

INTERPRETING THE SANTA MONICA HOLC MAP

Affordable Housing Locations

- 0 - 25 Units (112)
- 26 - 50 Units (65)
- 51 - 100 Units (19)
- 100+ Units (4)

HOLC Redline Grades

- A
- B
- C
- D
- <all other values>

The only non-whites living in blue or yellow areas were live-in domestics through at least the 1950 census.

Integration began in the 1960s but didn't really build noticeably until the 1980s. The city was about 96% white during its first and second phases of development. It dropped to 94% in 1950, which is likely what triggered redevelopment programs focused on "slum clearance." In 1970, the city was still 92% white.

Green zones had to be surrounded by blue zones or parkland. Yellow and red were bad influences that had to be buffered against.

1. SM's earliest mixed race area. Was at the edge of town by the railroad tracks and the city dump. Designated "skid row" and eliminated in the 1950s, replaced with one-story commercial buildings.

2. Bandini Tract (Belmar Triangle). Evolved as second mixed race neighborhood after 1900, occupied by poor whites and influx of new African Americans that came to Santa Monica. Was tucked up against abandoned railroad land with trains passing along the north edge. Planning for the Civic Center began in 1918, which kept it devalued. It was zoned commercial in 1922. Samohi took portions of it in 1912 and in 1950s. The rest was finally taken for the Civic Center, also in the 1950s.

3. Phillips Chapel District. Mixed race area, mostly African American, grew up around church established in 1909. In 1922 when the zoning ordinance was first created, residents here requested R1 zoning to preserve their property values but were refused. This neighborhood is still extant.

The green area was established as the industrial zone for "noxious uses" in 1912. After 1922 when we had our first full zoning ordinance, it only extended west as far as Lincoln Blvd.

This untinted area was clay pits from 1904 until about 1950. When clay was exhausted from pits they became city dumps for Santa Monica and Beverly Hills. Trash was burned to control rats. Clay pits were also smelly, smoky and noisy.

They fled to Sunset Park when FHA offered an affordable way to move. The neighborhood became extremely segregated. 1950 census: 1061 nonwhite people, 171 whites. Adjacent to industrial zone, cemetery, garbage dumps. Fwy added next to industry, removing homes instead.

The rest of this red area was mostly working class and poor whites until the 60s or 70s. Was redlined because poor people were also considered a bad investment. Also, housing types dating back to the late 19th century remained here and were frowned upon.

Pico Neighborhood, established 1904 for working class (Irwin Heights). Clay pits attracted new Mexican immigrants. As African Americans were pushed out of other areas, they came here too. Working class whites

This area was blue because there was no development here before the FHA program, so it grew with exceptional compliance with race restrictions, and was buffered from the red zone by yellow.

This area was yellow because even though there was a lot of deed restricted FHA activity, there was also multi-unit housing built to accommodate Douglas Aircraft workers in some sections. It was also yellow because it was adjacent to red zones, the airport, and another city dump at Marine Park.

This area was redlined because of mixed population including Italians, Japanese, Mexican, Portuguese and later, Jews, in combination with the proliferation of older housing types, which were frowned upon, and the extensive Ocean Park amusement zone adjacency.

Santa Monica Census Data

Year	Total	% Change	#White	%White	#Not W or AfAm	% Not W or AfAm	#African American	% Af Am	#Mex/Span Californio	% M S C	#Japanese	#Chinese
1880	417	–	–	91%	–	–	*15	*3.5%	**7	*1.5%	*0	*13
+1890	1580	278.9%	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
1900	3,057	93.5%	2,958	96%	–	–	60	2%	*290	*9.4%	7	32
1910	7,847	156.7%	7,589	96%	–	–	191	2%	*399	*5%	66	20
1920	15,252	94.4%	14,866	97%	–	–	282	2%	–	–	80	20
%1930	37,146	143.5%	33,539	90%	–	–	750	2%	2307	5.4%	432	19
1940	53,500	44.9%	51,691	96%	–	–	1,265	2.4%	–	–	394	34
?1950	71,595	33.8%	67,955	94%	410	0.5%	3230	4.5%	–	–	–	–
1960	83,249	16.3%	78,122	93%	1,067	6%	4,060	5%				
1970	88,289	6.1%	81,935	92%	2,136	7%	4,218	5%				
1980	88,314	0%	75,676	85%	15,052	21%	3,594	4%				
1990	86,905	–1.6%	72,116	82%	15,448	22%	3,973	5%				
2000	84,084	–3.2%	60,482	71%	20,521	24.5%	3,081	4%				
2010	89,736	6.7%	69,663	70%	16,547	18.4%	3,526	3.93%				

Source: United States Census, (grey from secondary sources that used census records, not all subgroups accounted for)

* hand counted using enumeration sheets, probably a little low

three of these labeled “Indian” and have Spanish surnames, either from Mexico, or refugees from mission era

+ actual 1890 census for Santa Monica lost in flood, and official data reports don’t include details on cities with populations below 2500

% 1930 is the only census year when “Mexican” was considered a race to be counted. This census was the basis for the HOLC maps

? 1950 census report also provides breakdown of non-whites by district

NB: Nationwide, African Americans have always comprised between 10% and 13% of population except in 1930 and 1940 when percentage dipped just below 10%

Compiled by Nina Fresco 2021