

Hi.

To see if there is a strategy capable of achieving, over time, the intent of the [VNC Diversity Vision Goal*](#), I ask each of you to review and comment on my below analysis about the [Loss of Housing and Diversity](#) and to respond to the leading question regarding a “moral obligation to increase the supply of less expensive housing in our LA communities”.

[JDM Thoughts about LA Housing Crisis and Loss of Diversity](#)

Are we morally obligated to increase the supply of less expensive housing in our LA communities?

[LA Times 151124 Editorial Regarding the Cause of the LA Housing Crisis *](#)

<http://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-1124-development-moratorium-20151120-story.html>

Thirty years ago, homeowners and neighborhood groups worried that high-rise towers along some of the city’s major boulevards were destroying their low-rise communities and turning suburban Los Angeles into a gritty, traffic-clogged Manhattan. Sympathetic politicians heeded those worries and launched a ballot initiative, Proposition U, to stunt the growth of development in most of the city. The measure passed by a wide margin, fueled by anger at City Hall’s failure to manage the boom or acknowledge residents’ angst. It remains a significant constraint on developers’ ability to build enough housing to meet the population’s increasing demand.

[150724 LA Times Gregory Morrow OpEd – LA Affordable Housing Analysis *](#)

<http://www.venicenc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/150724LATimesGregoryMorrowOpEd-LAAffordableHousingAnalysis.pdf>

There is no easy answer for the housing affordability crisis in Los Angeles. But embracing growth rather than fighting it can create a city for everyone, not just the most fortunate among us.

For much of the last 40 years, planning in Los Angeles has been guided by the idea that growth is bad, that more people mean more congestion, pollution and social ills. The city has emphasized “downzoning” — reducing the number of units allowed to be built on properties — to actively curb growth. Embracing growth rather than fighting it can create a city for everyone, not just the most fortunate among us.

It hasn’t worked. According to the city’s 35 separate Community Plans and census data, since 1970, half a million more people have moved to Los Angeles than were planned for. Housing supply simply has not kept pace with growth, so it should be no surprise that L.A. has become the least affordable city in the country — a city booming in gentrification (the rich displacing the poor) and busting in affordability (for everyone except the very well-off).

[150723 LA Daily News Bonin Article-Homeless Needs *](#)

<http://www.venicenc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/150723LADailyNewsBoninArticle-HomelessNeeds.pdf>

We will likely need to change or suspend some land-use regulations to make it easier to create more housing and shelter options.

[Aug 20, 2015 Jacobin Interview of Eric Foner – Ideas Trump Details *](#)

<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/08/eric-foner-reconstruction-abolitionism-republican-party-lincoln-emancipation/>

The abolitionists said, “I am not putting forward a plan for abolition, because if I put forward a plan, people are just going to be debating my plan. ‘Oh, it’s going to be two years, five years, seven years.’ No: I’m putting forward the moral imperative of dealing with slavery.” And if people are convinced of that, then politicians will come up with a plan to do it. That means politicians are eventually going to pick up those ideas and use them in other ways and turn them into political strategies.

[150809 Atlantic Alana Semuels Article – The Resurrection Of Americas Slums *](#)

<http://www.venicenc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/150809AtlanticAlanaSemuelsArticle-TheResurrectionOfAmericasSlums.pdf>

The number of people living in high-poverty areas—defined as census tracts where 40 percent or more of families have income levels below the federal poverty threshold—nearly doubled between 2000 and 2013, to 13.8 million from 7.2 million, according to a new analysis of census data by Paul Jargowsky, a public-policy professor at Rutgers UniversityCamden and a fellow at The Century Foundation. That’s the highest number of Americans living in high-poverty neighborhoods ever recorded.

... every city and town must ensure that new housing construction reflects the income distribution of the metropolitan area, he said, so that more housing is available to people of all incomes in different parts of town.

“If we are serious about breaking down spatial inequality,” Jargowsky writes, “We have to overcome our political gridlock and chart a new course toward a more geographically inclusive society.”

* These headers are links which will take you directly to web pages where the cited text appears.

The New York Times

ARTHUR OCHS SULZBERGER JR., *Publisher, Chairman*

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The Architecture of Segregation

Fifty years after the creation of the Department of Housing and Urban Development — and nearly that long after the passage of the Fair Housing Act of 1968 — the fight against the interlinked scourges of housing discrimination and racial segregation in America is far from finished. Economic isolation is actually growing worse across the country, as more and more minority families find themselves trapped in high-poverty neighborhoods without decent housing, schools or jobs, and with few avenues of escape.

This did not happen by accident. It is a direct consequence of federal, state and local housing policies that encourage — indeed, subsidize — racial and economic segregation. Fair housing advocates have recently been encouraged by a Supreme Court decision and new federal rules they see as favorable to their cause. Even so, there will be no fundamental change without the dismantling of policies that isolate the poor and that Paul Jargowsky, a professor of public policy at Rutgers University-Camden, and others call the “architecture of segregation.”

As things stand now, federally subsidized housing for low-income citizens, which seems on its face to be a good thing, is disproportionately built in poor areas offering no work, underperforming schools and limited opportunity. Zoning laws in newer suburbs that rest on and benefit from infrastructure built with public subsidies prevent poor, moderate-income and minority families from moving in. Discriminatory practices exclude even higher income minority citizens from some communities.

The economic expansion of the 1990s brought wage increases and low unemployment, diluting poverty and cutting the number of people living in high-poverty neighborhoods by about 25 percent. Many policy experts believed at the time that the era of urban decay was coming to an end. But as Mr. Jargowsky observes, that’s not how things worked out. In a new analysis of census data, he finds that the number of people living in high-poverty slums, where 40 percent or more of the residents live below the poverty level, has nearly doubled since 2000.

Meanwhile, he writes, poverty has become more concentrated: More than one in four of the black poor, nearly one in six of the Hispanic poor and one in 13 of the white poor now live in a neighborhood of extreme poverty. Impoverished families are thus doubly disadvantaged — by poverty itself and by life in areas ravaged by the social problems that flow from it.

The Fair Housing Act was supposed to overcome these problems. But presidents in both parties declined to enforce it vigorously, and governments at all levels simply ignored it. No one knows that story better than former Vice President Walter Mondale, a co-sponsor of the act, who spoke eloquently at a fair housing conference at HUD on Tuesday.

“When high-income black families cannot qualify for

a prime loan and are steered away from white suburbs, the goals of the Fair Housing Act are not fulfilled,” he said. “When the federal and state governments will pay to build new suburban highways, streets, sewers, schools and parks, but then allow these communities to exclude affordable housing and nonwhite citizens, the goals of the Fair Housing Act are not fulfilled. When we build most new subsidized housing in poor black or Latino neighborhoods, the goals of the Fair Housing Act are not fulfilled.”

Among the recent positive moves, in a June ruling the Supreme Court reminded state and local governments that housing discrimination is illegal even when unintentional and that the Fair Housing Act bars them from spending federal money in a manner that perpetuates segregation.

The following month, HUD ended decades of equivocation by issuing new rules under a provision of the act that requires state and local governments to “affirmatively further” fair housing goals by making legitimate efforts to replace “segregated living patterns with truly integrated and balanced living patterns.”

These actions, plus growing concern over racial isolation in places like Ferguson, Mo., and Baltimore, have inspired hope among fair housing advocates. But given the high social costs of entrenched segregation, governments at all levels must do far more.



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JDM Conclusion

151027 DFC Agenda – JDM Research – Housing/Diversity Relationship *

<http://www.venicenc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/151027VNCDiscussionForumMeetingAgenda.pdf>

My research indicates a strong argument can be made that nothing the VNC Board has done since its formation has addressed the long-term impacts of the erosion of residential diversity in the Venice Community. Without change, the Venice Community is likely to become the equivalent of a gated community – diversity be damned! This is the same issue being faced by the City of Los Angeles except that the erosion of residential diversity in the Venice Community has been significantly more serious and has even accelerated under the additional pressures of Short Term Rentals.

JDM Rationale

My fear is that, if nothing realistic is done to deal with this housing problem in LA – if nothing but talk and promises and half-measures are proposed which cannot be realistically implemented – then we will create a regional dynamic that promises long-term segregation between ‘them’ and ‘us’. It appears that the city mayor and council have promised to declare an emergency which they can’t do and thus no longer back; and proposals are made which we adopt without evaluating their likelihood of proving successful.

Perhaps we should seriously consider enacting laws based on a moral obligation to provide, in our communities, a proportionate share of the less expensive housing necessary to offset anticipated immigration as it occurs so that our human settlements can minimize the risk of inadvertently creating the architectural/urban-design equivalent of ghettos (whether for the rich or for the poor, or thru nimbysm or by enacting Jim Crow Tactic laws). The impact goes beyond the “rich/poor” segregation into bigotry.

I do believe that we in Venice and our Neighborhood Council peers have an opportunity to lead LA toward changes which, over time, can erode this negative dynamic in which all of us seem to be, at present, trapped.

Sincerely,

Joe Murphy

310-305-1444

joedmur@gmail.com

Your comments & insights in response to this email would, as usual, be much appreciated.

Please note that your response, unless you specifically request anonymity, will be compiled into an email which identifies you by name and provides your contact information as the responding individual. At my discretion, I may comment on whatever response you send me. I intend to exercise this discretion for the primary purpose of clarifying what I perceive as misunderstandings. If you disagree with my comments, you will have the ‘last word’ by responding to my comment. The final version will consist of a compilation of your responses, my comments if any, and your ‘last word’ responses without further ‘counter-comments’ from me. The final version will also be sent to my email list. You are welcome to send this to others.

"Given that each of us lives in a different world, what can we do to minimize misunderstandings?"

* VNC Diversity Vision Goal and Census Statistics

Consider strategies that encourage & facilitate realistic recommendations designed to increase economic diversity, including affordable [less expensive *] housing, etc. [* Clarification inserted November 24, 2014 by Joe Murphy]

US Census data documenting loss of diversity in Venice

90291 (Walgrove to beach, Washington to Dewey) LAMSA

50 year period	1960	2010	% Change
Total Population	35,409	28,207	-20
Total Population	6,746,356	12,840,726	+90
Dwelling Units	16,320	16,190	-1
Dwelling Units	2,501,432	4,498,576	+80
MHI (inflation adjusted)	+/-41,646	+/-70,859	+70
10 year period	2000	2010	% Change
Total Population	31,097	28,207	-9
Dwelling Units	16,311	16,190	-1
MHI (inflation adjusted)	+/-60,228	+/-70,859	+18
0 – 55 Years of Age	26,761	22,746	-15
55 – 100 Years of Age	4,257	5,595	+31
Black-African American	2,087	1,491	-27
Hispanic or Latino	7,834	5,668	-28
Housing for Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional	79	342	+333
18 year period	1996	2014	% Change
SFR avg price/sq. ft.	198	1,037	+523
Condo avg price/sq. ft.	171	750	+438