

Tarzana, California

People and Place

Location

Tarzana is a community within the greater Los Angeles (L.A.) area that occupies a land area of 6.45 square miles. Tarzana is located in Los Angeles County toward the western end of the San Fernando Valley at the foothills of the Santa Monica Mountains, 22 miles northwest of Los Angeles City proper. Neighboring Los Angeles area communities include Canoga Park, Winnetka, and Reseda to the north, Encino to the west, Pacific Palisades to the south, and Woodland Hills to the east. Freeway 101 (Ventura Boulevard) runs through the northern portion of Tarzana. The geographic coordinates of Tarzana, California, are 34°10'24"N and 118°33'11"W.

Demographic Profile

Tarzana was not recognized as a Census Designated Place on the 2000 U.S. Census. However, basic demographic data are available for the community at the zipcode level. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the Tarzana zipcode (91356) supported a population of 27,407. The community's gender structure at the time was evenly divided, with only slightly more females (52.0%) than males (48.0%). The median age in 2000 was 39.6, which is slightly higher than the national median age of 35.3 for the same year.

The 2000 U.S. Census shows that the racial composition was predominantly White, (78.9%), followed by Asian (5.6%), and Black or African American (3.8%). American Indian or Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander each constituted less than one percent (0.3% and 0.1% respectively) of the population. Overall, 5.3% of residents classified themselves as belonging to some other race and 6.0% identified with the category of two or more races. A total of 13.1% identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino. About 35.2% of the population in 2000 was foreign-born, including 21.9% that were born in Iran and 10.6% in Mexico.

For the population 18 years and over, 86.9% had a high school education or higher, 39.6% had attained a bachelor's degree or higher, and 15.3% earned a graduate or professional degree. The highest level of educational attainment was a high school diploma or equivalency for 17.0% of the population. In 2000, 80.2% of the population lived in family households.

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 L.A. County area and becoming similarly dependent on marine resources.² 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.

Europeans first reached the area in 1542, when Spanish explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo entered Santa Monica Bay and was met by Tongva Indians in canoes. Beginning with the founding of the San Fernando Mission in 1797, Spanish settlers and missionaries established permanent residence in the area. At the onset of European settlement it is estimated there were at least 5000 native residents in the San Fernando Valley.³ This population declined rapidly as European-introduced diseases and conflicts killed an estimated two-thirds the native population in the state of California.⁴ The Tarzana area was originally part of the Mission's lands, but when the territory was seized first by Mexico and later by the United States, it became part of a succession of large cattle ranches owned by wealthy, powerful men active in local politics and business.⁵ Starting in the 1870s, the Tarzana area was purchased by investors who developed it into a large-scale wheat farm.

The acreage surrounding Tarzana was sold to the Los Angeles Suburban Homes Company in 1909 in anticipation of the completion of the Los Angeles aqueduct and the annexation of the area into the City of Los Angeles. One of the investors, General Harrison Gray Otis, founder and publisher of the Los Angeles Times, bought 550 acres in what is now the center of Tarzana. Another investor founded a small town, Runnymede, in the vicinity and subdivided the surrounding land into small plots for poultry ranches and berry farms. In 1915, Edgar Rice Burroughs, author of the *Tarzan Stories*, purchased Otis' acreage, built a large home, and renamed the property Tarzana Ranch. Burroughs' subdivided and sold the land for homes in 1923, and as development proceeded, the neighboring small farms were also converted to residential areas. In 1927, local residents renamed the town Tarzana in honor of Burroughs and his famous literary character.

Today, Tarzana is regarded as a Los Angeles bedroom community and features many neighborhoods zoned single-family residential or residential/agricultural that attract people interested in a suburban lifestyle and larger home lots.⁶ The community is literally home to swimming pools (local lore holds that the first residential swimming pool was constructed in Tarzana) and movie stars, as well as a number of luxury housing developments and country club golf courses.⁷ Tarzana also supports a burgeoning Iranian population, and the community is well known for its Persian restaurants, booksellers, and language training institutes.⁸ A thriving Jewish community attends four synagogues and provides the customer base for the first and only branch of the Hebrew-language bookseller Steimatzky constructed outside of Israel.⁹ In February 2000, Tarzana residents formed the Tarzana Community and Cultural Center, which stages community festivals and events and collects photos and memorabilia related to Tarzana's history to help foster a sense of history and place among community members.¹⁰

Infrastructure

Current Economy

Because of its location within the Los Angeles metro area and its status as a bedroom community, many Tarzana residents likely commute to jobs in the city and surrounding communities. However, the area does support a number of retail businesses, many of which are clustered along Ventura Boulevard, which runs across the northern portion of Tarzana. Other than this strip, the community does not have an easily distinguishable commercial core.¹¹ In addition to these retail stores, Tarzana is home to the Encino-Tarzana Medical Center and a number of smaller medical clinics, law offices, real-estate agencies, country clubs, and professional offices that provide local employment.¹²

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 58.8% of the population 16 or older was employed in 2000, and 38.2% were not in the labor force (were not actively seeking work). The community displayed a 4.8% unemployment rate (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force), which fell below the national unemployment rate of 5.7%. Of the employed civilian population, 19.5% worked in “Educational, health and social services,” the majority of those falling under “Health care and social assistance,” while 13.2% worked in “Retail trade” and 12.1% worked in “Professional, scientific, and technical services.” A total of 8.4% of the employed civilian population worked for federal, state, and local government; however only 0.6% of those were reported as working for government services related to “Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining.” Overall, only 0.1% 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.

According to the U.S. Census, Tarzana’s per capita income in 1999 was \$36,327, a value well in excess of the national per capita income of \$21,587. The median household income was \$51,420, compared to a national median household income of \$41,994. Approximately 11.1% of residents were living below the poverty level in 1999, a value below the national poverty level of 12.4%. In 2000, there were 11,422 housing units in Tarzana, 96.6% of which were occupied and 3.4% of which were vacant. A total of 57.0% of the occupied housing units were owner occupied and 43.0% were renter occupied. Of the vacant housing units, 32.2% were for rent and 21.5% were for sale.

Governance

The portion of the San Fernando Valley containing Tarzana was annexed by the City of Los Angeles in 1915. Although it is not an independent city, Tarzana is recognized as a distinct community within the City of Los Angeles. As such, Tarzana does not have a separate municipal government, but it is one of 80 communities within L.A. that have formed active Neighborhood Councils. The L.A. city charter was reformed in 1998 to allow the formation of these Councils, each of which is allotted a yearly operating budget of \$50,000 and run by community members on a volunteer basis. The Tarzana Neighborhood Council, which was certified in January 2003, functions as an advisory body meant to make the city government more accountable and more responsive to the needs of local residents.¹³

Los Angeles was founded in 1781 and incorporated on 4 April 1850. It is a Charter City that operates under a Council-City Manager form of government.¹⁴ Los Angeles has a 15-member City Council and Mayor; all are elected officials.¹⁵ Los Angeles levies an 8.25% sales and use tax rate. Los Angeles County uses a 12.0% transient lodging tax rate, which earned \$10,202,899 in revenue for the 2000-2001 fiscal year.¹⁶

California state law assesses commercial vessels, charter boats, and oceanographic research vessels at 4% of their full cash value.¹⁷ 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.¹⁸ Some commercial vessels are also subject to a Ballast Water Management Fee of about \$500 per voyage.¹⁹ 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.²⁰

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.²¹ 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.²²

The nearest California Department of Fish and Game Marine Region field office is located approximately 47 driving miles from Tarzana in Los Alamitos. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Southwest Regional office is located in Long Beach (42 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 (40 miles). Delmar and San Diego, approximately 126 miles and 145 miles away respectively, are the nearest cities that hold Pacific Fisheries Management Council meetings. There is a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services District Office located in Los Angeles (22 miles).

Facilities

Tarzana lies 22 miles from the heart of Los Angeles. The main thoroughfare connecting Tarzana to the greater metropolitan area is Highway 101 (Ventura Boulevard), which cuts across the northern portion of the community. The City of Los Angeles is accessible by land, sea, and air. Highways 5, 10, and 110 contribute to the 527 freeway miles in the city. Seventeen Amtrak trains service L.A.'s Union Station (27 miles from Tarzana), making it the eighth busiest Amtrak station in the nation. Los Angeles International Airport, LAX (25 miles from Tarzana), ranks third in the world based on passenger volume. Ontario International Airport, Bob Hope Airport, and Long Beach Airport also service the Los Angeles area.²³

Tarzana is located in the Los Angeles Unified School District, and students attend schools in Tarzana and the surrounding neighborhoods. Three public elementary schools and one public middle school are located in Tarzana proper. High school students attend Taft High School in neighboring Woodland Hills. The immediate area also features a number of private and parochial schools. Nearby hospitals include the Kaiser Foundation Hospital and Encino Hospital, both of which are located in adjacent communities. Other medical services are provided by the Encino-Tarzana Medical Center and a number of clinics located in the immediate vicinity. The City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works provides water and sewer services to Tarzana. Pacific Gas and Electric and other private power companies supply electricity to area residents. Law enforcement and emergency services are administered by the Los Angeles Police Department and a number of Los Angeles fire companies.

The nearest marine facilities are located at the Port of Los Angeles in San Pedro Bay (40 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.²⁴ 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.²⁵ The port has 29 state-of-the-art cargo facilities and five intermodal railyards.²⁶ 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.²⁷ 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.²⁸ In 1997 the 47-acre terminal island transfer facility was completed allowing the direct transfer of containers from ships to trains.²⁹

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

No vessels delivered landings to Tarzana in 2000. However, there were two commercial vessels owned by Tarzana residents, both of which participated in the Federally Managed Groundfish fishery. Recorded data indicates that the number of vessels owned by Tarzana residents in 2000 that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/2), groundfish (0/0/NA), highly migratory species (NA/1/NA), shellfish (NA/0/NA), and shrimp (NA/0/2).³⁰ According to available data, there were no seafood processors operating in Tarzana in 2000.

In 2000, no federal groundfish permits were held by community members. In the same year, recorded data indicates that the number of Tarzana residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/3), highly migratory species (NA/1/1), shellfish (0/0/NA), and shrimp (0/0/2).³¹

According to available data, there were at least 13 commercial fishing permits, all state registered, held by Tarzana residents in 2000. Recorded data indicates that the number of state permits held by Tarzana residents in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/5), highly migratory species (NA/1/3), shellfish (0/0/NA), and shrimp (0/0/4).³²

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, at least two charter businesses serviced sport fishermen and tourists in Tarzana. There are no license agents selling sportfishing licenses in Tarzana. In 2000 residents of Los Angeles County purchased: 76,385 resident sportfishing licenses, 59 non-resident sportfishing licenses, 164 sport salmon punch cards, and 174 abalone report cards. The nearest commercial passenger fishing vessels port complex consists of Redondo, Marina Del Rey, and Malibu. In 2000, at this 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.

Subsistence

Local tribal and nontribal community members might be engaged in subsistence fishing in the Tarzana area. However, specific information on subsistence fishing in Tarzana 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, there was no involvement in North Pacific fisheries by Tarzana residents.

Sportfishing

While the majority of the charter boats in Tarzana target West Coast fisheries, 42 Tarzana community members purchased Alaska sportfishing licenses in 2000.

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