

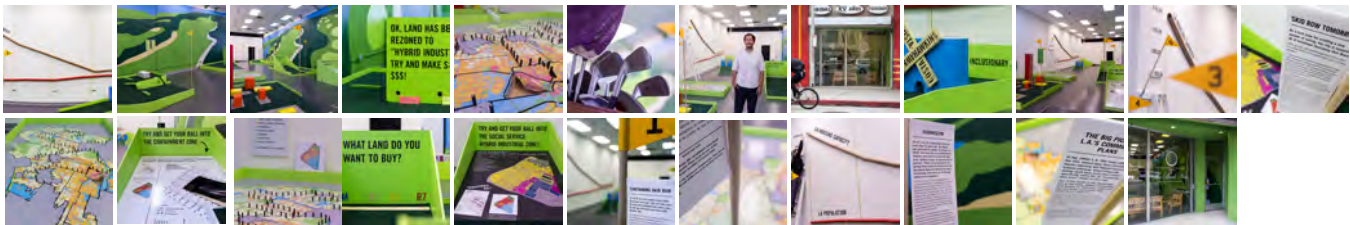
## Photos: This Zoning-Themed Mini-Golf Course Tackles Housing Issues In L.A.

by [Julia Wick](#) in [Arts & Entertainment](#) on Jun 12, 2017 9:42 am



(Photo by [Brian Feinzier/LAist](#))

[http://laist.com/2017/06/12/la\\_zoning\\_minigolf.php#photo-5](http://laist.com/2017/06/12/la_zoning_minigolf.php#photo-5)



The Los Angeles Poverty Department [has been using art](#) to take on civic issues for more than three decades, and the latest project from the Skid Row-based nonprofit is no exception.

Zoning, or the process of dividing land into different uses with different rules, may seem dry, but it quite literally shapes our cities. The process is often opaque to non-planners, and most citizens have little idea of how much power lies within zoning codes. [The Back 9](#), a zoning-themed playable miniature golf course designed by Rosten Woo, in collaboration with LAPD (yes, the Los Angeles Poverty Department also goes by LAPD, and yes, they are in on the joke), aims to demystify the process and interrogate the mechanisms, hidden assumptions and consequences of the now-in-progress re-zoning of Los Angeles.

“Zoning changes how wealth is accumulated, but it’s very technical and opaque. One goal is to help people understand what it is, what it does, and how they can have input,” artist Rosten Woo told the [LA Downtown News](#). “But the second part is that people need to see the end result, what the stakes are. There are implications for social class.”

The multidisciplinary art project, which was made possible by a grant from the Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts, essentially uses each hole in the course to explain a part of the zoning process. Los Angeles was a national pioneer in zoning laws (we passed the nation's first citywide zoning ordinance separating residential areas from other uses in 1908) and is now in the midst of updating our zoning codes as part of the Re:Code LA initiative. To the artist-activists at the LAPD, zoning is also seen as a tool of oppression: in their view, L.A. has been "particularly effective at wielding these codes as a means for disenfranchising communities, historically handing over an extraordinary amount of control to the city's developers."

"The back nine is a colloquial expression of a place where deals happen," LAPD artistic director John Malpede told the L.A. Times. In Malpede's view, golf is the perfect metaphor for the behind-the-scenes dealings that often dictate development in L.A., or what he calls the "the process that happens behind the public process."

While the mini-golf course is "a response to the re-zoning of Los Angeles (now in process), it has additional resonance in the current moment: a time when Golf is at the center of Trumpian world politics," according to a statement from the organization.

"*The Back 9* is an excellent example of how art can reflect and perhaps ultimately impact our communities. A golf course—with all its timely connotations— is an inventive way to stage an examination of the consequences of rezoning a city," Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts Executive Director Mary Clare Stevens told LAist. "The installation and performances demand engagement and attention, and the Los Angeles Poverty Department and Rosten trust that their audience is up to the challenge of responding to the ideas and themes presented. We are thrilled to support the project."

*The Back 9* which opened on June 10, is housed at LAPD's [Skid Row History Museum & Archive](#) on S. Broadway just north of Grand Central Market. There will be a performances at the installation on June 16 (8 p.m.) and June 17 (3 p.m.), and the installation will run through October 28.

*The Skid Row History Museum & Archive is located at 250 S. Broadway in downtown Los Angeles. (213) 413-1077*

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