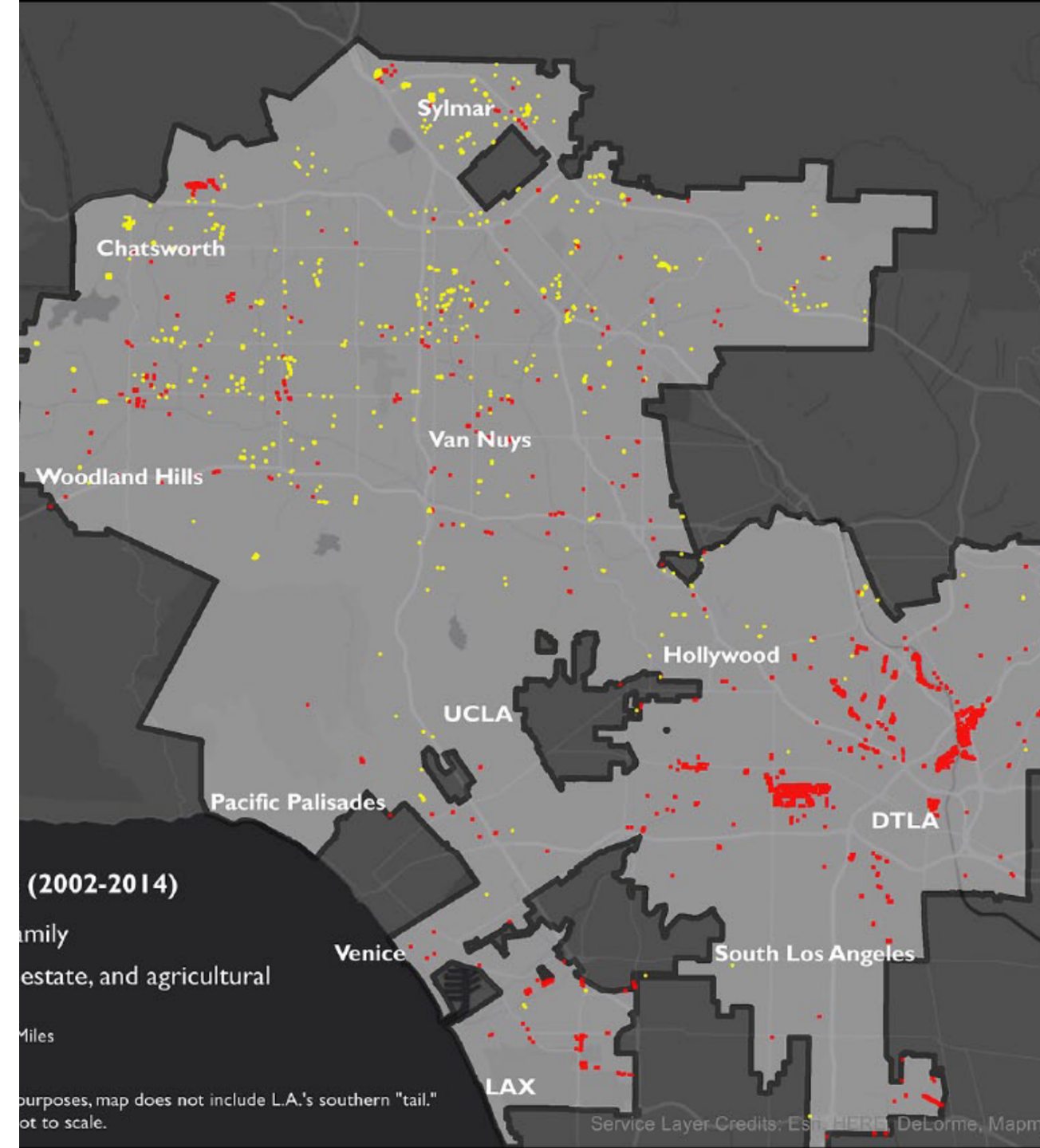




Why Are Regulations Changed?

A Parcel Analysis of Upzoning in Los Angeles

CJ Gabbe, 2017

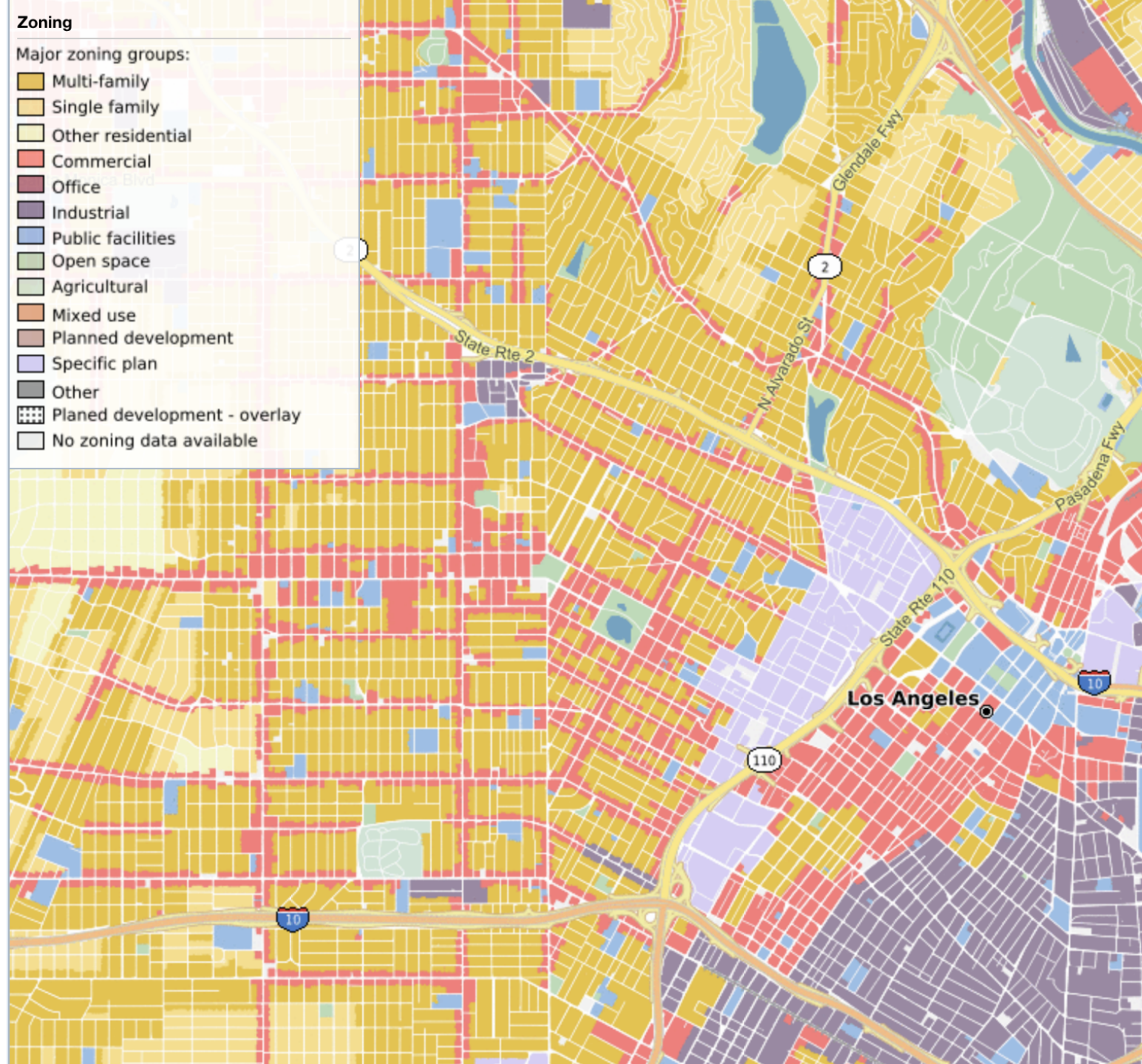


Background

-  Author: CJ Gabbe (Santa Clara University; Dept. of Environmental Studies)
-  Published in *Journal of Planning Education and Research*

What is zoning?

- Legal rules for "what can you can build, where"
- Implemented across the US in 1920s







Why does zoning matter?

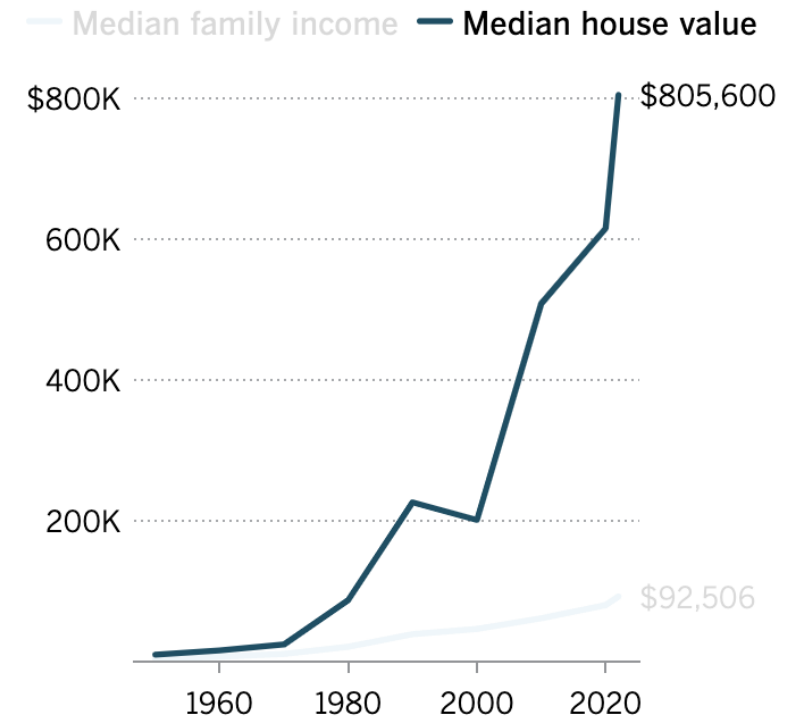
Housing affordability

- LA faces a severe housing shortage
- Zoning limits the supply of homes

Social & environmental health

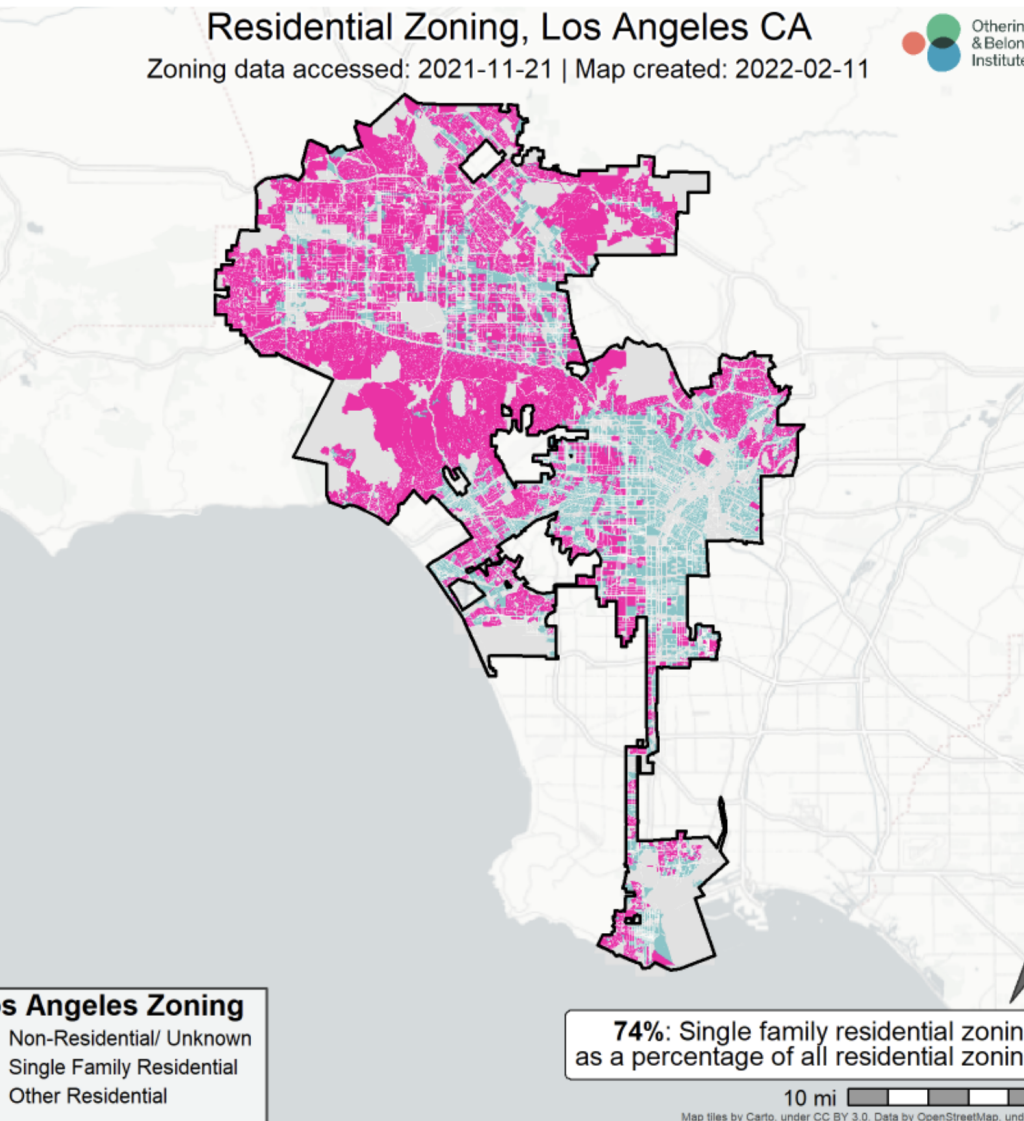
- Zoning dictates proximity of different types of homes (🏡, 🏢) to detriments (pollution) & amenities (parks, schools, etc.)

L.A. County housing burden




U.S. Census Bureau

Becky Nicolaides



Zoning changes in LA

-  Over time, LA's "zoned capacity" has been greatly reduced
 - **1960:** 10 million residents
 - **1990:** 3.9 million
- Today, politicians are generally focused on **upzoning**: expanding housing supply to reduce prices

: [Othering & Belonging Institute](#)

Research question: *why* are zoning laws changed?

- In theory, zoning outcomes reflect competing interests...
 - However, little research into the causal factors of zoning changes

Author's hypothesis:

- 📈📋👍 market demand / alignment with municipal goals ➡️ upzoning **more** likely
- 🏠👎🏠 homeowner presence ➡️ upzoning **less** likely

📺: Spectrum News



Methods and results

1. Create a dataset of site, regulatory, and neighborhood characteristics for all LA parcels (~780,000) in **2002** and **2014**
2. Construct logistic regression models
3. Calculate odds ratios (to improve interpretability)

Equation 1. Logistic regression model of parcel upzoning.

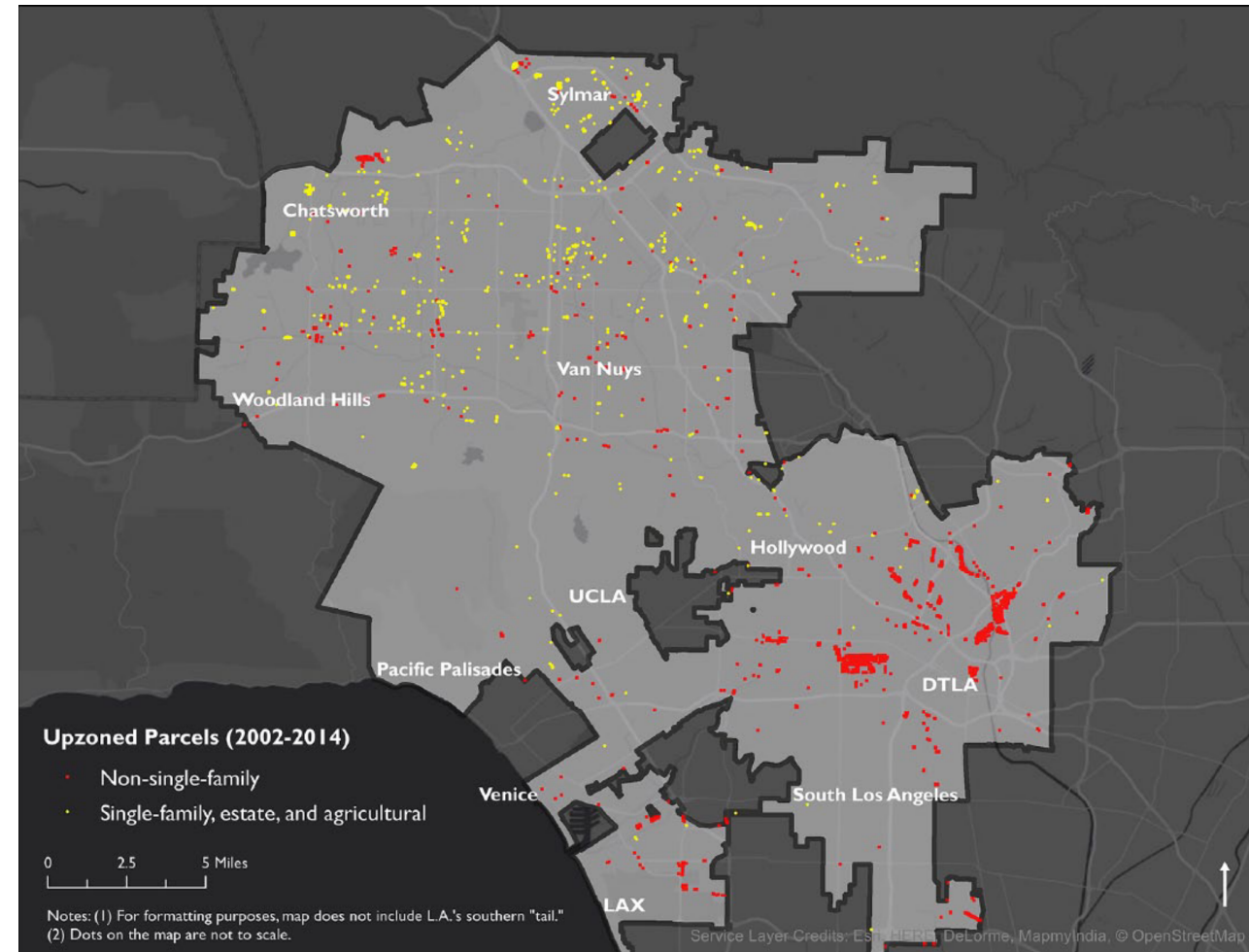
$$\begin{aligned} Upzoning_i = & \alpha + \beta_1 Accessibility_i + \beta_2 Amenities_i \\ & + \beta_3 Natural_i + \beta_4 Regulations_i \\ & + \beta_5 Municipal_i + \beta_6 Homeowner_i \\ & + \beta_7 Demographics_i + \beta_8 NeighborhoodChange_i \\ & + \beta_9 CityCouncil_i + \varepsilon_i \end{aligned}$$

Table 2. Logistic Regression Results for Upzoning (Odds Ratios).

Variables	(1)	(2)
	Non-SF Parcels, Odds Ratio	SF Parcels, Odds Ratio
Distance to freeway ramp (miles)	0.651 (0.181)	0.952 (0.146)
Employment accessibility measure (2000)	0.997 (0.00459)	0.997 (0.00319)
Within a half mile of a rail or BRT station (indicator)	0.656 (0.238)	0.937 (0.338)
Distance to beach (miles)	1.563*** (0.171)	1.139 (0.113)

Results

- **Upzoning is relatively rare:** only 1.1% of all parcels were upzoned from 2002-2014
- 🏖️✎️ **Amenity effect:** parcels closer to beaches and higher-performing elementary schools had lower odds of upzoning
- 🗳️📊 **"Homevoter" effect:** parcels in neighborhoods with high homeownership rates were much less likely to be upzoned



Conclusion

“[T]he most desirable areas are also the most difficult to upzone.” (p. 9)

- LA's zoning has changed to increase zoned capacity **downtown** and **at the urban fringe**
- 60 percent of upzonings initiated by property owners; 40 percent initiated by city (via city plans)

Citation

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