & Eastern European population had a high population number within BH.

**FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION STATISTICS  
FOR BOYLE HEIGHTS, 1950<sup>8</sup>**

Area of Birth	Group Population	Per cent of total Population
(Total Population)	(35,340)	(100)
Southern & Eastern Europe	6,795	19
Mexico	3,710	10½
Northern & Western Europe	362	1
Other Foreign Countries	572	1½
Total	11,439	32

Figure 6: *Foreign-Born Population Statistics for Boyle Heights 1950*

(Source: Chicano Resource Center)

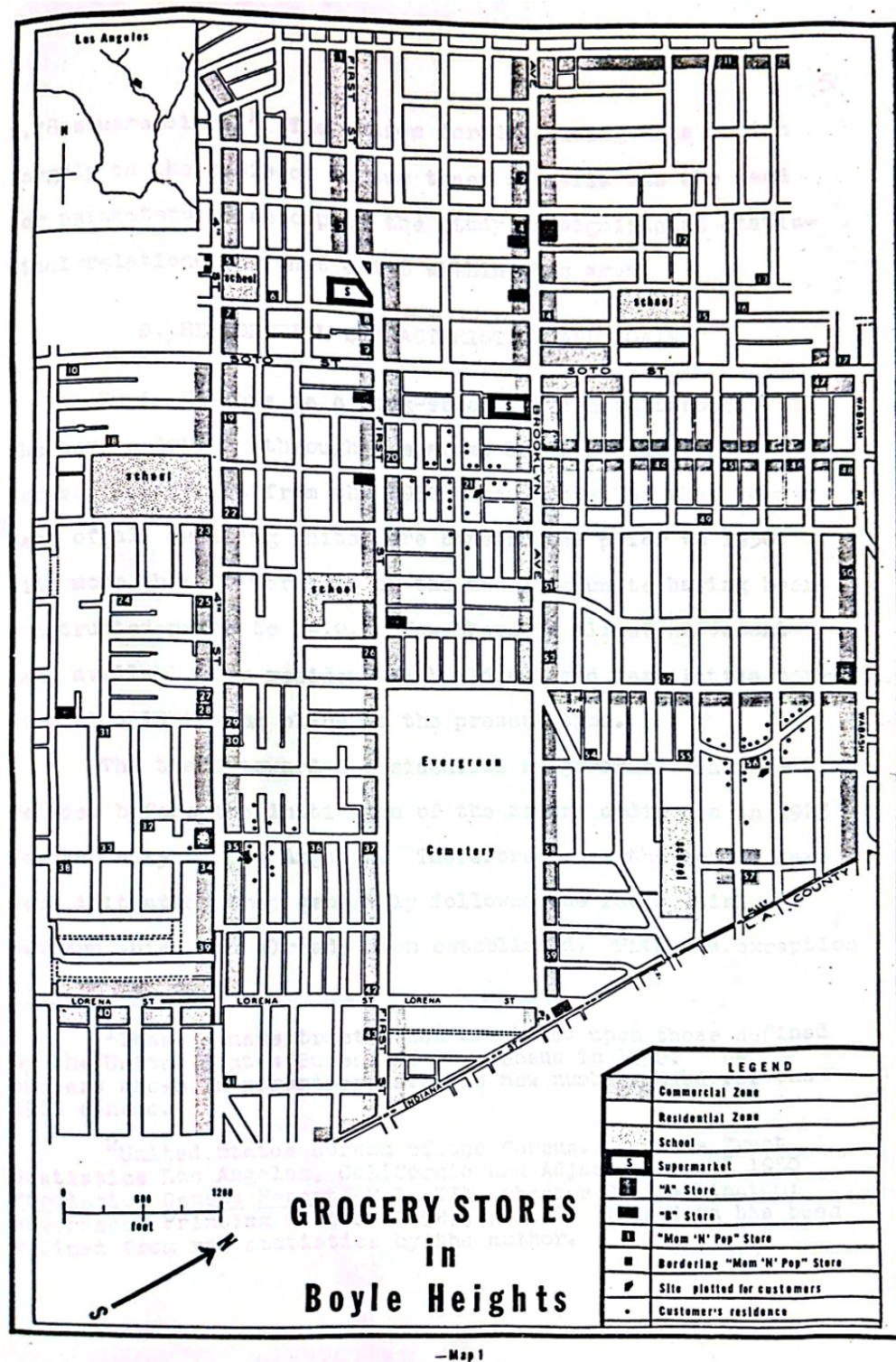


Figure 7: Grocery Stores in Boyle Height

(Source: Radell, 1961)

## Past Community Engagement Efforts and Gaps

For those of us born after 2000 Using Dr. Ashley Hernandez Thesis (2022), Figure 4, created by Hernandez illustrates the timeline of the community engagement and outreach that was conducted towards the redevelopment of the Eastside.

Year	Event
2003	Turf jogging path is installed around Evergreen Cemetery
2004	Construction of Pueblo del Sol, a mixed-income, multi-family housing complex funded by the federal HOPE VI program, is complete, replacing the 380-unit Pico-Aliso Public Housing Complex
	Construction begins for Metro Gold Line Light Rail Eastside Extension Project
	Sale of the 23-acre site of the Historic Sears Tower and Distribution Center to MJW Investments, a private real estate company
	First Now! Project begins to help revitalize Downtown's major east- west civic corridor
2005	Construction begins for the Expansion of the Hollenbeck Police Station
2006	The City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning begins the process to update the Boyle Heights Community Plan, which was last updated in 1998.



	Private developer announces that the Linda Vista Hospital will be developed into a complex of 151 live/work condos called the Buena Vista Lofts
	Eastside Luv Bar opens
2007	The Fifteen Group Land and Development LLC proposes to demolish and replace the Wyvern wood Garden Apartment Complex with a mixed-use development, including commercial space and market-rate housing
	From Lot to Spot, a 501(c)3 that seeks to address the lack of recreational spaces in low-income neighborhoods of color, is founded in Boyle Heights
	First Now! Project continues and progresses into 1 <sup>st</sup> Street and Cesar Chavez Ave. in Boyle Heights
2008	Leadership for Urban Renewal Network (LURN), a social justice-driven 501(c)3 economic development organization, opens in Boyle Heights
2009	Los Angeles Metro unveils the Mariachi Plaza stop, the first of the Gold Line Light Rail Eastside Extension project

	Primera Taza coffee shop opens
--	--------------------------------

2010	Los Angeles Bike Plan is approved, which includes cycling and pedestrian improvements throughout the Los Angeles including Boyle Heights
	LA County-USC Medical Center expansion project is complete, and the new hospital facility opens
2011	Boyle Heights Small Business Guide published by the Boyle Heights Chamber of Commerce and former Councilmember Jose Huizar
	Los Angeles Bike Plan improvements take place in Boyle Heights, bringing new bike lanes along major neighborhood corridors
	Self-Help Graphics opens at their new location
	The Fifteen Group releases the draft Environmental Impact Report for the redevelopment of the Wyvernwood Garden Apartments: The Los Angeles Conservancy gets involved in helping save Wyvernwood
2012	Espacio 1839 opens
	Walgreens and CVS open
2013	Art galleries begin to move into Boyle Heights starting with 365 Mission, 12 others would shortly follow
	The Boyle Hotel project is complete and opens
	ELACC acquires Casa del Mexicano

Year	Event
	Mayor Eric Garcetti launches Great Streets Initiative with Boyle Heights as a recipient
	MJW Investments sells Sears Tower to Izek Shomof, prolific Downtown Los Angeles Developer
	The University of Southern California approves LA County-USC Medical Center and USC Health Sciences Campus Master Plan which proposes continued expansion
2014	Metro announces plans to redevelop Mariachi Plaza into commercial space
	La Monarcha Coffeeshop moves into bottom floor of Boyle Hotel
2016	Construction of the 6th Street Bridge/Viaduct Project begins

*Table 2 – Summary Timeline of Redevelopment in Boyle Heights from 2000-2016 Source: Boiling Heights: Diverging Politics and Anti-Gentrification Activism in the Boyle Heights Neighborhood of Los Angeles*

The table above gives a timeline and historical context for the East Side redevelopments in Boyle Heights over the last two decades. For Someone who was unaware of planning, being asked by another planner whether I was involved in community outreach for the creation of the new specific plan made me directly say no, but what I wanted to say was “Did they do any outreach and how well did they really engage with different community members and not just private and public stakeholders?”

In one of her interviews, when speaking to one East Los Angeles Community Corporation (2022). She writes how even the organizer had to self-teach planning to understand the material. Pulling directly from Dr. Hernandez dissertation, the interview as stated:

Another ELACC organizer described a similar sentiment and the types of changes they had to adapt to when engaging more directly with urban planners in the city. And we were talking to the planning department about the community plan, and I'm like, 'I have no idea what you're saying, but I'll figure it out!' There's been a lot of self-teaching around that kind of stuff. Especially the city planning piece. Planning 101, 'what is zoning? What is R2?' I have no idea! [laughing]...Like the way that we break down information, make it digestible, like popularize it for community members to understand the impact that this has on their communities, especially things like the community plan...Like thinking through the implications of what that means. Or even characteristics of a neighborhood, like you know, the Cesar Chavez Corridor as the 'commercial corridor' and what that means.

In the quote above, it becomes evident that community organizers in the community have been met with having to self-teach planning issues, even when online resources made by the city or county to make some technical parts of planning more accessible, educational barriers continue which can snowball into a sense of frustration and exclusion by a system that influences the changes to organizer's environment and non-profit missions.

## Mapping Displacement Activism: Social and Physical Networks

In *Encountering Gentrification: Affordances of a Feminist Approach to Rhetorical Circulation and Twitter Data Studies* (Dighton, 2019) explains the effect of seeing business, landscaped people she knew become displaced. Throughout the sections in her dissertation, the author mentions how urbanization and redevelopment affect areas like Boyle Heights. Through new urban development and gentrification, slums are considered hidden landscape gems due to the proximity to a metropolitan lifestyle. Other important concepts in Dighton's dissertation include documenting how online social platforms assist with anti-gentrification activism that manifest into physical in person events.

Dighton creates a documentation of social media platforms interactions with the guerilla group Defendboylehts through creating a web of networks. The closer the dot is to the blue dot indicates how much they have interacted with the group. This chart indicates how through online platforms networking for organizers transforming physical spaces into guerilla activist groups such as Defendboylehts assisted with beginning a continuous wave of activism to protect the neighborhood. Additionally, bridging multi-disciplinary rhetoric studies and affect theory (Liljeström 2015). Being aware of multiracialism and multiculturalism within Boyle Heights allows for notice of patterns of inequality based on social demographics in present-day 2025. The concept of intersectionality, as coined by Black feminist Kimberlee Crenshaw (1989), refers to the intersection at which identities intersect. Crenshaw coined the term to describe how Black and other women of color often face larger repercussions based on social and political rhetoric. By separating gender, race, class, nationality, and even education attainment while acknowledging

how, at times, particular identities intersect to illustrate that systematic categorization through systemic counting can be harmful while simultaneously calling out the lack of consideration for how social, racial, and economic power dynamics inflict harmful punishments with little to no understanding how demographic markers history affects the present-day decisions.

This thesis notices the theory of intersectional being forgotten in systems of power such as law—medicine, and urban planning. Quantitative data such as the United States Census does not fully encapsulate the lived and past experiences that a certain demographic or data marker has. This analysis can lead to limited compassion or in-depth understanding for some groups.

The author starts by mentioning Boyle Heights is at the epicenter of all great things since it is close to Downtown LA(DTLA), which has increased a calling for art-washing (Dighton 2018) The renovation of DTLA has allowed a new group of people to seek interest in living closer to the center of LA without breaking their wallets.

This dissertation is relevant to this thesis since Dighton creates a documentation of how social media specially guerilla activist groups such as Defendboylehts assisted with beginning a continuous wave of activism to protect the neighborhood. Gaps in the literature fail to acknowledge how the extension of the movement may have misaligned with former or concurrent grassroots. While Guerilla activism allowed for more public attention, did the credibility of this activism continue during the years? How do community members part of the original movement feel as more signs of displacement around the neighborhood continue. Furthermore, how did some members if leaving continue their involvement if they themselves left the area?

## **Place Keeping by Latinos and Feminist**

For many, memories tied to specific times and spaces, often shaped by prior public policies, become accessible and digestible through the profession. Once entering the planning system, whether through private, public, or federal paths, planners acquire a different kind of power: the ability to understand and influence policies that others, due to their positionality, may be excluded from (Beejuan, 2022). As feminist scholar Leslie Kern explores in *Feminist City* (2019), urban spaces are experienced differently by people of varying demographics and genders due to the inheritance of past environmental designs. Furthermore, reading about the intersection of community members' positionalities led me down a research rabbit hole, connecting lived experiences to historical planning theories and policies. At The American Planning Association National Conference in Denver 2025, UC Berkeley's Othering and Belonging Research Institute presented on how Urban Planners need to be multi-faceted and willing to be translators from and to community members. Urban Planner and Social Worker Richard Aviles echoes that traditional urban planning community engagement is not always advisable to vulnerable populations. Even when being in direct services, being a translator between both the set and the folks who are directly receiving the service relies reasonably for planners to on take that extra-steps to assuring people are not lost with the technicalities of programs and policies.

Pioneer Latino Urbanist James Rojas' master thesis also contributes to the themes of belonging through "enacting" one's environments. In his dissertation Rojas who recalls on his own memories living in the neighborhood, begins detailing how Latino residents use their front yard to resemble their home-country environment with filling their gardens with various plants,

making religious shrines to The Virgen De Guadalupe, or some occasions, both. The message that Rojas wants readers to take away is how Latinos in neighborhoods like Boyle Heights use the Informal businesses along commercial corridors can be seen as a way of enacting one's place of belonging through cooking the foods of their home.

For individuals who are not within the academia side of planning it becomes easy to judge city planners and officials for not enhancing or preserving art within neighborhoods or communities. Gadwa and Markusden (2010) break down the difference in Cultural Districts and how they primarily pertain to downtown centers such as Times Square, Pershing Square. Markusen and Gadwa's exploration of the intricate political dynamics surrounding the integration of art and cultural mosaics sheds light on the challenges faced by city planners and officials. Their analysis underscores the importance of understanding the multifaceted web of interests and influences at play when it comes to enhancing or preserving art within neighborhoods and communities.

Individuals who value art in their community, when a mural encounters a new artist's attempt at trying to use the mural as a background for their own mosaic or graffiti, the question then becomes how communities can preserve the history told in the prior murals in the community. Both articles show relevancy to greater context of trauma-informed planning & art, specifically the necessity for historical preservation and storytelling, and participation through art for community engagement and futures requires the support for centers like Cal poly Pomona Dale Prize 2024 winner: dA Center for The Arts. Evidence of similar practices and community art projects are seen in Self-Help Graphics (Boyle Heights). These two centers of arts encourage their



community to come and learn new skills and participation for the youth and adults. The sad truth is that many adults do not have the time to take off work to participate in an art workshop, let alone a research study on their health. It takes different community partners to look for those avenues of trust to gain a community's trust. Art is one of many forms of community involvement in public health. Planning has shifted from self-interest planners to more community-based planning for many years; public health is an important pillar within the field, so why not use art to further our community participation in community-based events to encourage their community members to become more involved in planning?

### **Critique about Planners from The Outside**

In *Union De Vecinos: Challenging the Largest Displacement in 20th Century Boyle Heights* (Vilichis-Zarate, 2023), long-time Liberationist Los Angeles Tenant Rights organizer (LATU) Leonardo writes in his dissertation how East Los Angeles Chicano Planning seen through Barrio Planners Agency founded by Raul Escobedo, Frank Villalobos, David Angelo and Manuel Orozco began as barrio advocates and trusting community members for the Latino community at the time that had experienced eminent domain through the construction of the interstate freeways in Boyle Heights. Vilichis acknowledges the radicalism and community empowerment that Barrio Planners held up until they changed by abandoning their non-profit status and going to private urban design, thus being seen as Eastside's "cultural and political brokers."

This annotation from Vilichis-Zarate (2023) demonstrates to the public how opportunism in personal and career positions for Chicanos in positions of power can also contribute to displacement and continued harm based on demographic and geographic markers. In the case of

Barrio Planners, their vision started off their own roots of displacement through eminent domain but later allowed for capital and career opportunities to cloud their original mission of assisting Chicano from the community instead of being gateways for other developers, urban designers, and public agencies to use their positionality as a buy into the community. Grassroots organizations, such as LATU, can be seen to criticize Barrio's planner's lack of constituency to a bottom-up approach to Latino development. The privatization of services through capitalism is often one critique that marginalized groups have as someone moves up a social ladder. Barrio planners may have begun with the personal mission to make the East Side better through direct past Barrio experiences. However, past Barrio planning includes being involved in the redevelopment and agents in planning conversations that did bring benefits to a majority but may have indirectly contributed to the displacement through being involved in the process of Barrio planning.

In *La Luz En Lo Oscuro*, Chicana Feminist Pioneer Gloria Anzaldua and co-editor Annalise Keating, chapter *Geographies of Selves—Reimagining Identity*, Anzaldua goes over intricacies of identity politics as Mexican American/Chicana. She begins by notifying the reader that the interior of one's body is composed of a geography of cells that have been made from our own lived experiences. Later in the chapter, once conscious of the social mobility that one holds through being able to exist in systems of power or social mobility through intuitions. Anzaldua reminds the reader that the difficulty of remaining authentic and radical becomes as difficult as living in Napatla- living in intersections between worlds, which can lead to insiders, outsiders, and "other-siders."

Anzaldua recognizes how the war of identities within other Chicanos is seen as a s "Semilla Perdida" (lost seed) that forgets that once in academia or a position of power, it becomes easy through positionality to inject and process previous forms of systemic harm.

The relevance of comparing both forms of geography allows readers to form their own opinions on the two different forms of Chicano/urbanism. Through Chicana Feminist Geographer Anzaldua encourages the reader to self-examine their own self-geography to find their spaces of growth by acknowledging the "Sombras" by being a trader. Anzaldúa also allows the reader to hold grace and examine how even as Chicanos and of the same culture, the community will often have criticism towards other Raza who are in positions of power or seen as "*Malinches*" (Trader to tribe) to the community critique in connection to Anzaldúa's analysis of Chicana Geography feminism writes Latinos are not monolithic, indicating how one's social mobility can impair an inclusive form of planning through legislation, personal and career frameworks, and social services. This section employs an interdisciplinary approach, draws on how even as Latinos in positions that allow us to become more involved as designers of the environments, criticism and accountability sometimes go hand in hand when trying to be a community partner.

### Chapter 3: Methodology

This study employed an interdisciplinary qualitative data approach, beginning with an examination of maps from the Urban Displacement Project (UDP) at the University of California, Berkeley. By examining Berkeley's UDP topography of commercial and tenant displacement at identified sites, the researcher can identify small and micro-businesses in commercial and mixed-use zoned areas that are susceptible to displacement. In combination with the historical context of commercialism along Cesar Chavez Commercial corridor the map confirms what on-the-ground community members have been echoing for the last few decades. A qualitative data approach can further the emphasis of direct impact within certain corridors such as Cesar Chavez.

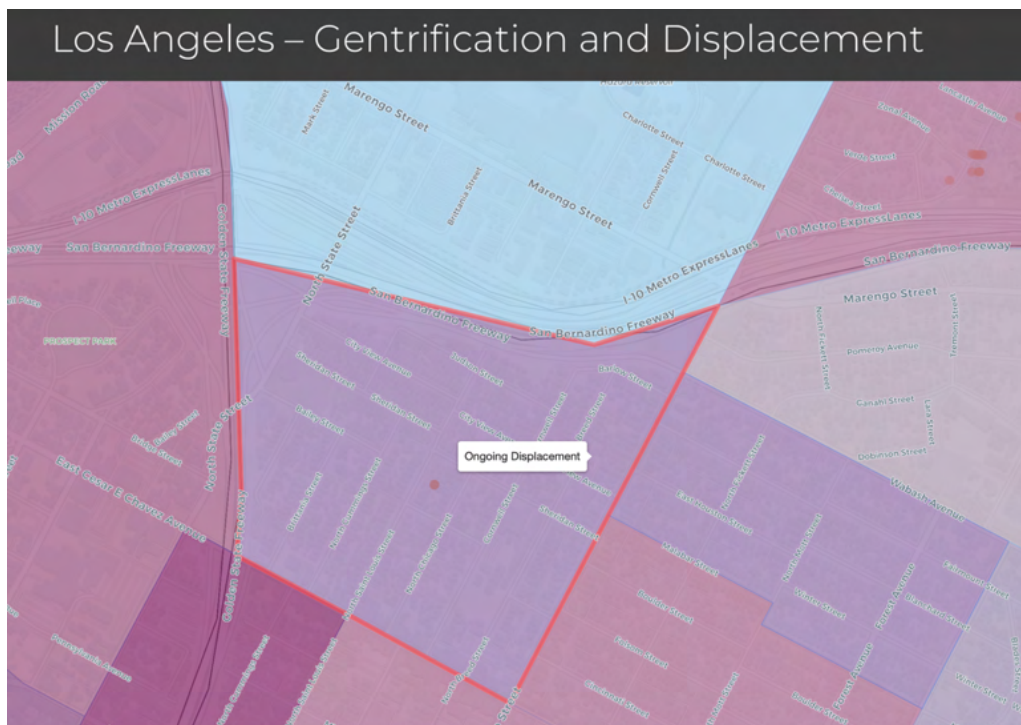


Figure 8: Screenshot of Map Indicating Ongoing Displacement in Los Angeles. Gentrification and Displacement (Source: The Urban Displacement Project)

Furthermore, an auto-ethnographic approach was employed in the methodology, utilizing senses and memories to recall how certain aspects of Cesar Chavez have changed. The feelings that one felt during a different time, either the early 2000s or 2010, up until leaving for SSU in 2018. A short analysis of how place-making through informal economies by utilizing UDP criteria and displacement maps layered with the topography of commercial and tenant displacement at identified sites, the researcher can identify small and micro-businesses in commercial and mixed-use zoned areas susceptible to displacement.

In the paragraphs below, a step-by-step explanation of how the structure of conducting findings is unveiled. Being an academic, abiding to the Institutional Review Board guidelines assisted with minimizing future risk for participants. The following below indicates how research was conducted, rationale behind employing a participant.

### **Semi-structured interviews**

Conducting 7-10 interviews with stakeholders, small business owners, and residents within the designated site can help justify a small number of communities that have been overlooked, thereby highlighting forgotten narratives. Using Mario Small's theory of small sampling (2009), the study's expected sample size is 7-10 participants; interviews will be recorded and transcribed for analysis. In addition, borrowing and updating questions from Ramos (2019), a similar study looking at disruption of social cohesion but in Highland Park. To be more geographically aligned with Boyle Heights residents, some questions were altered and translated for Spanish speakers. These individuals will have direct experience or knowledge of the change on Cesar Chavez Avenue. While the formally recorded sample will be limited to this range, it may also engage in informal, off-the-record conversations with additional individuals to inform

research direction. For time, sample size was determined by examining the land use map of Cesar Chavez and walking around the neighborhood, reflecting on identity politics and personal memories to identify possible individuals to be represented in the qualitative data needed, given the limited time available for the project. Although traditional planning research often employs a larger sample size, borrowing from Sociologist and Columbia University Professor Mario Small (2009), who justifies using a small sample size for vulnerable populations, it is the responsibility of the researcher to expand and connect the narratives of participants to broader theories in the academy.

### **Auto-Ethnography**

As Chicana Feminist Gloria Anzaldúa says, “I am a turtle, wherever I go I carry 'home' on my back (1987), for myself, while I navigated the suburbs of Rohnert Park trying to complete one degree; I wore and my home through writing about neighborhood pride any chance I could. Growing up, I would visit Cesar Chavez every day of the week and stop at the 605-bus stop on Soto, in front of King Taco. That space had a meaningful influence on my present-day exploration of Cesar Chavez, helping me identify what has changed and what still needs to change. I refer to change not as removal but as an evolution of services—services that should become more accessible for commercial stores struggling to keep their doors open.

My observations include street vendors who have maintained their spots, particularly in front of George Burgers and Bank of America, as well as *La Chispa De Oro*, Don Roberto Jewelers, and Guerrero Closeout LLC. This also involves listening to long-term community residents who feel the commercial street has changed and no longer feels as welcoming to them.

In this essay, I argue that using autoethnography as a Chicana planner can contribute to the work of other Chicana scholars in different fields, but with the same underlying message of centering one's knowledge. For example, Minerva Chávez (2012) argues that *testimonios* (testimonies), autobiographical educational experience, must be recognized as valid ethnographic research to contribute to existing knowledge around issues of educational equity. Similarly, Chávez's (2012) work aligns with Donna Haraway's (1988) argument: "positioning is, therefore, the key practice in grounding knowledge organized around the imagery of vision, and much Western scientific and philosophic discourse is organized in this way. Positioning implies responsibility for our enabling practice.

### **Archival Research**

Being from Boyle Heights, I go on the Montebello 40 to do homework in the Chicano Resource Center (CRC) at the East Los Angeles County Library every other day to do homework. Becoming familiar with the library at an early age, and even as a McNair scholar, gave me an introduction to the power of archival work by public institutions. The next step after conducting ethnographic research was to visit the CRC to examine the Boyle Heights archive folder. While at the library, borrowing books that are not accessible through digital libraries, but concentrate on a specific aspect of Boyle Heights, which, when combined with contemporary findings, can give a greater scope of understanding. Within the BH archives, George J. Sanchez's oral history and community projects around Boyle Heights introduced how institutions near or in Los Angeles have contributed to the preservation of neighborhood temporalities. In addition, digital archives

involved reviewing board agendas, campaign materials, LA Times articles, social media comments, and electoral flyers.

### **Oral Histories**

Following a similar mission as Boyle Heights Historian George J. Sanchez's oral history and community projects around Boyle Heights (2003) introduced how institutions near or in Los Angeles have contributed to the preservation of neighborhood temporalities. Collecting oral histories from long-standing residents to document their experiences with displacement in the area over the years. Getting situated at *La Chispa De Oro* and talking casually with the owner gave the ability to ask questions about how the neighborhood has changed since opening in 1994. Getting names and daily interactions with customers who have either become regulars or family members from prior clients. Using authentic relationship building and listening, having the ability to sit and listen is the primary form of obtaining oral histories from older individuals who are shy to "be in an interview" but not shy to "*Chismear*" (gossip). Following the attempt to obtain oral histories below gives clear steps on how the methodology took place to begin the study. In some connotations, the word "*Chisme*" can carry a negative connotation, but I argue it can increase participation with community members who either:

- a. Limit their public interactions
- b. Do not feel visible enough to make an opinion
- c. Do not know what planning and the effects are.

The first phase began with formulating research questions and clarifying objectives to identify small business corridors, enhancing the methodology by integrating Chicana Feminist



Standpoint alongside ethnographic techniques. Ethnographic Research & Data Gathering: I will conduct observational research, pending IRB approval, and facilitate semi-structured interviews *Pláticas*(conversations).

### **Geographical Location and Site:**

Utilizing Latino Urbanist James Rojas's framework on "enacted" environments, slightly shifting the objectivity toward commercial "enacted" environments by informal economies in the neighborhood to. primarily consisting of individuals with small businesses in or connected to the Cesar Chavez or 1st Street area, ensuring that the study remains focused on local experiences and narratives. The study's second phase prioritized interactions with small business owners, community leaders, and residents. This approach allowed researcher to centralize guiding questions that explore solidarity, coalition politics, and inequalities in urban planning. Field observations will be conducted at selected research sites, documenting noticeable patterns of spatial displacement and business dynamics and investigating narratives related to anti-gentrification initiatives. I will analyze social media posts that document changes in topography or social cohesion and examine discussions on displacement politics across various platforms, including Instagram, Boyle Heights Beat, and the LA Times.

### **Recruitment Technique**

Using Chicana Feminist praxis, such as "*Chisme*" (Gutiérrez, 2022) and prior community communications. The researcher used language, culture, social, educational, racial, and class perspectives to locate individuals who may hold similar or intersecting identities (Krenshaw, 1989) to identify potential interviewees or informal conversation partners. It is essential to note

that gaining trust through consistent attendance or explaining why one could not be there was crucial to upholding trust and interest in this study. Even when participants were unclear about what urban planning as a field entailed, carrying the Los Angeles Planning Spanish Glossary allowed the researcher not to mislead or misinform participants who were willing to talk. Among the recruitment process, the researcher employed a form of "linguistic" code-switching (Martinez, 2021) to adapt to the everyday and past social contexts of the potential subjects. As academics, there is a critique that when interacting with community members with limited education, academics may still invoke a form of hierarchy through their vocabulary or lack of vernacularism. As upcoming professional but also someone who learned to code switch after attending a PWI and living in the suburbs, it is through Chicana Geography (Anzaldúa, 2015), having the ability to speak in multiple tongues, whether "hood", "formal Spanish", "formal English" or as some of the participants state in the findings chapter "*Chueco*" (crooked).

### **Snowball Sampling**

Some participants will be identified through referrals from other study participants (snowball sampling), allowing the recruitment of community members who may have deeper or more specific connections to these Cesar Chavez spaces. As stated in the abstract, using "Chisme" as methodology allowed for snowball sampling to occur more naturally. Participants found that removing academic and planning jargon, while also diluting complex planning policies, can facilitate inclusive conversations by breaking down concepts into everyday lived experiences. In Chapter four, a subsection highlights how snowball sampling led to the discovery of

intergenerational forms of entrepreneurship among children of immigrants, while also appreciating the place where it all began for them: Cesar Chavez Avenue.

### **Demographic Characteristics**

The participants in this study will primarily come from local small businesses, self-identifying Boyle Heights community members about Boyle Heights, California, anti-gentrification allies, and individuals with direct knowledge and experiences related to displacement in the area. The subject group will have the following characteristics: Participants will represent a range of self-identifying markers such as, ethnicity, nationality, income level, stakeholder, races, and ages to reflect the cohesion and history of small businesses in Cesar Chavez or 1st St. Participants will include individuals who have been active in the community over different periods, as well as those who have memories, or knowledge of the change of small business cord but not necessarily active in the community. This ensures that a range of experiences, including individuals who may be experiencing or noticing the effects of displacement, are documented.

### **Promotional Flyers for Small Businesses**

After establishing trust through establishing positionality and relationship to the neighborhood by returning weekly, different store owners, such as *La Chispa De Oro*, Guerrero Outlet, were involved. Blanca's Boutique, a former optometrist's parcel, has recently offered a small business opportunity to a Pomona resident named Ren. The intention behind providing flyers in both English and Spanish was to offer potential subjects clear and direct information about the study and address any questions. By requesting consent to participate in the small-

business recruitment, the Flyers were only displayed from IRB approval to April 20th. Possible participants will have the ability to text, call, or email to schedule an interview or send in pictures or any relevant information related to documenting the change on Cesar Chavez Ave or First Street. **See Appendix C and D.**

## Chapter 4: Invisible Narratives Lost Space and Place

In this chapter, a dive into qualitative methods of research begins an introduction to Latino commercialism and glimpse at multinational communities through food merchants and Latino storeowners but commercial renters at the same time. By walking down the street of Cesar Chavez, a Latino Planner could expect to be greeted in Spanish or advertised with products. The narrow streets become a bit more crowded due to informal business in front of small businesses, however it has become clear that store owners do not have a problem with allowing someone in front of their store to possibly sell a different product. This research began with auto-ethnography mixed with ethnographic research by memories of places and senses walking west of Cesar Chavez Ave and Soto Street. Due to change in small-business, owner, vacancy or accurate information, some small businesses were not included in great depth for this study; however, using *Chisme* (Gutierrez,2022) to ask community business owners if they are aware of changes in the neighborhood allowed for some notes for establishments around Cesar Chavez Ave.

There is back and forth between crossing streets regarding the layout of commercial businesses. Cesar Chavez Ave finds itself in a unique placement fore fronting the residential streets behind commercially zoned establishments. It is important to note that the geography of Cesar Chavez Ave being a main street and lower density area being surrounded by single-family and multi-family zoning, allows for a potential interest for individuals wanting to live closer to DTLA without living inside of an urban area. As urban planners, we understand that migration to different neighborhoods is natural, the issue arises when neighbors begin to collide due to

inconveniences and lack of consideration for one another. The question then becomes how do we plan for higher density with intention of including the surrounding community?

### Archival Research

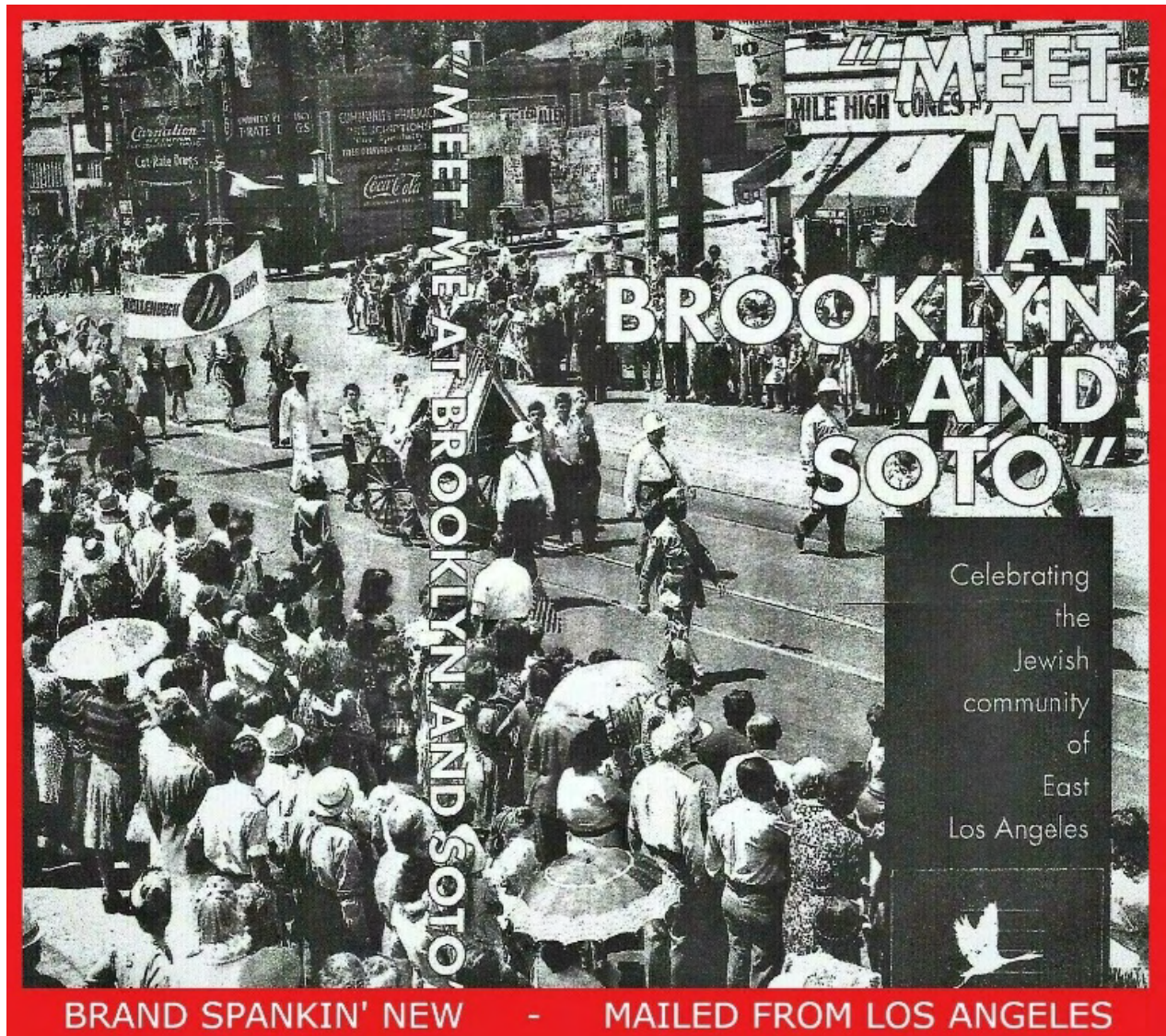


Figure 9: VHS Film "Meet Me at Brooklyn and Soto (Source: California State Archives: Boyle Heights)

For those outside the Jewish community, like me, learning about Brooklyn Avenue before its Latino-majority occupation fostered a similar pride for the now-renamed street, Cesar Chavez

Avenue. My memories of going down Cesar Chavez to get a burrito from a local, mom-and-pop immigrant-owned restaurant” *La Chispa De Oro*” parallels those of earlier residents who would walk down the street to Breed and buy a kosher pickle. The film captures these experiences, allowing audiences unfamiliar with the demographic changes and network shifts surrounding the former Brooklyn Avenue—now present-day Cesar Chavez; to gain a deeper understanding of the area. Although filmed in 1997, one can sense the love and pride former residents had for their community. Even during the White Exodus (Sánchez, 2021), some migrated to areas such as Fairfax or West Los Angeles.

Many who grew up in Boyle Heights between the 1920s and 1980s as seen in *figure 4*. attribute their survival, cultural pride, and sense of belonging to the neighborhood's unique character. Jewish social systems played a significant role in creating much of the still-standing infrastructure, embedding religious and cultural identity into the built environment. Their pride and place-making were evident through investments in community enhancements that bridged social classes, even with those below the poverty line. Jewish loan systems and community credit enabled some individuals to maintain economic stability. Similar lending practices emerged in Japanese and Latino communities, sustaining mutual aid traditions as a means of coping with adversity.

Scholars have identified this practice as “mutual financial aid and saving associations” (MFASAs), which have helped immigrant communities save for economic development and build financial assets. While MFASAs share the same foundational purpose of assisting immigrants, the

names of each system vary according to nationality. As Yoon (2015) explains, examples of MFASA systems include:

**Arisan** among Indonesians. **Hui** among Chinese or Taiwanese (Ardener, 1964). **Mujin, Ko, Tanomoshi** among Japanese (Embree, 1939). **Kye** among Koreans; **Ho** among Vietnamese. **Kameti** or **Chit fund** among Indians (Hevener, 2006). **Tanda** in Latin American countries, such as Mexico (Hevener, 2006). Systems in West Africa, for example, **Oha, Osusu, Adashi** among Nigerians (Ardener, 1964; Hevener, 2006). Pakistan-specific systems (Farid, Shafiqullah, & Rafiq, 2012).

Later in the film, Barney Papel describes helping his Japanese neighbors before they were forced to comply with Executive Order 9066 (Roosevelt, 1942). Broken by the sight of them selling their valuables, he offered mutual aid by managing their property and bills, assuring them, *"When you come back, we will get it straightened out."*

The larger message to the audience is that both dire loss and mutual care, transcending racial and cultural lines, were instrumental in the survival of specific populations. Similar methods of care for Boyle Heights residents resurfaced during the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids under the Trump Administration. Molina (2025), in an article for *Boyle Heights Beat* titled *as families self-deport, these neighbors are stepping in to care for pets left behind*, documents how neighbors assumed responsibility for pets and possessions when residents were displaced due to deportation fears. In both *Executive Order 9066* and more recent immigration enforcement actions, the targeting of



racial minorities prompted communities to create rapid-response networks for protection and safety.

### **The Chicano Resource Center Archives**

The saying “do what you can, with what you have” was first introduced to me in high school by Ms. Julie Cortez at the Math, Science, and Technology Magnet Academy (MSTMA) at Roosevelt High School. However, it wasn’t until I got to SSU that the phrase turned into “use your resources,” which had a much more positive connotation but nonetheless the same meaning when telling it to an individual who comes from a low-income household. Upon returning to the Eastside in 2023, now as a newly seasoned researcher, The Chicano Resource Center felt like being a kid in a candy store. It was through my past journeys on public transit, specifically the Montebello Line 40 or the formerly known Gold Line now E Line, that led me back to using resources in my stomping grounds. The archival findings below are publicly accessible to the public at the CRC by going to the file cabinets labeled BIO. Upon opening the file cabinet, towards the back of the cabinet, one can find an entire folder dedicated to Boyle Heights. In the folder is a time capsule of different archives, newspapers, pictures, academic essays, community events and projects, some of George J. Sanchez and The Japanese American Museums Oral History Project flyers and a Spanish translation of “The Power of Place.” Prior to looking at the folder, the intention was to find any articles that mention the “Eastside Redevelopment Project” or mentions of the name change of Brooklyn Ave to Cesar Chavez in the 1990’s. Below are the findings. In figure 10, readers can see how the name changes from Brooklyn Ave to Cesar Chavez, crediting New York’s Brooklyn borough, where some Jewish families came from. In the article,

the reconstruction of the main street in Boyle Heights is a staple memory for Jewish folks who left the neighborhood to the west, and stated that even when choosing to leave, the street remained significant for them.



**JONSONS MARKET** - Site of their first location, Brooklyn and Mathews Aves.

## JonSons Market one of oldest

The first of the six JonSons Markets was established in 1958 by John Inadomi and is still at its original location, Brooklyn and Mathews Aves. in East Los Angeles.

The name of the market derives from its founder, "John" and his "sons." It began as a family operation and has still remained one today. The operation is now into its third generation. John's son, Yosh, now acts as president of the market chain and when he retires the position will be available to one of the many family members who work in the stores.

Yosh Inadomi remembers the commitment and faith that his father had in the East Los Angeles area when he first opened the market. "That commitment was

justified because it has been the community that has helped us grow", stated Inadomi. To show that appreciation JonSons Market was the first to begin a scholarship for high school students of the East Los Angeles school district and have also participated in the 16 de Septiembre parade since it first began and have participated in several other community service projects.

JonSons Market was also the first market to advertise with the Belvedere Citizen and were strong supporters of the community newspaper. "We still continue to support the newspaper and feel as if JonSons Market and the Belvedere Citizen-Eastside Journal have grown together."

Figure 10: JonSon Market (Source: The Chicano Resource Center)



which are committed to employing  
improving job training opportunities  
participation of industries in job tra  
programs.  
improving information services an  
munity residents to reach jobs.

**POLICIES**

The Boyle Heights Community Plan  
accommodate the anticipated growth in p  
ment of the Community to the year 1990.  
that some growth will take place and must  
Present population projections indicate  
76,000 to 82,000 persons will occur by  
will be shown in later revisions of the Com  
The Plan encourages the preservation of  
residential areas, the conservation of ope  
preservation and strengthening of the B  
munity Business District.

Most commercial activities and public faci  
the needs of the Community, playing  
exceptions are several specialized region  
general-merchandise retail center, and other  
services along several major streets.  
The Community serves a well developed r  
due in part to its rail and freeway accessibl  
The most important general feature, at  
facilities proposals, is a population lev  
relatively stable throughout the life of the f

**LAND USE**

**Commerce**

**Standards and Criteria:**  
The commercial lands (not including ass  
nated by this Plan are adequate in quanti  
the projected population to the year 1990  
following standards:

a. 0.6 acres per 1,000 residents for  
neighborhood or convenience type ci  
b. 0.2 acres per 1,000 residents for  
community shopping and business  
vice uses and specialized commercial  
In general, off-street parking should be p  
less than three square feet for each squa  
floor area for each community, neigh  
shopping area as specified on the Plan Ma  
less than two square feet for each squar  
limited and highway oriented commercial

This Preliminary Plan has been prepared for discussion purposes prior to completion of a final Proposed Plan. Citizens of the community are urged to review the Plan and submit their written and oral comments to the City Planning Department. Additional information and copies of the Preliminary Plan may be obtained from: Community Plans Unit IV, City Hall, Room 605, Los Angeles, California 90012, telephone 485-3744.

## INTRODUCTION

This report presents the preliminary proposal for a Community Plan for Boyle Heights. The Boyle Heights Community contains approximately six square miles, with a population of 76,000, and is bounded on the north by Alhambra Avenue, Marengo Street and the San Bernardino Freeway; on the east by the City boundary at Indiana Street; on the south by the City boundary at approximately 25th Street; and on the west by the Los Angeles River. The salient characteristics of the area are: 1 a varied topography, containing both hilly and level areas; 2 a predominantly low medium density residential development; 3 a large industrial belt surrounding the area on the south, west and part of the north; 4 dispersed commercial facilities; 5 a primary Mexican-American population, forming the heart of the greater Mexican-American district within the City and County of Los Angeles; 6 problems including low income, under-employment, low education levels, housing deterioration, poor health conditions, and language differences. Boyle Heights is the oldest suburb within the City of Los Angeles and has on the average some of the areas which could most benefit from home maintenance.

# Boyle Heights Community PRELIMINARY PLAN

## PURPOSES

The Boyle Heights Community Plan is a part of the General Plan of the City of Los Angeles. It consists of this text and map.

## USE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of the Boyle Heights Community Plan is to provide an official guide to the future development of the Community for the use of the City Council, the Mayor, the City Planning Commission; other concerned governmental agencies, residents, property owners, businessmen of the Community; and private organizations concerned with planning and civic betterment. For the Council, the Mayor and the planning Commission, the Plan provides a reference to be used in connection with their actions on various city matters as required by law.

PR - AP - 4562-4  
CITY PLAN CASE 21237  
JANUARY 1974

Previous stages of the Boyle Heights Community Plan study involved the gathering and analyzing of data relating to physical, social and economic factors and the identification of community problems and potentials. The Preliminary Plan is the result of the cooperative efforts of the Los Angeles City Planning Department and the Boyle Heights Citizens' Advisory Committee.

The next step in the planning process will be to use the Preliminary Plan as a basis for discussion to obtain reaction and suggestions from the residents of the Boyle Heights Community.

Upon completion of the public discussion, the Planning staff with the assistance of the Citizens' Advisory Committee, will formulate a final Proposed Plan. This Plan will be reviewed by the General Plan Advisory Board (composed of various City Department managers who assist the Director of Planning in the preparation of the General Plan), and presented to the City Planning Commission and Mayor for approval and to the City Council for adoption.

The following population statistics are pertinent to the Boyle Heights Community:

1970 Population	75,926
Existing Zoning Capacity	139,968
1990 Projected Population	82,000
Population Capacity of Plan	82,777

The Plan is intended to promote an arrangement of land use, circulation and services which will encourage and contribute to the economic, social and physical health, safety, welfare, and convenience of the Community, within the larger framework of the City; guide the future of the Community to meet existing and anticipated needs and conditions; contribute to a healthful and pleasant environment; balance growth and stability; reflect potentials and limitations, land development and other trends; and protect investment to the extent reasonable and feasible.

This Plan proposes approximate locations and dimensions for land use. Development may vary slightly from the Plan provided the total acreage of each type of land use, the land use intensities, the population densities, and the physical relationships among the various land uses are not altered.

Figure 11: Boyle Heights Community Plan 1974

(Source: The Chicano Resource Center)



# STUDY

Continued from B1

study, ranging from new sidewalks and gutters to the possibility of a shopping mall, excite many Eastsiders, including Alatorre.

"This is a very important attempt to improve the social and economic life in these communities," Alatorre said recently.

Longtime Boyle Heights activist Alex Salazar, who will chair the 36-member citizens advisory panel that will make recommendations for improvements, said the committee will be open to all suggestions.

"That's what I like about it," he said. "I personally don't have any priorities, but we will listen to the what the communities want. We want to turn things around in Boyle Heights and El Sereno."

According to city officials, the two communities have long been ripe for revitalization.

Boyle Heights, which is just east of downtown, has a housing stock that dates back to the turn of the century. The median value of a single-family home is \$136,000, well below the citywide average of \$244,500. The area has an estimated population of 65,000 and an average household annual income of \$22,931, less than half the citywide average.

And in El Sereno, where housing and population swelled after World War II, the business districts along Huntington Drive and Eastern Avenue have languished in recent years. Merchants have not been able to attract the patronage of new immigrants the way shop owners on Brooklyn Avenue in Boyle Heights have.

Many residents of El Sereno, which is northeast of downtown, said they shop at the new Montebello Town Mall because their bedroom community of 53,000 lacks the variety of stores that a modern shopping mall offers.

"I wish we had something like that in our community," El Sereno resident Guillermo Martinez said.

According to figures released by city researchers, home values and household income in El Sereno are higher than in Boyle Heights, but are still below the citywide average. The average household income in El Sereno is \$32,900 a year; the city average \$46,700.

Alatorre, aware of the bitter wrangling over the revitalization of Olvera Street, has repeatedly said he is not certain what will result from the study. Some community activists believe Alatorre is

avoiding a public statement about his preference so he cannot be accused of having an agenda.

"I have nothing particular in mind," Alatorre said. "I want to hear what the community and the committee will say."

If a redevelopment project is recommended in part of the area studied, additional hearings and council action will be required, officials said.

According to business and community leaders familiar with the study, several proposals are being mentioned as possible recommendations:

- The creation of a shopping mall, anchored by a major retailer. There is ample undeveloped land in El Sereno that could be available for such a project. A determining factor may be the degree of community support for it, city planners say.

- A commercial or light-industrial development on land surrounding the Sears store at Olympic Boulevard and Soto Street. The retailer's catalogue center, which employed more than 1,000 workers, was closed last year, leaving the possibility that the land formerly occupied by the center could be used. Sears officials insist they have no plans to close the landmark store—opened in 1927—pointing out that the outlet recently reported its best first-quarter sales figures in a decade.

- New environmentally sensitive industry on North Main Street in Boyle Heights. City officials have long favored getting rid of unsightly auto wrecking yards along Mission Road and attracting new businesses. Officials are interested in companies with a long-term commitment to the area.

- Improvement of housing in Boyle Heights. There appears to be little chance of building new housing in the overcrowded area. But consultants hired to help carry out the study believe a street-by-street analysis of the area could lead to special loan programs to spruce up existing housing, much like an earlier CRA program in which 960 homes and apartments there were rehabilitated with low-interest loans.

- A hit list of unwanted projects, such as the proposed state prison downtown. "The people have made it clear that they don't want a prison here," said Raul Escobedo, a partner in Barrio Planners Inc., an East Los Angeles firm hired as a consultant to the study.

Frank Villalobos, the firm's principal partner, has been at the forefront in the fight against the

prison.

"I've known this community for 20 years," said Escobedo, who was raised on the Eastside. "I don't want outsiders to do this study. People know who we are and where we are."

But one community activist who asked that his name not be used said there may be opposition nonetheless.

"Remember, you're talking about a community that is fighting a state prison," he said. "You're also talking about folks who are afraid people might be displaced by the [CRA]. They're not going to say 'yes' just because everybody says they want to clean up the community."

Alatorre, aware of potential mistrust of any change in the two communities, has repeatedly said the study will not necessarily result in a CRA project in either area.

Other Latino activists said the study may be well intentioned but

could turn out to be a Band-Aid approach to more serious problems beyond its scope.

Dr. Gloria Romero, an assistant professor of psychology at Cal State Los Angeles, complained that the study panel should be expanded to include federal and state officials who can address the broader problems of the area—crime, lack of education and family issues.

Others criticized the advisory group's composition: only eight of its 36 members are women and it is top-heavy with business and civic leaders, they say. They also point out that organized labor, which could play a pivotal role in any revitalization work, is not represented on the committee.

But such concerns don't seem to matter to Lopez. She just wants better stores at Plaza del Sol.

"People can talk all they want," she said. "Make them do something."

Figure 12: Newspaper Archive of Boyle Heights Suggestions for Redevelopment Around Neighborhood (Source: The Chicano Resource Center)



### Chavez debate

I am writing this letter in response to the initiative that has been presented to change the name of one of our major Streets to honor the late Cesar Chavez. As a lifelong resident of Los Angeles and a long time advocate of remembering and learning from our history as a city, I'm both delighted and dismayed with this plan.

I am delighted because Cesar

Chavez's contributions to our society are both profound and hopefully lasting. He is emblematic of the spirit that has built our country. The sacrifices and struggles that he endured on behalf of the farmworkers in particular, and all working men and women in general serve as an example of the qualities of a true American hero.

I am dismayed because of the combination of streets that were chosen for this name change. People have for ages used place building and street names as means of honoring those people that have contributed to the betterment of society.

This is the tradition that we are carrying on in naming a street after Cesar Chavez. But, whenever we change a street name, we must choose carefully which street should bear the new name. In this case, the plan is to use Brooklyn Avenue, Macy Street and that portion of Sunset Boulevard located east of Figueroa Street.

While the Sunset Boulevard change may not pose a real historic problem as the most significant part of the street will remain "Sunset", I feel that the other two street names are of historic value.

Chicano Resource Center  
East Los Angeles Library  
DO NOT CIRCULATE

6/30/93 14  
NORTHEAST NEWSPAPERS • Belvedere, East L.A. Tribune, Eastside Journal, Eagle Rock Sentinel, Highland Park, Mount Washington, El Sereno, Lincoln Heights

Boyle Heights

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Brooklyn Avenue became the main street of the Boyle Heights community that thrived as Los Angeles' principal Jewish community for many years. The name "Brooklyn" refers to the New York borough that many of these people came from. It became a way of identifying the Boyle Heights area with the people that lived there at the time. Ultimately the Jewish community, for the most part, moved to the West side of town, but they never forgot their Boyle Heights roots. Brooklyn Avenue has served as a reminder to this rich period of Los Angeles history.

Macy Street was named to honor Dr. Obed Macy, who was an early physician in Los Angeles and a one-time owner of the Bella Union Hotel, which was the first hotel to serve the pueblo of Los Angeles. It also recognizes the achievements of his son, Oscar Macy, who was a crusading newspaper editor and noted businessman and who served as the Los Angeles City Treasurer during the 1880's. "Macy Street", which was previously called "Aliso Road", had been named by the Los Angeles City Council to honor this pioneer family.

Both of these street names: "Brooklyn" and "Macy", recall a rich part of our history and should be preserved as a reminder of our past.

An alternative street to name after Cesar Chavez could be a combination of 4th Street and 3rd Street stretching from the Harbor Freeway to Atlantic Boulevard in East Los Angeles. This road, which bends and changes its name at the eastern city boundary, is a major commuter link through Boyle Heights and East Los Angeles. It has ramps from the Harbor, Santa Ana and Pomona freeways. Designating this roadway "Avenida Cesar Chavez" would honor the great farmworker union leader and the people he fought for without slighting others who have also contributed to our city for past present and future generations.

CHARLES J. FISHER  
Past President

Highland Park Heritage Trust

Figure 13: Newspaper Archive: Letters to the Editor About Changing Brooklyn Ave to Cesar Chavez

(Source: The Chicano Resource Center)



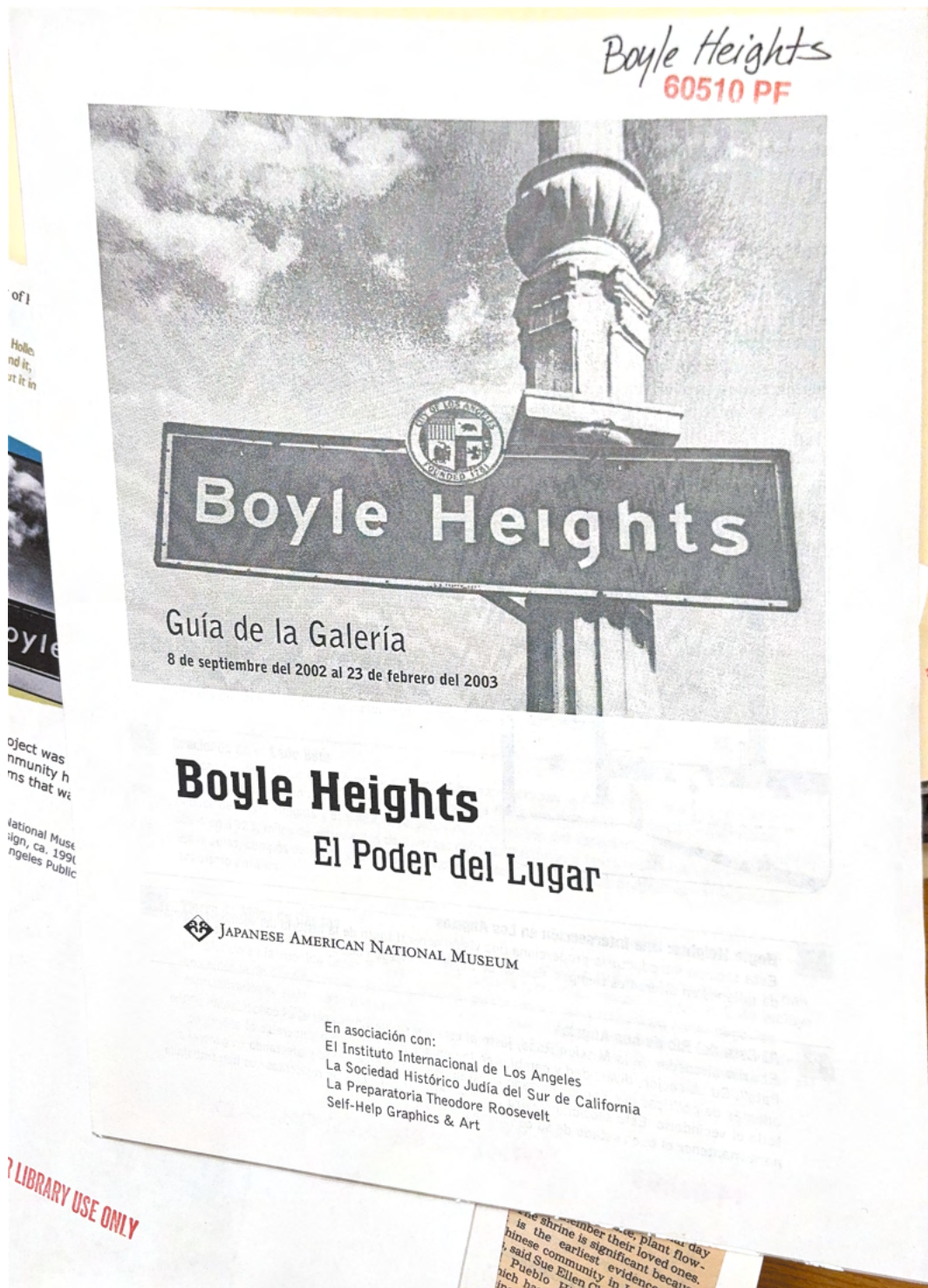


Figure 14: Scan of Boyle Heights: El Poder del Lugar Spanish Translated Flyer (Source: The Chicano Resource Center from The Japanese American Museum)

**Boyle Heights CRC**

## Local Libraries / Local Knowledge

### Mapping Boyle Heights

A collaboration between the Getty Research Institute  
for the History of Art and the Humanities  
and the Los Angeles Public Library


Saturday, February 22  
4:00 pm  
*Interweaving Histories*

How do the many histories and communities of Boyle Heights intersect? What are the links between the past and the present? This event will bring together historians, artists, and community leaders to share these stories.

Paul Botello, muralist  
Judy Branfman, writer  
Lindsey Haley, writer  
Henry Ronquillo, school principal  
Leland Saito, sociologist  
George Sanchez, historian

Self Help Graphics and Art, Inc.  
3802 César Chávez Boulevard  
Los Angeles  
Open to the public

To learn more about this project, or to become a participant in the Neighborhood Resource Guide Project, please call the Getty Research Institute at (310) 458-9811, ext. 1320.



Saturdays: March 22, April 5, and April 19  
10:00 am–4:00 pm  
*Neighborhood Resource Guide Workshops*


In this series of three workshops, high school students will come together to map the history and culture of Boyle Heights. With the help of artists, urban planners, and web designers, students will turn this information into a neighborhood guide for library users.

Benjamin Franklin Library  
220 East 1st Street  
Los Angeles  
Open to project participants

Saturday, April 5  
12:00–2:00 pm  
*Children's Mapping Workshop*

In conjunction with the workshops for high school students, younger children will be invited to a day with artists to map and draw their neighborhoods for a library exhibition.

Benjamin Franklin Library  
220 East 1st Street  
Los Angeles  
Open to the public



## Bibliotecas locales / Conocimientos locales

### Navegando Boyle Heights

Una colaboración entre el Getty Research Institute  
for the History of Art and the Humanities  
y la Biblioteca Pública de Los Angeles.


Sábado 22 de Febrero  
4:00 pm  
*Entretejando historias*

¿Cómo se entrelazan las numerosas historias y comunidades de Boyle Heights? ¿Cuáles son los lazos entre el pasado y el presente? En esta tarde se reunirán historiadores, artistas y líderes de comunidades para compartir estas historias.

Paul Botello, muralista  
Judy Branfman, escritora  
Lindsey Haley, escritora  
Henry Ronquillo, director de escuela superior  
Leland Saito, sociólogo  
George Sanchez, historiador

Self Help Graphics and Art, Inc.  
3802 César Chávez Boulevard  
Abierto al público

Para más información sobre este proyecto, o para participar en el Neighborhood Resource Guide Project, favor de llamar por teléfono (310) 458-9811, ext. 1320 del Getty Research Institute.



Sábados: 22 de Marzo, 5 de Abril, y 19 de Abril  
10:00 am–4:00 pm  
*Taller: Una Guía de Fuentes Locales*

En esta serie de tres talleres, estudiantes de High School se reunirán para hacer el mapa sobre la historia y cultura de Boyle Heights. Junto con artistas, planificadores urbanos, y diseñadores de la red del internet, los estudiantes convertirán esta información en una guía local para usuarios de la biblioteca.

Benjamin Franklin Library  
220 East 1st Street  
Abierto a los participantes del proyecto

Sábado 5 de Abril  
12:00–2:00 pm  
*Taller: Artistas y niños*

Los niños menores de edad serán invitados a pasar un día con los artistas para dibujar sus barrios por una muestra en la biblioteca.

Benjamin Franklin Library  
220 East 1st Street  
Abierto al público

Credits: All photos Courtesy of the Security Pacific National Bank Photograph Collection/Los Angeles Public Library.

Figure 15: Local Libraries/Local Knowledge Archive (Source: The Chicano Resource Center)



Boyle Heights Chicano Resource Center East Los Angeles Library Do Not Circulate

60510 PF

SECTION B

MONDAY JULY 31, 2000 CC

LOCAL NEWS / WEATHER / EDITORIAL

# METRO



Some Eastsiders still call this Boyle Heights corner Brooklyn and Soto, despite the 1994 change from Brooklyn to Cesar Chavez.

By GEORGE RAMOS  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

## Heart of the Eastside

### Corner of Cesar Chavez and Soto— a Landmark in History of 2 Cultures

Some habits are just too hard to break. Eddie Ramirez knows that his family-owned pharmacy is at the corner of Cesar E. Chavez Avenue and Soto Street in Boyle Heights. But as much as he tries to keep current with new things, he still succumbs to the old ways by referring to the intersection by the name it bore when he shined shoes there in the early 1930s.

"Brooklyn and Soto," he says, the names rolling easily off his tongue. "There's no other place like it in L.A."

The corner is considered by locals and some historians as the Eastside's premier intersection. To them, it has more importance

than Hollywood and Vine or Wilshire and Rodeo. They see it as a vibrant place that was at the center of the country's biggest Jewish community west of Chicago before World War II and the nation's largest concentration of people of Mexican descent after it.

It was there in 1938 that Jews marched to protest *Kristallnacht*, the vengeful day when Nazi supporters looted more than 7,000 Jewish-owned businesses and burned nearly 270 synagogues throughout Germany.

It also was there in 1994 that Chicano activists and others,

mindful of Chavez's role in the fight for decent pay and better working conditions for migrant farm workers, cheered when Brooklyn was formally renamed to honor the longtime president of the United Farm Workers union, who had died the year before.

Despite the change of the street name and the language heard on it, the intersection evokes an intimate sense of neighborhood that is often missing in Los Angeles.

"I've found that I can't go anywhere in the city without finding someone who has some connection to Brooklyn and Soto," says oral historian and filmmaker Ellie Kahn, who produced a film about the Jews of Boyle Heights, "Meet Me at Brooklyn and Soto."

Mail carrier Marion Rodriguez, who recently retired after delivering mail in the neighborhood for nearly 30 years, notes that little has changed over the years. "You meet all kinds of people there," she says. "They're walking down the street, doing their shopping. I see them all every day. 'Where's my check?' they'll say."

The history of the intersection is intertwined with the development of the bluffs east of downtown Los Angeles after the Civil War. Developer William H. Workman began subdividing the area in 1876. Married to the daughter of Andrew A. Boyle, who built the first brick home on the bluffs, Workman turned the area into the city's first suburb. He called the area Boyle Heights in honor of his father-in-law.

To attract newcomers from the Midwest and the East, many of the streets were given names familiar to them: Chicago Street, St. Louis Street, Cincinnati Street, Michigan Avenue, Indiana Street and Brooklyn Avenue.

Among the new arrivals were Yiddish-speaking Jews from Eastern Europe. By 1920, they dominated Brooklyn and Soto. Barrels of herring and pickles were a common sight in front of stores. The Canter Brothers' deli—related to the famed Canter's deli on Fairfax

Please see CORNER, B3



Pharmacist Eddie Ramirez started at the corner shining shoes.

Figure 16: Newspaper Article Titled: Heart of The Eastside (Source" The East Los Angeles County Library the Chicano Resource Center)

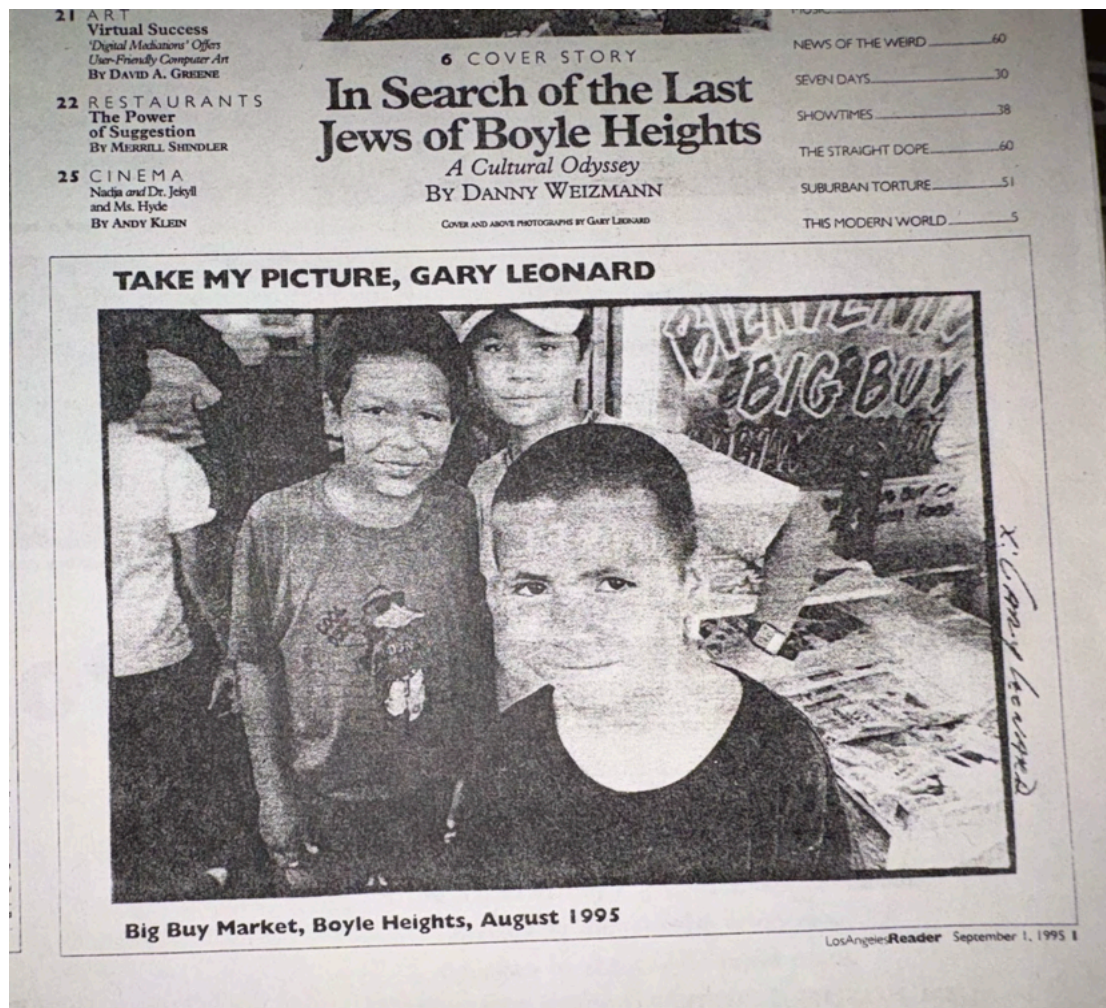


Figure 17: Newspaper Archive. Title: Take My Picture, Gary Leonard. Above Caption: In Search of The Last Jews of Boyle Heights

(Source: The Chicano Resource Center)



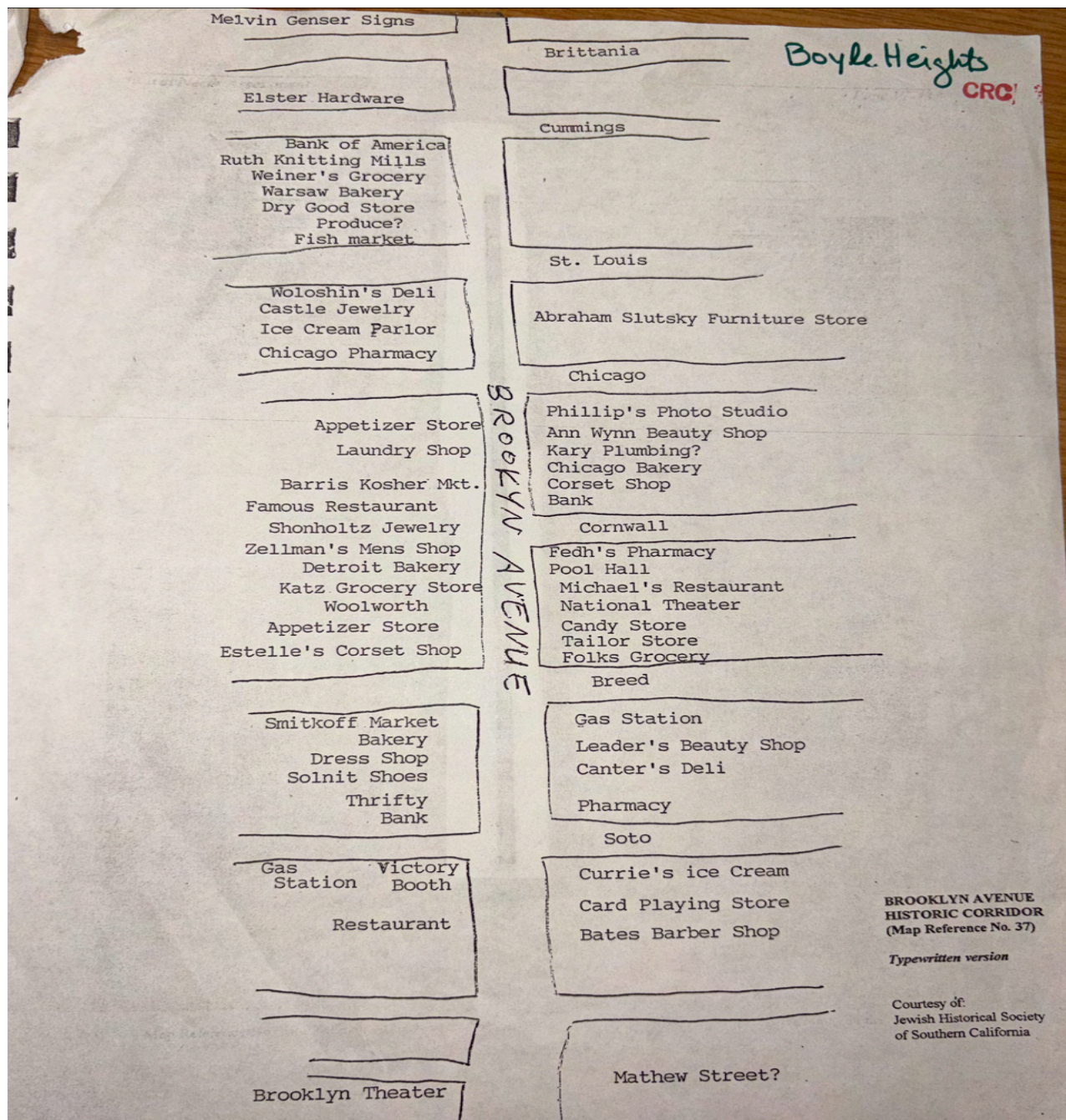


Figure 18: Small Business Before Latino Commercialism

(Source: The Chicano Resource Center)



Figure 19: *Streetview on Cornwell St. Facing West*

### **Ethnographic Research**

Ethnographic research focused on *La Chispa De Oro*, a local mom-and-pop shop established in the neighborhood in 1994, which also served as a renter-occupied space—alongside conversations, observing how the informal economy engages in the spatial dynamics of small business corridors. Weekly interactions with merchants, residents, bystanders, business owners, and employees without imposing on the business's daily revenues, observing foot traffic in front of a restaurant, and how parking affects possible revenue for small businesses. Guiding questions for ethnographic research did not initially include, but later expanded to examining red curves and the lack of certain parking types. What are the behaviors of small-business owners and people selling different goods in front of their stores? Conversations with the business owner

were casual, indicating trust and encouragement for small-business curiosity, as the researcher inquired about urban planning and how small businesses fit into it.

The initial curiosity about learning more about Boyle Heights beyond personal experience continued after learning about the neighborhood's narratives and its impact on planning policies. The first time I engaged with Boyle Heights through the lens of urban planning was in a class taught by a former professor, now a long-time mentor (Castillón, López, and Rascon, 2022), Dr. Charlene Tung. Like many first-generation college students, homesickness for the streets of Boyle Heights motivated me to pursue interests that extended beyond the classroom, seeking new career opportunities. Using senses to begin storytelling about a place that many of my classmates had never heard of before was not something I knew I was naturally good at until I was told, "I want to visit Boyle Heights one day," by the same classmates. It became a later realization after visiting home during winter breaks that I would return to something new. Infill developments such as the newly opened Lorena Plaza Affordable Housing project were eye-catching enough to natural seek a future research interest in housing developments and community engagement. The question that stuck with me while navigating URP was, how many of my friends also had curiosity in learning more about the foundations of planning?

While working on a McNair Scholars research project about the legacies of mutual aid in Boyle Heights and how they compare to contemporary mutual care efforts. The encouragement to read George J. Sánchez's book, *Boyle Heights: How a Los Angeles Neighborhood Became the Future of American Democracy* by Dr. Tung is how I fell deeper in appreciation for the neighborhood I called home. A semester later, Dr. Tung strongly encouraged annotating the book

to better understand the intersections of public policy, planning, and narrative across different temporalities. Carrying and reading Sánchez's book (2021) everywhere I went in the final year at SSU gave me my first real experience with affect theory (Haraway, 1988) in relation to geographic place-making.

Mentioning how I "landed" in urban planning isn't simply a personal anecdote; it's a way to illustrate how some planners of color often "stumble" into the field later than their peers. The love and authentic connection one feels for a neighborhood hundreds of miles away can become the foundation for a planning career. Walking down contemporary Cesar Chavez Avenue, starting at King Taco on Soto and Cesar Chavez, and continuing until reaching the San Bernardino 10 Freeway, one may perceive a similar commercial experience. However, some of the minority owned-business landscape could not be more different. Elders strive to survive in informal economies (Huerta, 2019), while others engage customers in foot-traffic chatter, asking, "¿Cómo estás?" (how are you?) reflects a daily hospitality. The warm hospitality and personalized customer service provided by Latino informal businesses create a unique experience in commercial areas, such as Cesar Chavez Avenue. Cesar Chavez carries different meanings or feelings. For some people, it's a place where their business had an opportunity to rise because of the foot traffic from the nearby elementary school, Sheridan Elementary School. Small businesses such as *La Chispa De Oro* (1994), who close on Tuesdays during the summer due to lower foot-traffic in the area.



## **Social Media to Network**

The power of digital networks as explained in Dighton (2019)'s article is one of the many ways gentrifications in neighborhoods have been able to contextualize posts that highlight ongoing displacement activism, anti-displacement rhetoric, opinions on housing, and/or affordable housing. Or in some cases, it can be one of the only few ways people who have left the neighborhood stay connected and keep spaces that no longer exist alive. For example, Big Buy Grocery.

I posted a picture of this Big Buy Grocery Store that I found on Yelp. I decided to post it on my Instagram story because I knew if I had forgotten that there was a grocery store before the Walgreens on Breed and Cesar Chavez, others may have to. After posting the picture I received some likes and one message from a former middle school friend who had moved back to Mexico with his parents after we graduated in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Sergio, who had arrived with his parents at the young age of 6, had lived in an apartment near St. Louis and Cesar Chavez, and has memories of the Big Buy, selling in front of the store with his mom. He states, "I used to feel ashamed back then having to sell with my mom, now I feel pride to know that I came from nothing." Although our only connection that Sergio and I have now is through social media, his memories of his childhood and street vending with his mom are forever embedded in the land of Boyle Heights.

Sergio, like many street vendors, often feel the shame of having to go into the street and make it day by day but they work past it because they know that shame is minimal compared to the possibility of being homeless or not providing for their family. However, since Cesar Chavez

Avenue businesses are interdependent on one another, the blanket of shame is quickly lifted through the feeling of belonging. Language being the first form of safety and communication, street vendors know their customers by name. Organic hospitality is embedded within the streets of Cesar Chavez. The limerence of Big Buy Market was a brief meeting space for neighbors through need for groceries. Additionally, a health aspect of accessibility to grocery stores within a short neighborhood distance was disintegrated through the introduction of a competing chain store to its long-time community partners Ramirez Pharmacy and Botica Del Sol.



*Figure 20: Big Buy Market Side Profile (Source: Yelp)*



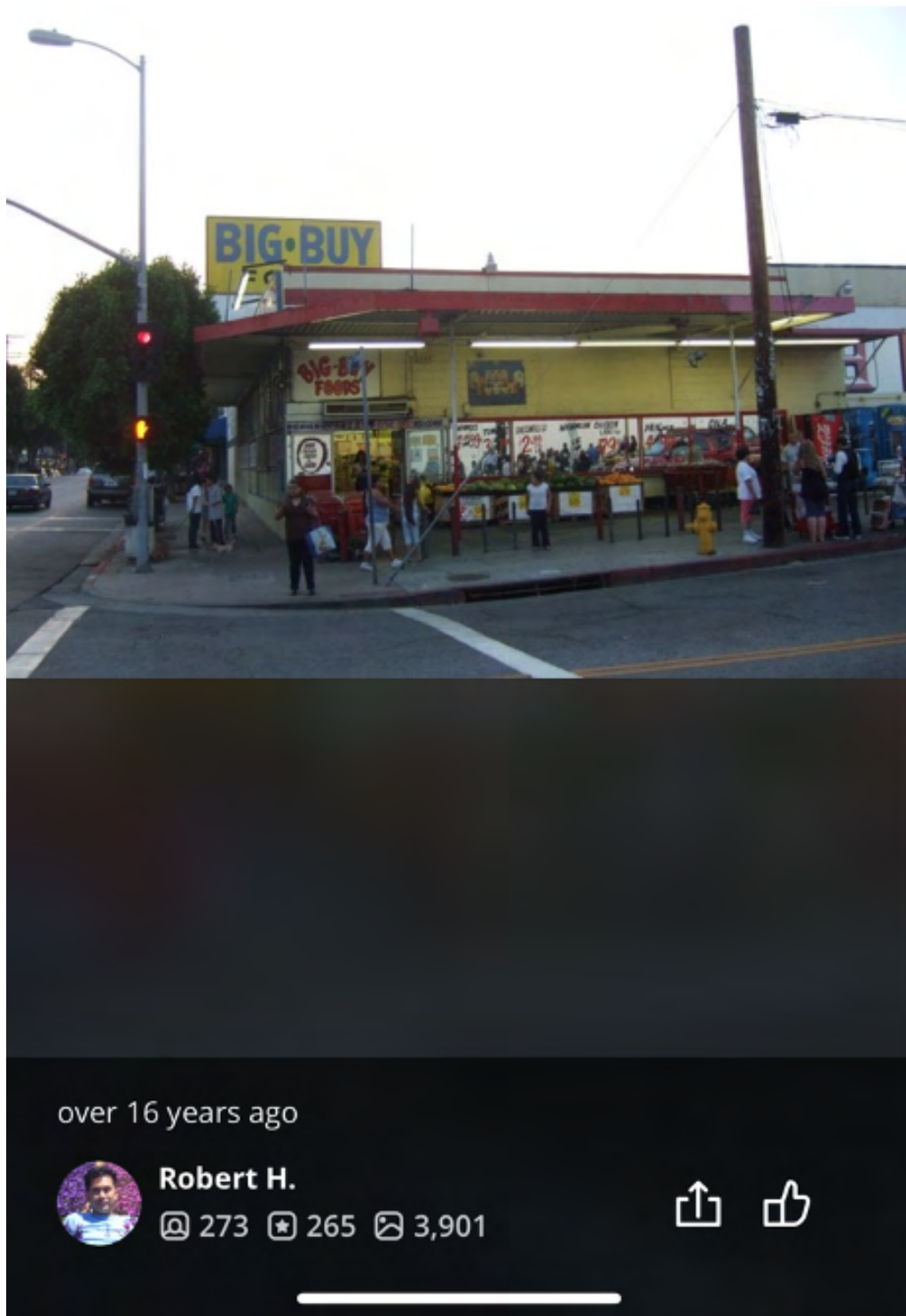


Figure 21: *Best Buy Grocery Store Front and Breed Street View (Source: Yelp 2009)*

With the topic of local economic competition, the conversation then carries over from the 2010's looking at the viewpoint towards the new corporation, in an article from Boyle Heights Beat, *Walgreens divides community: Chain store brings benefits and drawback*(2012), journalist Brizette Castellanos was able to get a direct quote from former Boyle Heights Chamber of Commerce President César Armendáriz:

Boyle Heights Chamber of Commerce president César Armendáriz believes that Walgreens can help Boyle Heights reinvent itself by creating a more diverse business environment and more jobs. 'But he understands that Walgreens' success may come "at the cost of hurting small businesses.'

The convenience store that began competing with both pharmacies up the street has mixed opinions on the placement but nonetheless, while walking down the street, the business unlike other businesses aside from Bank of America across the street, has constant foot traffic around and entering the store. Next to Walgreens, when I was walking in March, construction to the parcel next it and between newly established UPS Shipping, a small business, formerly an optometrist office. Next to the former optometrist, is a Tax Place where locals in the area often go during tax season. The last food spot on the block is *La Chispa De Oro*, which has taken another neighboring parcel and broke walls to expand their small mom-and-pop restaurant in the late 2000's after their neighbor a Chinese Shoe Place left the community. Next to *La Chispa De Oro*, is Blanca's Boutique, formerly known as Paul's Nails



Figure 22: Front View of La Chispa De Oro 2025

### Site Visit: “At La Chispa De Oro Everyone is Family”

Walking into *La Chispa De Oro* one is automatically greeted by one or many family members. The first sight that one has to their left is family member A who is quickly putting hand-made tortillas on the hot parrilla. Additionally, one quickly can point out that even structured as a family mom-and-pop restaurant, it is run through matriarchal powers. The services and multi-tasking of each employee or family member can be labeled as unstructured; however, coming from Latino background, the way women and the one dishwasher work is not a typical business where one has social hierarchy based off your position. Even with the small-business owners, the genuine conversations and laughter that sometimes distract the women from working and

*Chismear* can be seen as safety. Where orders are not piled up, everyone looks for tasks such as cutting onions, prepping salsas for tomorrow, making chips (that everyone receives upon ordering) or assisting with making *agua frescas* (fresh waters).

In *Figure 16*, readers can see that on the parcel drawing of different small business around the neighborhood, when drawing down from Folk's Grocery on Breed Street until getting to "Cornwall" as labeled on the paper, next to a pool hall is "Michaels Restaurant", which can indicate that the infrastructure and interior design from prior Jewish occupants in the area allowed for a smooth transition for now 30 year old mom-and-pop restaurant *La Chispa De Oro*.

In an article by Boyle Heights Beat (2012), Melchor mentions how when he first got his driver's license, he thought that he would be the cool guy in his friends group going places with the homies, but as stated in the article instead he would get sent for *masa*, *chiles*, *nopales* (dough for tortillas, Chile and cactus) or anything needed for the restaurant. Ten years now passing since that article, Melchor is still seen or heard being told to go to Smart and Final down on 4<sup>th</sup> and Breed.

The characteristics of the *Chispa*, to some, can be seen as nostalgic. Recently, one family member had an encounter with a customer from over 20 years ago. The individual who had left for Columbia returned to *La Chispa De Oro* to ask about *Roci*, a former cook, whom her former crew knew as "*La Guerra*". Sadly, *Roci* passed away a couple of years ago due to health implications, so when the individual was told the one person he was looking for, he left with grief rather than joy of being reconnected with the person he knew when he was 10. It was through this story where one can see that restaurant like *La Chispa De Oro* hold. When speaking with one

family member who assists as a waitress, when asking about her customers that she interacts with, she states that on her days off, the next day she always gets told she was asked for by her regular customers. She calls them her “viejitos”. When asking her about her time there and how seeing the neighborhood change in demographics, she states that a lot of her “older” customers from when she first began working in the establishment have passed, but nonetheless the memories of giving them tortillas or extra avocado like she does to former Assemblymember for The 52<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District, Wendy Carrillo, who occasionally but for years has supported an immigrant-owned small-business.

Many customers experience an automatic sense of familiarity. There is a range of demographics that come into to restaurant either to pick up food or if they’re lucky enough to find parking in the only 3 parking spots on the street. Most times, they take the risk and parking in front of a 51 feet red zoned curb. For elders who seems to be the most visiting demographic they do not always can park in front of the restaurant and if they do, they have their eye out constantly or have a family member go around and pick up the car while they wait in the front.

The curb in front of mom-and-pop restaurant *La Chispa De Oro* has a red curve of 53 feet from the parking meter closest to the UPS store. Clients of the establishment, including city staff with Los Angeles Emblem Park in front of designated no-parking curb with hesitation and fear on whether their car will become LADOTS next victim. While conducting ethnographic research at *Chispa* it became visible that a lot of older customers must do multiple rounds until the three parking spaces on the same side of *La Chispa De Oro* is vacant. On other days when there is no sign of anyone moving, customers impatience will overcome them to the point of not going to

get food. In *table 3*, a condensed chart showcasing most verbal concerns from restaurant owners and customers.

Customer Demographic	Needs	Wants	Fears
Elder	1. Nearby parking, ADA accessible parking to commercial areas	1. Air conditioning inside during hot days	1. Getting ticketed by LADOT

Table 3: *La Chispa De Oro Customer Concerns, Needs and Wants*

### **Demographic Changes: Commercial Turnover**

At *La Chispa De Oro*, business owner Melchor Senior talks about current tension with the neighbors over parking. The limited and scarce parking in front of Avenida Cesar Chavez is not suitable for his small business whose demographics are either elderly, family, or unaccompanied women who come in with small children. Often the neighboring businesses such as the newly established UPS store opened in 2025. UPS and 4 other businesses rent parcels; however, it is under recent news that the landlord, including renting the backside connecting all parcels, is attempting to restrict long-established business owners Melchor and family. Having to sometimes parking in the behind lot that has a direct entrance to their backdoor, that helps with brining in merchandise in and out towards the kitchen has been met with pushback from neighbors UPS. With the scarcity of parking, even for locals who receive a ticket from LADOT because they either, parked on the side where Street Cleaning would be passing, not paying for their meter, or worse were parked in a red curve because of the lack of “sufficient parking” as

stated by Melchor Sr. Through this interaction, one can speculate that there is preference by landlords towards corporations instead of their renter of thirty years.

This is not the only new neighbors that *La Chispa De Oro* has. Since opening their doors in 1994, *La Chispa De Oro* seems to be the last original Mom-and-Pop restaurant struggling to keep their doors open. Aside from the UPS store their former competitors *La Guadalupe* who had a mural of a key religious protector for most Latino communities “*La Virgen De Guadalupe*” now painted brown because of the constant graffiti from local gang members said one Mayra who has been working in Cesar Chavez in former Nail Salon “Paul’s Nails” now Blanca’s Boutique. She mentions how the current business-owners are not the same ones who originally owned sold the business after the father passed away. She mentioned although the new business “*La Managuita*” a Nicaraguan and Mexican immigrant-owned business is a nice welcome to the neighborhood; she still misses those who have decided to also leave the neighborhood.

LOS ANGELES CITY

## Public hearing today on proposed Boyle Heights housing development

The development by Tiao Properties on Cesar Chavez Avenue has been at the center of a debate over gentrification



BY ALEJANDRA MOLINA  
MAY 26, 2025



El Apetito restaurant on Cesar Chavez Avenue is one of several businesses slated to be razed as part of a mixed-use development by Tiao Properties. (Photo by Andrew Lopez/Boyle Heights Beat)

A public hearing on a proposed housing development at the center of a gentrification debate in Boyle Heights is scheduled for Wednesday, May 28, at Ramona Hall Community Center.

The hearing by the East Los Angeles Area Planning Commission, which was postponed

Advertisement



**How to get your child a seat on a LAUSD bus**

August 13, 2025

**LAUSD announces safeguards for immigrant students on same day federal agents make arrest outside school**

August 13, 2025

**Day of Action: L.A. groups stage daylong boycott, protest over federal immigration actions**

August 12, 2025

Figure 23: Boyle Heights Beat Article on Public Hearing for Mixed-Use Development



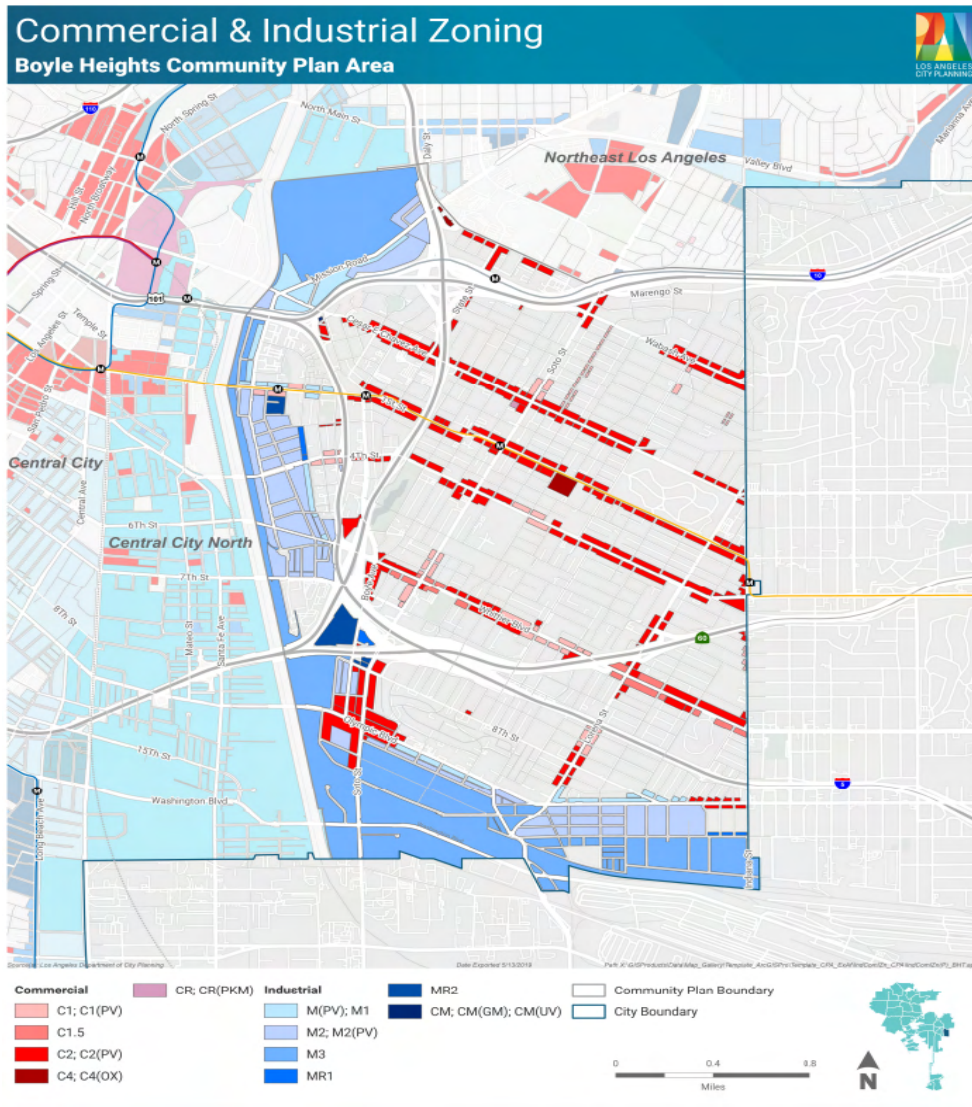


Figure 24: Commercial and Industrial Zoning (Source: Boyle Heights Community Plan Area)

### **Rationale for Case Study:**

As previously stated, using Chicana Feminist praxis of *Chisme* (Guitrerez, 2022) led me back to gaining confidence to enter community spaces, the first-time hearing about on-going anti-displacement activism was the summer of 2023. Freshly graduated and looking at books at the East LA County Library Chicano Resource Center, there was a librarian who was assisting with the library's donation/informal store. By casual conversation, or as Latino scholars would label it, *Chisme* session about the Barrio being sold (Estrada, 2025) became the introduction to the most recent local anti-displacement activism occurring around stopping a new development in Cesar Chavez.

The proposed mixed-use development at 2115–2125 East Cesar Chavez Avenue and 301–309 North Chicago Street includes 50 units—45 market-rate and five affordable (extremely low-income), as well as commercial space for artists and a community market. However, it will temporarily displace three businesses and two residential units. The initial approval on March 13, 2024, was annulled for violating California Affordable Housing Act regulations.

The dispute, led by the El Apetito Coalition, centers on preserving a long-standing Norteño music venue and restaurant. Rosa El Apetito, the owner, fears losing her livelihood and housing, as she lives upstairs with her elderly mother. She has also raised concerns about property maintenance and health impacts, citing the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and ongoing neighborhood health issues. Community members expressed concerns about noise pollution and limited parking in a corridor already struggling with parking shortages.

The displacement debate can be complex for planners. While pro-housing advocates celebrate California's legislative reforms aimed at closing housing gaps, these policies can conflict with grassroots preservation efforts. On June 30, 2025, Governor Newsom announced "ground-breaking reforms" to expedite affordable housing and infrastructure projects while exempting certain rezonings from CEQA (Office of Governor Gavin Newsom, 2025). These reforms aim to speed site readiness for approved housing elements while maintaining environmental protections but for neighborhoods with ongoing displacement raise the question for some whether the Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) owned by private landlord who may not be charging market-rate rent, sells their parcel or demolishes it which then leads to displacement for some families.

## **Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews with different community members who were a bit surprised when first being asked to begin interviews, seeing themselves as "random" and possibly not as "important" compared to other potential interviewees. Using feminist praxis of explaining positionality, reminding participants that the purpose of interviews is to highlight voices that may seem invisible on the larger scope issues, but as Mario Smalls (2009) highlights, there are great depths of knowledge in qualitative research, especially when working with hesitant, vulnerable populations that already feel dismissed. Through careful consideration and IRB guidance, the following chapter aims to serve as a bridge for emerging urban planners, as well as long-time community members who have inherited their membership from my mother, who was an active member of the community herself. It was through "*Platicas*" (Talks) with different older folks and

auto-ethnographic analysis that it became clear Cesar Chavez Ave has and continues to have intergenerational social mobility for future generations.

### **EastLosHeart Interview**

Christopher Cruz, known online as *East Los Heart*, a community photographer who documents injustices in the neighborhood, has been in the community, continuing his grandfather's legacy of fighting for Chicano spaces and art behind the scenes. Now a case manager in Sacramento, Cruz became involved in housing activism with "Defend Boyle Heights" after witnessing friends displaced by real estate speculation. He eventually stepped back to pursue his studies at UC Davis, citing internal disagreements within the group.

In his interview, he mentioned that he and his family had recently worked with Cal State LA's Ethnic Studies Art and Preservation program to preserve the art and history of Chicano Murals in East LA/Boyle Heights. Chris is more famously known on Instagram and local community activist such as EastLosHeart. If you follow him on Instagram, you can see an array of documentation from the hood through his camera. When I asked Chris how he became passionate about "Chicano Activism," he told me that he is the grandson of Emmanuel Gomez Cruz. Emmanuel Cruz's murals may not all stand out to newcomers, but to Chicano families like Chris's understand the significance of preserving and gifting his grandfather's art to the CSULA Chicano Art archives. Cruz who used art as a proclamation of Chicano and Mexican history to enable forms of belonging for Mexicans on the Eastside carry the underlying message of claiming public space to place-make for communities. Now recognized by Getty (2015) and PBS SoCal

(2012), Cruz is seen as one of the pioneers for Chicano murals in the Eastside with religious paintings, and most notorious A Chicano Christmas Story a re-write to enable imaginative ways of representation and belonging. Pulling from Christopher's Blog (2020), for more information about his grandfather, in his piece he writes:

Emmanuel Gomez Cruz was born August 2, 1931, and raised in multiple parts of Los Angeles. Anyone who knew my grandfather or observed his art could see that for a young Mexican American man growing up in the 1940's and 50's the allure, excitement, necessity, and struggles of Pachuco Zoot Suit culture meant everything.

Later in his interview Chris states that UCLA had an interest in preservation, but Chris and his family decided to keep his grandfather's art on the Eastside to make it accessible to the community. When we started talking about why UCLA is not accessible to Chicano Art, we started talking about the geographic locations and transit accessibility if someone from the community did want to see his art. I then inserted and told Chris that as a kid from the Eastside trying to do research myself in 2017 during my SLP project, where my group went to interview Professor Daniel G. Solórzano at UCLA. Telling Chris about how at 17, how four brown individuals from a low-income area had to navigate how to get to UCLA using only public transit to get our research on stereotype threat and its possible correlation to property taxes in the area. Through this conversation, Chris and I spoke about how institutions such as UCLA carry a large archive of Chicano history. However, geography sometimes becomes a barrier to wanting to see the work of your community. *Figure 26* illustrates one of many paintings by Emmanuel Cruz.



Figure 25: One of Emmanuel's Paintings at Ramona Gardens (Source: The Getty)

### **Viva Padilla**

Viva Padilla, a Chicana organizer, first-generation publisher, poet, translator, writer, and owner of Re/Arte Centro Literario, until she was commercially displaced. To some in the community she is known for owning one of the few bookstores in the community that held space for all marginalized groups. Viva who had organized and appealed a development proposal that would allocate 95% of its units at market rate and only 5% for low-income residents, ultimately evicted herself after paying her rent one day late. Is much more than a community organizer. As a commercial tenant, she noted that there are few protections for commercial tenants, referencing the Los Angeles Commercial Anti-Displacement ordinances. While the City of Los Angeles implemented a temporary ordinance during the COVID-19 pandemic, it expired in 2022.

Another program that Viva attempted to assist with, in the event of a potential halt to development, was registering El Apetito as a Legacy Business through the Los Angeles Economic and Business Development. When checking the Legacy Business interactive map, it was visible that El Apetito is recognized as one; however, as Viva stated later in the conversation, the lack of records for some business receipts limited the application for grants, since Rosa had bought the restaurant from the previous owner. In addition, the necessity for new housing, according to Los Angeles RHNA and state-mandated policies such as the Housing Accountability Government Code section 65589.5, which was overturned on March 13, 2014, to allow the development to proceed.

In later conversation Viva Padilla, she raised a significant concern: activism in higher education, from the perspective of non-academic community members, can feel intrusive and inauthentic. Recently, when she came to Cal Poly Pomona to speak about her activism, she reminded attendees that social justice work cannot be limited to academic jargon; it must be grounded in community-based action. Community Organizer Viva Padilla, who became a Tenant Rights Legal Aid under Elen Popp

The description above is not a new sentiment among Chicanas outside academia. Gloria Anzaldúa and her contemporaries recognized early on the importance of navigating "two tongues"—one in the academy and one outside—to bridge Chicana stories from the street to the classroom.

### **Intergenerational Skills: Magda, Linda, Rebecca**

One way I maintain a work/life/self-care balance is by getting regular facials—not just from any spa, but from one of the few spaces to replenish and *Chismear*: LA Skin Bar LLC owned

by Linda since February 8<sup>th</sup>,2020 who is situated next to sister Lexy's A Chic Boutique who has been around since April 19<sup>th</sup>,2019, both who grew up in Boyle Heights. Linda not only mother of my longtime friend, Rebecca. Rebecca and I met in TK kindergarten at First Street Elementary before she relocated to her stomping grounds Pico Rivera; another predominantly Latino community, with an 83% Latino population (Rocco, Scott, & Soja, 1996)—her family roots run deep in Boyle Heights. Becky who shares similar memories of our grandparents picking us up from elementary has kept her connection to the neighborhood through her mom, aunt and most importantly grandma. Her hope is to open her own pre-school or day care in the neighborhood, I am certain that she too will continue serving the community and future generations.

Linda, her mother is a strong and humble empowering community member whose mission is to bring skincare and most importantly intergenerational self-care for some of the older women in our community who often dismiss their own self-care. She speaks about how she feels blessed by being able to provide a service of self-love and restoration for those who often are too busy or hesitate to spend on themselves because sometimes “the land eats first” meaning bills and rent may be the primary reason for not investing in one's skincare. Nonetheless Linda continues her mission and hope to make sure that whoever is under her hands leaves her business feeling relaxed and glowing. It was through consistent and monthly appointments for my own replenishing where Linda who has opened about her mom working on Cesar Chavez.

Through Linda and her mother, Magda, I've been able to learn more about the commercial landscape of César Chávez Avenue and its ties to family-run businesses. Speaking with Magda about her time on Cesar Chavez Avenue from the 1990s to early 2000s, her pride in



shared memories and neighborhood connections was evident. Magda credits her work experiences there with building her networking, customer service, and computer skills, as well as enabling social mobility and economic security for her and her two daughters.

She began at Candy Cane's Kids Clothing a former Jewish owned establishment on the corner of Breed (now Cesar Chavez) before being recruited to Don Roberto's Jewelers, where her career began. She stated :

one day, the manager saw how excellent she would interact with customers and suddenly I was being asked if I wanted to join Don Roberto Jewelers. I told him that I didn't have any computer, or much English writing experience, he didn't care. He said don't worry about that. I took the job, and it paid off because over time my skills in customer service, learning the jewelry industry, business and forms of credit. I am forever thankful it gave me the opportunity to be a part of the community and provide for my two daughters.

Reflecting on her time there, she recalled daily interactions that gave her purpose—whether customers made a purchase. She emphasized how Latino customer service norms fostered a hospitality that encouraged return visits. She also remembered an incident where she assisted a customer overlooked by others due to their appearance.

When asked about crime during her time there, she explained that while violence, mostly gang-related, was present, she still felt welcome: "Cesar Chavez has always been dangerous, but it was my home." Magda, who recalls how the name changes from Brooklyn Avenue to Cesar Chavez, felt like an open invitation for more Latinos to go and converse in Spanish and simply

exist. Like the Jewish community, who stated they also felt at home in Brooklyn, where they would constantly hear Yiddish being spoken daily by store owners, customers, friends, and most importantly, family members who had also immigrated thanks to the social networks in the community (Meet Me at Brooklyn and Soto, 1997)

Her reflections led to mention of *La Chispa De Oro* across the street, where she regularly ordered a dozen freshly made tortillas with asados chiles. She recalls how she would talk with Senior Melchor, and she would try to sell him jewelry for his wife. She always would ask him to deliver her food because of the “*chisme*”. Upon mentioning local-delivery, *La Chispa De Oro* continues making short-distance delivery to neighbors. Small-Businesses like *La Chispa De Oro* illustrate how mom-and-pop hospitality contributes to customer retention. Nevertheless, the arrival of national chains like Michoacana, La Monarca, Walgreens, and UPS (2025), alongside deteriorating maintenance in some older properties, has transformed parts of the neighborhood.

## **Reporting & Dissemination**

In the next chapter results will be situated within the broader context of discussions on displacement and gentrification. The results from this research underscore the historical and ongoing systemic barriers related to urban planning in and around Boyle Heights. Ethnographic research for this study began at *La Chispa De Oro*, a family-owned and operated mom-and-pop shop established in 1994 in the neighborhood. By centralizing Chicana praxis and geography, a deeper analysis on changes in population, feeling of belonging, and foot-traffic attempts to advocate for future forms of revitalization to bring back feelings of “community” (Cahuas,2021)

## **Chapter 5: Discussion and Analysis**

“Boyle Heights is a place that has allowed people to live on the margins because they themselves may also belong to a marginalized group”

- Christopher aka EastLosHeart on Instagram

-

Being labeled a "Latino neighborhood" can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, there is pride and a sense of belonging in being surrounded by people with similar backgrounds—whether in terms of race, nationality, income, immigration status, or, in the case of Boyle Heights, language. In this chapter, looking how language and limited community engagement when it comes to housing rolls into other issues within the community.

### **Background of Boyle Heights**

According to the City Planning Boyle Heights Demographic Profile (2022), 58% of the population consists of Latinos and foreign-born residents, many of whom are renters. Social science scholar Dr. Jessica Hernandez (2022) discusses displacement in the context of immigrants being uprooted from their homelands and migrating to survive, providing a broader understanding of displacement amid globalization and migration across various Latin American regions. The boundaries of Boyle Heights, as outlined in the Boyle Heights Specific Plan (2023), depend on the direction one travels. Heading west past the 10 Freeway and White Memorial Hospital toward the LA River and the Los Angeles Metro Transportation Connector Union Station

results in leaving Boyle Heights. Conversely, walking east from Cesar Chavez Avenue, the moment one reaches Indiana and Cesar Chavez, near the famous “Blood in Blood Out” mural, one crosses into unincorporated East Los Angeles. Boyle Heights is the second-oldest neighborhood in Los Angeles (BHSP, 2023). It has produced numerous political figures from the East Side, including former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and Edward Roybal.

I argue in this essay that while legislation and planning do not entirely encapsulate Latinx geographies and understandings of geography, government documents often remain inaccessible due to language, education levels, and technological barriers. Being from Boyle Heights has introduced the realities of living on the margins and struggling daily for many, including myself. However, we are not taught about zoning, redevelopment, density bonuses, city boundaries, or even the differences between cities and neighborhoods. We often remain unaware of the legacies of injustice introduced by colonialism, which continue to manifest in the lingering effects of redlining (McKnight, 1960) that lead to health disparities. Thus, it is important to learn and use guides created from and by Latinos in Planning who have developed a guidebook on “Latino Inclusive Engagement Guide” (2025) to minimize the gaps of upcoming changes in the neighborhood and help residents feel more a part of the process when possible.

According to a Latino Policy and Politics Institute report, illustrates the changes in migration patterns among US-born and foreign-born populations from 2003 to 2019. Approximately 70% of California’s undocumented adults over the age of 45 have lived in the United States for more than 15 years. Within the neighborhood's local context of Boyle Heights, as seen in figure 26, a high concentration of foreign-born populations exists. Additionally, the

LPPI report states that around 70% of California’s undocumented adults over 45 years have resided in the country for over 15 years.

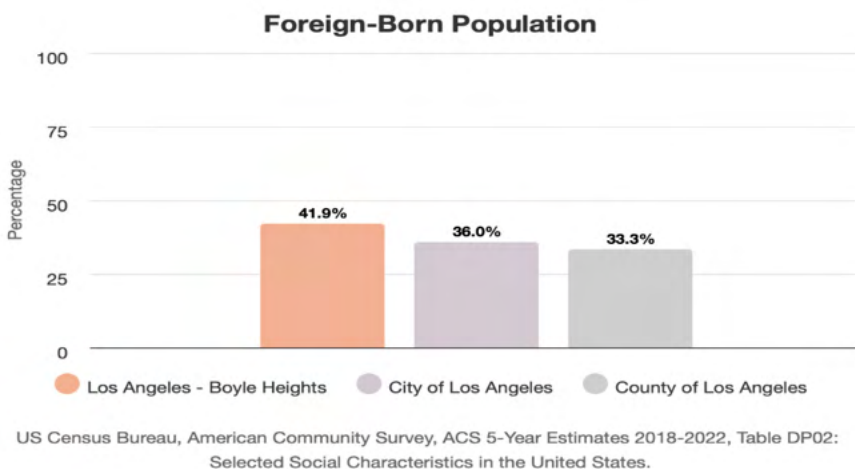


Figure 26: *Boyle Heights Foreign Born Graph (Source: Los Angeles County Community Health Profiles: Boyle Heights, 2024)*

The population of contemporary Boyle Heights is 76,511 (LACCH 2020), with 96.2% identifying as Latino/Hispanic, 37.1% as white, Asian, or belonging to another racial category, and 1.6% as Black or African American, who have a significantly low presence of 0.6% (Census 2020). While the recent census indicates a lack of diversity within Boyle Heights, it is not to overlook the diversity in Latinidad that Boyle Heights has. Boyle Heights, being composed of 96.2% Latino, the racial categorization that individuals receive does not represent the multiculturalism and multiregionalism within the current population of Latinos. Boyle Heights carries a legacy of mutual aid and care, rooted in the early recordings of *mutualistas* in the Southwest prior to the

annexation of Mexican territories (Hernandez, 1979). Systemic injustices, particularly around immigration, have infringed upon the fundamental human rights of immigrants. Burt Hernandez and other Chicano scholars emphasize the importance of Indigenous groups alongside immigrants. Lipsitz notes that barrios like Boyle Heights have historically been viewed as slums, economically undervalued due to their Chicano and Latino heritage, despite the undeniable beauty of their multicultural populations, businesses, and art. Conceptions of Boyle Heights include, but are not limited to, memories of hearing the horn of a street vendor as he traveled up and down the hills, wondering whether his sister, also a vendor, was doing well during her migration back to Mexico. Through these memories, I have come to understand how the people in contemporary Boyle Heights have survived. It was a place where one could find fresh produce, like cut nopales (cactus) or fresh avocados, from one of the ladies near Payless ShoeSource. Back then, before street vending was decriminalized in 2018 via California's Safe Sidewalk Vending Act (SB 946), she had to remove her goods quickly. Before that law, I recall witnessing street vendors running and attempting to flee from the LAPD or other local agencies, who would cite and confiscate their merchandise, often leading to a loss of revenue and income for the day.

Now, although vacant retail establishments dot the area, similar street vendors can still be found on the corner of Soto and Cesar Chavez, working hard to earn their daily bread. Outsiders who are unfamiliar with informal economies may interpret the congregation of these vendors as a nuisance obstructing public walkways. However, for those who live and know Cesar Chavez Avenue, it's well understood that they can always grab a fresh mango or a bag of plantain chips from either side of Soto and Cesar Chavez.

## Tactile Community Engagement: A Call for Power in Place for Place-Keeping

Searching for Cesar Chavez in archival newspapers and Boyle Heights archives to combine planning theories and redevelopment efforts with public opinions. A glance at how the change in name from Cesar Chavez Avenue in 1994 led to a significant shift in commerce and the transition of commercial renters, marking the beginning of contemporary Latino commercialism. After conducting archival research, I make the argument that for communities such as Boyle Heights, when community engagement workshops occur, having more of tactile interactions to implement inclusive forms ways of participatory planning.

## Language Barriers in Planning

While speaking with street vendors, I often ask, *"How long have you been here?"* I wasn't expecting one merchant to respond with, *"OOOO tantos años"* translation: *"Oh, many years."* As someone who has been in academia for seven years, code-switching between formal and informal language has become second nature—a skill I learned navigating a Predominantly White Institution.

English Speakers	Spanish Speakers	Spanish linguistic isolation
3,017	19,350	4,535
12.9%	82.7	23.4%

Table 4: *Boyle Heights Demographic Profile 2022 (Source: 2022 City Of Los Angeles - Department of City Planning)*

In Boyle Heights, for example, 82.7% of residents speak Spanish or live in households where the language is isolated (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). This high percentage of Spanish speakers reflects a slice of *Latinidad*. While some Japanese and Jewish landmarks and temples remain, Boyle Heights continues to be home to multiple waves of immigrants and their children.

When you begin to question your self-identity and the social identities imposed on historically neglected communities, it can become a personal mission to address ongoing urban issues such as rising homelessness, displacement, and mistrust of government agencies. The reality of the "theory of change" is that it is not linear. Grassroots and interest groups channel their rage and hope toward policymakers. For this reason, it is crucial to learn from and use resources created by planners with cultural and community knowledge. For example, *Latinos in Planning* has developed the *Latino Inclusive Engagement Guide* (2025), which seeks to reduce gaps in public understanding, prepare residents for upcoming changes in their neighborhoods, and foster greater community participation

As previously mentioned, Latino Commercialism is can often be associated with an organic form of hospitality and familiarity (Lara, 2018) The truth about Cesar Chavez Ave, it follows the similar feeling of what some people in Latino communities call "casero" meaning, "homey" or inviting depending on who you ask. Beginning the walks starting at Ramirez Pharmacy on 2403 E Cesar Chavez, Los Angeles. Ramirez Pharmacy opened in 1962 by Eddie Ramirez continues to be a legacy business within Cesar Chavez Ave. Right Across the street from the



Pharmacy is Sol Pharmacy who may not be family owned like Ramirez Pharmacy but rather initially started by University of Southern California (USC).

In a statement below extracted directly from PharmSC Clinic, USC Mann Alfred E Mann School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences Mission page (2025):

“Botica Del Sol is a licensed community pharmacy owned and operated by Yousef Bahdi, a licensed pharmacist. The pharmacy graciously offers the use of a private consultation room to the USC Mann School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences students, so they can offer free health screenings to the community.”

While Botica Del Sol is not family owned, it is a first form of institutional competition while providing career development for USC students and services to "underprivileged" communities to quote their webpage, the competition between the pharmacies parallel to one another are both combined by being the ⅔ non-chain pharmacy unlike the newish Walgreens that opened in 2012.

Walgreens on the corner of Breed Street, now occupies the former grocery store Best Buy Market who originally opened in 1962. Big Buy Markets, although gone over 13+ years now, remains in the memories of those who knew Cesar Chavez. At one point on Breed Street, one could expect being greeted by produce for the week in hopes that the fresh produce would convince you to give in. Upon entering the grocery store, a mixture of senses would intersect: the music, the Spanish conversations through customer and neighborhood chatter, mixed with the Spanish music playing on the local radio.

### Interview Key Findings:

Interviewee:	Planning Related Issues:	Community Engagement
Resident from Mariachi Plaza	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. New infill developments not being affordable</li> <li>2. Affordable housing not always accessible to current Boyle Heights Residents</li> <li>3. Lack of housing opportunities for young adults</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Neighborhood Council and Planning and Land Use lack outreach and structure</li> <li>2. Lack of tenant rights outreach prior to being displacement process</li> </ol>
Carol Martinez Freelance Journalist	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Displacement in community</li> <li>2. Limited community engagement when it comes to planning issues</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. outreach could be better, programs and educational resources</li> </ol>
La Chispa De Oro	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Red curb zoning seem hostile and interferes with business.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Better outreach about small business economic support. Better listening and outreach for urban planning conversations</li> </ol>

		that effect commercial businesses.
Resident B from Boyle Heights	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. New developments with no transparency and accessibility to community</li> <li>2. Policy makers that do not take environmental justice and community needs seriously</li> <li>3. Developers from outside community lying about affordable housing</li> </ol>	1. involve youth in civically engaged conversations about their environment.
Family Member- La Chispa De Oro	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parking, with the UPS store, more illegal parking in red zones has occurred.</li> <li>2. No parking for "Viejitos"</li> </ol>	1. No aware of what Urban Planning as an institution and system
Small Business an Adjacent Around	1. Parking, lack of preservation, lack of public spaces para "comunidad"	1. Not familiar with Urban Planning.

EastLosHeart: Christopher Hernandez.	1. Displacement through private landlordism for new high-rise apartments	1. Better educational resources on forms of housing and how to apply
Viva Padilla, former Re/Arte Bookstore owner Current Position: Eviction Defense Network Para Legal Elen Popp	-Displacement from Private Landlordism, Ellis Act, Lack of attempts for preservation and inclusivity. Gentrification and displacement of long-term resident.	

### **Stop Being So Academic: Demystifying Data Tools for the Homies**

After speaking with non-planning friends who are involved themselves in community engagement and working with youth, have been in the same boat to self-learn about Boyle Heights Community Plan and the jargon showed me Planning needs to be digestible to non-planning professionals, looking at the above quote, where does one look for public data to further understand planning concepts relating to their community outside of an institutional pay wall like the academy?

As a researcher, having the ability to do research and find data tools accessible to the public originally introduced me to an Affordable Housing Data Tool by The California Housing Partnership. CHPC who has also taken on advocacy and preservation analysis on Los Angeles County, (2025) in their Affordable Housing Needs Report 485,667 low-income renter households

do not have access to an affordable housing. When looking at the percentage of households in the county who pay more than half of their income in housing costs within extremely-low-income households, in the same report, CHPC found that 79% of ELI households in the county economic and housing. In addition to pointing out that Los Angeles County renters need to make \$49.58 per hour, which according to their report, the necessary salary to have housing society requires making 2.9 times the counties minimum wage. Both data tool and housing report provide concise quantitative data designated for advocacy groups and non-profit orgs, and public.

#### WHO CAN AFFORD TO RENT

Renters need to earn **2.9 times** the minimum wage to afford the average asking rent in Los Angeles County.

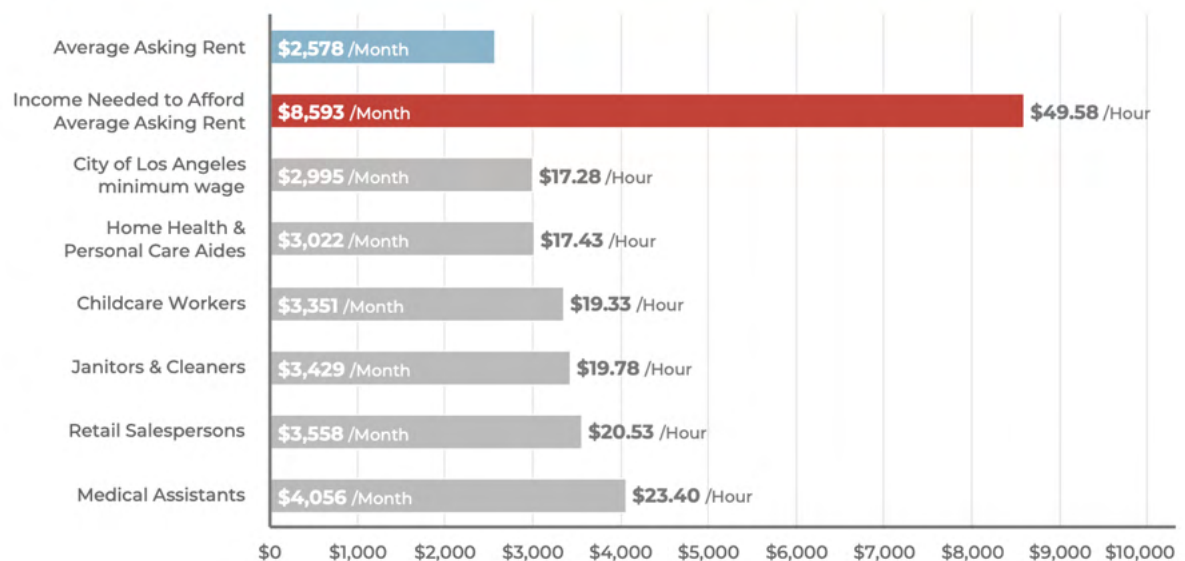


Figure 27: Who Can Afford Rent in Los Angeles County

(Source: CHPC Los Angeles County Needs Report 2025)

For first-generation college students, pursuing higher education often transcends individual aspirations, embodying a collective effort to overcome barriers their parents and

previous generations faced. The phrase "*Estudia para que no battles Como yo*" (Go to school so you don't suffer) echoes through Latino communities, marking the initial encouragement for younger generations to use education to escape the neighborhood. This narrative provokes questions: How can we be encouraged to leave when our roots/home are susceptible to displacement while one is gone? Memories of Cesar Chavez Avenue helped me identify similar demographic pockets in Santa Rosa, CA. By employing my senses in writing "I Am From" poems, I informally learned about the significance of space and place (Carmona, 2019; Mandeli, 2017). The emotions and sensations associated with public spaces in Boyle Heights have taken on new meanings in the realms of preservation and restoration. My academic journey, which intertwines historical narratives of significant geographic locations and contemporary Chicano Theory explored in Chicano and Chicana Studies courses, has unveiled personal indebtedness. The importance of the emotions and sensations in public spaces throughout Boyle Heights begin to carry sensations of preservation and restoration. advancing in the academy through weaving past narratives of a significant geographic location with contemporary Chicano Theory within Chicano and Chicana Studies courses began to snowball into revealing a personal mission that was unprecedented unveiling rich but heavy history of what is now present-day Boyle Heights.

#### **Continuation of Mutual Care and Aid in Latino Communities:**

Learning about different Mutual Aid and care that is carried within Boyle Heights has led to noticing the continuation of these caretaking social networks whether formally or informally While conducting weekly sites at *La Chispa De Oro*, I became quickly familiar with how small businesses in Cesar Chavez contribute to the Mutual Aid legacy. The first instance is seen through

the mom-and-pop restaurant that allows an individual with cognitive disabilities what some may say “loiter”. However, the natural care and allowance of letting the individual be inside the restaurant with little to no possibility of him buying food ensures how informal safe spaces among marginalized community members begin. The individual who is named Michael sits at a table and asks questions that come to mind. When he is not sitting, he assists elders who have difficulty getting to their table and then helps them to their care. This form of mutual care, whether spoken or not in quick conversation, should illustrate the importance of protecting and preserving spaces like *La Chispa De Oro*.

### **Fighting From a Distance**

For those who leave the community—whether through displacement, tenant harassment, upward social mobility, state-level pressures, or, more recently, targeted actions against undocumented immigrants by Homeland Security—the question of identity remains central. For artists from the neighborhood, one form of cultural preservation has been maintaining community murals. These works, integral to Latino urban identity, are also vulnerable to gentrification and private landlordism. For example, the “El Pueblo No Se Vende” mural by Sergio Robleto, once displayed on El Apetito, has faced the threat of removal, serving as a poignant reminder that resilience through art is an ongoing struggle.



Figure 28: Quote from Artist Sergio Robledo for L.A Taco(Source:L.A Taco)

Coming from the Barrio of Boyle Heights, I grew up with portraits of activists and a history of Latino inequalities on the walls of schools around my area. With the rise in gang activity, some of those murals have sadly been drawn over. To say that graffiti is not art would be an insult to many great artists. However, it starts becoming a problem when someone else's and the community's intellectual property is vandalized. Knowing the history of my community with the effects of slavery, immigration, redlining, environmental and educational inequalities, and now the current uprising of gentrification, storytelling through murals and art becomes essential to preserve the voices of long-time residents.

### **Building “Confianza” (trust): Continuing to Advocate for Immigrant Communities**

The declaration of taking pride in the composition of immigrant labor in Los Angeles, sanctuary cities like Los Angeles have been directly targeted by the Trump Administration. The attacks on immigrant residents in Los Angeles beginning June 2025 did not only invoke a rapid response from city officials from CD1 council member Euinisses Hernandez elected 2022, and



newly elected (2024) CD 14 councilmember Ysabel Jurado. CD 14 councilmember, who is prideful about being daughter of a formerly undocumented Filipino father, has been attempting to grapple with hardship after hardship since entering office. Following almost a decade of mistrust from local politicians, the test for consistent authentic trust has been given to councilmember Jurado who herself is a tenant-rights attorney. In a post where she recognized that Boyle Heights is 70% renter occupied, the question for the remaining of her term is how she will continue to assure Boyle Heights minimizes displacement as housing gets built.

One recommendation from this study for local policymakers and planners comes from Latinos in Planning. In the *Latinos and Planning Division (LAP) Inclusive Engagement Guidebook* (American Planning Association, 2024), the first few pages provide readers with context on the importance of engaging with Latino populations. LAP emphasizes that such engagement goes beyond simply "checking a box" for community participation in areas with concentrated Latino populations. Created to inform, but not limited to, urban planners, architects, policymakers, and others involved in shaping the urban landscape, this initiative aims to equip those working with Latino communities with the tools and strategies needed to facilitate inclusive engagement. By intentionally naming decision-makers, a call-in approach can enhance local community engagement when working in a majority Spanish-speaking community, such as Boyle Heights. The argument presented is that, for both current planners and those involved in future developments entering Latino communities, engagement should account for past and present barriers that these populations have faced. An approach to inclusive Latino community engagement could have occurred prior to the creation of the plan, along with a Housing 101

forum or a general small resource fair to reach current individuals who may have forgotten or could not be involved in past Specific Plan engagement efforts. However, through Latino community engagement for the upcoming Specific Plan, it should center on actively listening, acknowledging historical contexts, and collaborating with these communities to build neighborhoods that reflect their values, preferences, and character.

## **Chapter 6: Final Thoughts**

### **Connection to Cesar Chavez Ave**

Planners who come from the communities they serve often carry a different kind of credibility in the streets, one rooted in shared history, relationships, and lived experience. Embedded-planner Jonathan Bell-Pacheco (2019) describes in his concept of “embedded planning” that trust is built not through just working from one's desk, mandated outreach events, but through being physically present and authentically engaged in the everyday life of a neighborhood or "hood" as some folks call it. The Boyle Heights Chamber of Commerce (BHCC), active since 1979, reflects this principle by consistently working alongside immigrant-owned businesses to strengthen economic stability and preserve a sense of belonging. Their motto, "Bridging Business and Community Since 1979," continues through their recent activism for small businesses in the area being affected by recent ICE attacks on the community. Their outreach with local small businesses and recent small-scale revitalization of Cesar Chavez through a community engagement event, inviting community members to assist with planting plants by local businesses (BHB,2025).

For emerging urban planners with deep local roots, the opportunity goes beyond providing technical expertise—it's about protecting the institutions that define a neighborhood's identity. In Boyle Heights, that could mean helping legacy businesses apply for programs like the Los Angeles Economic and Business Development Legacy Business Program, turning policy tools into safeguards for the community's economic and cultural spaces. Someone who exemplifies this role on BHCC, is Ralph Carmona, a long-time BHCC Board advisor and member of Barrio Planners. According to his biography on the BHCC website, Carmona has spent decades offering technical assistance, marketing, outreach, and event planning, not only to the BHCC but to small businesses

across the Eastside. His work shows how planners "embedded" in their own communities can serve as cultural and economic bridges, being translators for changing policies into digestible support and ensuring that local voices shape development decisions.

## **Limitations**

This study began with the intention of examining displacement in small business corridors, with the aim of continuing discussions about gentrification in mixed-use areas. Limitations in this study included access to private information that subjects did not feel comfortable disclosing. Fear of retaliation from landlords or speaking against high positions of power, in fear of causing tensions. Other limitations include the limited quantitative analysis in studies that often ignore qualitative methods, which are often overlooked in the field of planning. Reflecting on the limited time and networks in the community, collaborating with other entities in the neighborhood could have possibly provided clarity on how interactions between immigrant-owned businesses and developers occur. Lastly, due to technical preservation frameworks and limited documentation from current or past Latino business owners, such as Cesar Chavez, who have voluntarily left, contact information was not attainable, resulting in minimal or no access. Thus, this thesis reflects only a fraction of minority business owners and workers within Cesar Chavez Avenue.

## **Suggestions for Future Research**

This thesis is a foundation for future research when I return to academia examining how newly adopted bills such as SB 55 and SB 130 to survey how senate and assembly bills that streamline developments and allow for the exception of CEQA have dire effects on the longevity of neighborhood characters. Furthermore, interviews with Urban Planners from the area to ask

how their involvement within local politics as experts has poured into community partnerships, and how that has expanded opportunities for the community?

After conversing with some Latino Urbanists, the curiosity arose to explore place-making with youth in communities facing displacement. The question remains: how can preservation and revitalization in commercial corridors be inclusive for all? With the recent efforts of the Boyle Heights Chamber of Commerce and Latinx with Plants to revitalize Cesar Chavez through planting and cleaning the corridor (2025) the question arises: how can a community effort for consistent maintenance and place keeping be done by and for its neighbors?

If Cesar Chavez Avenue is to be met with higher density in residents, how is the character of the neighborhood being preserved so people can feel a sense of home, rather than a problem that needs to be removed, unlike the newly established York Avenue in Highland Park?

As a former Math Science Technology Magnet Academy alumnus at Roosevelt High School, I am aware of the continuation contract that Esri has with high school students as part of their Service-Learning Project (SLP). Through an early introduction to research projects and the practice of executing a small-scale research project, I developed a personal interest in planning. After a conversation with from Latinos in Planning, who hosted a Place-It! Workshop with Libros Schmibros for the second year in Boyle Heights, and sharing that student had an organic gravitation towards place-making and placekeeping conversations, it further solidifies the next steps for this research. Previously mentioned limited representation in a field such as urban planning can feel isolating.

A question still to be answered is: Does exposure to place-making and place keeping concepts in combination with advocacy planning prior to the implementation of the new Boyle Heights Specific Plan by other Intersectional Urban Planners mitigate future threats of displacement?

Borrowing from USC historian George J. Sanchez's oral history efforts, the next steps for this thesis include the beginning of documenting and story-mapping of places in Cesar Chavez where people in the neighborhood would socialize, buy produce, buy apparel and shoes, or, most importantly, "*Chismear*" (Gossip). By labeling and geomapping some oral history, the hope is to have future generations of the individuals interviewed or spoken with go back to the map and say, "Yeah, that's where my great grandma used to *Chismear*".

There is no doubt that minority-owned small businesses often agree that "community is essential for survival". Daily interactions, whether through providing a service or catching up since the last time seeing one another, organic hospitality is a foundational part of Latino communities. The reality is, people live day to day in the neighborhood and do not think about Intersectional Feminist Theory in connection to their possible exploitation or, in some cases, being the exploiter. As academics, it is a privilege to have the theories and vocabulary to identify systems and institutions that are directly changing our environments, and in the context of this essay, our neighborhoods. Gentrification is a multi-faceted process that includes displacement as a part of the process, but in mixed-use areas such as Cesar Chavez Ave, commercial gentrification can be measured differently.

## Conclusion

This research found that informal and formal economic and social systems are symbiotic, offering more than just financial support in Boyle Heights. Findings suggest that better, more transparent and translated dialogue and outreach between local governmental agencies and low-income residents are needed. Furthermore, in its geographic boundary, Boyle Heights holds a legacy of Social Justice in reaction to Local, State, and Federal policies that targeted demographics within the neighborhood through different periods (Sanchez, 2021). Recognizing current long-established restaurants along Cesar Chavez Avenue as legacy businesses would enable them to apply for economic support and offer protections such as grants, community partnerships, and recognition at the neighborhood and city levels for their community contributions. Recommendations for enhancing connectivity along Cesar Chavez Avenue by establishing Boyle Heights, a Metro Micro zone, to improve accessibility and increase economic activity for aging demographics. For political leaders, it is more important than ever to recognize the invisibility of immigrant communities, which contribute significantly to the city's great aesthetic and economy.

As a born and raised Angelino, it was academia that taught me the structure and theories to articulate the passion I have for understanding how neighborhoods in Los Angeles have fostered organic social networks composed of similar demographics in residential, commercial and mixed-use zones. It was also the power of education that has kept me grounded in learning how to advocate for placekeeping (Ladner, McCoy, 2025). For this thesis, the term "resident" will refer to anyone physically present in the geographic area that constitutes the city of Los Angeles.

With the current attack from the Federal Administration on Local Los Angeles residents and as a Municipality, it becomes more important than ever to recognize the public visibility of Majority-Minority (Chappel, 2024) communities even if the federal government chooses to criminalize what the city of Los Angeles values. The differentiation in citizenship will be referred to when certain policies call for classification in immigration status for accessibility to public programs' such as public housing and affordable housing.

As written about in *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning* (Hong, 2021) "indebtedness" for some marginalized folks can be seen as being loyal to a system or individual through invisibility, taking the short end of the stick, not speaking up due to fear or lack of comprehension to advocate for something better. For many individuals from the community, the indebtedness sometimes transformed into our personal academic and social mobility; for those who are pushed out by the school-to prison-pipeline (ACLU, 2008), the indebtedness is diluted because of the lack of social and economic support by limited occupational mobility.

This is not to say that those who choose or cannot continue into academia should be excluded from conversations that involve the well-being of all. In a recent love letter to the Eastside, artist, songwriter, active entrepreneur and community member Will.i.am shows how he himself is indebted to the community that raised him. Will.i.am who also funded and contributed for the partnership between ESRI and MSTMA @ Roosevelt High School (2009) where students like me, received a free computer to get our high-school brains started with consciousness-raising research. However, it was through the back-and-forth advocacy from now, Dr. Mariana Ramirez who made it a mission to assist students who lived in a hyper-segregated



area due to redlining, public policies, urban planning and in recent years, city council members who have not always put the community's well-being first.

Recent Federal ICE attacks on immigrant majority neighborhoods and communities have been the epicenter for many children of immigrants. The fear of going out due to the possibility of being detained dominated the minds of millions of immigrants in Los Angeles. Even with the declaration of being a Sanctuary City (2025), the stampede of military personnel going after immigrants is now in the Los Angeles history books. A couple of weeks after the raids began, the Boyle Heights Chamber of Commerce directly messaged me asking if I had *La Chispa De Oro's* contact for a Boyle Heights Beat Article on the impacts of the raids. After connecting Melchor with BHCC, who then directed them to BHB, the same article interviewed small business owners (July 2025), and it reported that immigrant-run businesses suffered significant revenue loss since the raids began. Melchor, the business owner of *La Chispa De Oro*, reported a loss of up to \$7,000, which led to reduced employee hours and some of the physical labor being taken on by himself.

Weeks later, California State Senator Alex Padilla and team filmed an Instagram Reel (IG: SenAlexPadilla) Senator Padilla's visit to *La Chispa De Oro* was not only reassuring community members that their representatives care about them, but also a great accomplishment for small immigrant-owned businesses. In combination for meeting RHNA goals, opportunities for revitalization of minority-owned businesses and commercial mixed-use corridors through multiple partnerships, but directly including long-time businesses within Cesar Chavez Ave, as stated in the Boyle Heights 2024 Community Plan Policy section: Commercial Corridors along 1st and Avenida Cesar Chavez will be considered for preservation of the community.

In combination for meeting RHNA goals, opportunities for revitalization of minority-owned businesses and commercial mixed-use corridors through multiple partnerships, but directly including long-time businesses within Cesar Chavez Ave, as stated in the Boyle Heights 2024 Community Plan Policy section: Commercial Corridors along 1st and Avenida Cesar Chavez will be considered for preservation of the community. As Los Angeles prepares for the upcoming LA28 Olympics, the need for housing will be greater than ever. Communities such as Boyle Heights, adjacent to the Los Angeles River and Downtown Los Angeles, will undergo redevelopment to prepare for waves of crowds. Drawing on No Olympics scholar Jules Boykoff's research, the clearing of undocumented immigrants around the Olympics has occurred in Paris, Tokyo, and London. As the city and the world become excited about the USA hosting the games, for scholars who work with or in immigrant communities, it becomes difficult to share in the excitement. The theories of urban cleansing are not new to Los Angeles or San Francisco.

In conclusion this thesis encourages inclusive forms of community engagement when working with communities that have been historically harmed by public and planning policies. Acknowledging that for some communities having to tackle the extra language barrier when attempting to advocate for their own community hauls or minimizes the power of testimony. Although Los Angeles Planning has a Spanish glossary, if there is still a limited number of translators or in the case of Boyle Heights residents, not knowing that one must request a translator three days in advance, it becomes visible that some structural operations need to be adjusted. Encouragement towards local governments when funding is available, investing in

educational workshops that take into consideration community concerns and questions when it comes to housing can limit unnecessary NIMBYism in the future to ensure more housing for all.

### Works Cited

1. Abusaada, H., & Elshater, A. (2020). Revealing distinguishing factors between *Space* and *Place* in urban design literature. *Journal of Urban Design*, 26(3), 319–340.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2020.1832887>
2. Ahrens, Mareike. "'Gentrify? No! Gentefy? Sí!': Urban Redevelopment and Ethnic Gentrification in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles." *Aspeers: Emerging Voices in American Studies*, vol. 8, 2015, pp. 9–26. Print.
3. American Civil Liberties Union. (2008, June 6). *What Is the School-to-Prison Pipeline?* Retrieved May 2025, from <https://www.aclu.org/documents/what-school-prison-pipeline>
4. Anzaldúa, G., Keating, A., & EBSCO Publishing. (2015). *Light in the dark = Luz en lo oscuro: rewriting identity, spirituality, reality* / Gloria E. Anzaldúa; edited by AnaLouise Keating. (A. Keating, Ed.). Duke University Press.
5. Arana, M. (Writer). (2024). *Latinoland: a portrait of America's largest and least understood minority* (1st ed.). Simon & Schuster.
6. Ayón, D. R., & Pla, G. L. (2018). *Power shift: how Latinos in California transformed politics in America* / David R. Ayón and George L. Pla. Berkeley Public Policy Press, Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California, Berkeley.
7. *Boyle Heights Beat* articles. 2011–2024.
8. Boyle Heights Chamber of Commerce. (2025.). *Board of Directors 2024–2026*. Retrieved August 13, 2025, from Boyle Heights Chamber of Commerce website: <https://www.boyleheightschamber.org/board-of-directors>

9. Barton, M. S., Valasik, M. A., Brault, E., & Tita, G. (2020). "Gentefication" in the Barrio: Examining the Relationship Between Gentrification and Homicide in East Los Angeles. *Crime and Delinquency*, 66(13-14), 1888–1913.
10. Cahuas, M. C. (2021). Voicing Chicanx/Latinx feminisms and situating testimonio in geographical research. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 29(11), 1514–1527.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2021.1987199>
11. California Department of Housing and Community Development. (2020, September 15). *Housing Accountability Act technical assistance advisory (Government Code section 65589.5)* [Memorandum]. State of California. Retrieved from <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/housing-element/housing-element-memos/docs/hcd-memo-on-haa-final-sept2020.pdf>
12. CalMatters Digital Democracy. (n.d.). *SB 79: Housing development: Transit-oriented development* [Legislative summary]. Digital Democracy Platform. Retrieved August 15, 2025, from [https://calmatters.digitaldemocracy.org/bills/ca\\_202520260sb79](https://calmatters.digitaldemocracy.org/bills/ca_202520260sb79)
13. Carstensen, Nils, Mandeep Mudhar, and Freja Schurmann Munksgaard. "'Let Communities Do Their Work': The Role of Mutual Aid and Self-Help Groups in the Covid-19 Pandemic Response." *Disasters*, vol. 45, no. S1, 2021, pp. S146–S173. Web.
14. Chávez, M. S. (2012). Autoethnography, a Chicana's methodological research tool: The role of storytelling for those who have no choice but to do critical race theory. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 45(2), 334–348. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2012.669196>

15. City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning. (1998, November 10). *Boyle Heights Community Plan*. City of Los Angeles. [https://planning.lacity.gov/odocument/2521b2cd-efa6-41a9-ac8a-4b50c67c047c/Boyle\\_Heights\\_Community\\_Plan.pdf](https://planning.lacity.gov/odocument/2521b2cd-efa6-41a9-ac8a-4b50c67c047c/Boyle_Heights_Community_Plan.pdf) planning.lacity.gov
16. City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning. (2009). *AE Amendment 1* (PDF). Retrieved from [https://planning.lacity.gov/odocument/4e7baa82-d7a3-4deb-b978-43e1c4a676b4/AE\\_Amend\\_1.pdf](https://planning.lacity.gov/odocument/4e7baa82-d7a3-4deb-b978-43e1c4a676b4/AE_Amend_1.pdf)
17. City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning. (2023, June 30). *Boyle Heights Community Plan Update Draft Regulations Economic Feasibility Assessment: Additional Considerations (Addendum)*. City of Los Angeles. [https://planning.lacity.gov/odocument/c485b9ee-f7f3-494f-8645-424f949c0c2c/Boyle%20Heights%20CPU\\_Additional%20Considerations\\_06302023.pdf](https://planning.lacity.gov/odocument/c485b9ee-f7f3-494f-8645-424f949c0c2c/Boyle%20Heights%20CPU_Additional%20Considerations_06302023.pdf)
18. Chapple, K., & Song, T. (2024). Can new housing supply mitigate displacement and exclusion? *Journal of the American Planning Association*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2024.2319293>
19. Crisman, Jonathan Jae-an, and Annette Kim. "Correction to: Property Outlaws in the Southland: The Potential and Limits of Guerrilla Urbanism in the Cases of Arts Gentrification in Boyle Heights and Street Vending Decriminalization in Los Angeles." *Urban Design International*, vol. 25, no. 2, 2020, pp. 179–191. ProQuest. Web. 1 May 2023.
20. Cruz, C. (2020, August 2). *My grandfather: The Chicano folk artist of Boyle Heights and East L.A.* Medium. Retrieved August 15, 2025, from <https://medium.com/@EastLosHeart/my-grandfather-the-chicano-folk-artist-of-boyle-heights-and-east-l-a-508a44f59d8e>

21. Delgado, Emanuel, and Kate Swanson. "Gentefication in the Barrio: Displacement and Urban Change in Southern California." *Journal of Urban Affairs*, vol. 43, no. 7, 2021, pp. 925–940. Web.
22. Diaz, D. R. (2005). *Barrio Urbanism: Chicanos, Planning, and American Cities* (1st edition.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203020968>
23. Dighton, Desiree. "Encountering Gentrification: Affordances of a Feminist Approach to Rhetorical Circulation and Twitter Data Studies." ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2019. Print.
24. East Los Streetscapers, & (Botello, David, Healy, Wayne, Yepes, George). (1984; repainted 2007). *Corrido de Boyle Heights* [Acrylic on stucco, concrete, brick].  
<https://jstor.org/stable/community.14383093>
25. Estrada, John Zender. (2004). *History of Boyle Heights* [Acrylic on concrete].  
<https://jstor.org/stable/community.14393266>
26. Fukuoka, F. (1937). *Mutual life and aid among the Japanese in Southern California: with special reference to Los Angeles / Fumiko Fukuoka*. University of Southern California.
27. Graaff, Kristina, and Noa Ha, editors. *Street Vending in the Neoliberal City: A Global Perspective on the Practices and Policies of a Marginalized Economy*. Berghahn Books, 2015. Web.
28. Grabar, H. (2023). *Paved paradise: how parking explains the world* / Henry Grabar. Penguin Press.
29. Haraway, D. (1988). Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 575–599. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>

30. Hernandez, A. C. (2022). *Boiling Heights: Diverging Politics and Anti-Gentrification Activism in the Boyle Heights Neighborhood of Los Angeles* (Doctoral dissertation). University of California, Irvine. Print.
31. Huerta, Alvaro. *Defending Latina/o Immigrant Communities: The Xenophobic Era of Trump and Beyond*. Hamilton Books, 2019. Print.
32. Hong, C. P. (2020). *Minor feelings: an Asian American reckoning* / Cathy Park Hong. One World, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC.
33. Investopedia. (2006). What Is Redlining? Definition, Legality, and Effects. *Investopedia*. Retrieved August 15, 2025, from <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/r/redlining.asp>
34. Jacobs, J. (1984). *Cities and the wealth of nations: principles of economic life* / Jane Jacobs. (First edition.). Random House.
35. KCET. (2012, April 19). *Meet me at Brooklyn and Soto* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ar2FqTMLQos&t=2700s>
36. Kern, L. (2020). *Feminist city* / Leslie Kern. Verso.
37. Kern, L., & ProQuest. (2022). *Gentrification is inevitable and other lies* / Leslie Kern. Verso.
38. Lara, J. J. (2018). *Latino Placemaking and Planning: Cultural Resilience and Strategies for Reurbanization*. University of Arizona Press. Print.
39. McCoy, E., & Ladner, C. (n.d.). *Placekeeping: Setting a New Precedent for City Planners*. Planetizen.com.
40. McPherson, R. (2025, May). *Los Angeles County 2025 Affordable Housing Needs Report* [PDF]. California Housing Partnership. Retrieved from [https://chpc.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Los-Angeles\\_Housing\\_Report-2.pdf](https://chpc.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Los-Angeles_Housing_Report-2.pdf)



41. Moraga, Cherrie, and Gloria Anzaldúa, editors. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. 40th anniversary ed., State University of New York Press, 2021. Web.
42. Martinez-Hollingsworth, A., Hernández, J., Edwards, C., & Partlow, K. (2022). Mural Painting to Collect Sensitizing Data and Encourage Research Participation Among U.S. Latinos. *Health Promotion Practice*, 23(5), 766–776. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248399211038901>
43. Naples, Nancy A. "Towards Comparative Analyses of Women's Political Praxis." *Women & Politics*, vol. 20, no. 1, 1999, pp. 29–57. DOI: 10.1300/J014v20n01\_02. Print.
44. Public Policy Institute of California. (2006). *California's geographic divisions*. Public Policy Institute of California. [https://www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/content/pubs/report/R\\_601CGR.pdf](https://www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/content/pubs/report/R_601CGR.pdf)
45. Radell, D. R. (1967.). "Mom'n' pop" grocery stores in the Boyle Heights section of Los Angeles, California: a study of site and situation. Chicano Resource Center. Print.
46. Ramos, Miguel. "An Exploratory Look at Displacement in Highland Park." California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, 2019. Print.
47. Rojas, J. (1991). *The enacted environment: The creation of "place" by Mexicans and Mexican Americans in East Los Angeles* (master's thesis). Massachusetts Institute of Technology. <https://dspace.mit.edu/handle/1721.1/67305>
48. Sanchez, George J. *Boyle Heights: How a Los Angeles Neighborhood Became the Future of American Democracy*. University of California Press, 2021. Print.

49. Scott, A. J., Soja, E. W., Scott, A. J., & Soja, E. W. (1996). The city: Los Angeles and urban theory at the end of the twentieth century. In University of California Press Package Archive Pre-2000. University of California Press. <https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520920682>
50. Tsiebos, M. D. (2014). *Citizen participation in redistricting: Evaluating the 2011 Public Access Plan in the County of Los Angeles*. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.
51. ("Shithole" and Other Racist Things Trump Has Said — so Far, 2018)
52. Vargas Bustamante, A., Félix Beltrán, L., Cuadros, N. N., Zeng, X. L., & González, S. R. (2023, July 13). *Implementation lessons from the 2022 Medi-Cal expansion to undocumented adults aged fifty and above*. UCLA Latino Policy & Politics Institute. Retrieved August 15, 2025, from <https://latino.ucla.edu/research/lessons-2022-adult-medical-expansion/>
53. Vilchis-Zarate, L. (2023). *Union De Vecinos: Challenging the Largest Displacement in 20th Century Boyle Heights* (Order No. 30695875). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global: The Humanities and Social Sciences Collection. (2898270477).  
<http://proxy.library.cpp.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/em-union-de-vecinos-challenging-largest/docview/2898270477/se-2>
54. Yoon, I. (2015, September 03). Mutual Financial Aid and Saving Associations (MFASAs) among Asian Americans. *Encyclopedia of Social Work*. Retrieved 15 Aug. 2025, from <https://oxfordre.com/socialwork/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199975839.001.0001/acrefore-9780199975839-e-1157>.

## APPENDIX A: IRB Approval Modification

# CAL POLY POMONA

Memorandum  
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona  
Institutional Review Board -- Office of Research Compliance  
Federalwide Assurance 00001759 -- IRB principles: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice

**Date:** May 27, 2025

**PI Name:** Jennifer Lopez; **Department/College:** Environmental Design

**co-PI Name(s):** Alvaro Huerta

**Protocol Title:** Exploratory Research of Displacement on Small Business Corridors: A Case Study on Boyle Heights

**Protocol Number:** IRB-25-33

**Submission Method Type:** Modification

**Review Board Type:** review by the CPP IRB office

**Decision Type:** Approved

**Approval Date:** May 27, 2025

**Dear Investigator(s),**

This message is to inform you that the CPP IRB has reviewed the amendment/modification request for your protocol.

The amendment was reviewed by the board type indicated. It was found to be in compliance with applicable federal and state regulations and Cal Poly Pomona policies regarding the protection of human subjects/participants used in research. Thus, the Cal Poly Pomona IRB grants you continued approval to conduct the research. On its behalf, I thank you for your adherence to established policies meant to ensure the safety and privacy of your study participants. You may wish to keep a copy of this memo with you while conducting your research project.

You may continue the research study as amended as of this date May 27, 2025. It would be appreciated that you advise the IRB upon the completion of your research involving the interaction with human subjects. Do this by submitting a closure form within the Cayuse system.

Approval is conditional upon your willingness to carry out your responsibilities as the investigator(s) under University policy. Your research project must be conducted according to the methods described in the now amended and final approved protocol. Should there be any changes to your research plan as described, please advise the IRB, because you may be required to submit an amendment (with re-certification). Additionally, should you as the investigator or any of your subjects experience any "problems which involve an undescribed element of risk" (adverse events in regulatory terms), please immediately inform the IRB of the circumstances.

The Board wishes you continued success in your research endeavors.

Sincerely,



Greg Placencia, Ph.D.  
Chair, Institutional Review Board  
Associate Professor Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering  
College of Engineering

## APPENDIX B: Spanish Recruitment Flyer

# ¿HA SIDO USTED TESTIGO DE UN DESPLAZAMIENTO EN CESAR CHÁVEZ O FIRST STREET EN BOYLE HEIGHTS?

ES USTED:

- ¿INQUILINO?
- ¿MIEMBRO DE LA COMUNIDAD DE BOYLE HEIGHTS?
- ¿PROPIETARIO DE UNA PEQUEÑA EMPRESA EN LA AVENIDA CÉSAR CHÁVEZ O EN LA CALLE PRIMERA?



**¡CUÉNTAME TU  
EXPERIENCIA O TESTIMONIO  
EN UNA PLÁTICA!**

### Proposito De Estudio

Impulsar diferentes enfoques de planificación que prioricen las estrategias contra el desplazamiento y creen una mejor capacidad de acción para los planificadores urbanos, el Ayuntamiento y los miembros de la comunidad a largo plazo.

No se puede proporcionar ninguna compensación en este momento.

### Acerca de mí:

- Estudiante de maestría de primera generación y candidata a tesis en planificación urbana y regional en Cal Poly Pomona
- Antecedentes académicos: Licenciatura con distinción en Estudios de la Mujer y de Género. Especialidades: Estudios Chicanos/o Latinos y Estudios LGBTQ+.
- Chicana Mexicoamericana de bajos ingresos, hija de inmigrantes

### **Las pláticas se programarán entre mediados de marzo y principios de abril.**

- Se realizará una entrevista semiestructurada guiada con preguntas.
- Los participantes no están obligados a responder todas las preguntas.
- Los participantes tienen derecho a negarse a responder o retractarse de sus declaraciones.
- Se garantiza la privacidad y la confidencialidad.
- Los participantes pueden elegir ser identificados si lo desean.

Collegio de Diseño  
Ambiental de Pomona,  
Universidad Politécnica  
Estatad de California

JENNIFER LOPEZ:  
APPROBADO CPP IRB-25-33

Programación y entrevista por correo  
electrónico o mensaje de texto:  
jlopez7@cnp.edu  
323-395-8677





## APPENDIX C: English Recruitment Flyer

# HAVE YOU WITNESSED DISPLACEMENT ON CESAR CHAVEZ OR FIRST STREET IN BOYLE HEIGHTS?

ARE YOU A:

- RENTER?
- BOYLE HEIGHTS COMMUNITY MEMBER
- SMALL BUSINESS OWNER ON CESAR CHAVEZ AVE OR FIRST STREET?



**TELL ME YOUR EXPERIENCE  
OR TESTIMONIO IN A  
PLATICA(TALK)!**

### Purpose of Study

To push for different planning approaches that prioritize anti-displacement strategies and create better agency for Urban Planners, City Council and long-term community members.

- **No compensation can be provided at this moment.**

### About Me:

- First Generation Master Student and Thesis Candidate for Urban and Regional Planning at Cal Poly Pomona
- Academic Background: B.A. Women's and Gender Studies Minors: Chicana/o Latino Studies and Queer Studies.
- Low-Income, Mexican-American Chicana, daughter of immigrants

### **Platicas will be scheduled between Mid March-Beginning of April**

- A guided semi-structured interview with questions will be conducted.
- Participants are not required to answer all questions.
- Participants have the right to decline to answer or retract statements.
- Privacy and confidentiality are guaranteed.
- Participants can choose to be identified if they wish.

**California Polytechnic State University,  
Pomona  
School of Environmental Design**

**Schedule an Interview via email or  
text:**

**jlopez7@cpp.edu  
323-395-8677**

JENNIFER LOPE: CPP IRB APPROVED  
IRB-25-33

## **APPENDIX D: Interview Questions English**

### *Displacement in Small Business Corridors: A Case Study on* Boyle Heights: Interview Questions

#### **Small Business Questions:**

Do you own a small business?

When did you become a small business owner?

How do people become aware of your restaurant?

What is the origin of your business?

Is it a family business?

How long have you been renting?

Do you have a good relationship with your landlord?

Do they help you with maintenance or upkeep to the infrastructure?

Has the rent increased severely since you've been here?

What factors do you believe contribute to the economic value of your business?

Where do you hear people moving to?

What are the different ways people are being pushed out of the community?

Were they asked to move out and given relocation assistance? How do you see the new affordable housing projects affecting small businesses like the ones in Cesar Chavez?

What programs do you know are offered for small businesses?

What issues do you feel target current small business owners in Boyle heights?

Do you know anybody who has been displaced in the neighborhood?

What are your thoughts on the new housing projects being made?

Of the different ways, people are being pushed out which one do people experience more often?

### **Social Cohesion**

Why do you think people are being displaced?

Why do you think people choose to live in Boyle Heights in the first place?

Do you think it has to do with social connections or affordability?

Do you hear about overcrowding housing before displacement?

Do you hear about overcrowding after displacement has occurred?

Do you feel people are being pushed out of the community? Is there a demographic that is highly impacted? What demographic is vulnerable to displacement?

Do people still come back to the community? If so, why?

Do people want to stay in the community, do people try to stay in the community?

Do you think people know of the resources as displacement occurs? why?

What resources do you think can prevent displacement?

Did people go to court and try to fight the displacement? Why or why not?

Did the building get a new owner?

What are the ways that Landlords harass tenants?

What are some things people are doing to resist displacement?

What can cities do to prevent displacement? Like what?

What are some forces creating displacement?

What are some current things happening to address displacement?

What could the community do to address residential renter displacement?

What are some limits/gaps to keep people from being displaced? It can be at any level

What can urban planners and other stakeholders such as the Chamber of Commerce Boyle heights offer?

**Elders**

Do you see people that are being pushed out of the neighborhood have their health affected?

Do you see more elderly being pushed out?

Do you feel a certain demographic is most at risk for displacement?



## APPENDIX D: Interview Questions Spanish and English

Spanish Translation:

¿Tiene usted una pequeña empresa? ¿Cuándo se convirtió en propietario de una pequeña empresa?

¿Cómo se entera la gente de su restaurante?

¿Cuál es el origen de su negocio?

¿Es un negocio familiar?

¿Cuánto tiempo lleva alquilando? ¿Tiene una buena relación con su propietario?

¿Le ayudan con el mantenimiento o la conservación de la infraestructura?

¿Ha aumentado mucho el alquiler desde que está aquí?

¿Qué factores cree que contribuyen al valor económico de su negocio?

¿La infraestructura? ¿El negocio? ¿El servicio? Servicio al cliente Hábleme de su negocio.

¿Qué lo hace único en el vecindario? Los residentes con los que ha trabajado en este trabajo, ¿cuánto tiempo llevan viviendo en Boyle Heights?

¿A dónde oye que se muda la gente?

¿Cuáles son las diferentes formas en que se expulsa a las personas de la comunidad?

• ¿Fue un aumento del alquiler? •

¿Fueron desalojados? •

¿Cómo ve que los nuevos proyectos de vivienda asequible afectan a las pequeñas empresas como las de Cesar Chavez? ¿Qué programas sabe que se ofrecen a las pequeñas empresas?

¿Qué problemas cree que afectan a los propietarios de pequeñas empresas actuales en Boyle Heights? ¿Conoce a alguien que haya sido desplazado en el vecindario?

¿Qué piensa de los nuevos proyectos de vivienda que se están realizando? De las diferentes

formas en que se está expulsando a las personas,

¿cuál experimentan las personas con más frecuencia? Cohesión social

¿Por qué cree que se está desplazando a las personas?

¿Por qué cree que la gente elige vivir en Boyle Heights en primer lugar?

¿Cree que tiene que ver con las conexiones sociales o la asequibilidad?

¿Escucha sobre el hacinamiento en las viviendas antes del desplazamiento?

¿Escucha sobre el hacinamiento después de que se haya producido el desplazamiento?

¿Siente que se está expulsando a las personas de la comunidad

? ¿Hay algún grupo demográfico que se vea muy afectado?

¿Qué grupo demográfico es vulnerable al desplazamiento?

¿La gente sigue volviendo a la comunidad?

Si es así, ¿por qué? ¿La gente quiere quedarse en la comunidad, la gente intenta quedarse en la comunidad?

¿Crees que la gente conoce los recursos cuando se produce el desplazamiento?

¿Por qué? ¿Qué recursos crees que pueden prevenir el desplazamiento?

¿La gente fue a los tribunales y trató de luchar contra el desplazamiento?

¿Por qué o por qué no? ¿El edificio tuvo un nuevo propietario?

¿De qué manera los propietarios acosan a los inquilinos?

¿Qué cosas están haciendo las personas para resistir el desplazamiento?

¿Qué pueden hacer las ciudades para prevenir el desplazamiento?

¿Como qué? ¿Cuáles son algunas de las fuerzas que crean el desplazamiento?

¿Qué cosas están sucediendo actualmente para abordar el desplazamiento?

¿Qué podría hacer la comunidad para abordar el desplazamiento de los inquilinos residenciales?

¿Cuáles son algunos límites/brechas para evitar que las personas sean desplazadas?

Puede ser a cualquier nivel.

¿Qué pueden ofrecer los planificadores urbanos y otras partes interesadas, como la Cámara de Comercio de Boyle Heights?

Acceso: ¿Las personas desplazadas pueden permitirse un lugar en Boyle Heights?

¿Cree que la comunidad es la misma?

¿Por qué o por qué no?

¿Los propietarios ofrecen a los residentes la posibilidad de quedarse?

Salud y edad

¿Ve que la salud de las personas que están siendo expulsadas del vecindario se ve afectada?

¿Ve que se está expulsando a más personas mayores?

¿Cree que un determinado grupo demográfico corre mayor riesgo de ser desplazado?

## **APPENDIX E: Debrief Statement**

### **English Debrief:**

Thank you for being a part of this study focused on documenting the displacement of small businesses in mixed-use areas.

Your involvement is essential in preserving the history and experiences of these important spaces. This study's objective is to gather and examine stories, memories, and archival materials on Cesar Chavez Ave, aiming to enrich the historical record and enhance understanding of their importance.

By sharing your experiences, you are helping to ensure that future generations can recognize and value the importance of Cesar Chavez and the Multiculturalism that has evolved over time into different social cohesion within the community. In addition to also highlighting issues that disrupt living stability for current residents. Rest assured; your confidentiality is a priority.

Fake names will be utilized to ensure anonymity unless you have explicitly consented to use your real name. All personal information will be kept secure and will not be associated with your interview responses. If you ever feel hesitant about your participation, you have the option to withdraw from the study, even after today's session. If you would like to withdraw or have any questions about your involvement, feel free to reach out to me at 323-395-8677 or [jlopez7@cpp.edu](mailto:jlopez7@cpp.edu). Thank you once again for your significant contribution to this important initiative.

Thank you,

Jennifer Lopez Cal Poly Pomona Approved IRB-25-33

## **APPENDIX F: Spanish Translation Debrief**

*Gracias por formar parte de este estudio, centrado en documentar el desplazamiento de pequeños comercios en zonas de uso mixto. Su participación es esencial para preservar la historia y las experiencias de estos importantes espacios. El objetivo de este estudio es recopilar y examinar historias, recuerdos y materiales de archivo relacionados con la avenida César Chávez, con el fin de enriquecer el registro histórico y mejorar la comprensión de su importancia.*

*Al compartir sus experiencias, usted está ayudando a asegurar que las generaciones futuras puedan reconocer y valorar la relevancia de César Chávez y la multiétnicidad que ha evolucionado con el tiempo, fortaleciendo la cohesión social de la comunidad. Asimismo, se pretende poner de relieve las cuestiones que perturban la estabilidad de vida de los residentes actuales.*

*Tenga la seguridad de que su confidencialidad es una prioridad. Se utilizarán nombres falsos para garantizar el anonimato, a menos que haya dado su consentimiento explícito para utilizar su nombre real. Toda la información personal se mantendrá segura y no se asociará a las respuestas de la entrevista. Si en algún momento tiene dudas sobre su participación, cuenta con la opción de retirarse del estudio, incluso después de la sesión de hoy.*

*Si desea retirarse o tiene alguna pregunta sobre su participación, no dude en ponerse en contacto conmigo al 323-395-8677 o al correo [jlopez7@cpp.edu](mailto:jlopez7@cpp.edu).*

*Gracias, una vez más, por su valiosa contribución a esta importante iniciativa.*

*Muchas gracias,*

*Jennifer López Cal Poly Pomona Aprobado: IRB-25-33*

## **APPENDIX G: Instagram Photo Consent**

Instagram and Email Excerpt:

Hola [Name],

I hope you're doing well! I am currently working on my master's thesis which focuses on exploring displacement around Cesar Chavez Ave and First St. I came across your account/post that is relevant to documenting real time change in the environment and would love to request your permission to include it as part of my research.

Your post will be credited appropriately, and it will be used solely for academic purposes to help document the current and past conditions of the neighborhood. If you prefer to remain anonymous, I will not include your Instagram username or name in my work.

Please let me know if you are comfortable with this request, and feel free to ask any questions you may have.

Thank you!

Best,

Jennifer Lopez

Master's Candidate Urban and Regional Planning Cal Poly Pomona

IRB-25-33

## **APPENDIX G: Spanish Recruitment**

### **Ayude a preservar Boyle Heights: comparta sus recuerdos de Cesar Chavez Ave**

Hola [Nombre del destinatario], ¿Le apasiona preservar la vibrante historia y cultura de Boyle Heights?

Mi nombre es Jennifer Lopez y me comunico con usted como parte de mi tesis de maestría, que se centra en el desplazamiento en Boyle Heights, particularmente en los corredores de pequeñas empresas. Mi razón de documentar y preservar los preciados recuerdos de los miembros de la comunidad mientras colaboro con los planificadores urbanos y el Ayuntamiento local para combatir la retórica obsoleta con efectos institucionales y sistémicos.

¿Por qué participar? Comparta sus ideas sobre cómo la gentrificación y el desplazamiento afectan a nuestra comunidad. Contribuya a un proyecto que resalte la importancia de las relaciones sociales y económicas en el uso de la tierra.

Ayude a los futuros planificadores urbanos, como yo, a comprender las necesidades de la comunidad y abogar por un cambio positivo. Su papel: Su participación es voluntaria e invaluable. Todas las experiencias compartidas serán tratadas con el mayor cuidado y respeto, asegurando que su voz sea escuchada para dar forma al futuro de Boyle Heights.

Esta investigación está aprobada por la Junta de Revisión Institucional de Cal Poly Pomona (NÚMERO IRB: IRB-25-33).

Participe: si está interesado en participar o tiene preguntas, comuníquese conmigo a [jlopez7@cpp.edu](mailto:jlopez7@cpp.edu)

¡Sus experiencias y perspectivas pueden marcar una diferencia significativa! ¡Gracias por considerar esta oportunidad de contribuir a la historia de nuestra comunidad! Saludos cordiales,  
Jennifer Lopez Candidata a maestría, Cal Poly Pomona



## APPENDIX H: English Recruitment Form

**Study Title:** *Exploring Displacement Impacts on Small Business Corridors: A Case Study of Boyle Heights*

**Researcher Name:** Jennifer Lopez

**Faculty Chair:** Dr. Alvaro Huerta

**Institution:** Cal Poly Pomona

**Contact Information:** jlopez7@cpp.edu, 323-395-8677

**IRB Protocol Number:** IRB-25-33

### **Purpose of the Study:**

You are invited to participate in a research study aimed at documenting and preserving the voices of small business spaces in Boyle Heights, California.

This study seeks to gather stories, experiences, and historical data, pictures from individuals who have been involved in and come across the change of physical and social environment have knowledge of small businesses in the area. The purpose of this project is to contribute to the preservation of Boyle Heights history and community identity.

### **What Participation Involves:**

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a one-on-one interview, either in person or virtually, where you will share your experiences related to small-businesses in Cesar Chavez Ave.
- The interview will be audio or video-recorded (with your consent) for the purpose of transcription and analysis.
- You may also be asked to contribute archival materials (such as photos, documents, or other records) relevant to queer spaces in Cesar Chavez Ave, Boyle Heights.