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HOUSING INAFFORDABILITY ALONG CALIFORNIA'S GOLD COAST

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF SANTA MONICA ON THE WAY TO SILICON BEACH?

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What happened to the People's Republic of Santa Monica along the way to Silicon Beach?

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ABSTRACT

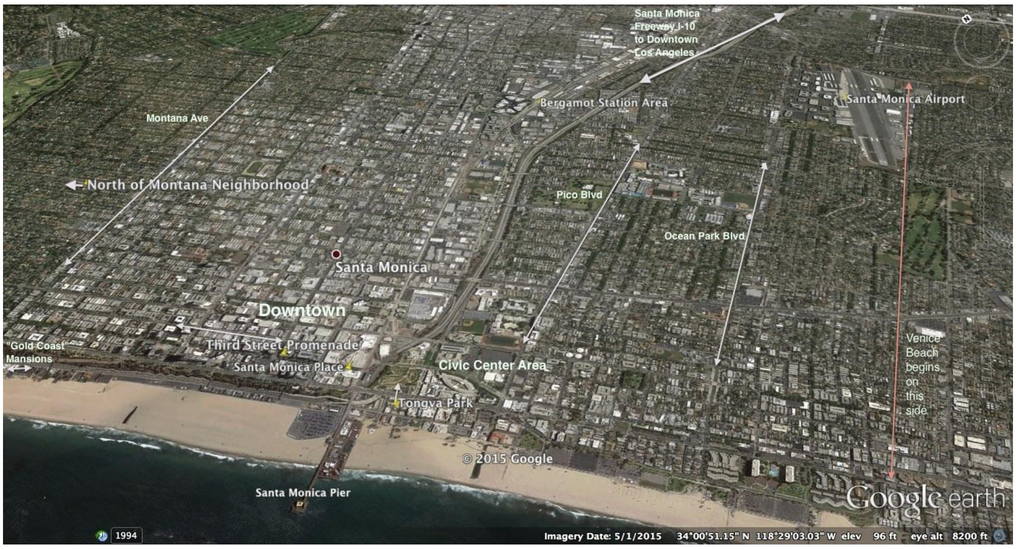
This conference paper, shortened and updated from Peters (2016), chronicles Santa Monica, CA's increasing loss of its former progressive roots and housing policies. My findings connect to larger storylines of neoliberal urbanization, gentrification, the rise of consumptive spaces and of urban tourism in America, as well as many other discourses about contested urban spaces. In the ocean-side community of Santa Monica, located in the heart of the Los Angeles megaregion, new tech industry workers and temporary visitors increasingly clash with long-term residents in their visions for the city's future. Los Angeles has now become the most unaffordable rental market in the entire U.S. - and rents in Santa Monica are the highest within that market. A recent dramatic rise of so-called Ellis Act evictions is rapidly displacing the city's few remaining lower-income residents while its homeless population already hit an all time high. The city's new, developer-friendly climate is seen in stark contrast to 'the People's Republic of Santa Monica's' earlier tradition of lower-density, slow growth, progressive urban development policies that were focused on the supply of public benefits and included important pro-renter policies. So Santa Monica, a city with a lively and internationally renowned history of political activism, is now increasingly overwhelmed with a housing affordability crisis of epic proportions. Resident groups are divided between renters and homeowners and between business owners and employees. Overall, a loud and strong political force has long existed in this city that advocates for 'slow(er) growth,' i.e. a kind of economic growth that shuns massive development projects and resists city plans for additional office development even when it comes packaged as part of mixed-use projects that also propose residential and hotel units.

KEYWORDS: Housing affordability, gentrification, Santa Monica, California, Silicon Beach

SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA: FROM BEACH CITY TO SILICON BEACH BOOM TOWN

The ocean-side community of Santa Monica has long been one of the premier tourist destinations along the California coastline. It covers just 8.3 square miles and is home to about 90,000 residents. Santa Monica is encircled from all sides by Los Angeles, a large city of 3.5 million people which in turn lies at the heart of the LA metropolitan region which – at 18 million people spread out across the 4850 square miles – is one of the largest urban agglomerations in the entire world. Market analysts contest that Santa Monica has now gone ‘from beach town to boom town’, with a slew of dense, mixed-use development projects slated for completion in the near future that many see as a tipping point in the city’s development. Creative industries (film, fashion, new media and tech companies) along with tourism activity now dominate the economic landscape. Newcomers and temporary visitors clash with long-term residents in their visions for the city’s future, and the new, developer-friendly climate in Santa Monica is seen in stark contrast to ‘the People’s Republic of Santa Monica’s’ earlier tradition of lower-density, slow growth, progressive urban development policies that were focused on the supply of public benefits. Yet these public benefits – well-maintained parks, affordable housing, good public transit and parking – were of course precisely the key elements that distinguished Santa Monica from its larger neighbor Los Angeles and subsequently made the city a more attractive place to live, work and play in the first place.

Figure 1: Santa Monica’s Central Beachfront



Source: Google Earth, labels added by author.

In the case of Santa Monica, the somewhat familiar story of a well-governed, progressive, attractive place becoming victim to its own success contains some interesting twists. Young and minority residents are typically those most affected by the housing affordability crisis in the city, but the recent influx of young, mostly white and often well-to-do tech workers moving down from Northern California’s Silicon Valley additionally complicates the picture in Santa Monica.

HISTORY: FROM BEACH TOWN TO SILICON BEACH

Santa Monica, encircled from all sides by the much larger City of Los Angeles, has long been one of the premier tourist destinations along the California coastline, and it is one of America’s quintessential Tourist Cities. As California became the United States’ 31st state in

1850, the Mexican ranchos of Santa Monica changed hands and soon declined. Tourism soon became an inseparable ingredient in the city's development and its prosperity. As more and more gold seekers arrived in Southern California, Santa Monica quickly developed into the region's first recreational resort, with vacationers sometimes even prospecting for gold along the beaches (Garbee et al 2007:20). Soon after the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad in the 1890s, Santa Monica lost out to San Pedro as the location for Los Angeles' first major seaport, a loss which enabled the town to maintain its quaint seaside charm. The Ocean Park neighborhood was built around the same time, its development closely intertwined with the development of 'Venice of America', also spearheaded by tobacco millionaire and land developer Abbot Kinney. These two adjacent communities provided significant new residential areas, along with Santa Monica's first of many major amusement parks. A whole string of wooden piers were built, key among them the Santa Monica Pier, which is the only one remaining today. The calculated and synergetic development of Santa Monica as both a desirable location for recreation and residence is epitomized in the fact that it was railroad and development magnate Henry Huntington[i] who originally invited the Hawaiian-Irish surfer George Freeth to the coast in 1907 to promote his Pacific Electric Railroad lines, paying him to demonstrate his skills at several venues along the beach and later to work as the first official ocean lifeguard. Freth' surfing and swimming lessons drew significant crowds and are indeed credited with increasing ridership along Pacific Electric's beach routes.

Santa Monica Bay became a key location both for film production and film star living. While the city was still hard hit by the Great Depression, aircraft production brought a huge economic boon in the early 1940s. Douglas aircraft remained the area's largest employer throughout the 1950s (Garbee et al. 2007:27).The opening of the Santa Monica freeway in 1966 promised to improve accessibility and bring additional economic development. Yet similar countless other communities around the country the freeway was routed through and thus tragically decimated Santa Monica's long-established African-American enclave in the Pico District.[ii]Throughout the 1960s and 70s, the city's economic development base changed significantly, with Douglas closing its plant in 1968 and a number of health and sports-related businesses opening but the economy slowing overall – and many residents liking the slower pace. By the late 1970s, Santa Monicans for Renters' Rights (SMRR) was founded and soon emerged as a major local political force, gaining a council majority by the early 1980s and being instrumental in passing a rent control ordinance, partially as a response to early gentrification along Main Street and other parts of Ocean Park.

A new indoor mall, Santa Monica Place was built in 1980, directly competing with the adjacent outdoor Santa Monica mall that had been opened with much fanfare in 1965 on Third Street but since then seen steady decline. The eventual revitalization and transformation of the outdoor mall into the highly successful Santa Monica Third Street Promenade further cemented Santa Monica's reputation as a desirable place for play and stay, with tourists making up a significant but not yet major portion of the Promenade's customer base. One of the most interesting aspects of Third Street's successful reinvention is that it was not led by local business leaders but by then-mayor Dany Zane, who had been one of the early SMRR leadership figures and whom Santa Monica residents, many of whom were renters, inherently trusted (Pojani 2008:147).

Since the late 1980s, both overall economic and tourism development has been on a steady upward trend in the city, much of it owning to the high quality of life progressive politicians have been able to create and maintain in Santa Monica by consistently investing in good public infrastructure, services, education and public amenities who benefit visitors and residents alike. The 1990s saw the opening of several new high-end and high-profile hotels in the city. As of 2014, the coastal stretch running from Santa Monica to Venice and Marina del Rey is considered Southern California's second most popular tourist destination, behind Disneyland but ahead of Hollywood and Downtown Los Angeles (Wallace 2014). In the new millennium, hotel development became increasingly complemented with the relocation of major tech firms to the area. On the environmental side, Santa Monica is generally considered a model city for urban sustainability planning (see especially Farr 2012:78ff and Riposa 2004). Meanwhile, Santa Monica is also homea large homeless population, increasingly gridlocked by traffic and it faces issues of displacement and a crisis of affordability.

PLAY, TOIL AND STAY: SANTA MONICA AS A PLACE TO VISIT, WORK AND LIVE

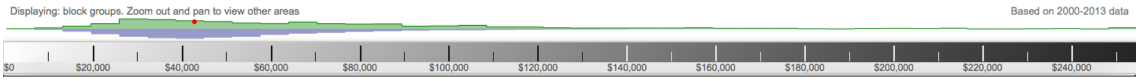
Of Santa Monica's approximately 90,000 residents, 70% are white and 72% are renters.[iii] There are roughly 50,000 housing units, 17,500 of whom at one point fell under the 1979 rent control ordinance. The median household income is an impressive $71,400 and 64% of adults have at least a bachelor's degree. The city has over 9,000 businesses, including branch offices for entertainment industry giants like MTV Networks, Universal Music Group and Lionsgate Universal and technology giants such as Google, Apple, Microsoft and, soon, Intel. In recent years, many tech startups from the Bay Area's Silicon Valley have re-located or opened new offices in Santa Monica, Venice and nearby Playa Vista, earning the area the name Silicon Beach.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN SANTA MONICA: CONFLICTS AND KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Santa Monica may only have about 90,000 residents but between its full-time residents, work commuters, day visitors such as beachgoers and tourists, the city's daytime population can swell to anywhere from 250,000 to up to 450,000 people, with weekend congestion on streets often approaching or at times surpassing weekday rush hour traffic.

Urban development and politics in Santa Monica has long been defined by a stark economic contrast between its tony, increasingly super-rich, celebrity-studded and overwhelmingly white north of Montana area, where the median sales price for residential homes lay above $3 million dollars in 2014 and median household incomes are above $115,000, and the Pico area to the south, where individual homes sell for a fourth or fifth of the price and median household incomes are less than half of Montana's, around $57,000.[iv] Overall, however, Santa Monica has become significantly richer over the last decade, with city-wide averages up 60% compared to 2000 even in the recession affected year of 2009, compared to a dramatic fall of almost 100% in California overall in the same time period.[v]

Figure 2. Santa Monica Household income map (2013 data)



Source:http://www.city-data.com/income/income-Santa-Monica-California.html

Santa Monica has been governed by a city charter reliant upon a Mayor – City Council system since 1906, but corruption and inefficiency in the 1930 brought about the adoption of a new city charter in 1946 which is active until this day. It is still based on a council system, with seven city council members reviewing, setting and passing key local laws and decisions. The key political forces in the city are renters, homeowners and business owners and developers, including hotels. For the last three decades, the group *Santa Monicans for Renters Rights* (SMRR) has dominated Santa Monica's progressive local politics. All councilmembers, school board officials and planning commissioners elected in the 2013 mid-term elections had been endorsed by SMRR. Over two-thirds of Santa Monica residents are renters, with about half of them living alone (Roderick 2003:2). SMRR is by no means a monolithic organization, however, but in fact covers a spectrum ranging from fierce anti-development folks to much more moderate players more amenable to responsible development. In the recent 2014 election, SMRR for the first time endorsed a slate of all anti-development candidates. Renters are also covering an increasingly wide spectrum, of course, representing many different ethnicities, income brackets and political viewpoints. On the pro-development side, the key local PAC (political action committee) is *Santa Monicans United for a Responsible Future* (SMURF), who typically stand diametrically opposed to the city's leading anti-development group *Santa Monica Coalition for a Livable City (SMCLC).* In 2014 a new anti-development group called Residocracy rose to the fore over resistance against a large mixed-use project in the Bergamot area.

Santa Monica AS a CONTESTED CITY:

Santa Monica is a city with a lively history of political activism. Resident groups are sometimes divided between renters and homeowners and between business owners and employees, but overall, a loud and strong political force exists in this city advocating for "slow growth," i.e. a kind of economic growth that shuns massive development projects and resists city plans for additional office development even when it comes packaged as part of mixed-use projects that also propose residential and hotel units.

Residents Protesting and Resisting Dense Mixed-Use Projects

Homeowners and renters in Santa Monica are often united in their concerns over over-development in Santa Monica, but alliances and allegiances can be brittle. In 2010, Santa Monica approved its new Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE).[vi] As a major planning undertaking, the LUCE is a hefty 540-page document approved after a series of lengthy and heated public debates that started in 2004. Visionary in many ways, Santa Monica's LUCE won several major local and national planning awards.[vii] The LUCE clarifies how its policy direction is different from its 1984 edition in three main ways:

> It is a conservation plan that provides for an overall reduction in building height. It represents a paradigm shift in the way the City assesses traffic, providing aggressive transportation management tools to reduce congestion and new vehicle trips. It ensures that a sustainable city is the overarching principle. (Santa Monica LUCE 2010, p. 5)

The plan, which distinguishes several different urban forms in Santa Monica, at times mentioning specific areas or districts or otherwise speaking more generally of "the residential neighborhoods," "the boulevards," and "the industrial lands." The plan calls for the development of a new Specific Plan for Downtown, the city's main commercial and visitor destination, and dedicates significant attention to two other major areas where battles over development has been fierce: the Civic Center Area, for which a Specific Plan is already in its implementation phase, and the so-called Bergamot Area, a clustering of creative sector venues where residents successfully nixed plans for a major mixed-use redevelopment project in 2014.

In fact, by regular North American urban development standards, Santa Monica's LUCE is incredibly restrictive, specifying that almost all of the city's land area should be conserved and that land use changes in the city should be directed to commercial and industrial areas that comprise only 4% of the land area, mainly concentrated around the Civic Center and Bergamot areas. Both areas lie mostly within walking distance of a new light rail line that is set to open in 2016 and which will allow residents, workers and visitors direct transit access to many key LA locations, including those all the way in Downtown Los Angeles. The intention to locate future development near this important new transit line was a huge impetus for the development for the LUCE, and for rethinking development in Santa Monica more generally.

In the Civic Center area, The Village at Santa Monica mixes 160 affordable rental units with 158 luxury residences developed by Related Companies and partners. A central feature is the 'walk street' through the site that connects pedestrians from Main Street to Ocean Avenue and is dotted with retail, restaurants and landscaped plazas. Public reactions to the project cover the entire spectrum from praise to outrage. The LEED-Silver-certified affordable Belmar apartments, which included work/live studios with roll up fronts as well as 1-3 bedroom apartments, were targeted at artists, actors and other creative class workers rather than low-income hotel or other service sector workers, who were priced out of Santa Monica long ago.[viii] The two luxury condo complexes, The Waverly and The Seychelles, meanwhile, offer 1-3 bedroom residences priced between $1 and $4 million dollars.

For the Bergamot area, meanwhile, the City of Santa Monica developed an entirely new plan. In June 2013, a final draft, a 200+ page document was released after extensive community feedback, and it contained plans for two specific sub-areas, namely the Bergamot Transit Village area from Cloverfield Blvd to Steward Street to the North and the Mixed-Use Creative district from Steward Street to the Northern edge of Santa Monica at Centinela Ave.[ix]

Like the LUCE, the Bergamot Area plan was a solid, overall well thought-out planning effort that sought to address the essential struggles of densification in Santa Monica via long-term vision that hoped to transform this rather drab light-industrial and commercial area into a transit-accessible, bike- and walk-friendly district for creative class workers and, increasingly, outside visitors. Planners envisioned the future of the area as one where visitors arrive there by light rail or bicycle, enjoying the art galleries, improved amenities and dining options as well as a new boutique hotel. However, while planning efforts for a revamped Bergamot Arts Center continue to move forward, the corresponding plans for the adjoining Bergamot Transit Village were toppled by community resistance.

On February 4, 2014 Santa Monica's City Council had approved the Bergamot Transit Village (BTV), a massive 765,000 square foot mixed-use development project on the site of an old Papermate factory sitting adjacent to the future Exposition light rail transit stop at 26th Street and Olympic Avenue. BTV included 375,000 square feet of creative office space, 29,300 square feet of retail, and 330,000 square feet of housing (471 apartments and 27 live/work units for artists). As a commercial developer, owner Hines underemphasized the residential potential of the site while at the same time drawing the immediate ire of locals worried about additional traffic impacts in an area with already nightmarish traffic.

In January 2014, Residocracy, a new slow-growth group emerged, quickly vying to become a major political force. Its initial efforts concentrated around gathering enough signatures to repeal the City Council's approval of the BTV. Residocracy founder and former city council candidate Armen Melkonioans led the campaign for a veto referendum petition, which was also supported by SMRR, SMCLC, and many other community groups including all seven neighborhood associations. They were mainly concerned that BTV would bring up to 7,000 new daily car trips to the area.[x] By the end of their 30-day time window, the petitioners submitted 13,500 signatures to the city clerk, far more than the 6,091 required, thus forcing the city council to act. Rather than put the veto referendum on the November 4, 2014 election ballot, the council voted to rescind the development plan. Residocracy's activism ultimately resulted in the developer Hines walking away from the entire project and selling the Papermate factory site to another developer, Clarion, who wants to reactivate existing entitlements and simply re-develop the site for office use. Clarion will thus not need to provide any of the community-oriented benefits or innovative street redesigns associated with the larger mixed-use residential/retail/office project, although their bland project will still generate similar amounts of additional car trips. As Barragan (2015) aptly summarized, "BVT opponents were worried about traffic and they're going to get it anyway." Clearly, slow-growth proponents once again held the upper hand in Santa Monica by successfully stopping a large mixed-use project, but the pyrric nature of this victory is hard to miss. Slow-growthers are primarily older, white residents, many of whom are homeowners. This stands in sharp contrast to the 96 percent of the city's Hispanics and 75 percent of Asian Americans who had been fully supportive of the Bergamot plan.[xi]

Rethinking the New Sharing Economy: Protesting and Resisting the Airbnbification of Santa Monica

While many residents are opposed to new and expanded hotel operations, many are equally dismayed at the recent expansion of 'hotel alternatives' in their city and the way that these temporary rentals threaten existing housing opportunities. Similar to other popular urban tourist destinations around the world, Santa Monica has seen a spectacular rise in 'sharing economy' offerings via sites such as Airbnb. The overall situation is still somewhat messy, murky and in flux, with less clearly defined front lines of protest and resistance than in the other two cases. For one, Airbnb of course turns residents into hosts. It also pits increasingly squeezed renters in the least affordable market in the nation against at least equally struggling hotel workers. But while Aibnb may have started out in 2007 as (mostly) a "sharing economy" concept promoting simple peer-to-peer rentals, it is now at a very different stage of its operations. Currently valued at around $13 billion, Airbnb has a higher market value than hotel giants such as Hyatt or Wyndham (at $8.4 and $9.3 billion, respectively, Bradshaw (2015), also cited in Saman 2015:5). The highly successful "culting" of its brand (Atkin 2004) is based upon establishing a sense of community among its customers who are to buy into Airbnb's "San Francisco air mattress" founding myth. In a blatant act of self-boosterim and rhetoric of 'community building,' the company released an 'analysis' immodestly entitled "Airbnb's Positive Impact in Los Angeles," claiming that host incomes and visitors' spending generated an overall economic impact of $312 million while supporting 2,600 jobs.[xii] This is how Airbnb characterizes its local "community":

> Airbnb hosts in the City of Los Angeles have been welcoming guests into their homes since late 2008. Over the past six years, Los Angeles residents have formed a vibrant Airbnb community, sharing unique experiences with travelers from around the world. […] Between May 2013 and April 2014, 4,490 Los Angeles hosts welcomed guests into their homes. […] 38% of hosts are low to middle income, [earning] below $65,900/year. Almost half of Airbnb hosts work in the arts, entertainment and recreation occupations. [http://blog.airbnb.com/economic-impacts-los-angeles/]

The spin in their corresponding press release is even more extreme, basically recasting Airbnb not as a recently IPO-ed multi-billion dollar business empire but as a charitable, environmentally beneficial endeavor that 'can help locals out' in multiple ways:

> "Home sharing helps Angelenos stay in their homes, pursue creative careers, and share the city they love with visitors from around the world," said Airbnb Regional Head of Public Policy David Owen. "Nearly three quarters of all Airbnb hosts use the money they earn to stay in their homes and about 30 percent of hosts say hosting helped them to start a new business." […] "Many hosts are aspiring stars in the entertainment industry, and the additional income from Airbnb is what allows them to keep their LA dreams alive." By helping residents share their homes, Airbnb also promotes the efficient use of existing resources and a more environmentally sustainable way of traveling. The study found that home sharing results in a significant reduction in energy, water use and waste generation, compared to hotel stays, and also encourages sustainability awareness among both residents and visitors."

A closer look at Santa Monica's and Los Angeles' Airbnb market reveals this rhetoric that touts win-win "creative class peer sharing" as a preferable, personalized alternative to hotel booking as a partial truth at best. For starters, the listed units are a far cry from the proverbial actor's couch lower-income tourists were supposed to crash on: nearly 90% of the rental offers are for whole units, often listed by leasing companies with multiple units. By 2015, as many as 8,400 hosts and more than 11,400 units were listed for rent in Los Angeles (which for the purposes of the report included all of Santa Monica) via the rental site, clearly indicating its growing influence on the Los Angles tourism sector. Yet contrary to Airbnb own claims, a recent report by the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE/Saman 2015) details how this impact is likely to be negative rather than positive, especially in the longer term:

> By incentivizing the large-scale conversion of residential units into tourist accommodations, Airbnb forces neighborhoods and cities to bear the costs of its business model. Residents must adapt to a tighter housing market. Increased tourist traffic alters neighborhood character while introducing new safety risks. Cities lose out on revenue that could have been invested in improving the basic quality of life for its residents. Jobs are lost and wages are lowered in the hospitality industry. […] Airbnb has created a nexus between tourism and housing that hurts renters. The 7,316 units taken off the rental market by Airbnb is equivalent to seven years' of affordable housing construction in Los Angeles. In Venice, as many as 12.5 percent of all housing units have become Airbnb units, all without public approval. There are 360 Airbnb units per square mile in Venice and longtime residents who never intended to live next to hotels now find themselves dealing with noise and safety concerns that negatively impact their quality of life. (Saman 2015:2-3)

The report distinguishes between three main categories of hosts, namely "on-site hosts" who actually "share" a room or other portion of their home, hosts who rent out a single unit and hosts who are really leasing companies or landlords taking advantage of the lucrative short-term rental market. And while on-site hosts actually make up a majority of all listings (52%), they only generate 11% of all Airbnb revenue, while the multiple listers, who only make up 6% of all agents, generate more than a third of all revenue. The LAANE report then goes on to vilify and call out specific multiple listers in the Venice/Santa Monica area by name and demands that only true sharing be allowed. Generating considerable buzz and press in around local Los Angeles real estate and urban development blog sites such as CurbedLA, the report prompted Airbnb to delete listings and cancelling bookings for some of its biggest hosts, mostly in an around Santa Monica, leading local bloggers to speculate whether "Airbnb [can] survive in LA without big professional landlords."[xiii]Short-term rentals are still largely illegal across the county, and proper taxation regimes have yet to be worked out.[xiv]

At the community level, the Airbnbification of Santa Monica and surrounding Los Angeles is a clear case of the neoliberalization of the tourism sector, standing in stark juxtaposition to some of Santa Monica's recent labor victories in the hotel worker arena. With housing prices and rents absolutely skyrocketing in Santa Monica and surrounding neighborhoods, people feel as through they cannot afford to not rent out their space, especially when they are away. Santa Monica and the adjacent beach community of Venice Beach together are responsible for a whopping 40% of total Airbnb revenue in Los Angeles.

Clearly, more research is necessary in order to better unpack and unbundle the implications the actions of new sharing economy opportunists such as Airbnb and others have on urban tourist economies in highly valuable, high-profile and high-stakes markets such as Santa Monica's.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: WHAT DOES SANTA MONICA TEACH US ABOUT CONTESTED CITIES?

When discussing patterns of protest and resistance in Santa Monica, a complex picture emerges that involves different residents, employees and business leaders in the city. As the city densifies and its economy further develops and diversifies, the struggle to equitably share increasingly scarce public spaces, infrastructures and amenities between new and old residents and a much larger daytime population that also includes hundreds of thousands of additional visitors and employees intensifies.

Is Santa Monica a typical or an atypical example for protest and resistance in a world of new (?) urban tourism and does it offer broader insights into the state of urban tourism in post-industrial cities across the Northern Hemisphere? The answer is it depends.

Santa Monica's dual reliance on both a vibrant tourism sector and a strong creative class economy effectively blurs the boundaries between visitors and a new class of residents it seeks to attract. One might say that although early-on, Santa Monica at least partially fit the characteristics of a typical 'tourist city' that continuously (re-)built infrastructures to attract tourists (Judd and Fainstein 1999), these spaces never became exclusionary, insulated tourist 'bubbles' (Fainstein 2007). In fact, Santa Monica's most important tourist amenities -- the beaches, the Pier, the Third Street Promenade, and, more recently, Tongva Park – are all public spaces, and they are all equally enjoyed by locals and visitors who are drawn to Santa Monica as a general 'creative urban area.' The city really has reached a breaking point in terms of its affordability for lower and middle-income residents. This affordability crisis is of course closely linked to the ongoing neoliberalization and commodification of urban economies across the globe. But the case of Santa Monica also illustrates the nascent regulation of new sharing economy phenomena such as Airbnb. We also see that residents in the 'new tourist city' of Santa Monica are not as monolithically divided between homeowners and renters as in the past, and that its new tech sector oriented residents may very well crave, rather than fear, the kind of walkable, mixed-use densified spaces that older residents are so wary of. For the time being, however, a lot of good, progressive planning and policy-making seems to still get trumped by the short-sighted anti-density activism of certain (over-)entitled residents who resist and resent both, the advent of Silicon Beach and the advancement of beachgoers into their wealthy single-family home neighborhoods.

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[i] Garbee et al. (2007:23) mistakenly claim that it was Collis Huntington, Henry's uncle and one of the Big Four to build, who invited Freeth to California. However, Collis died in 1900. Freeth died at the young age of 35 from an influenza epidemic in 1918, but only after having trained the first generation of volunteers who would then form L.A. County's first Lifeguard Service.

[ii] Today, the area is the city's most ethnically diverse neighborhood, but it is also the one with the highest crime rates and the one receiving the amount of least attention from city officials.

[iii] Note that this stands in stark contrast to the much larger surrounding city of Los Angeles, whose 3.5 million residents are 48% Hispanic or Latino, 10% African American, 11% Asian and only 41% White. According to a 2013 Harvard study, 52% of LA residents were renters in 2012. Although much lower than than in Santa Monica, this rate still made LA the city with the highest percentage of renters among all major U.S. cities (see http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/jchs.harvard.edu/files/jchs_americas_rental_housing_2013_1_0.pdf, accessed March 2015).

[iv] In June 2014, real estate site Redfin showed the median list price for individual homes in the Montana area at $3.6 million while Pico homes had a median list price of $765,000. Actual median sales prices were $2.85 million and $885,000, respectively, seehttp://www.redfin.com/neighborhood/1919/CA/Santa-Monica/North-of-Montana and http://www.redfin.com/neighborhood/2139/CA/Santa-Monica/Pico, both accessed June 25, 2014. For income data see http://www.city-data.com/neighborhood/North-of-Montana-Santa-Monica-CA.html and http://www.city-data.com/neighborhood/Pico-Santa-Monica-CA.html, also accessed June 25, 2014. By the end of 2014, with a median sales price of $3.1 million per home that year, the North of Montana section of Santa Monica had officially surpassed even Beverly Hills and Bel Air as the most expensive neighborhood to buy a house in the Los Angeles area (for details, see http://la.curbed.com/archives/2015/01/the_10_most_expensive_places_to_buy_a_house_in_los_angeles.php, accessed February 2015).

[v] Source: http://www.city-data.com/income/income-Santa-Monica-California.html, accessed June 25, 2014.

[vi] The LUCE is available online at http://www.smgov.net/uploadedFiles/Departments/PCD/Plans/General-Plan/Land-Use-and-Circulation-Element.pdf.

[vii] Among others, the LUCE won the "Outstanding Comprehensive Planning Award, Small Jurisdiction" from the California and Los Angeles divisions of the American Planning Association (APA) and well as the "Compass Blueprint Sustained Leadership Award" from the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG).

[viii] Tellingly, the lottery application for the Belmar apartments was provided via the Actors Fund at http://www.actorsfund.org/others/pdfs/LA/BelmarFinalApplication.pdf (last accessed April 2015). Rents for small studios started at $439/month and were as low as $650/month for three bedrooms, compared to Santa Monica's incredibly high average rental price of $2,600/month (see, for example http://www.latimes.com/business/realestate/la-fi-rents-in-southern-california-will-climb-20141006-story.html, accessed January 2015).

[ix] The Draft Plan is available at http://www.smgov.net/uploadedFiles/Departments/PCD/Plans/Bergamot-Area-Plan/Bergamot-Area-Plan-Draft-June-2013.pdf

[x] SMCLC also filed a lawsuit against the project, attacking the whopping 8,500 page Environmental Impact Report for not having sufficiently studied alternatives to the massive project. For additional details on the referendum, see http://ballotpedia.org/City_of_Santa_Monica_Bergamot_Transit_Village_%22Hines_Project%22_Veto_Referendum_%28November_2014%29, accessed June 25, 2014

[xi]This is according to data in the 2014 City of Santa Monica Development Survey, available at http://www.smgov.net/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=46504. Also see Smith (2014).

[xii] See http://blog.airbnb.com/economic-impacts-los-angeles/ as well as Airbnb's official press release at https://www.airbnb.com/press/news/new-study-airbnb-community-generates-312-million-in-economic-impact-in-la, both accessed April 2015.

[xiii] Specifically, the controversy was over the region's most prolific host, Globe Homes and Condos aka Ghc, and formerly misleadingly known as "Danielle and Lexi" with as many as 78 listings (Kudler 2015a, 2015b).

[xiv] In his April 2015 State of the City address, Los Angles mayor Eric Garcetti proposed two major policy reactions to the sharing economy, announcing that ride share companies Ueber and Lyft would soon be allowed to pick passengers up at Los Angles International Airport and that he wants to use taxes collected from Airbnb to bankroll a new affordable housing trust fund (http://www.lamayor.org/sotc). No parallel initiative for Santa Monica has been announced.