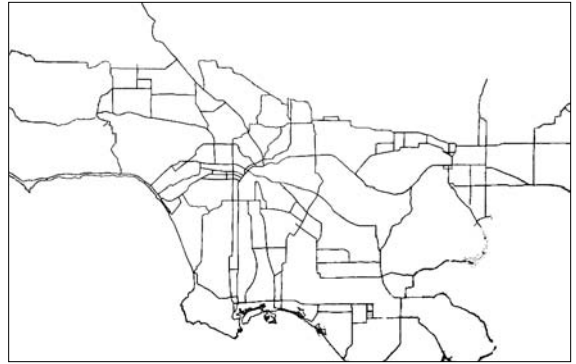


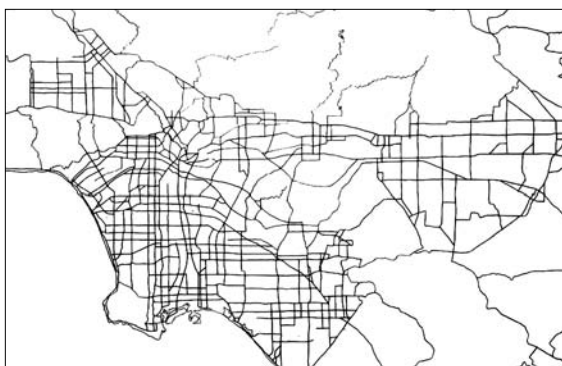
Growth of Major Surface Roads in Greater Los Angeles: Early, middle, and late 20th Century.



Aqueduct was completed in 1913, and with a seemingly unlimited water supply obtained from 120 miles (194 km) away, Los Angeles began to grow. Prior to the building of the aqueduct, local water could only support a population of about 250,000 people. Today, water brought from the Colorado River and Northern California as well as Owens Valley supports almost 15 million people.

Cars allowed the city to spread. The year of the aqueduct, 1913, was the same year that Henry Ford “put his cars on rollers and made his workers adopt the speed of the assembly line.”<sup>1</sup> In his novel *Middlesex*, Jeffrey Eugenides describes the effect on workers at the River Rouge plant in Detroit, Michigan. “At first, workers rebelled. They quit in droves, unable to accustom their bodies to the new pace of the age. Since then, however, the adaptation has been passed down: we’ve all inherited it to some degree, so that we plug right into joysticks and remotes, to repetitive motions of a hundred kinds.”<sup>2</sup> Mass-production made the automobile cheap and universally available.

Growth has not followed an even pace. The convergence of water and cars generated a spurt of early growth. Then, after World War II, expansion accelerated enormously, fed by a postwar surge in population and by an influx of people moving from rural to urban areas. Growth continues, fed increasingly by immigration from other countries.



### ROADS AND FREEWAYS

A single century has seen the geometry of the Los Angeles road system transformed. Early roads mostly followed either the diagonal Spanish grid of the original 1781 settlement or pioneer trails through a rough wilderness. Then as more people arrived, the road system became regular, following the orthogonal geometry of the US Land Ordinance of 1785. Three successive maps, starting in 1913, show the progression of major roads throughout the 20th century. The layout of roads has divided the region into ever-smaller and more uniform land parcels. Today, only isolated pockets of larger and irregular parcels remain, scattered throughout the mountains and along the perimeter of the region.

In only 50 years, a system of freeways has extended over the region. But before the mass arrival of automobiles and freeways, people rode streetcars. The “Red Cars” extended 70 miles (112.6 km) east to west and 50 miles (80.5 km) north to south, the most extensive streetcar system in the world. Now, since the 1950s, a vast network of freeways has grown rapidly to serve the same region. The Red Cars have disappeared.

Greater Los Angeles now spreads over several county lines. Restricted in some directions by ocean and mountains, in other directions its limits are vague and unstructured. Coalescing within