

Report from Surveys of Manufactured Home Communities in Longmont and Lafayette, Colorado

University of Colorado Boulder, Affordable
Housing Research Initiative (CU-BAHRI)

In cooperation with
Boulder County Housing and Human Services Boulder County
Public Health

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Research Team

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Introduction/Executive Summary

This report provides an analysis of paper based and on-line surveys that were distributed in July, August, and September 2023 to Manufactured Home Parks (MHPs) in the communities of Longmont and Lafayette in Boulder County. A total 252 surveys were completed; however, many questions had less than 252 responses, with an average of 200 responses per question. The following provides a summary of the key finding from the data collection and analysis.

- Demographically, most survey respondents identify: their gender as female (67%), their age as over 40 (79%), and their race/ethnicity as Hispanic, Mexican, Central, South American, or Spanish heritage (66% combined).
- An overwhelming majority of survey respondents own (90%) as compared to rent (10%) their homes.
- The racial/ethnic demographics for the MHP surveyed show a larger representation of individuals with Hispanic, Mexican, Central American, South American, or Spanish heritage than in the general population.
- There are higher rates of non-English speaking populations or where English is not a first or native language in the MHPs surveyed as compared with the general population.
- For respondents that speak languages other than English, 40% have a need for translation services.
- Nearly 70% of survey respondents identified a yearly household income under \$40K, and only 9% have a yearly household income over \$60,000 as compared to the Median Household Income of \$92,466 for Boulder County.
- Homes with at least one person with a disability, are more likely to have a lower yearly household income than homes without a disabled person living in the home.
- Most survey respondents in the lowest income bracket—a Yearly Household Income (YHI) under \$20,000—are over 60 years of age. Additionally, social security and retirement income were the largest percentages of financial assistance received by respondents.
- Nearly all respondents have little to no financial assets. Of those reporting assets, most are vested in savings and other forms of assistance are mainly provided by family members or friends.
- While slightly more than half of respondents identified having one or more cars, respondents with and access to a car identified problems securing regular transportation. Respondents that have access to a car deal with their car(s) breaking down or in need of regular repairs. Several respondents also identified the cost of gas as impeding their transportation needs. For household without access to a car, the main concerns were navigating public transportation and difficulty finding transportation for medical appointments or that will accommodate persons with disabilities.
- Respondents identified the need for improved infrastructure, home repairs, and difficulties of being able to pay lot rent and utilities and meet other basic needs, particularly for households with retired individuals on fixed incomes, or households with YHI less than \$20,000.
- There is a vast range of available park amenities across different communities.
- Most respondents are interested in increasing community meeting and gathering places in their respective communities as expressed through desired park amenities.

More details for each of the summary points list above are provided within this report, which is organized into the following categories:

- Demographic Analysis
- Yearly Household Income
- Financial Benefits and Assets
- Community Wealth and Interest in Communal Land Ownership
- Transportation
- Monthly Expenses
- Conclusions.
- Water
- Condition of Home and Need for Repairs
- Park Amenities
- Information Sharing
- Additional Comments from Survey Respondents

Demographic Analysis

Figure 1 illustrates the number of respondents per Manufactured Home Park (MHP). The highest number of responses came from Countryside Village Longmont and St. Vrain, Lafayette. Surveys were not submitted by any residents of Emma S. Trailer Park and Longmont Mobile Home Estates, and therefore these two parks are not included in this report. Additionally, while Banecks is included, only one resident submitted a completed survey.

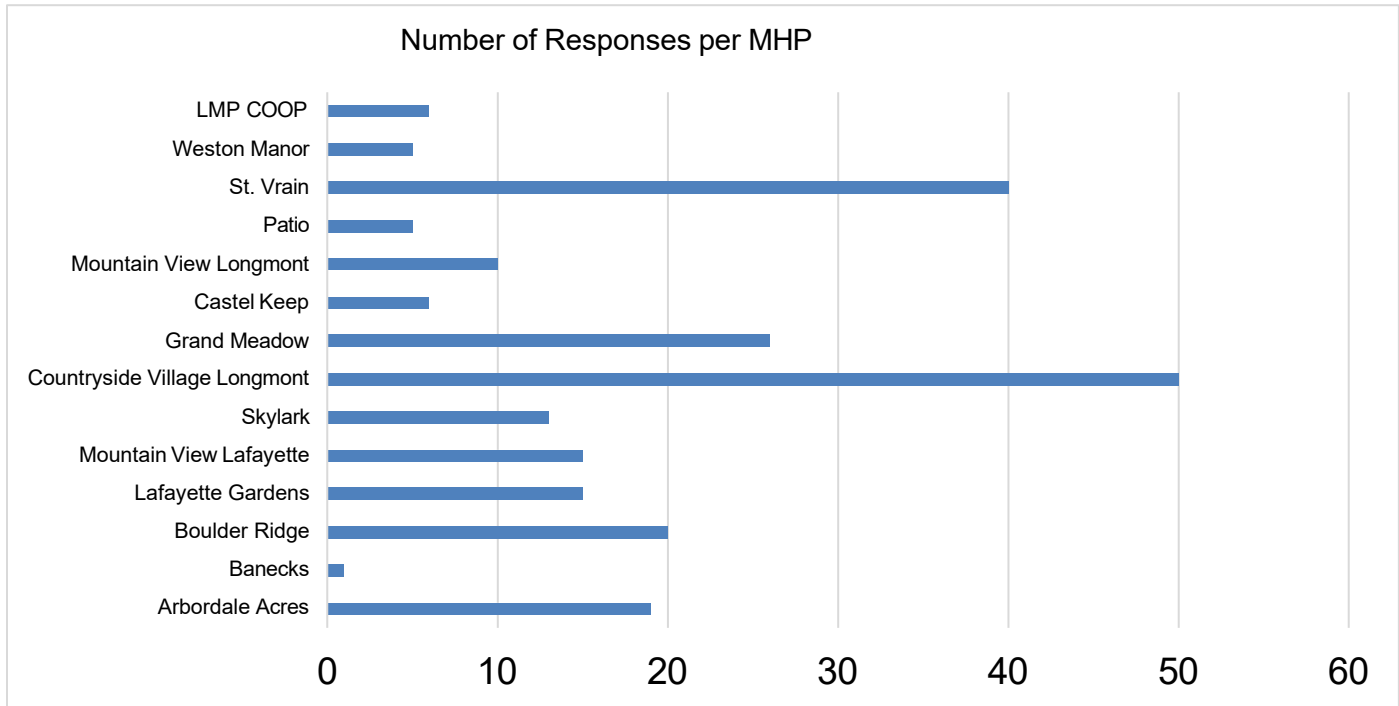


Figure 1: Number of Respondents per Manufactured Home Park

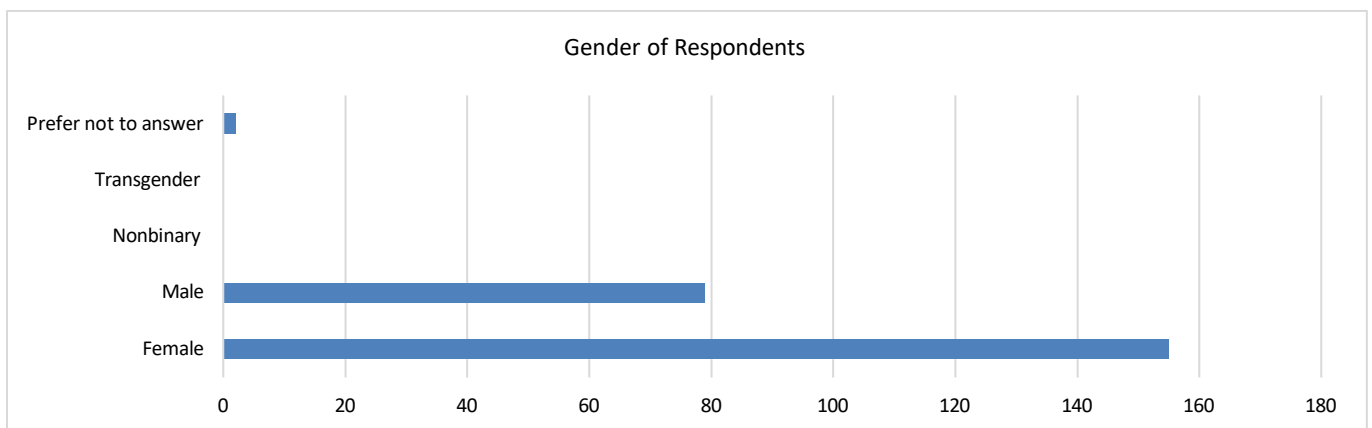


Figure 2: Survey Respondents Gender

Significantly more women (67%) as compared to men (34%) completed surveys. Less than one percent selected “prefer not to answer” and seven percent did not answer this question. More research is needed to identify if this data reflects more women-headed households in MHPs, or if women were more likely to complete the survey as compared with men.

With respect to race and ethnicity, over 97% of respondents stated that the race/ethnicity categories reflected how they identify. Most respondents selected their racial/ethnic identity as: Latino/Latina/Latinx, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicana, Another Hispanic/Latina/o, or Spanish Origin (65% combined), or White (35.3%).

The racial/ethnic of the survey respondents reflects a significantly smaller percentage of residents that identify as White living in MHPs in these communities as compared to the general population. For example, in comparison to census data for Boulder County and for both Lafayette and Longmont.

Based on census data, over 80% of residents in Boulder County (89.5%) (Lafayette, 83.5% and Longmont, 82.9%) identified as White, as compared to 35.3% of MHPs survey respondents. MHP residents at a rate of 65% identified their race/ethnicity as Latin, Mexican, Hispanic, or of Spanish origin, while census data identifies much smaller percentage in the general population (16.8% Lafayette, 23.5% Longmont, and 14.1% Boulder County, see Figures 3 and 4). Additionally, the percentage of individuals identifying Spanish as language spoken at home (see Figure 5) and the need or preference for translations services per MHP (see Figure 6) is larger than the census data on languages spoken in these communities.

Just over 50% of respondents identified a language other than English predominantly spoken at home. This percentage is much higher than the Census data on households where a language other than English is spoken (Lafayette 14%, Longmont 19.4%, and Boulder County 14.6%). Overall, 50% of respondents identified either a need (40%) or a preference (10%) for translation services. Figure 6 illustrates the need for translation services per MHP. For example, 75% of all respondents identifying the need for translation services were split between three MHPs (25% in each), Boulder Ridge, Countryside Village Longmont, and St. Vrain. Arbordale Acres' respondents were 10% of those identifying a preference for translation services. Respondents from St. Vrain at a rate of 18%, and Countryside Village Longmont at a rate of 49.2% selected "preferred" translation services.

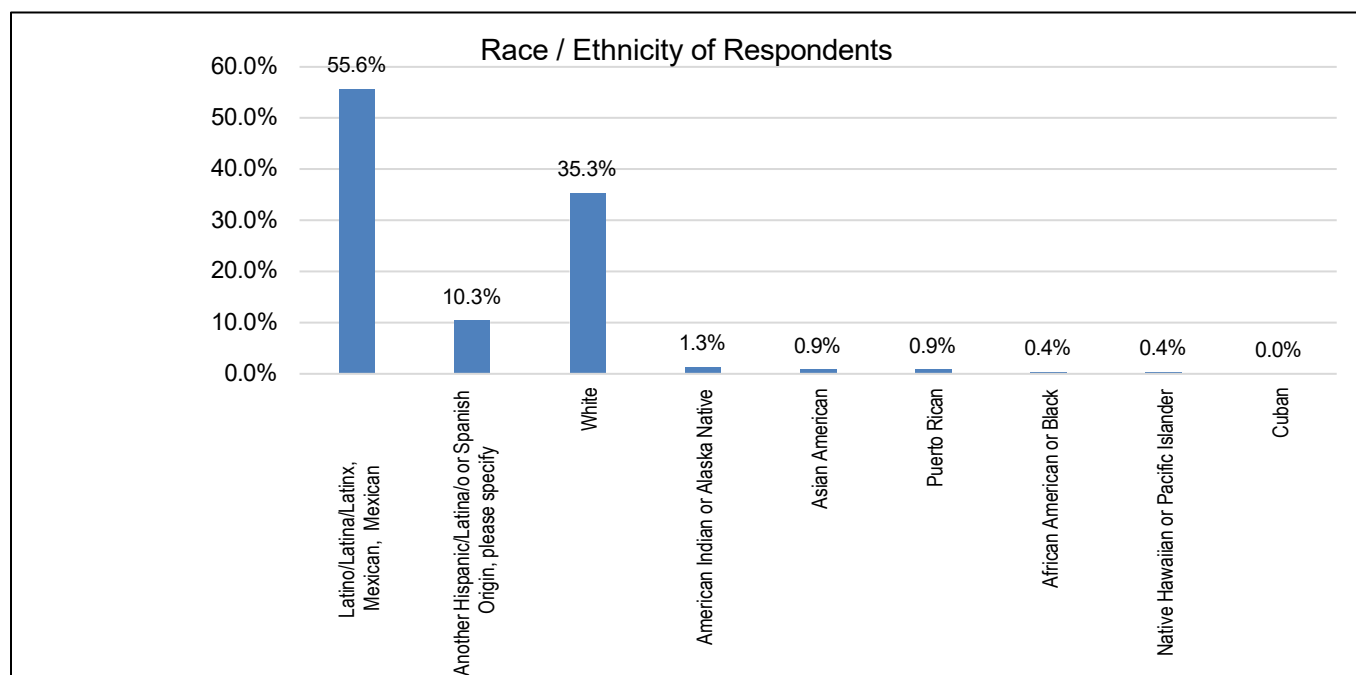


Figure 3: Race / Ethnicity of Respondents

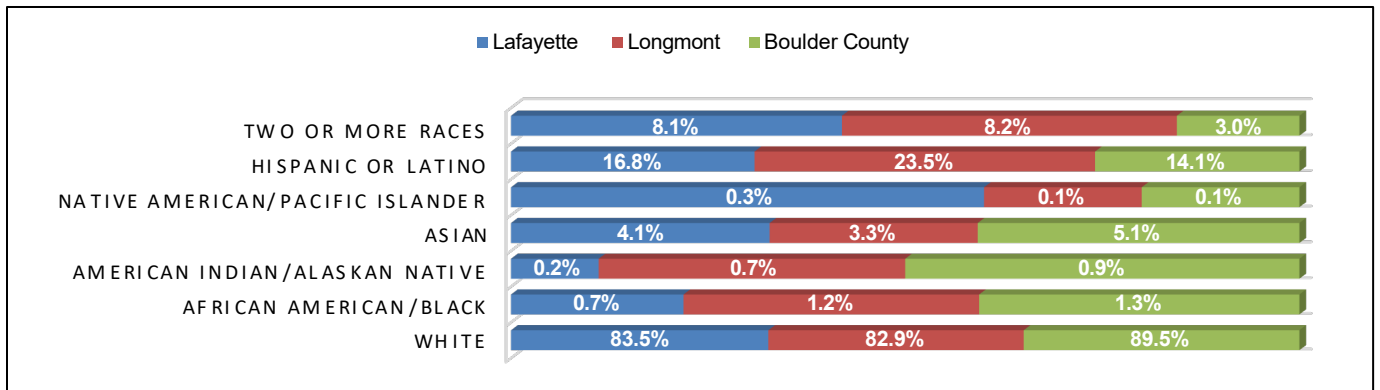


Figure 4: Census Data on Race/Ethnicity for Lafayette, Longmont, and Boulder County

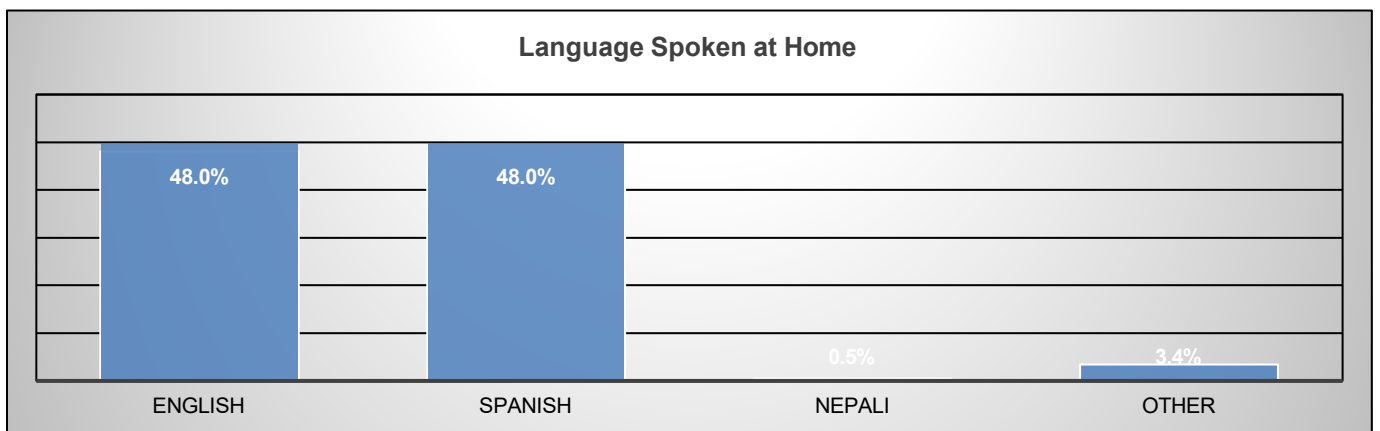


Figure 5: Language most often spoken at home.

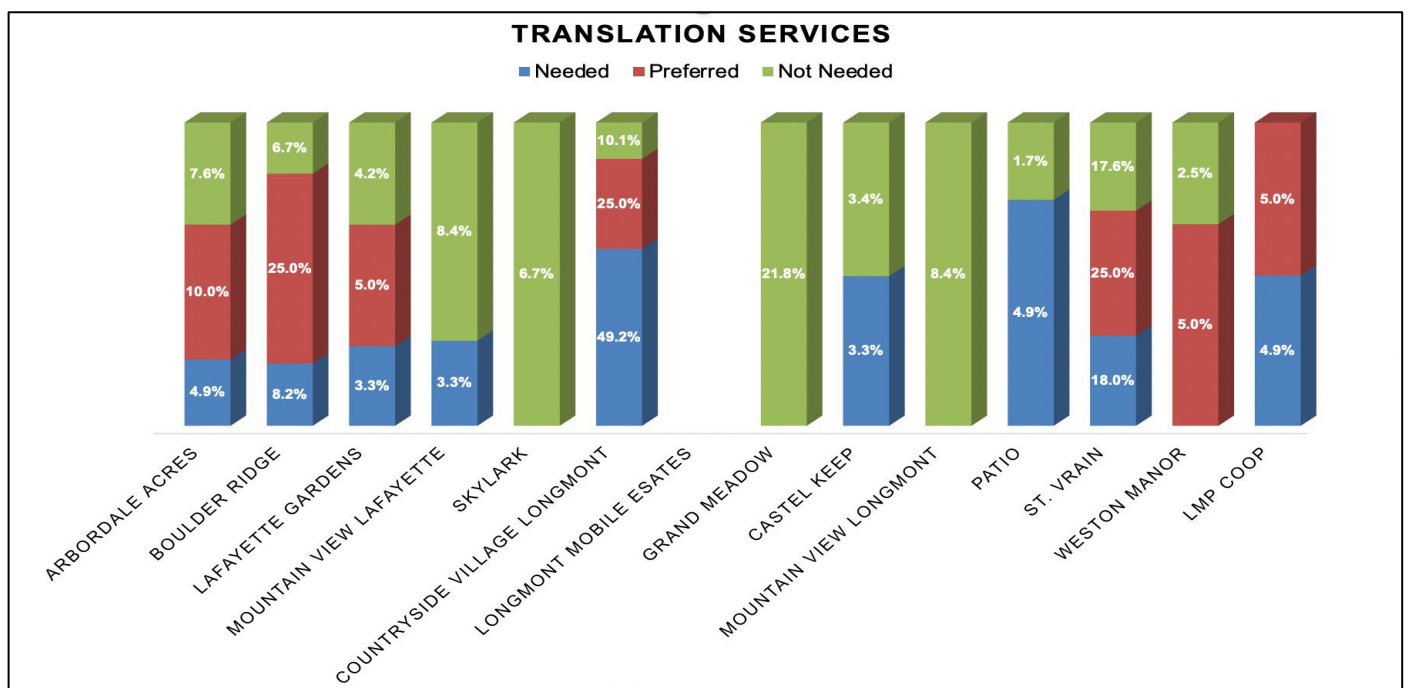


Figure 6: Translation Services Need per MHP

Most survey respondents (79%) are over the age of 40, and 37% are over the age of 60 (see Figure 7). Compared to the Census data for Lafayette, Longmont, and Boulder County, there are a larger number of individuals over the age of 65 in MHPs than the general population (13.7% Lafayette, 16.2% Longmont, and 16.6% Boulder County). Cross-referencing age with the different MHPs, Castel Keep had the highest percentage of survey respondents from the 18-25 and 26-30 age groups; however, there were only six total respondents from this MHP. Unsurprisingly the senior living communities of Grand Meadow, Mountain View, and West Manor had the highest percentages of populations 50 years of age and older.

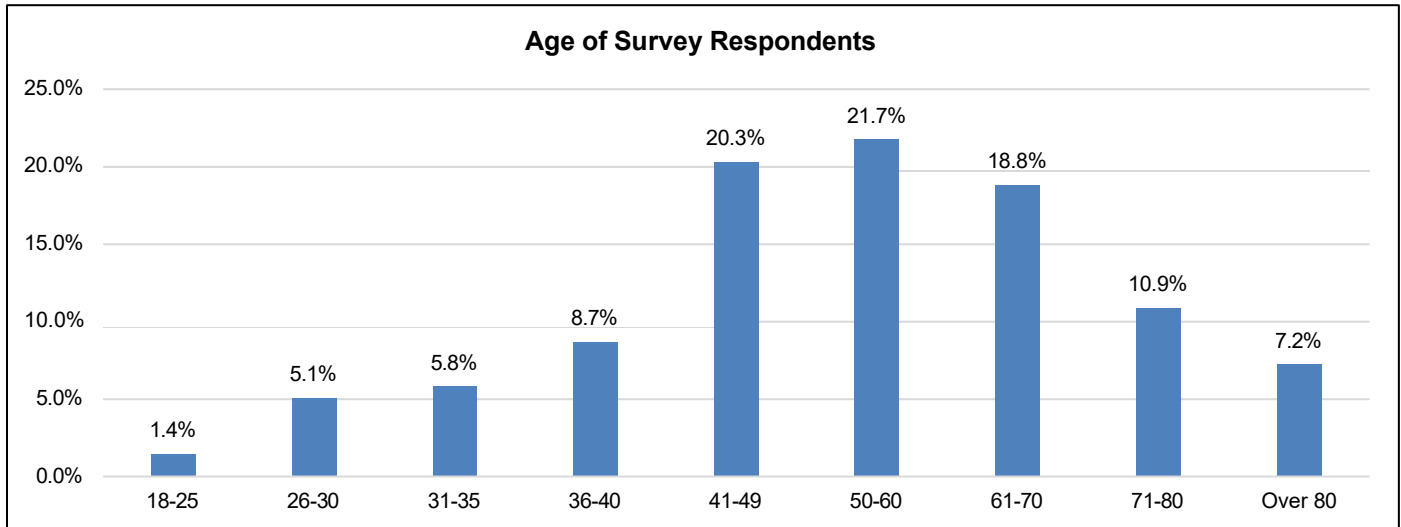


Figure 7: Age of Survey Respondents

Over 50% of respondents identified their relationship status as married or in a partnership, while nearly 35% identified as single, and 8.8% as divorced, and 0.5% as separated (see Figure 8). Over half of the respondents (57.5%) have no children under 18 living in the household, and 42.5% had one or more child living in the household.

Marital Status

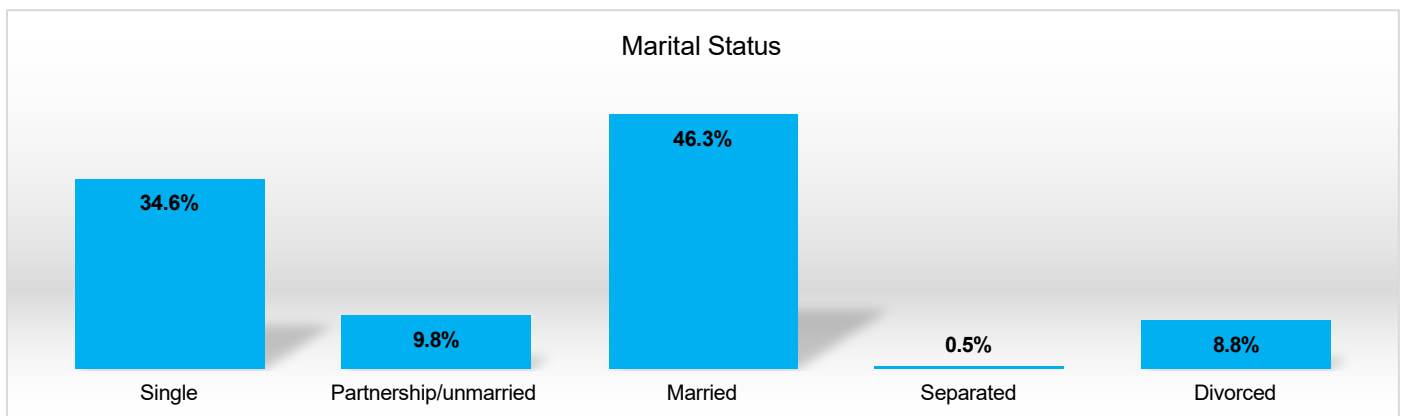


Figure 8: Marital Status of Survey Respondents

Yearly Household Income

Just over 30% of respondents have a person(s) with a disability living in the home. Cross-referencing this data with the MHPs, the communities with larger percentages of individuals living with disabilities are Countryside Village Longmont (19%), Grand Meadow (22%), and St. Vrain (19%) (see Figure 9). Additionally, a larger percentage of households with one (or more) persons living with a disability reported a lower yearly income. For example, over 70% of households with disabled persons living in the household reported a yearly household income under \$30K, and only 18.3% of household with incomes over \$40K (see Figure 10). Additionally, 81% of survey respondents who identified a person living in the household with a disability were over 50 years of age.

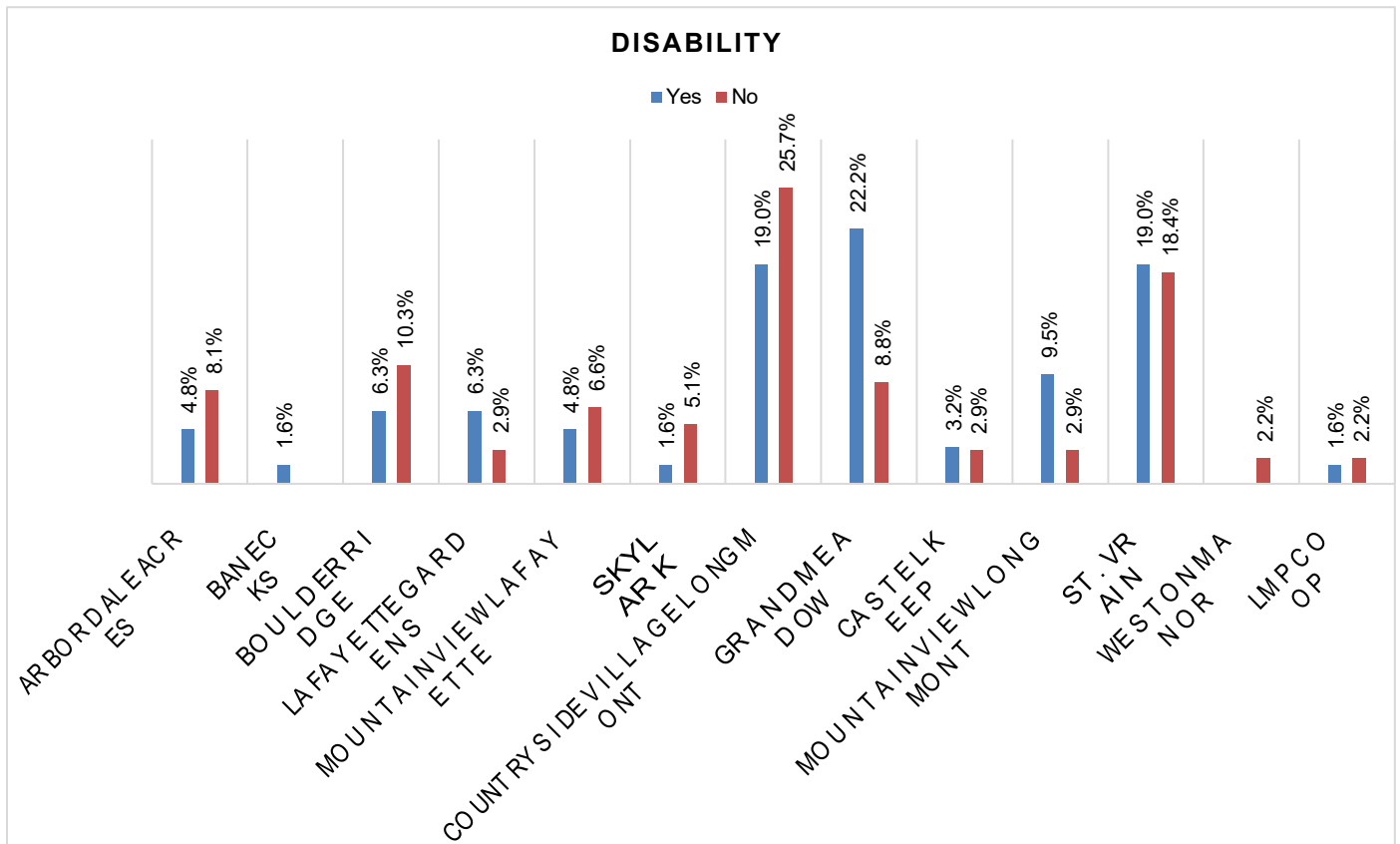


Figure 9: Person(s) with a Disability in the Household

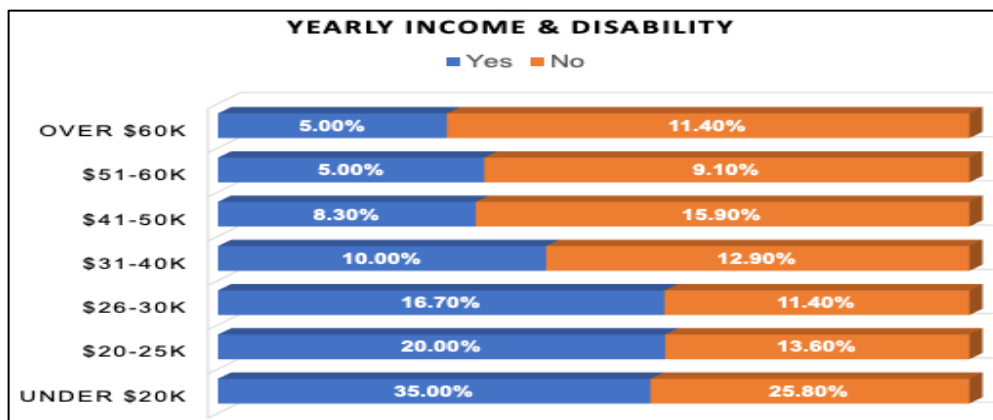


Figure 10: Yearly Household Income and Disability

Nearly 30% of all respondents identified a Yearly Household Income (YHI) of under \$20,000, and most households (69.4%) identified a YHI of \$40,000 or under (see Figure 11). Yearly household income rates vary by age and location (see Figures 12 and 13). For example, in Boulder Ridge there are 26.3% of survey respondents with a yearly household income over \$60K, in comparison with Grand Meadow, Longmont with 27.6% of survey respondents with a yearly household income of \$25-30K. Of the Grand Meadow residents, 98% of respondents are over 50 years of age, and 50% of respondents have a yearly income under \$30K. Survey respondents in the lowest income brackets were concentrated in the over 60 age group. Correspondingly, social security and retirement income are the most common forms of financial benefits received by survey respondents (36% combined).

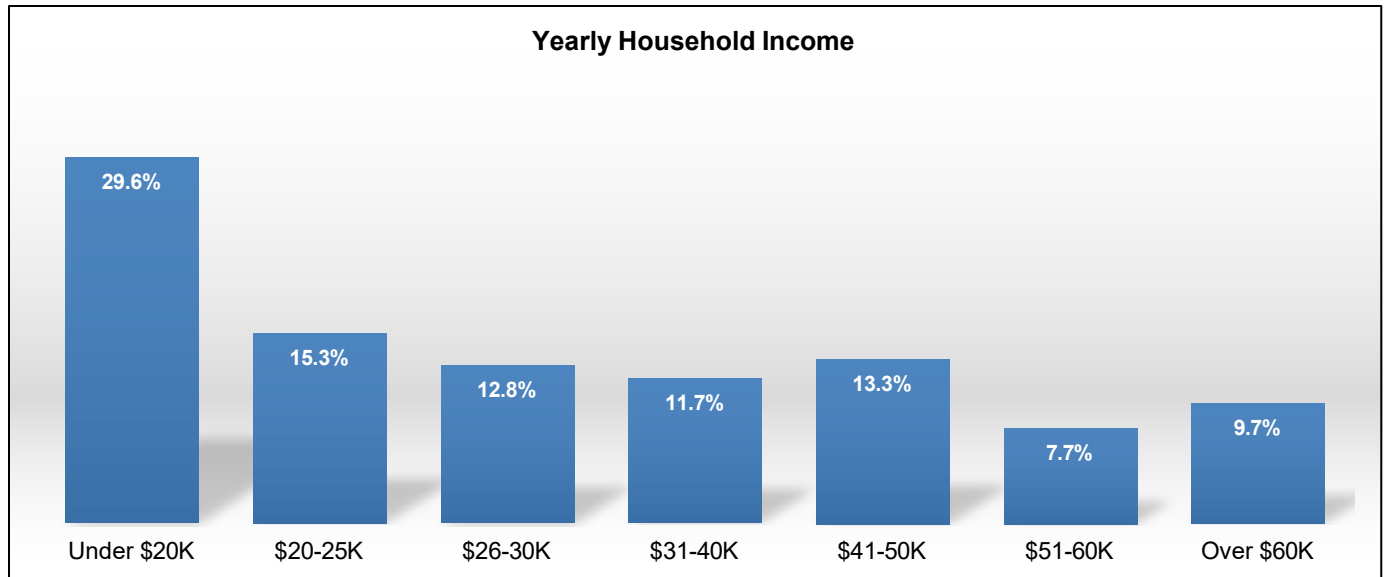


Figure 11: Yearly Household Income

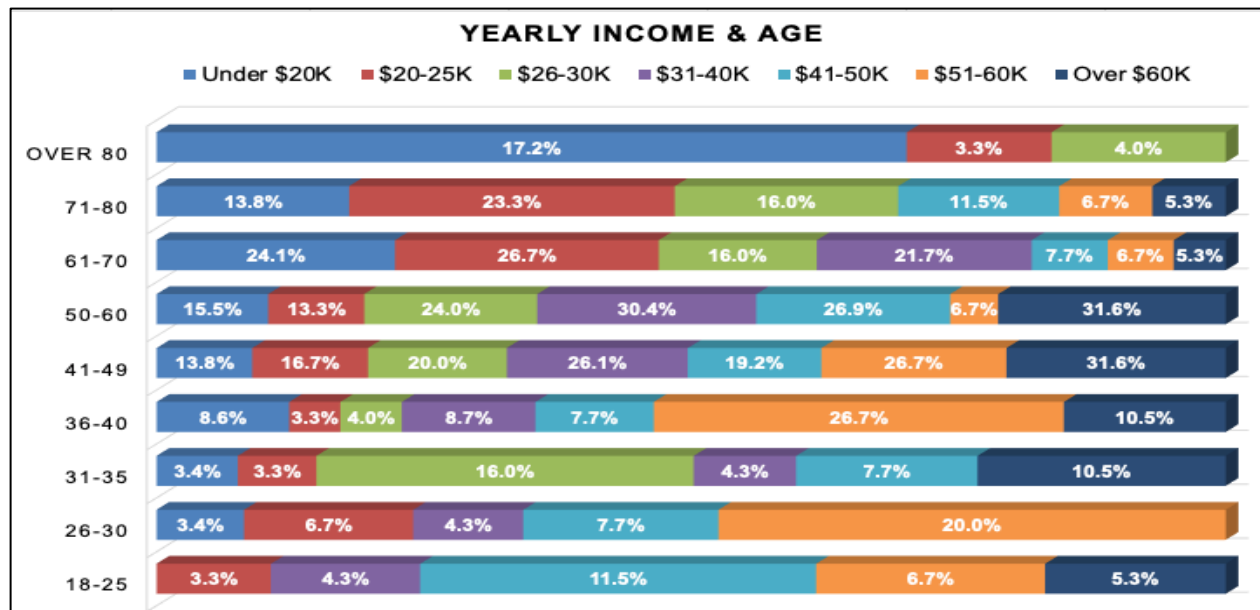


Figure 12: Yearly Household Income (YHI) & Age

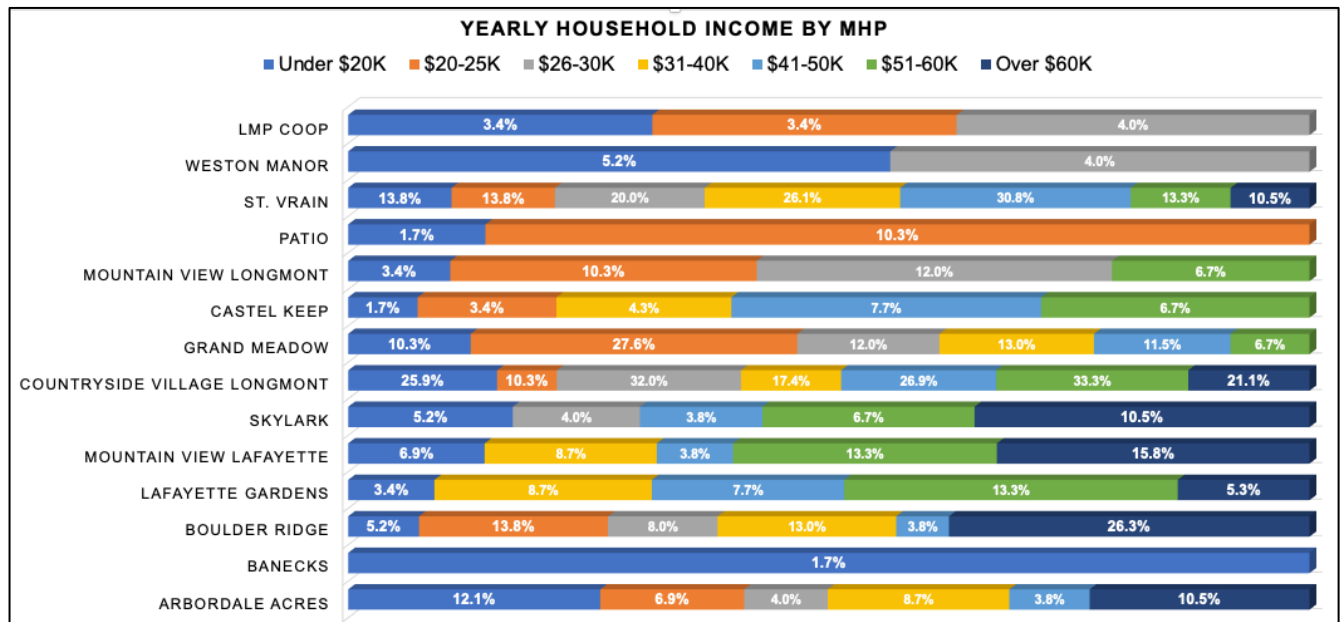


Figure 13: Yearly Household Income (YHI) per Manufactured Home Park (MHP)

Financial Benefits and Assets

Just over half of the survey respondents (53.13%) identified receiving some form of financial benefits. A total of 26% receive Social Security Income, followed by Food Stamps/SNAP Benefits (16%), Retirement Income (11%) and less than 1 percent receive Disability Benefits, Transportation Assistance, Public Assistance, or Supplemental Social Security Income (see Figure 14). Only 28% of all respondents reported some form of financial assets (see Figure 15): Savings (18%), Other Assets (10%), Property (0.06%), Stocks (0.04%), Bonds (0.01%).

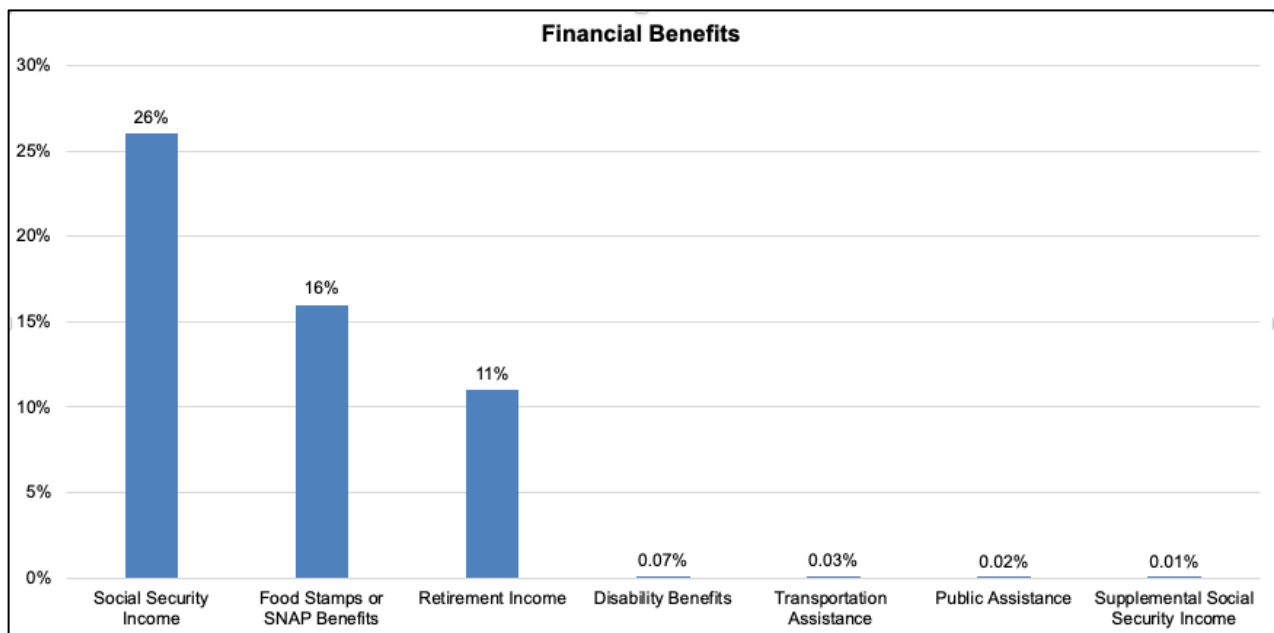


Figure 14: Percentage of Households Receiving Financial Benefits

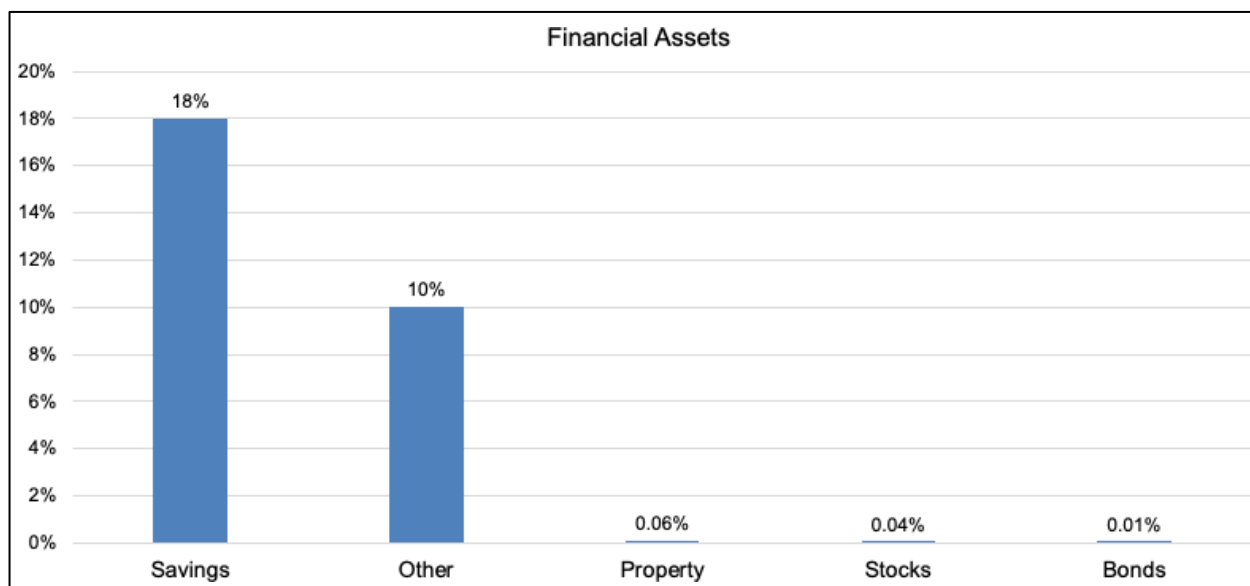


Figure 15: Percentage of Households with Financial Assets

Households with one or more working adults make up 58% of all respondents; 36% of respondents have one working adult in the household, 22% two working adults, and less than 1% of respondents identified 3 or more working adults. The 42% of households without a working adult are most likely retired individuals, based on the percentage of respondents who receive social security or retirement income. Additionally, of the households with one working adult, 68.98% have a full-time job, 15% have one part-time job, and 15% identified being retired. The number of retired persons is most likely underreported due to the limited options available to survey respondents (see the conclusion section of this report for more information on data limitations).

Community

Half of the survey respondents (50.7%) have lived in their homes for 10 years or more, and 3.4% have lived in their homes for 30 or more years. Of the respondents living in their homes less than 10 years, 19.7% have lived in their homes for 1-3 years, followed by 15.3% for 4-6 years, 9.9% for 7-9 years, and 4.4% for less than one year (see Figure 16). An overwhelming majority of survey respondents own their homes (90%), which remains relatively consistent when cross-referenced with length of time in home (see Figure 17).

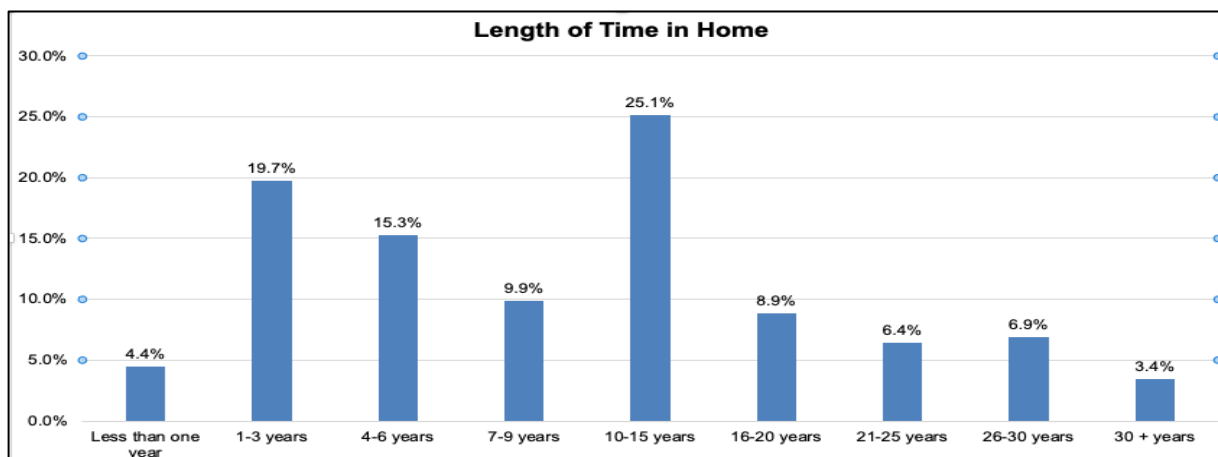


Figure 16: Length of Time in Home

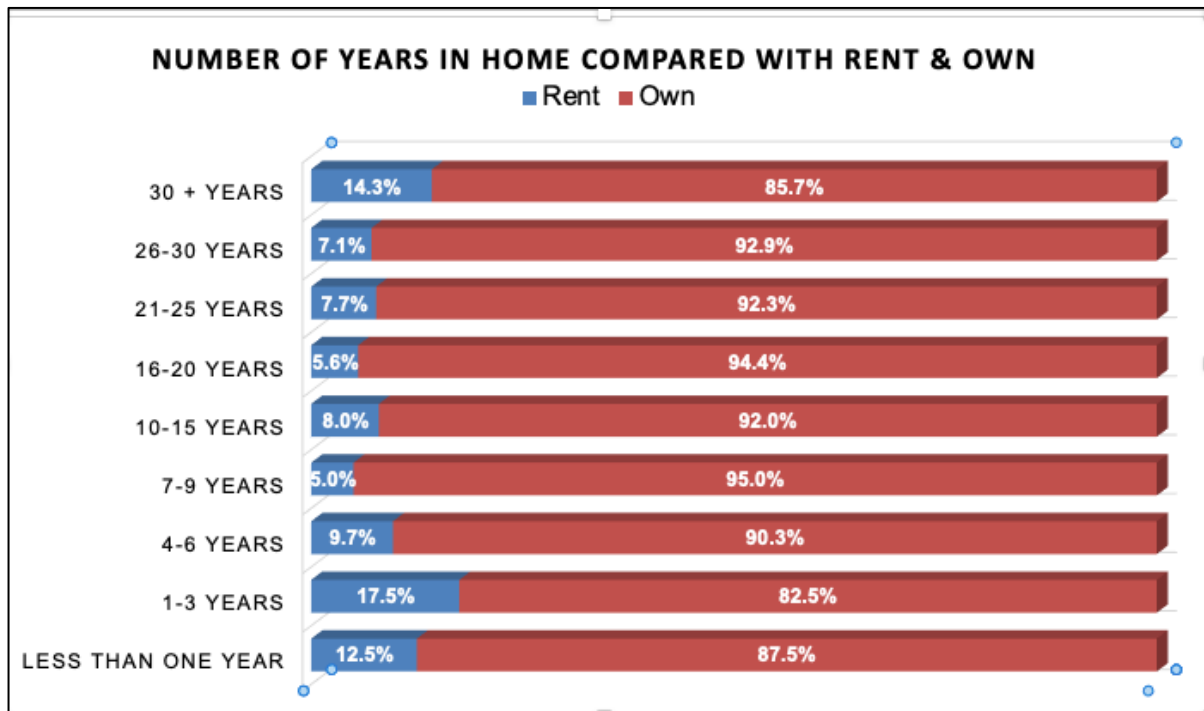


Figure 17: Length of Time in Home Compared to Renting or Owning Home

Most respondents expressed interest in their community purchasing the park land if the current owner were to sell (see Figure 18). Respondents identified a variety of requisites necessary for them to move toward becoming a resident owned community; these included: funds and financing as the most often cited need, followed by increased organization, working together, and community cohesion. Several respondents identified the need for more information, training, and education about the process, challenges, and opportunities for a community land purchase.

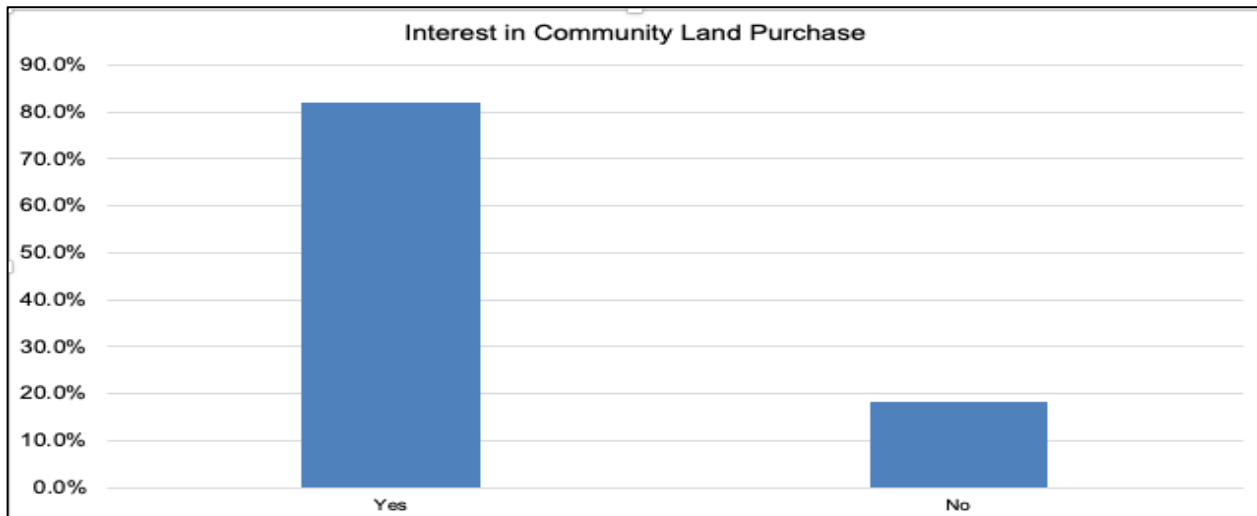


Figure 18: Interest in a Community Purchase of MHP land

Transportation

Most households have one or more cars available. However, 66.18% of respondents identified transportation challenges occurring one-to-three times per week, followed by 4-6 times per week for 13.24% of respondents, and 1-3 times per month for 16.18% of respondents, and 5% of respondents identified transportation challenges occurring 4 or more times per month. The reasons given for transportation were mainly identified by households without access to a car. For those with access to a car, the problems were mainly associated with the car breaking down, or difficulties due sharing the car with household member each with different transportation needs, and financial challenges associated with the cost of fuel. Several respondents also expressed frustration with public transportation and the ability to security transportation for medical appointments and the ability to accommodation persons with disabilities.

Monthly Expenses

The majority of survey respondents (57%) identified water/sewer costs being included in their lot rent. When comparing this with different MHP communities, nearly all residents of each community surveyed identified water/sewer included in their lot rent. Less than 5% overall identified the inclusion of gas/electric, and less than 1% identified the inclusion of Internet service in their lot rent (see Figures 19 and 20).

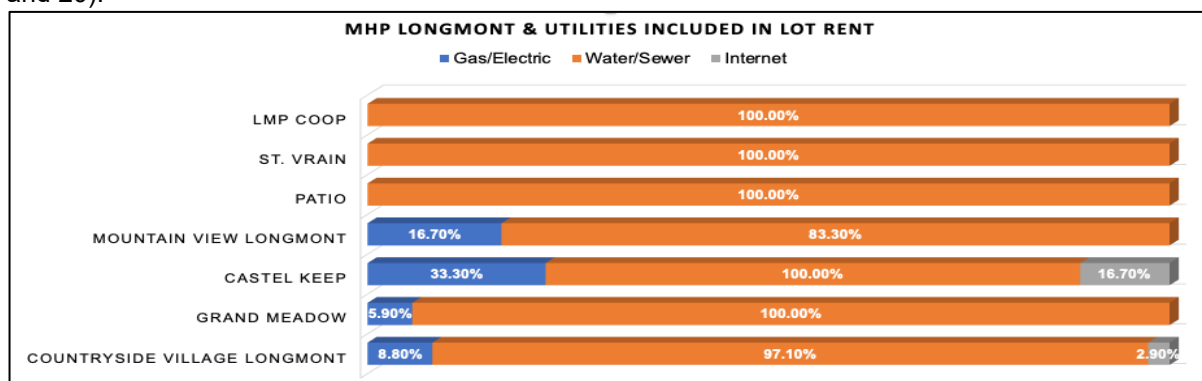


Figure 19: Longmont MHP: Utilities Included in Lot Rent

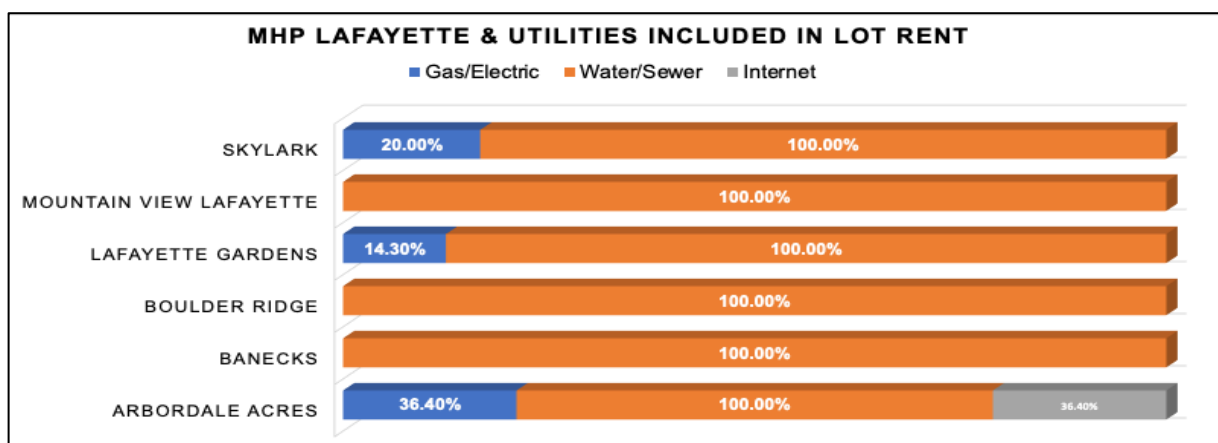


Figure 20: Lafayette MHP: Utilities Included in Lot Rent

Disruption of utility services in the past 12 months effected less than half of all respondents: 30% experienced a disruption in water/sewer service, 17% in Gas/Electric service, and 17% in Internet service. The disruption of water/sewer availability should be noted because the majority of MHP residents' water/sewer being included in their lot rent and maintained by park owners. Figure 21 visualizes the percentages of disruption in utility service per MHP. Note these percentages are drawn from the 30% of all respondents who reported a disruption in service.

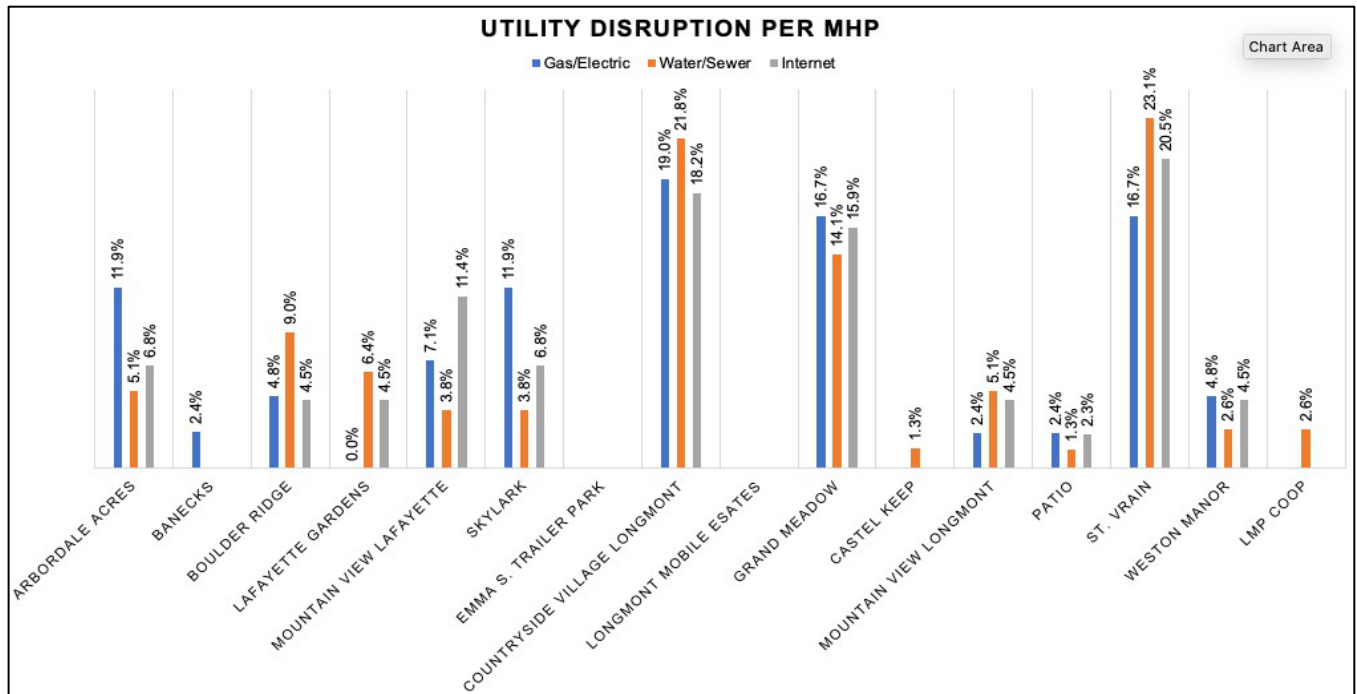


Figure 21: Disruption in Utility Services over past 12 Months per MHP

Respondents identified variable costs for lot rent, transportation, and utilities, as visualized in Figure 22. Additionally, respondents identified that both water/sewage and gas/electric costs fluctuating by season, with the most variability in costs occurring in winter for gas/electric, and summer for water/sewar (see Figure 23). A slight majority (52%) of respondents identified awareness of resources for food, rental or energy assistance, and (48%) identified a lack of awareness.

Expense	Monthly Average Cost	Range of Monthly Costs
Gas/Electric	\$151	\$18--\$600
Lot Rent	\$818	\$100--\$1,130
Transportation	\$258	\$300--\$2,000
Water/Sewar	\$68	\$5--\$500

Figure 22: Expenses

Condition of Home and Needed Repairs

Only 9% of respondents described their home in excellent condition, followed by 32% who identified their home in good condition. Most respondents (59%) identified their home as in either fair (34%) or poor/bad (25%) condition (see Figure 23). Respondents stated a slate of needed repairs for their homes. Nearly all respondents identified more than one aspect of the home in need of repair. Roof repair was most commonly cited as "in need of repair" followed by windows, appliances, siding/skirting, park infrastructure, floors or carpet replacement, doors, bathrooms, electrical concerns, and kitchen repairs (see Figure 23).

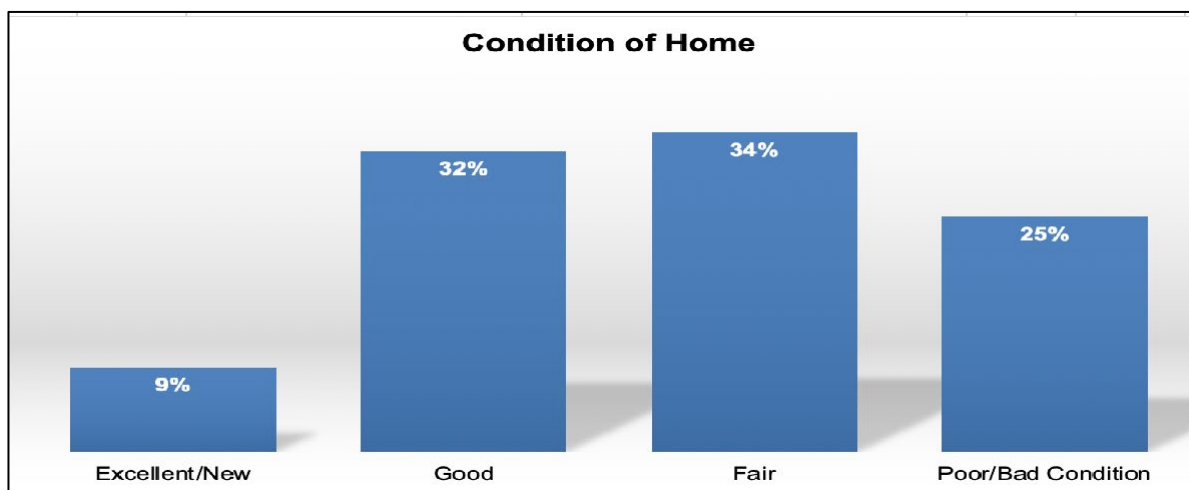


Figure 22: Aggregated Overview of the Condition of Individual Homes

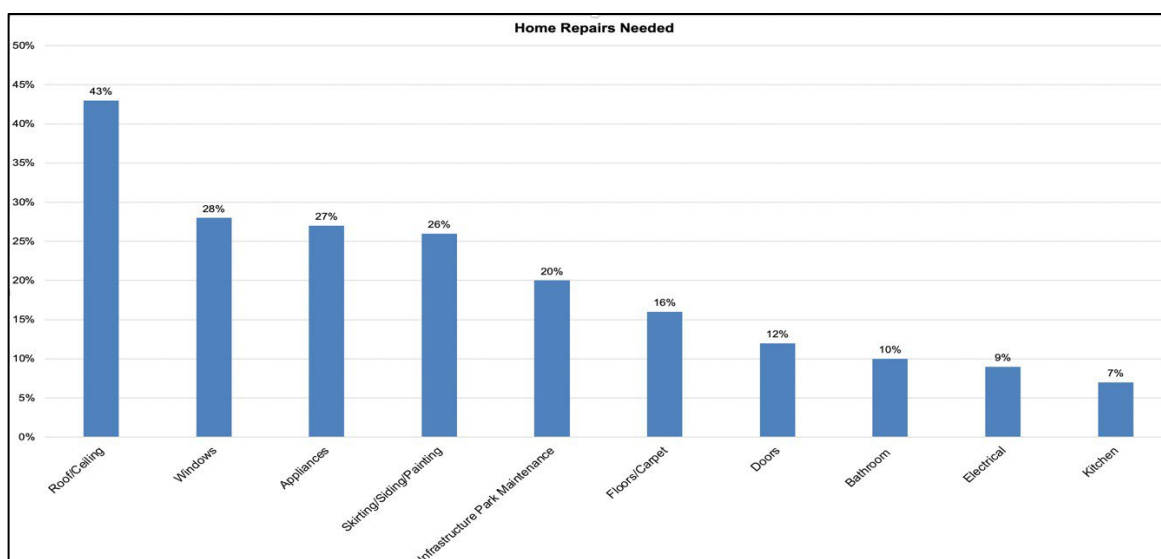


Figure 23: Types of Home Repairs Needed

Park Amenities

Park amenities varied significantly among the different parks in this study. Amenities ranged from MHPs with no amenities to MHPs with playgrounds, parks, pools, and community centers. Respondents identified a variety of *desired* amenities. Most residents were interested in parks and playground and public gathering places, along with a community center or other indoor public gathering place for residents. Several respondents were also interested in having a pool, gym, and dog park. While other respondents identified the need to repair, update, or expand/enlarge existing parks or playground spaces within their MHP.

Information Sharing

Most respondents identified email as the preferred method of contact, followed by text message, postal mail, door-to-door, and park management newsletter. Less than 10% of respondents identified Facebook, community bulletin boards, and a website as a preferred method of communication, and less than 5% choose NextDoor or selected “other” as a preferred communication method (see Figure 24).

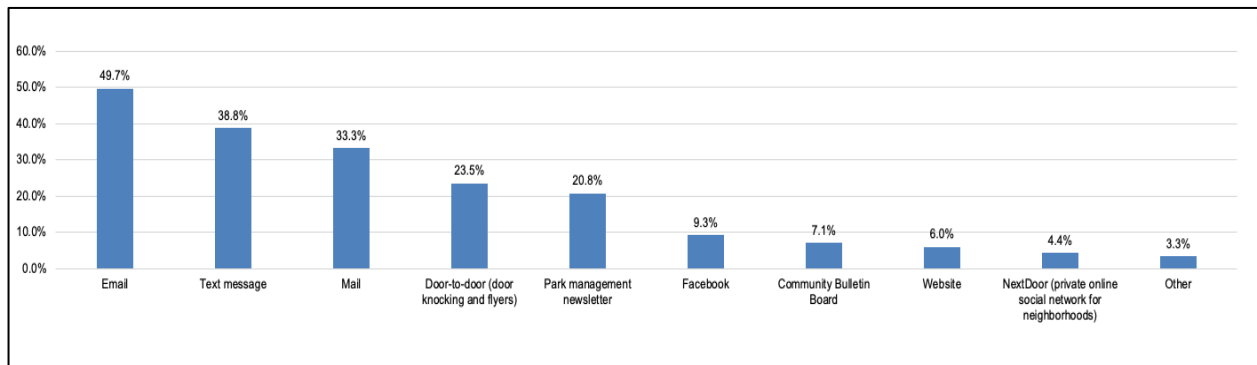


Figure 24: Best Methods for Contacting Residents

Water

Most survey respondents (55%) identified a regular use of bottled water. Figure 25 the percentage of respondents that stated they use bottled water on a regular basis per MHP. There were a variety of reasons for the use of bottled water. Many identified concerns about the taste, smell, and chemicals in the water in Lafayette. Others were concerned about the age of the pipes either in the park or their home, while others identified a lack of trust in the quality of the tap water in their homes. Several respondents predominantly drink bottled water because they believe it is healthier for them to do so, while others drink bottled water for convenience.

Manufactured Home Parks	% of Respondents Using Bottled Water on a Regular Basis
Arbordale Acres	57.0%
Boulder Ridge	78.0%
Lafayette Gardens	56.0%
Mountain View Lafayette	46.0%
Skylark	37.5%
Countryside Village Longmont	72.0%
Grand Meadow	20.0%
Castel Keep	67.0%
Mountain View Longmont	50.0%
Patio	75.0%
St. Vrain	48.4%
LMP COOP	75.0%

Figure 25: Bottled Water Usage per MHP

Additional Comments from Survey Respondents

Just under 30 survey respondents provided additional comments. All are included below:

- I don't think of myself as living in poverty even though I live in a trailer park. I got a divorce, and this was the only place I could afford to buy (I had money from the equity in my house). I'm very well educated (2 Master's degrees) and am a high school teacher. I am living quite well here but I don't think I could afford to buy a condo, so unless I suddenly felt like selling my soul to a man again, I expect I'll be carried out of here feet first. I actually love my place; I just don't like the stigma attached to living in a trailer park so I try to never tell people I live in one and I basically never invite people over...so that sucks. I feel anxiety about the idea that someone will find out I live here.
- I have had a stroke 6-14-23 and I hope you can read my print. I thank you for doing this (The Survey).
- I use filtered water in the refrigerator instead of tap water or bottled water. The highest utility cost season for water and sewer is summer and the highest for gas and electric is winter.
- I was in an accident my car needed work but ran good, while I was hurt the manager took my car out of my driveway and sold it and kept the money, it was worth \$5000-\$6000, I never saw a dime of the money.
- May be a more affordable recreation center. Direct center is not affordable maybe some sort of program through the through the trailer park.
- Need financial help with electricity. Our park has burnt-out yard lights in street. Mine has been out one year and it is a safety hazard. I have notified park management several times and nothing is done. I cannot afford to fix this. Can the city help?
- No late fees. When there is financial stress it makes things worse, and you can't just move away. You already live here and don't want to move, but also any other apartments cost a lot more.
- We would like to see improvement in our community.
- We would like to meet the owner of the park and ask him to please not raise the lot rent of the park anymore.
- Park owners: should personally speak to tenants regarding tenant concerns such as 1) rental increases, 2) tenant issues: park rules/regulation regarding adult supervision of youngsters, keeping pets on leashes, yard maintenance, expired car permits being driven by tenants, unused vehicles in driveways and on the street, abandoned cars. Property managers should follow up on the above rules/regulations instead of just monthly bills for monthly payments.
- Parking
- Personally, I think that it would help if Governor Polis could understand and support the importance of keeping mobile homes parks affordable. He seems to be out of touch with costs that retired people have. He did not support the limit proposed in rent increased last year. Obviously, he voted to support developers and those who stand to gain financially instead of his constituents.
- The city should have more control over the unfair and abusive rules of the trailer park owner.
- The corporation that owns grand meadows does not know the laws, rules, and regulations for mobile home parks. Except our 4 hour a day assistant who is blamed for everything. This is a senior home park.
- The cost of lot rent is way too high. Lot send rent should not be over \$350.
- The main thing I worry about is that the park will be sold, and they will kick us out and build homes or apartments. I could not afford to move or higher rent. This place is all I can afford.
- There is a problem with standing water in the neighborhood when it rains and snows. I could also use help getting my light replaced in my house.
- This park raises the rent every year and we don't get anything in return. They don't plow the snow properly and ice builds up in the gutters constantly. I have a pipe in the driveways gutter that constantly gets plugged. I don't know if there's a maintenance person I can call. I'm afraid to report problems for fear of retaliation from neighbors. I've had my gardens damaged on several occasions.
- Uncontrolled, annual rent increases are killing us!
- We lived here since 2007. Don't wish to be anywhere else. Calm, quiet, managed, and has changed for the better.
- We truly appreciate your help. God bless you.

- We're enraged to take care of their property. But rent keeps going up and there's no improvements, if nothing else it keeps going above hell. Trash everywhere!
- Lot rent increases every year, there needs to be a cap!
- Trees need desperately to be trimmed.

Conclusions

The responses to this survey provide a window into the financial and demographic structure of the community of people that live in Manufactured Homes in Longmont and Lafayette, Colorado. As this report shows, manufactured homes offer a form of home ownership for households with yearly incomes that are much less than the average median income for Boulder County. However, the fluctuation in utility and transportation costs, and increase in lot rent in many communities adds a constant financial burden, particularly for households on a fixed incomes or with yearly household incomes less than \$40,000.

Survey respondents are meaningfully invested in the health and cohesion of their communities, take pride in their homes, and have a keen desire to improve both their homes and the infrastructure and public use areas in their MHPs. Most have lived in their homes for more than 10 years and are invested in their respective communities, based on the additional comments from respondents and discussion of desired park amenities. Respondents who identified the need or desire for more park amenities were predominantly interested in communal or public spaces for the community to gather.

The following outlines some of the limitations of the collected data along with suggestions for improving future surveys and the need for additional qualitative research.

- Several respondents did not answer all of the questions on the survey.
- The demographic information collected was generally focused on the person answering the survey rather than household level data. For future surveys, it is recommended to tailor demographic questions that will gather household level data. For example: Number of people living in the household, gender, ages, race/ethnicity, etc. for each person in the household.
- Several respondents identified their households as bilingual, but this data was not reflected in the quantifiable data. Therefore, we recommend allowing respondents to select more than one language when identifying which language(s) are most often spoken at home.
- For "Yearly Household Income", it is unclear if respondents identified household income or only their individual yearly income. Therefore, we suggest future surveys include a drop-down menu to identify the yearly income for everyone in the household. This should then be cross referenced with jobs or types of jobs held by the working and retired members of the household.
- For the number of working adults in the household, it is recommended to provide a zero-value option and a zero/retired value option to capture data on households without a working adult, and households with retired individuals on a fixed income.
- The awareness of benefits question did not yield clear information. Therefore, it is recommended including a question such as "How easy is it for you to access financial assistance/benefits" and include a scale (from 1/easy to 5/very difficult). Additional suggestions include comparing awareness of benefits with use of benefits.
- Due to the low number of responses, it may be helpful to follow-up with respondents to determine how they found/heard about the survey, to track effective methods of distribution.

Based on the survey results, it is recommended to conduct follow-up interviews and/or focus groups within MHPs to gain better insights into community dynamics, community needs, necessary park improvements, and the relationship between park amenities and public spaces and community cohesion. Additional research through qualitative analyses is also necessary to reveal the relationship between public health concerns for low income individuals and families and affordable housing, particularly in MHPs.