

From: [Thomas Ellis](#)
To: [CityCouncilListPublic](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Hearn Avenue in the context of City Goal Setting, explained
Date: Wednesday, February 7, 2024 5:42:31 PM

Dear Madame Mayor, & Councilmembers;

Thank you for considering my remarks, before the Santa Rosa City Goal Setting session today: Your work is incredibly important for the City of Santa Rosa, as I have mentioned about historic aspects. Mr Rosenberg, Hugh Coddington, David Berto, Hugh Futrell, Steve Rabinowitz, have made significant influences. Yours can be remarkable or not.

My comments should be taken in the context of the Hearn Avenue Overcrossing Capital Improvements;

It is not that you are being misled, but you are being given only 1/2 the story.

The 2006 Accounting Reforms required full Profit & Loss Corporate Statements; including Depreciation which is the bookkeeping offset for unfunded Maintenance, primarily roadways (sewer & water). [Diminishing a Nonprofit's Assets is a violation of their corporate governance (this occurred while I was Accountant for the SC Task Force for the Homeless, which I told them, but the Board ignored). Excess maintenance is an upgrade and increases Asset lifetimes, while underfunded maintenance is a "booked" loss to assets as Depreciation and usually decreases Asset lifetimes. Engineers fund maintenance, Finance people defer maintenance, which brought forth these Reforms.] The Roadways are deteriorating, meaning the Assets are losing value, which should be reflected in a Loss (by Depreciation) to your Accounting.

Poorly invested Capital projects increase your Maintenance.

To answer the primary question presented by the Finance Dir, County Revenue increases 4%/yr; So your increase should also be about \$8M/yr (4%), as they say in economics, "all things being equal".

Taxes support your General Fund and Maintenance; Capital Improvements are generally by the Developer, Capital "In-Lieu" fees are required when these improvements are not made. When Developers skate free of Capital Improvements and "In-Lieu" fees, the burden falls to your BUDGET ! If you do not collect the "In-Lieu" fees, you must make the developer exactions for Capital Improvements to protect your BUDGET. If not, you will end up with an unlivable community without the necessary amenities for living, ie mere wage slavery !

But: Deferred Maintenance (M_d) Expense increases Geometrically (near the point of collapse); ie $(M_d)^x$. x =time.

Goals>Strategies>Objectives>Tactics, because the Strategies you use must match your Objectives and the Objectives must be accomplishable by use of your Strategies:

Strategies (Greek, "Strategos" for General, or Army Leader) is the wrong word below "Objectives", this word should be "Tactics". "Tactics" follow "Objectives". Strategies are between "Goals" & "Objectives". Strategies are proposed and conducted by the General, taking into account the ebb and flow of battle. [The Goal is to win the war (Lead the North Bay Area); Strategies are employed by the General using natural assets and resources (men & arms: in your case; Beauty, Community, Programs, Marketing, and Media where free News Media is best. You are losing this war when reporting is of School knife and gun violence, Homelessness, etc.); Objectives are the targets of the Strategies, ie Housing and ending or reducing Homelessness are Objectives and you direct Strategies at those Objectives (Re-Zoning and Office reuse or ADU's at Housing, and Safe Parking and Permanent Supportive Housing or Over-Policing at Homelessness); Tactics are the methods of achieving Objectives, ie what type of Policing, where will the Re-Zoning take place, what Marketing or Branding will you employ. This is why you have missed out on Eco-Branding and Tourism, because

you have no overarching Strategies.

The 4 Factors of Production in Economics are Land, Labor, Capital & Coordination, of which you control Coordination !

The vast majority of Economics taking place are in the Community; 60,000 homes, valued at \$60 Billion; an economy over which you have an authority to lead, but not direct responsibility. When you influence this, you succeed.

I pointed out a paradigm shift to the SC Library Dir. about their HVAC where Shade Trees & Ground Source Heat Pumps fundamentally change the energy required.

Engineering Creates Paradigm Shifts, no longer moving the chess pieces, but transforming Pawns into Queens.

My 1999 Sonoma County Economic Development Plan 2020 had 5 Parts: 3 Adopted; 2 Forgone; Adopted: Engineering School for SSU, SMART, Internet Training for Businesses; Forgone: Eco Tourism (Bikes, etc), Senior Housing (future housing & employment demographics).

Vision is an Image (Image in Greek is "Icon"), a picture of the future;

Is your Vision of a Diminishing World? or of an Enhanced World? A Paradigm Shift is a complete shift in Vision, and it can only be brought about by Engineering (or other genius).

Then that should represent what you do for Hearn Avenue, and all your Strategies by the General; I hope, a vision of an enhanced world using a Paradigm Shift at Hearn Avenue.

YHS Thomas C Ells, RCE 40656

From: [Tom LaPenna](#)
To: [_CityCouncilListPublic](#)
Cc: [Smith, Maraskeshia](#); [Basinger, Megan](#); [Osburn, Gabe](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Thank you!
Date: Friday, February 9, 2024 8:32:51 AM
Attachments: [Connecting the Dots- A Story of Profits Over People.pdf](#)

Greetings,

Thanks to all of you for listening to the SRMOA speakers at the Goal Setting Meeting and for working with us over the last two years. Your support is greatly appreciated as we continue forward this year with the final two items, the Senior Zoning Overlay and lowering the In Place Transfer amount to 5%. I spoke briefly with some of the Council Members before and after the meeting and I am encouraged by their comments about resolving these outstanding issues. I know when you read Legal Aid's model overlay zoning ordinance, the reasons Senior Residents are asking for this help will become even more clear.

We want Santa Rosa to be the leader and model in the North Bay for keeping mobile homes affordable for seniors.

Best Regards,
Tom

Attached is the file Dianne Monroe spoke about at the recent meeting - "Connecting the Dots" A Story Told Through Facts and Link.

Connecting the Dots

A Story about Profits over People Told Through Facts and Links

A Note about Links:

All links are active.

- If you have a computer version of this and the link does not work, simply cut and paste the link into your browser.
- If you have a paper version, you will need to type enough of the link into your browser that the article comes up.
- If you like, you can contact Tom LaPenna to receive an electronic copy of this document.

Executive Summary; Connecting the Dots What's Going On with Mobile Home Affordable Housing?

(1)

- ~ **In recent years investment firms and corporations nationwide have begun investing in Mobile Home Parks and are making huge profits.**
Often the first thing they do is raise space rent prices, pushing longtime residents out.
See Fact Sheet Appendix A:
Mobile Home Parks are Very Profitable for Owners and Investors
- ~ **Home sale prices and rental prices are soaring, while affordable housing options remain limited,** both in Sonoma County and nationally.
See Fact Sheet Appendix E:
The Economics of Living in a Senior MHP, and
<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/may/10/us-housing-market-prices-increasing>
- ~ **We are facing a crisis of affordable Senior housing, nationally and locally,** while Social Security has not kept up with inflation and pensions have become a thing of the past.
See Fact Sheet Appendixes C and D:
C. Seniors Are an Increasingly Large Portion of the Homeless
D. The Economics of Aging
- ~ **Some Mobile Home Park Investment Firms appear to be especially aggressive** in pursuing exorbitant rent increases, pushing tenants out and taking legal action.
Harmony Communities is one of the especially aggressive companies.

Harmony Communities, based in Stockton, CA
owns and/or manages 77 mobile home parks across California
<https://mhphoa.com/investors/harmony-communities>
(listed on other websites as 33 properties and 38 properties)

Three of them are in Sonoma County. They are:

Country Side MHP in Cotati,
Little Woods MHP in Petaluma
Carriage Court in Santa Rosa

More about Harmony Communities and its business practices is summarized on the following three pages:

2. Harmony Communities Overview
3. Harmony Communities in Sonoma County, A Tale of Three Cities
4. Harmony Communities in Other Places, The Playbook is Familiar

Harmony Communities Overview

(2)

In Sonoma County Harmony Communities has:

- ~ Filed a lawsuit in Petaluma (Little Woods MHP)
- ~ Threatened to file a lawsuit in Cotati (Country Side MHP)
- ~ Threatened to close down MHPs in Petaluma and Cotati (Little Woods MHP and Country Side MHP)
- ~ Raised rents exorbitantly in Petaluma (Little Woods MHP)
- ~ Changed Carriage Court MHP, in Santa Rosa, to an all-ages park
This is often seen as a first step to higher space rents and attempts to drive older home owner out. They also threatened to shut the park down if park owners could not “make a fair profit”.
<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/a-santa-rosa-mobile-home-park-for-seniors-is-being-converted-to-all-ages-to/>

See Page 3: **Harmony Communities in Sonoma**

The above cited behavior appears typical of Harmony Communities practices across a wide range of its properties.

See Page 4: **Harmony Communities in Other Places**

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On its website (<https://harmonycom.com/>) Harmony Communities boldly announces that:

We are the Leader in Affordable Communities

Harmony Communities owns and operates premier manufactured housing communities in the western United States. At a time when quality affordable housing is disappearing fast, it is our mission to expand options for economical and beautiful housing in the states and communities in which we operate.

We do this by identifying existing, high potential properties ripe for investment, upgrade, beautification and expansion.

The truth seems more like:

“Harmony Communities Inc. is a Stockton-based outfit that makes a practice of buying mobile home parks on the decline, mandating questionable fixes, and pricing longtime residents out of their homes.”

<https://original.newsbreak.com/@bottom-of-the-barrel-1591569/3276510597880-sonoma-seniors-scrooged-by-former-hollywood-stuntman-nick-ubaldi-and-harmony-communities-inc>

Harmony Communities in Sonoma County; A Tale of Three Cities Exorbitant Rent Increases and Threats to Close Mobile Home Parks Down

Cotati (Country Side MHP is owned by Harmony Communities)

<https://www.northbaybusinessjournal.com/article/news/mobile-home-park-owner-threatens-closure-after-cotati-passes-regulation-to/>

Mobile home park owner threatens closure after Cotati passes regulation to protect senior residents there. (December 18, 2023)

“You voted for a lawsuit,” Ubaldi said. “The property value far exceeds its current use”...
“After tonight’s vote we have decided to immediately begin the closure process for Country Side Mobile Home Park.”

Petaluma (Little Woods MHP is owned by Harmony Communities)

<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/retaliation-mobile-home-tenants-say-closing-park-could-leave-them-homeless/> (August 31, 2023)

Retaliation’: Mobile home tenants say closing park could leave them homeless. Residents of Little Woods Mobile Villa spoke out Tuesday over threats of closure.

<https://gwire.com/2023/11/15/mobile-home-park-owner-sues-petaluma-over-closure-rules-will-lawsuit-affect-fresno/>

Mobile Home Park Owner Sues Petaluma Over Closure Rules. Will Lawsuit Affect Fresno? (November 15, 2023)

...a lawsuit from a Petaluma mobile home park owner seeks to undo a law preventing the owner from selling a park there...

...Residents of Little Woods Mobile Villa received notices that their monthly rent would more than triple in the coming year...For one resident, that meant going from a \$500 monthly rent to more than \$2,215 a month.

Santa Rosa

(Carriage Court Mobile Home Park is owned by Harmony Communities)

<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/a-santa-rosa-mobile-home-park-for-seniors-is-being-converted-to-all-ages-to/>

A Santa Rosa mobile home park for seniors is being converted to all-ages to increase profit. (April 19, 2023)

“New management says the move is necessary to stay afloat, but residents fear displacement by the company with a track record of litigation over evictions and rent increases”

<https://www.denverpost.com/2021/12/17/golden-hills-mobile-home-park-purchase-sale-harmony-communities/>

These Colorado mobile home residents tried twice to buy their park. Will the third time be the charm? (December 17, 2021)

Shortly after buying park, Harmony Communities offered to sell to residents for what they say is significantly higher price

“The playbook by now is familiar, housing experts say: Corporations come in, raise rents immediately and often, while instituting rules and regulations that many residents feel are onerous and over-the-top.”

<https://original.newsbreak.com/@bottom-of-the-barrel-1591569/3276510597880-sonoma-seniors-scooged-by-former-hollywood-stuntman-nick-ubaldi-and-harmony-communities-inc>

Harmony Communities Inc. runs roughshod on ‘high-potential properties’ where real people live. (December 26, 2023)

“After the Cotati City Council told Ubaldi he could not move forward with plans to force the long-time seniors-only park to accept residents of all ages, the less-than-jolly owner threatened to close the whole place down.

“When Harmony Communities Inc. Comes to town, it’s profit over people all the way.

“Harmony Communities Inc. is a Stockton-based outfit that makes a practice of buying mobile home parks on the decline, mandating questionable fixes, and pricing longtime residents out of their homes.”

About RV Park of San Rafael and Harmony Communities

(The google search “RV park san Rafael Harmony” yields at least 10 articles on this story. This is only one of them.)

<https://pacificsun.com/affordable-housing-lost-to-greed/>

A story of affordable housing, corporate greed and good ol’ American grit
(August 24, 2022)

“Residents of the RV Park of San Rafael say they will lose their affordable housing due to the greed of Harmony Communities...”

About Shady Lakes MHP in Fresno County and Harmony Communities

<https://thebusinessjournal.com/shady-lakes-highlights-challenges-for-mobile-home-park-residents/>

Shady Lakes Highlights Challenges for Mobile Home Park Residents

(January 24, 2023)

“Almost four years after suing a Stockton-based investment company, residents of a Fresno County mobile home park have **experienced a near-100% increase in rent...** it only took four years under ownership of Shady Lakes LLC and managed by Harmony Communities — both of which are owned by the same person — to undergo the triple-digit increase in rent.”

“Investors have turned their eyes to mobile home parks because of the consistent cash flow. Turnover is very low because moving is so expensive.”

About Trails End Mobile Home Park in Fresno

(The google search “Trails End mobile home park Fresno Ca” yields at least 14 articles on this story, starting with Harmony Communities buying the park about 2 years ago, as residents protested this purchase. This is only one of them.

<https://fresnoland.org/2023/04/17/embattled-former-trails-end-mobile-home-park-in-northeast-fresno-set-to-close-according-to-owner/>

Embattled former Trails’ End mobile home park in northeast Fresno set to close, according to owner (April 17, 2023)

The owners plan to list the park right away, partner with a developer, or sell to “re-concept the land” for neighborhood compatibility.

“Residents of La Hacienda Mobile Estates in northeast Fresno, formerly known as Trails End Mobile Home Park, all received notice on Friday from Harmony Communities, that the park is set to close in 12 months, ending their tenancies.”

Why Does Harmony Communities want to drive people out of their homes? (5) **Maybe THE SMOKING GUN is here:**

Researcher's observations:

Perhaps they want to push elderly and other people out of their homes because:

- ~ The land those homes sit on is more valuable for development of upscale housing, and thus to increase their profits.
- ~ They want to upscale and gentrify the existing mobile home park to appeal to more affluent people and thus increase their profits.

Or, perhaps this story from NPR has discovered “THE Smoking Gun”

<https://www.npr.org/2021/09/03/1033910731/why-are-investors-buying-up-mobile-home-parks-and-evicting-residents>

Why Are Investors Buying Up Mobile Home Parks and Evicting Residents?

(September 3, 2021)

Rachel Martin, Host / Chris Arnold reports for our Planet Money team.

Intro:

For millions, owning a home in a mobile home park is an affordable housing option. But some companies are buying up parks, raising fees and evicting people. And the government is helping them do it.

Key Excerpt:

ARNOLD: George McCarthy is president of the nonprofit Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. And he says what's really troubling to him is that the government is basically turbocharging this trend. OK, here's how this works. **A company raises rates and fees in a park. That makes the park more valuable. So they can now borrow more money against it...**

They pull out, say, \$3 million, and they use that to go buy another mobile home park. And then they do that again and again. It's a cascade of borrowed money. And often, these loans are backed by the U.S. government.

MCCARTHY: They provide very, very low-cost debt for these investors to get enough cash out to go buy additional parks.

ARNOLD: The loans have supercheap interest rates because they're guaranteed by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the government-backed entities at the heart of the U.S. mortgage market.

MCCARTHY: And what's ironic about it is that one of the missions of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac is to help preserve affordable housing...

What are Harmony Communities and other MHP Corporate Owners Thinking? (6) (When they try to push elderly citizens and others out of their homes)

Researchers note:

Mobile Home residents and their advocates are often perplexed when MHP Owners say that rent control leads to less affordable housing and the key to more affordable housing is to let space rents rise to “market rate”. This language seems to reverse the actual relationship of things. This interview also seems to turn reality on its head by showcasing Matthew Davies, founder of Harmony Communities, as an advocate and creator of affordable housing, while in fact Harmony’s actions result in driving residents out of the homes they own.

Perhaps the answer to the question “What are they thinking?” lies in this Medium interview with Matthew Davies of Harmony Communities”. Excerpts below:

<https://medium.com/authority-magazine/matthew-davies-of-harmony-communities-how-we-are-helping-to-make-housing-more-affordable-9ba2f3075197>

Matthew Davies of Harmony Communities: How We Are Helping to Make Housing More Affordable (June 14, 2021)

In this interview, Matthew Davis states that:

“Government overregulation and NIMBYism (Not In My Back Yard) are the biggest obstacles to building the affordable housing stock in this country and particularly in my home state of California... Creating policies that discourage investment, such as — on the housing side — rent control, has the countereffect of depleting the affordable housing supply and driving prices up.

Davis goes on to argue that:

“At the state level, I’d ask for a full repeal of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).” And “At the federal level, I’d ask the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to do an honest assessment on the supposed disparate impact of many housing policies and how HUD guidance to address this impact is actually making housing less affordable and inclusive.

Perhaps most telling is the last question and response:

Interviewer:

Is there a person in the world, or in the US whom you would love to have a private breakfast or lunch with, and why? He or she might just see this, especially if we tag them.

Matthew Davis:

I’m a huge fan of Charles Koch’s ideas of freedom and “good profit”.

Researchers Ending Note:

One often hears property owners, especially corporate and other major owners, exclaiming that it is their property and they have the right to do whatever they want with it. This is often said by MHP Owners when they threaten that they will close the MHP down and find another use for the land if they can't earn "enough" profit from it.

At the same time, the private homes of mobile home residents are every bit as much their property, for them to benefit from as they like.

Which property takes precedence?

The property of the MHP owners who use the land to make profit, perhaps even taking the profits they make from space rents to buy additional MHPs to increase their profits and wealth.

<https://www.npr.org/2021/09/03/1033910731/why-are-investors-buying-up-mobile-home-parks-and-evicting-residents>

or:

The property of the mobile home resident, their homes which they purchase and maintain and need in order to have a roof over their heads, especially in their elder years.

Perhaps the answer to this question lies in this deeper question:

What kind of community and what kind of world do we want to live in?

Connecting the Dots

**A Story about Profits over People
Told Through Facts and Links**

Appendices

Mobile Home Parks are Very Profitable for Owners and Investors

(A)

www.nytimes.com/2022/03/27/us/mobile-home-park-ownership-costs.html

Investors are Buying Mobile Home Parks. Residents are Paying a Price.

Across the country, corporate landlords are expanding manufactured housing portfolios and driving up rents, pushing longtime residents out.

(March 27, 2022)

“Industry leaders are blunt about the business model: According to [materials](#) for a “boot camp” for aspiring mobile-home park investors prepared by [Mobile Home University](#), which is run by two of the largest mobile-home park owners in the country, “the fact that tenants can’t afford the \$5,000 it costs to move a mobile home keeps revenues stable and makes it easy to raise rents without losing any occupancy.”

“If residents of mobile-home parks can’t keep up with rising rents, or can’t afford to make the often-extensive alterations to porches, gardens and awnings that are required under the new management’s rules, they are swiftly replaced. With prices and rents for all kinds of housing soaring in many parts of the country, demand for manufactured housing is climbing.”

<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/corporate-landlords-blackstone-gobbling-mobile-174500027.html>

Corporate landlords are snatching up mobile home parks and jacking up the rent — here’s why such cheap properties are so appealing to wealthy investors

(January 9, 2023)

“Moving a typical mobile home costs between \$3,000 to \$10,000 also means that most tenants are unable to afford the move. This gives landlords immense pricing power.”

“Meanwhile, the yield is much higher. The capitalization rate (the ratio of net operating income to market price) could be as high as 9%, according to real estate partners Dave Reynolds and Frank Rolfe, who together are the fifth-largest owner of mobile home parks in the U.S.”

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/economy/rents-spike-as-large-corporate-investors-buy-mobile-home-parks>

Rents spike as large corporate investors buy mobile home parks

(July 25, 2022)

“Driven by some of the strongest returns in real estate, investors have shaken up a once-sleepy sector that’s home to more than 22 million mostly low-income Americans in 43,000 communities. Many aggressively promote the parks as ensuring a steady return — by repeatedly raising rent.”

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2022/04/06/the-future-of-mobile-home-park-investing-three-big-names>

The Future of Mobile Home Park Investing: Three Big Names

(April 6, 2022)

“Why has mobile home park investing attracted some of the top investors across the country? I think a primary reason is the unprecedented demand for affordable housing. Also, mobile home parks can typically be purchased for higher cap rates, providing investors more income per dollar invested.”

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesrealestatecouncil/2020/03/02/what-you-should-know-if-youre-considering-investing-in-mobile-home-parks>

What You Should Know If You're Considering Investing in Mobile Home Parks

(March 2, 2020)

“Mobile Home Parks have become the darling of private equity over the past few years, and rightfully so”

“So, why mobile home parks?....

Strong And Increasing Demand: As middle- and lower-class families continue to be pressured financially, growing demand for inexpensive housing makes mobile home parks an attractive housing option...

More Control of Rent Prices: The high and largely inelastic demand for affordable housing provides significant pricing power in the marketplace.

Higher Yields: ...mobile home parks typically trade at higher yields than most other commercial real estate assets.

Low Tenant Turnover: ... in most cases, once a mobile home is moved into a park, that home will stay for many years.”

<https://www.fool.com/real-estate/2022/05/26/why-a-mobile-home-park-could-be-a-wickedly-profitable/>

Why a Mobile Home Park Could be a Wickedly Profitable Investment”

Motley Fool, May 2022

<https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2022-07-25/rents-spike-as-big-pocketed-investors-buy-mobile-home-parks>

July 7, 2022 Los Angeles Times

Rents Spike as big-pocketed investors buy mobile home parks

** The above articles, and many others can be found using the google search “mobile home parks profitable”.

The Wealth Gap Between the Very Rich and Everyone Else Has Been Growing

(B)

~ **The rich are getting a lot richer, and everyone else is getting a lot poorer.**

The wealthiest 1% (3 million people) are worth more than the bottom 90% (291 million people).

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/the-bottom-half-of-america-has-half-the-wealth-it-did-30-years-ago/>

(September 29, 2022)

~ **In the US, the income gap between the rich and everyone else has been widening dramatically for more than 30 years.**

Between 1979 and 2019, the average income of the richest 0.01% of households grew more than nine times as fast as the income of the bottom 20% of earners.

<https://inequality.org/facts/income-inequality/>

~ **Over the past decades, wages have not kept up with prices.**

Many Americans' experience is that wages have not kept up with the cost of living in recent decades. During past decades, wage gains have mainly gone to the highest paid workers while it has barely budged for lower-income workers.

<https://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/101314/what-does-current-cost-living-compare-20-years-ago.asp>

Researcher's question: What, in the context of the above facts, is a "Fair rate of return" for mobile home park owners?

Seniors Are an Increasingly Large Portion of the Homeless

(C)

<https://justiceinaging.org/fact-sheet-older-adults-in-california-face-unaffordable-rents>

Fact Sheet: Older Adults in California Face Unaffordable Rents

(July 14, 2021, Justice in Aging)

“Older adults represent the fastest growing age group of the homeless population in California.”

“The primary drivers of the surge in older adult homelessness in California are unsustainable rent burdens and an inadequate supply of affordable, accessible, and stable housing.”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/30/magazine/homeless-seniors-elderly.html>

Elderly and Homeless: America’s Next Housing Crisis

Over the next decade, the number of elderly homeless Americans is projected to triple

(September 30, 2020 New York Times)

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/more-seniors-are-becoming-homeless-and-experts-say-the-trend-is-likely-to-worsen>

More seniors are becoming homeless, and experts say the trend is likely to worsen

(March 3, 2023, PBS)

<https://truthout.org/articles/were-failing-our-elders-seniors-are-a-growing-portion-of-unhoused-population>

We’re Failing Our Elders: Seniors Are a Growing Portion of Unhoused Population
People over age 50 now account for approximately half of the unhoused population in the US

(June 20, 2023, Truthout)

“According to PBS, people over age 50 currently comprise approximately 50% of the unhoused population, up from 37% in 2003 and 11% in 1990.”

“There are multiple reasons for this unprecedented spike, among them: skyrocketing rents, ageism, a weak social safety net, an insufficient supply of affordable housing...”

“And then there’s our overall economic system. Eric Tars, legal director of the National Homelessness Law Center, says that the crisis is the direct result of unfettered corporate greed.”

We may have worked all our lives, been frugal and saved... yet

- ~ **The money we saved was earned and saved when everything cost a lot less than it does now.** We're playing an endless game of "catch up" with the cost of living that we cannot win, running hard just to try to stay in the same place.
- ~ **We don't come with an expiration date.** So, we don't know how much we have to save for our money to last. We also don't know what illness we may get, what our needs may be and what that will cost. (For example: in-home help, long term care, dementia and memory care, etc. The costs of these kind of things are staggering and well beyond what an average middle-class person can save.)
- ~ **If you are part of a couple, one of you will likely pass away first.** The one that is left will have to continue living on one social security check. Yet the cost of rent, utilities, home maintenance etc. remains the same and continues to rise.
- ~ **Our Social Security COLA has not kept up with the cost of living, especially in recent years. And the long-term survival of Social Security is not certain.**
"Inflation was so severe in 2021 and 2022 that the average Social Security benefit fell behind by \$1,054, leaving 53% of retirees doubting they will recover because household costs rose more than the dollar amount of their COLAs."
<https://www.aol.com/social-security-cola-2024-estimates-180424412.html>
- ~ **Pensions are a thing of the past.**
In the 1980s about 60% of Americans had access to defined benefit pension plans. That number has dropped to 14% today (2022).
<https://www.fool.com/the-ascent/buying-stocks/articles/2-reasons-companies-dont-offer-pensions-anymore>
- ~ **Many older Americans, have not been able to save enough for retirement.**
"To make ends meet, more Americans are working into their 70s. The share of people older than 75 in the labor force is projected to reach 11% in 2026 up from 5% in 1996."

"The poverty rate among seniors reached 10.3% in 2021, Census data shows, which is the highest amount in two decades. "

"The savings shortfall leaves many older people unprepared for the medical costs that come with old age... An analysis by the National Council on Aging found 60 percent of older adults could not afford two years of long-term, in-home care."
<https://thehill.com/business/personal-finance/3991136-nearly-half-of-baby-boomers-have-no-retirement-savings/>

Notes on the Economics of Living in a Senior Mobile Home Park

(E)

- ~ Rents and home purchase prices fluctuate up and down over time. Mobile Home Park space rent never goes down.
- ~ Even when the percent increase in space rent remains the same, the amount of increase continues to rise. It works like compound interest. For example: Four percent of a \$200 space rent is \$8. Four percent of an \$800 space rent is \$32.
- ~ **The purchase price of mobile homes has increased a lot over the past decade. This doesn't mean Mobile Home Park residents have a lot of money.**
 - Some mobile home park residents are paying a mortgage along with space rent, along with repair and upkeep costs on their home.
 - Some mobile home park residents bought their homes when they cost much less. The value of the home may be a gift for whoever inherits it, but has no impact on their ability to provide for themselves while they are still alive.
 - Some mobile home park residents sell a home to buy into a mobile home park. They may be counting on the profit from this to provide for themselves for the rest of their lives, including the enormous costs of end-of-life-care.
- ~ **Mobile Home purchase prices have increased along with home prices and rental price in recent years.**

Thus, it seems unlikely that space rent regulations are the cause of mobile home purchase price increases, as some of the mobile home park owners have suggested in city council meetings on the topic.

 - **How Finding a Home in America Became So Absurdly Expensive**
(The Guardian, May 10, 2023)
"With US housing costs soaring due to increased demand and limited stock, the dream of home ownership or an affordable rental is becoming unreachable for many.... All told, as of 2022, median home prices and rents in America hit all-time highs."
<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/may/10/us-housing-market-prices-increasing>
 - **U.S. Housing Shortage: Everything, Everywhere, All at Once**
(October 31, 2022)
"The only way out of the supply crisis is to create more housing and preserve the affordable housing we already have."
<https://www.fanniemae.com/research-and-insights/perspectives/us-housing-shortage>