



Mixed-Use Zoning Codes and Their Effects on Housing Units

Noah Dankner, Devoe L. Moore Center, Florida State University.

Research Mentor: Dr. Crystal Taylor.



Background

Zoning regulations are rules that limit how property owners can use their land (Hirt 2014, 32). Houston, Texas, is an example of a deregulated city or “pro-market” environment. Miami, Florida, is an example of a typical American city which utilizes government-enforced zoning practices. The research examines changes in housing, population, and home values in Greater Fondren Southwest, Houston, and Coral Way, Miami, neighborhoods in their respective cities.

Research Question

Do zoning regulations impact housing supply and housing availability?

Alternative Hypothesis

Less restrictive zoning codes such as mixed-use zoning codes increase housing supply and housing availability.

Null Hypothesis

Zoning codes do not affect housing supply.

Methodology

Using 2000 and 2019 Census and American Community Survey data respectively, this research examines the relationship between zoning codes that promote mixed-use development and the number of occupied, available, and total housing units in a neighborhood.

This study analyzes two neighborhoods: Greater Fondren Southwest in Houston, Texas, and Coral Way in Miami, Florida, by running the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test on 11 and 26 Census Block Groups, respectively. This study tests the following five variables: occupied housing units, available housing units, total housing units, population, and median home value of owner-occupied units.

Table 1: Greater Fondren Southwest, Houston, Texas

Variables	Significance
Occupied Housing Units	.249
Available Housing Units	.016*
Total Housing Units	.116
Population	.133
Median Home Value of Owner-Occupied Units	.002*
*95 confidence level used	

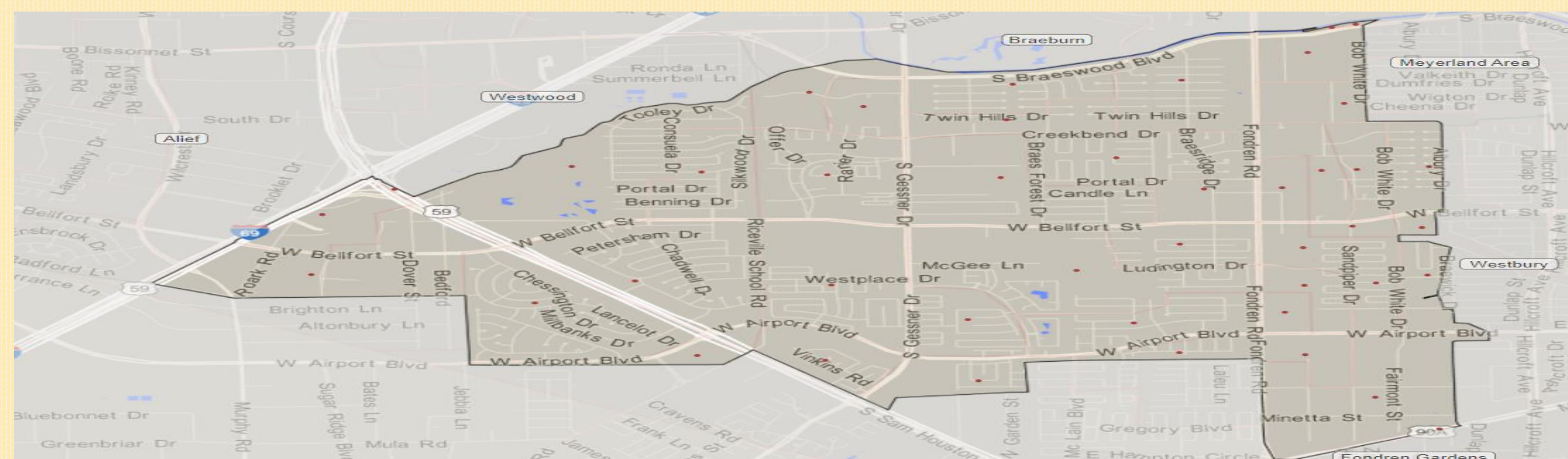


Figure 1: Map of Houston Neighborhoods

Color-coded breakdown of city's neighborhoods and downtown districts.

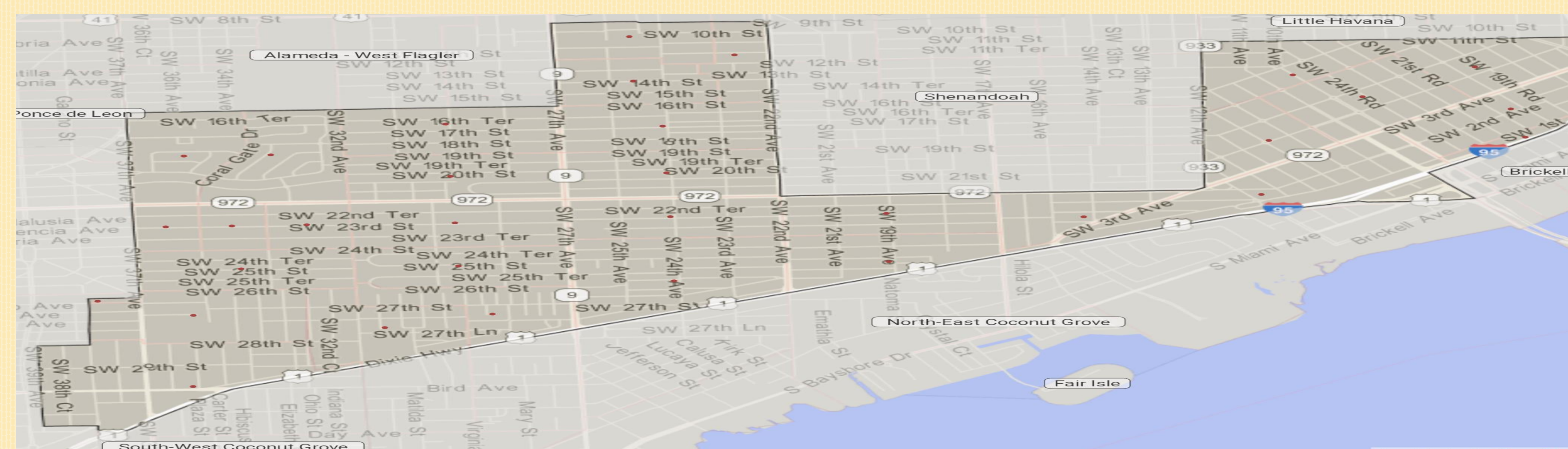


Figure 2: Map of Coral Way, Miami

Block group view of Coral Way, September 2018. © OpenStreetMap contributors.

Table 2: Coral Way, Miami, Florida

Variables	Significance
Occupied Housing Units	.046*
Available Housing Units	.002*
Total Housing Units	.001*
Population	.030*
Median Home Value of Owner-Occupied Units	<.001*
*95 confidence level used	

Results

- **Greater Fondren Southwest, Houston:** Available Housing Units and Median Home Value of Owner-Occupied Units showed statistically significant increases.
- **Coral Way, Miami:** Occupied Housing Units, Available Housing Units, Total Housing Units, Population, and Median Home Value of Owner-Occupied Units all showed statistically significant increases.

Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

Since Available Housing Units and Median Home Value of Owner-Occupied Units were not statistically significant in Houston but they were in Miami, this study reinforces the scholarly work of economists and urban theorists that zoning regulations do significantly restrict growth by reducing the availability of housing stock.

As Houston's deregulated approach supports growth, the case of Miami illustrates that even the loosening of traditional zoning regulations has a very positive effect on housing supply.

References



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