

Culver City, California

People and Place

Location

Culver City covers less than one square mile of water and 5.11 square miles of land. The community is located at the intersection of the 405 and Santa Monica Freeways in Los Angeles County, approximately 11 miles west of Los Angeles, between Inglewood and Beverly Hills. Culver City lies in the La Bollona Valley. Bollona Creek flows through this valley and has its mouth in the Pacific Ocean near Marina del Rey (5 miles to the west). Culver City is considered part of the greater Los Angeles area. The geographic coordinates of Culver City, California are: 34°00'59"N and 118°23'03"W.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Culver City was 38,816, a 0.1% increase from the 1990 U.S. Census. In 2000 the gender structure was evenly divided with slightly more females (53.3%) than males (46.7%). The median age in 2000 was 39.1, which is slightly higher than the national median of 35.3 for the same year.

For the population 18 years and over, 86.6% had a high school education or higher, 39.4% had attained a bachelor's degree or higher, and 15.9% had earned a graduate or professional degree. The highest level of educational attainment was a high school diploma/equivalency for 15.7% of the population. In 2000, 76.0% of the population lived in family households.

The 2000 U.S. Census shows that the racial composition was predominantly White (59.2%), followed by Asian (12.0%), Black or African American (12.0%). American Indian/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander each constituted less than one percent (0.7% and 0.2% respectively). Overall, 10.2% classified themselves as belonging to some other race and 5.7% of the population identified with the category two or more races. A total of 23.7% identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino in 2000. Approximately 26.6% of the population was foreign-born, with 24.5% born in Mexico.

History

Native peoples first inhabited the California coast about 13,000 years ago. The Los Angeles area was home to the Chumash, whose territory spanned the length of California coast from Malibu to Pasa Robles.¹ The Chumash subsisted via hunting and gathering, and relied heavily on maritime resources, including clams, mussels, abalone and hundreds of fish species. They developed sophisticated technologies for harvesting marine resources, established large coastal villages, and traded extensively within their territory. Between 200 and 500 years ago, Tongva Indians migrated from the Mojave Desert region, establishing 25 villages throughout what is today the Los Angeles County area and becoming similarly dependent on marine resources.²

Native peoples in the vicinity of what is now Culver City relied heavily on Ballona Creek, which flows through the Ballona Valley toward the Playa del Rey River.³ They harvested small fish from the creek and its surrounding marshes and constructed reed boats and wood plank canoes, which they sealed with asphaltum from the nearby La Brea Tar Pits. They also hunted sea lions and seals and consumed ocean fish and

shellfish. After European settlement, native peoples in the Culver City area became known as the Gabrielenos, a name derived from their proximity to the San Gabriel Mission. Today the Gabrieleno/Tongva Tribe is headquartered within the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area in San Gabriel, where it is engaged in a political struggle for federal recognition and tribal fishing rights.

The first European settlers established residence in the vicinity of Culver City starting in the 1780s, when several prominent Spanish soldiers arrived in the valley with their families and constructed two large ranches, Rancho La Ballona and Rincón de Los Bueyes.⁴ These settlers raised cattle and sheep and grew fruit and nut trees, vineyards, barley, corn, wheat, beans, and celery with irrigation water drawn from Ballona Creek. In the late 1800s, developers subdivided these ranches and attempted to build series of seaside resorts and a port near the mouth of Ballona Creek. These efforts failed due to flooding, and in 1935, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers finally channelized the creek to facilitate development in these areas.

Henry H. Culver, a real estate entrepreneur, founded contemporary Culver City in 1913. Culver chose the area for his new community because of its promising location between Los Angeles and the resort town of Venice. Culver carefully designed the city to have a mix of residential and commercial uses. In 1915, he convinced film director Thomas Ince to move his film studio to Culver City. Other movie studios (including the famous Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer) followed and the community quickly became known as “The Heart of Screenland.” Culver continued to aggressively promote the community, attracting a number of other businesses, lobbying for the construction of a freeway to link Los Angeles with the sea (the Santa Monica Freeway now serves this function), and facilitating the annexation of surrounding land into the community’s jurisdiction.

Today, Culver City lies within the greater Los Angeles area but remains an independent community with its own city government. Culver City is now the headquarters of Sony Entertainment, which occupies the historic Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studio. To stave off economic decline in the small community, the Culver City Redevelopment Agency, a division of the Culver City government, has undertaken a plan to remove “blighting influences” (i.e., abandoned buildings, undeveloped lots) from the area.⁵ The city also supports a number of lucrative small business and schools that are well regarded in the West Los Angeles area.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

Some of Culver City’s major employers include the Sony Entertainment Company, the City of Culver City, the Culver City Unified School District, Brotman Medical Center, and a number of smaller businesses located in the community. Because the greater Los Angeles metro area surrounds Culver City, residents may also commute to jobs in nearby neighborhoods.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 64.3% of the potential labor force was employed and there was a 5.4% unemployment rate (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). Of the population over the age of 16, 32.1% were not in the labor force (not actively seeking work).

Of the employed civilian population, 22.1% worked in “Educational, health and social services” and 13.8% worked in “Professional, scientific, and technical services.”

Another 9.5% worked in “Retail trade.” The local, state, or federal government employed a total of 15.2% of the employed civilian population in 2000, however none were reported as working for the government in the “Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining” industries. Only 0.04% of the employed civilian population over the age of 16 was involved in “Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting” according to the 2000 U.S. Census.

The per capita income in Culver City was about \$29,025 in 1999, compared to a national per capita income of \$21,587. The median household income in Culver City was about \$51,792, compared to a national median household income of \$41,994. Approximately 8.6% of residents were living below the poverty level in 1999, a value that compared favorably to the national poverty level of 12.4%. In 2000 there were 17,130 housing units in Culver City, 97.1% of which were occupied, 2.9% of which were vacant. Of the occupied housing units, 54.4% were owner occupied and 45.6% were renter occupied. Of the vacant housing units, 31.6% were for “For rent” and 21.6% were “For sale only.”

Governance

Culver City was incorporated as a general law city within Los Angeles County on 20 September 1917 but became a charter city in 1947. A 5-member City Council, a Mayor, a City Clerk, and a City Treasurer govern the community.⁶ Culver City levies an 8.25% sales and use tax.

California state law assesses commercial vessels, charter boats, and oceanographic research vessels at 4% of their full cash value.⁷ Vessels registered in California with either the Department of Motor Vehicles or the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) are assessed property taxes by the county tax collector where it is moored.⁸ Some commercial vessels are also subject to a Ballast Water Management Fee of about \$500 per voyage.⁹ California levies a fuel tax of \$0.18 per gallon, a portion of which goes toward marine safety and education programs and boating facility administration and development.¹⁰

The State of California levies landing taxes that must be paid by fishermen and fish processors involved in the retail sale of fish products. These taxes vary by species and range between \$.0013 and \$.0125 per pound of fish.¹¹ The California Department of Agriculture also administers two commodity commissions, the California Salmon Council and the California Sea Urchin Commission, which charge fees for marketing and lobbying on behalf of fishermen involved in these specific fisheries.¹²

The nearest California Department of Fish and Game Marine Region Field Office is located approximately 30 miles from Culver City in Los Alamitos. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Southwest Regional office is located in Long Beach (26 miles). Eight Coast Guard vessels are stationed at the U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Office/Group Los Angeles – Long Beach, which is located in San Pedro (25 miles). Delmar and San Diego, approximately 111 miles away, are the nearest cities hosting Pacific Fisheries Management Council meetings. There is a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services District Office located in Los Angeles (11 miles).

Facilities

Culver City lies 11 driving miles from Los Angeles. The main thoroughfares connecting Culver City to the greater metropolitan area are the 405 and Santa Monica Freeways, which intersect near the community. Culver City is accessible by land, sea, and air. Seventeen Amtrak trains service Los Angeles' Union Station (9 miles from Culver City), making it the 8th busiest Amtrak station in the nation. Los Angeles International Airport, LAX (7 miles from Culver City), ranks no. 3 in the world based on passenger volume. Ontario International Airport, Bob Hope Airport, and Long Beach Airport also service the Los Angeles area.¹³

Culver City is located in the Culver City Unified School District, which supports five elementary schools, one middle school, two high schools, and one adult education center. Culver City is also home to three private grade schools and West Los Angeles College (a community college facility). Nearby hospitals include the Brotman Medical Center. The City of Culver City provides water and sewer services to the community. Pacific Gas and Electric and other private power companies supply electricity to area residents. Law enforcement and emergency services are administered by the Culver City Police and Fire Departments and a number of Los Angeles fire companies.

The nearest noncommercial marine facility is located only 5 miles to the west in Marina del Rey, the world's largest man-made harbor for pleasurecraft, which provides berths for 5000 vessels and offers public ramps, guest slips, and rental charter boat services.¹⁴ A number of deep-sea fishing and whale-watching businesses operate out of this facility and cater to sport fishermen and tourists.

The nearest commercial marine facilities are located at the Port of Los Angeles in San Pedro Bay (25 miles). This port complex, which is outfitted for both commercial and recreational purposes, stretches along 43 miles of waterfront and occupies 7500 acres, 3300 of which are water.¹⁵ The port falls under the jurisdiction of the City of Los Angeles and is under the direction of a 5-member Board of Harbor Commissioners appointed by the City Mayor.¹⁶ The port has 29 state-of-the-art cargo facilities and five intermodal railyards.¹⁷ The complex also includes the Cabrillo Marina, which provides slips for 1100 pleasure crafts, Cabrillo Beach (popular with swimmers), three museums, the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium, and the S.S. Lane Victory (a national historic landmark). There are also a number of harbor cruise and whale-watching tours offered through the Port.¹⁸ The Port of Los Angeles' World Cruise Center is the primary cruise passenger complex on the West Coast, with the ability to handle the world's largest cruise ships.¹⁹ In 1997 the 47-acre terminal island transfer facility was completed allowing the direct transfer of containers from ships to trains.²⁰

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

There were no landings delivered to Culver City in 2000. However, there was one commercial vessel owned by a Culver City resident that participated in the Federally Managed Groundfish fishery. According to recorded data the number of vessels owned by Culver City residents in 2000 that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: groundfish (0/0/NA), highly migratory species (NA/0/NA), shellfish (NA/0/NA), shrimp (NA/0/0), and other species (0/0/2).²¹

In 2000, no community member held a federal groundfish permit. In the same year, recorded data indicates that the number of Culver City residents holding permits in

each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: groundfish (0/0/1), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), other species (0/0/2), and shellfish (0/0/NA).²²

According to available data, there were at least five commercial fishing permits registered to Culver City residents in 2000, all of which were registered state permits. Recorded data indicates that the number of state permits held by Culver City residents in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: groundfish (0/0/1), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), shellfish (0/0/NA), and other species (0/0/4).²³

According to available data, there were no seafood processors in Culver City in 2000, but Urbani Holdings (formerly Sattel Global Networks, Inc.) operated a specialty food distribution company in Culver City. This company distributed products such as truffles, caviar, wild mushrooms, smoked fish, and specialty game to gourmet stores and specialty shops throughout the country.²⁴

Sportfishing

A number of charter vessels operate out of the greater Los Angeles area targeting albacore tuna, rock cod, salmon, and other species. In 2002, according to available data, no charter businesses operated out of the community. There are two license agents selling sportfishing licenses in Culver City. In 2000 Los Angeles County residents purchased: 76,385 resident sportfishing licenses, 59 nonresident sportfishing licenses, 164 sport salmon punch cards, and 174 abalone report cards. The nearest commercial passenger fishing vessels port complexes consist of Renondo, Marina Del Rey, and Malibu; and Seal Beach, Long Beach, and San Pedro.

In 2000, at the Renondo, Marina Del Rey, and Malibu port complex, 13 commercial passenger fishing vessels served 63,765 anglers. These vessels reported 326,222 landings composed of more than two dozen species. Sea bass (various species), California scorpionfish, and rockfishes (unspecified) accounted for 39.9%, 22.7%, and 15.8% of the landings respectively. In the port group consisting of Seal Beach, Long Beach, and San Pedro a total of 54 commercial passenger fishing vessels served 148,977 anglers in 2000. These vessels reported 883,806 landings composed of more than two dozen species. Sea bass (various species), barracuda, flatfishes (unspecified), and rockfishes (unspecified) accounted for 47.6%, 14.1%, 10.4%, and 9.2% of the landings respectively.

Subsistence

Local tribal and nontribal community members might be engaged in subsistence fishing in the Culver City area. However, specific information on subsistence fishing in Culver City is not discussed in detail in this Community Profile due to the lack of available data. The California Department of Fish and Game uses the term “recreational” to refer to fishermen that do not earn revenue from their catch but rather fish for pleasure and/or to provide food for personal consumption. Therefore information on subsistence fishing in California is captured, to some degree, within the above sportfishing data.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000, one community member worked as a crewmember aboard a vessel involved in North Pacific fisheries.

Sportfishing

While the majority of the charter boats in the Culver City area target West Coast fisheries, a total of 42 Culver City community members purchased Alaska sportfishing licenses in 2000.

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- ²² 'NA' refers to data which was not available, for example, due to few or no recorded permit numbers, or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.
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