

# Making Displacement Visible: A Case Study Analysis of the “Mission Trail of Tears”

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## How to Read this Document (A Table of Contents)

As a document of witness, this report is necessarily a long one: it has taken the time and space required to tell the story of Mission Trails, a mobile home park in San Antonio, Texas that was removed when the City voted to rezone it for luxury apartments in 2014, as part of an overarching downtown redevelopment plan known as the “Decade of Downtown.” However, we know that long, thorough documents are not necessarily the most widely read. For purposes of public communication and distribution, then, we want to emphasize that this document has numerous points of entry and engagement. While it can and should be read as a single story, it is also comprised of standalone sections that address particular aspects of that story. For instance, those who want just the data on the impacts of rezoning can review the executive summary. Those interested in the broader historical and sociological contexts that have produced a case like Mission Trails in a city like San Antonio will find Section 3 of interest. For those who want to understand the timeline of both the city's actions and residents' responses, Section 4 will prove useful, while Section 5 describes our methods and presents a far more detailed analysis of interview findings than is available in the executive summary, including residents' direct testimony. Finally, Section 6 addresses the question of the preventative policy solutions that flow from the details of this case.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

On February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014, a long-time resident of one of San Antonio's older inner city neighborhoods attended a meeting of the city's Zoning Commission and found herself witness to an extraordinary sight. Jessica Fuentes had gone to the meeting that day to monitor a zoning case in her own rapidly gentrifying neighborhood of Beacon Hill, and was moved to tears by what she observed—two dozen residents of a Southside mobile home park vehemently speaking out against a developer's proposal to rezone their homes to permit the construction of luxury apartments:

I entered the room, and was astonished to see the room filled to capacity. I was lucky to have found a seat. I didn't know what the heck was going on, and I thought I missed a call-to-action by ... other social justice orgs because ALL the folks were Mexicanos, working class, people that look just like me and our families. So, their case came up and then they started going up one-by-one to the podium. With their fuerte voices, in Spanish, in English, in mocho, full of confidence and passion!! And I cried in my seat!!!! And after it was all over, and they were filing out of the room, I went up to each of them. I hugged them and I shook their hands. And I told them that they were NOT ALONE!! That I would promise to make their case known to all of us.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed she did—and as it was for Fuentes, the shock felt by those of us who had been thinking and writing and organizing around gentrification was only deepened by our awareness that the case of Mission Trails had not occurred in a vacuum. For the two years prior, I had been working intensively alongside many others to support residents fighting to preserve neighborhoods and public spaces from encroachment by downtown redevelopment efforts, having returned to San Antonio in my 30s to find large-scale changes underway in the neighborhoods in which I had grown up. When I left the city to attend graduate school in 2002, the Tobin Hill neighborhood off N. St Mary's, where my father grew up, was largely the same neighborhood—working class, Mexicana/o—as the one where we had visited my grandparents as a child. When I returned with my doctorate in 2012, I was disturbed by the changes not just to this neighborhood, its casitas and boarded-up bottling plants now jarringly juxtaposed with the upscale retail and condos of the Pearl, but to neighborhoods throughout the central city. I was disturbed by the casual racism implicit in rhapsodic discussions of the new development as *beautification*, as though the lives and houses of those who called those neighborhoods home were by contrast without value—ugly, *blighted*.

At first we didn't have a name for what was happening. The changes were highly visible but the processes at work, the logic of it, felt almost abstract—the turning over of public parks and plazas to private ownership or control, the closure of a public street and neighborhood right-of-way to a large grocery chain to permit the construction of a downtown store, the fast-tracking of the demolition of a building culturally significant to the Mexicana/o community in order to construct high-end apartments. We turned ourselves blue trying to explain that land grabs were sinister because they hinted at the possibility of less symbolic forms of displacement, a task made easier when we realized there was a name for what was happening—*gentrification*—as well as a long literature detailing its root causes and impacts. And yet, until Mission Trails, the public conversation about gentrification was largely about access to public space—streets and parks, bridges and buildings and history. Displacement was the

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<sup>1</sup> Personal communication to author, April 14, 2015.

specter haunting these conversations, but it had not yet become material until that February afternoon in 2014 when we learned what a developer had planned for 1515 Mission Road. My heart sunk then, because on some level, we had seen it coming.

Yet what was happening in San Antonio was not exceptional. Like many cities around the United States, San Antonio is undergoing extensive redevelopment of its downtown, in this case spurred by a local visioning process known as SA2020. These changes have been promoted by city leadership according to New Urbanist discourses about creating a revitalized, sustainable and walkable city that attracts people back to the central city.<sup>2</sup> Implicitly, this discourse also promises to correct decades of uneven development and racialized neglect created by deliberate policy decisions to promote Northside growth and development at the expense of basic infrastructure and quality of life on the city's largely Mexicana/o and Black West-, East-, and Southsides.

However, as recognized by urban scholars as far back as the 1970s, the sort of “urban renaissance” imagined by the “Decade of Downtown” is more accurately “a back to the city movement by capital, not people”<sup>3</sup> As with other cities globally since the 1960s, the move to return capital to inner city San Antonio has been framed by neoliberal theories of wealth generation through the attraction of “creative class” professionals and private investment. For the historically neglected neighborhoods peripheral to downtown, redevelopment has primarily meant the various displacements of gentrification: land grabs, privatization of parks and public spaces, demolition of historic landmarks and sacred spaces, and the expulsion of the poorest and most vulnerable residents from the urban landscape, primarily the poor and homeless of San Antonio's majority Brown and Black population.

Of the many impacts of the city's push for downtown redevelopment, the most visible and egregious has been the case of Mission Trails. Located on a stretch of the San Antonio River that became valuable overnight after completion of a \$271M, publicly-funded river improvement project, Mission Trails Mobile Home Community became a target for redevelopment when the City of San Antonio approved the rezoning request that allowed developers to construct luxury apartments on the site. Over their pleas and protests, approximately 300 residents were displaced—more than half of them elders and children, half of them monolingual Spanish-speakers, many of them disabled, many undocumented, almost all of them low- or very low-income, almost all of them Mexicana/o and Chicana/o. This removal, and the more subtle evictions, privatizations, and enclosures that both preceded and followed it, in turn anticipated UNESCO's 2015 designation of San Antonio's Spanish Colonial Missions as a “world heritage” site, which has only intensified the push to make over the central city for an influx of cultural tourism and “young professionals.” In fact, Mission Trails was the second mobile home park in the Mission Reach area to face demolition; at the time of the rezoning, the Rolling Home Trailer Courts had already been leveled to construct another higher-end complex. To the aesthetic delight of downtown boosters, this one was a community of “tiny home” condos whose design and footprint found inspiration from the trailer homes they had disappeared from urban space.<sup>4</sup>

This is a report about gentrification in San Antonio, as told through the lens of Mission Trails, and rooted in the efforts of Vecinos de Mission Trails and many others to support residents as they organized to save their homes, to locate secure housing, and to ensure just and dignified treatment by

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<sup>2</sup> See Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002) and Jeff Speck's *The Smart Growth Manual* (2009), which have greatly informed urban planning approaches.

<sup>3</sup> Smith 1979.

<sup>4</sup> McNeel 2013. See <http://therivardreport.com/roosevelt-townhome-development/>

city officials and developers. We have produced this report because displacement by its very nature erases evidence of impact and confounds documentation. Once residents are displaced, it becomes conveniently difficult for those who have made decisions to remove them from urban space to understand the real impact of those decisions. As a case study of Mission Trails, our project refuses this erasure by documenting what happened and how residents were impacted, in three ways:

- 1) We document the *causes* of displacement, reviewing scholarly literature on gentrification, neoliberal urban development, and San Antonio political history so as to set the case of Mission Trails in its broader sociological, historical, and policy contexts;
- 2) We document *how displacement happened*, drawing on archival research (news media reports, city documents, internal communications obtained through Open Records requests, organizing notes, photographs) to produce a written historical record of the Mission Trails case;
- 3) We document the *effects* of displacement, compiling data we collected on the *lived impacts* of city policy from interviews with 51 households, approximately half of those displaced. Beyond the anecdotal, we aim to provide quantitative and qualitative information on what residents experienced during and following displacement—where they moved, how they decided where and when to go, how their health was affected, and what the most significant long-term impacts of rezoning and relocation have been.

These aims are animated by a vision of “research justice,” in which the community-led production of new knowledge supports collective efforts to transform structural inequalities. As conceptualized by DataCenter, one of the oldest (and only) research justice organizations in the U.S., “Research Justice is achieved when marginalized communities are recognized as experts, and reclaim, own, and wield *all* forms of knowledge and information. With strategic support, the knowledge and information generated by these communities can be used as political leverage to advance their own agendas for change.”<sup>5</sup> Methodologically, our project is grounded in a commitment to “strong objectivity,” originally defined by feminist philosopher of science Sandra Harding, which maintains that “by starting inquiry from the lived experiences of [those] who have been traditionally outside the institutions in which knowledge about social life is generated and classified, more objective and more relevant knowledge can be produced.”<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, this project draws methodologically on two central tenets of Participatory Action Research: first, the idea that the best research emerges out of particular community needs and struggles, in an effort to directly address those needs or support those struggles. And second, as researchers we regard residents as co-producers of new knowledge and policy experts in matters of displacement. As such we have sought to collaborate with them in posing questions, refining methods, and interpreting findings. Our interest in understanding the root causes of Mission Trails and in documenting it fully thus cannot be extricated from the work of direct action—building neighborhood capacity for resisting future displacement. But this project has also emerged from an insistence on the necessity of carving out deliberate times and spaces within movement-building for the slow, incremental—indeed, years-long—and often solitary work of reflection, analysis, and theory. Without this too, we jump from crisis to crisis.

To all these ends, the research in this report has been designed and conducted by members of Vecinos de Mission Trails—with support from Mission Trails residents, student interns from UTSA, professors

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<sup>5</sup> DataCenter 2017. See <http://www.datacenter.org/services-offered/research-justice/>

<sup>6</sup> Naples 2007. See <http://bit.ly/2nEbzl1b>

and independent scholars, and volunteers from the community—to further demands for a right to the city by generating knowledge that meets a wider community need to understand the human impacts of “economic development” as both rhetoric and reality, and to use this understanding to create policy from the ground up. In this report, we look up the road from Mission Trails to the site of the former Rolling Home Trailer Courts, cleared for condos without a trace; and down the road to the tiny mobile home communities that still dot the banks of the San Antonio River, in similar danger of extinction as downtown redevelopment rolls its way South. As a project of witness, we have produced this report to honor the voices and experiences of those pushed from their homes, refuting these disappearances from urban geography—the “Mission Escondida” (“Hidden Mission”) that names the new housing development to be built atop Mission Trails—by making the violence of erasure visible and visceral. But we equally hope to provide data that can help residents threatened with future displacement to push for policy that preserves their homes and neighborhoods. In the work of writing, researching, and remembering, we act to ensure that what happened at Mission Trails never happens again.

## 2. CAUSES: DEFINING DISPLACEMENT, DEFINING THE DECADE<sup>7</sup>

To start, it is helpful to provide some basic definitions, starting with gentrification. Although this report highlights the case of Mission Trails, we want to resist the tendency to define gentrification narrowly as a single, catastrophic moment of displacement. We also resist the argument—often heard from policy makers tasked with doing something about it—that gentrification is so broad it can't be defined or that everyone has their own definition. In fact, there is significant consensus among urban scholars about the definition of gentrification, which Loretta Lees, Tom Slater, and Elvin Wyly describe as “the transformation of a working class or vacant area of the central city into middle class and/or commercial use”<sup>8</sup> or, more simply, “class-based displacement.”<sup>9</sup> In a U.S. context where the operations of class cannot be extricated from race, we would also highlight a more expansive definition provided by Causa Justa/Just Cause in a report entitled “Development without Displacement: Resisting Gentrification in the Bay Area”:

We define gentrification as a profit-driven racial and class reconfiguration of urban, working-class, and communities of color that have suffered from a history of disinvestment and abandonment. The process is characterized by declines in the number of low-income people of color in neighborhoods that begin to cater to higher-income workers willing to pay higher rents. Gentrification is driven by private developers, landlords, businesses, and corporations, and supported by the government through policies that facilitate the process of displacement, often in the form of public subsidies. Gentrification happens in areas where commercial and residential land is cheap, relative to other areas of the city and region, and where the potential to turn a profit either through repurposing existing structures or building new ones is great.<sup>10</sup>

This definition captures the lived experience of gentrification from the ground up, as displacement, but also the subtle, cultural forms of eviction we see in land grabs, demolitions, and the erasure of cultural landscapes and sacred spaces significant to historically marginalized communities. This definition also corrects a too-narrow understanding of displacement that misses the important distinction made by Mark Davidson and Loretta Lees between displacement as “the brief moment in time where a particular resident is forced/coerced out of their home/neighborhood” versus *displacement pressure* as an ongoing process over time.<sup>11</sup>

What this distinction highlights is that a case like Mission Trails has to be understood as the most visible phase of a broader lifecycle of *displacement pressure* that begins with disinvestment, proceeds through land speculation and the emergence of “rent gaps,”<sup>12</sup> and culminates in the physical removal of

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<sup>7</sup> Portions of this section are forthcoming in “No Nos Moverán: Embodying Buen Vivir in the Case of Mission Trails Mobile Home Community” by Marisol Cortez, a chapter included in the anthology *Community as the Material Basis of Citizenship: The Unfinished Story of American Democracy*, edited by Rodolfo Rosales and published by Routledge.

<sup>8</sup> 2008, *Gentrification*: xv.

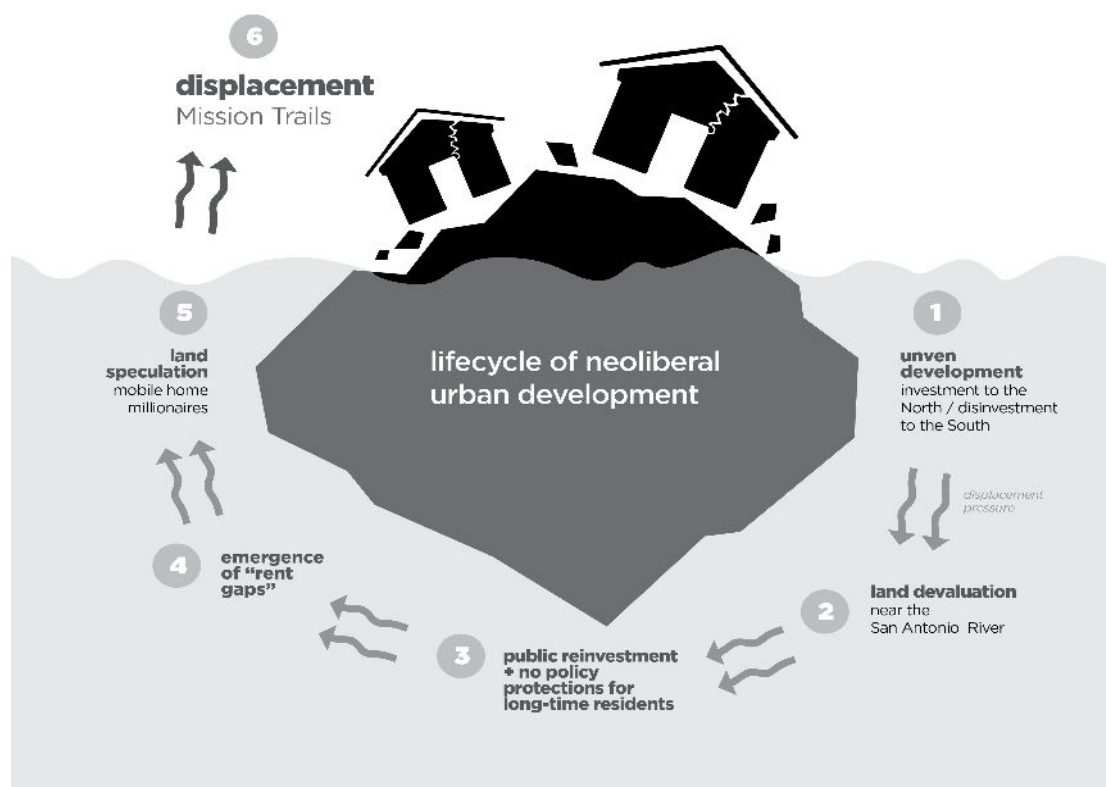
<sup>9</sup> Ibid.: xxii.

<sup>10</sup> 2014: 11-12.

<sup>11</sup> 2010, “New Build Gentrification: Its Histories, Trajectories, and Critical Geographies”: 400-402.

<sup>12</sup> Originally formulated by geographer Neil Smith, the concept of the rent gap is foundational to studies of gentrification. In his pioneering essay “A Theory of Gentrification: A Back to the City Movement by Capital, Not People,” Smith defines the rent gap as “the disparity between the potential ground rent level and the actual ground rent capitalized under the present land use” (1979: 545). For example, in the case of Mission Trails, rising land values following the redevelopment of the Mission Reach created a significant differential between *actual* rents if the land remained zoned for mobile homes and total

neighborhoods, cultural history, and residents. Alongside these removals is the destruction of affordable inner city housing stock that has been allowed to deteriorate through willful policy neglect. Thus, gentrification proceeds as part of a larger lifecycle of neoliberal urban development, visualized here:



Graphic Design Credit: Monica Velasquez

Additionally, gentrification happens through what Davidson and Lees call “exclusionary displacement,”<sup>13</sup> the indirect forms of removal that result when municipal governments subsidize the construction of housing unaffordable to lower-income residents, as seen with the construction of numerous projects around downtown. For instance, this chart summarizes rents for the ten apartment complexes that have been completed in San Antonio's downtown area following the creation of city incentive programs for multi-family housing (16 other projects have received incentives but have not yet been completed). While some affordable developments have received incentives (highlighted in bold), these projects lie outside the downtown area, where projects are higher-end compared to average rents for San Antonio at large (\$815 for a one-bedroom, \$1,040 for a two-bedroom):

Complex	Studio	1-Bedroom	2-Bedroom
The Agave	\$1,135-\$1,270	\$1,225-\$1,886	\$1,700-\$2,725
Cellars at Pearl		\$1,830-\$3,345	\$4,065-\$5,145
<b>Nopal Street Villas (Section 8)</b>			<b>\$950</b>
Peanut Factory Lofts		\$975-\$1,360	\$1,425-\$2,110

*possible* rents if it was rezoned for luxury apartments. This rent gap then attracted the attention of both American Family Communities as investor-owners and White-Conlee Builders as developers.

<sup>13</sup> 2010, “New Build Gentrification”: 398.



Rivera	\$1,245	\$1,225-\$1,685	\$1,925-\$2,385
<b>San Juan Apartments</b>			\$698-\$924
SoJo		\$1,800	\$2,800-\$3200
Southtown Flats	\$985-\$1,175	\$1,405-\$1,705	\$1,750-\$2,425
<b>Sutton Oaks (Section 8)</b>		<b>\$651</b>	<b>\$781</b>
Tobin Lofts	\$999	\$1,050	\$1,500-\$1,700

We include these forms of “exclusionary displacement” in our understanding of gentrification, as we do the encroachment of higher-end commercial redevelopment on working class neighborhoods. Even as this report focuses on Mission Trails, then, we cannot understand gentrification as a single moment of displacement, but rather as an ongoing process of *displacement pressure* generated by neoliberal urban policy—a concept to be explained below—which manifests in San Antonio as a broad range of “urban removals” at work beyond displacement narrowly. More than simply neighborhoods in transition, these various forms of removal represent sites of struggle or *fronteras*—interfaces—where deliberate policy decisions to favor private interests come into conflict with efforts to preserve various kinds of public goods or commons (i.e. housing, public space, air and water, cultural history). We have compiled this range of removals in the following typology, organized according to the phase of gentrification underway (from imminent to advanced, disinvestment to displacement)<sup>14</sup>

Geographic Relation to Downtown	Site of Struggle	Type of “Urban Removal”
Near Westside	Frio Road Corridor (Cattleman Square redevelopment, Westside Multimodal Transit Station, UTSA Downtown, Peanut Factory Lofts)	Criminalization and expulsion of homeless residents and day laborers from public spaces; displacement pressure on nearby public housing and working class neighborhoods
Near Northside (Beacon Hill)	French and Michigan rezoning	Displacement pressure on long-time residents via commercial encroachment and remaking of working class neighborhoods for middle class tastes
Near Northside (Beacon Hill)	Save Miguel’s House	Disinvested inner city housing stock targeted for demolition via code compliance enforcement and harassment by real estate “flippers”
Near Southside (Mission Reach)	Rolling Homes Trailer Courts; Mission Trails Mobile Home Community	Forced removal due to uncontrolled land speculation; destruction of affordable inner city housing stock to create market-rate housing
Downtown Core	Travis Park Remodeling	Expulsion and criminalization of homeless and poor residents to remake of public spaces for middle class tastes
Downtown Core	KWEX Demolition	Destruction of cultural landmarks historically significant to working class communities of color; publicly subsidized construction of unaffordable housing
Near Eastside (Promise Zone Neighborhood)	Wheatley Courts redevelopment	Displacement and temporary homelessness resulting from restrictive conditions for returning to public housing after its conversion to “mixed income” housing; displacement pressure on

<sup>14</sup> See Causa Justa/Just Cause's *Development without Displacement* for a more extensively developed example of how to generate a typology that maps stages of gentrification geographically within a given city. On the basis of this typology, the report's authors are then able to offer more targeted recommendations for policy solutions.

		surrounding neighborhoods
Near Eastside (Dignowity Hill Neighborhood)	Hays Street Bridge Restoration Group vs. City of San Antonio	Privatization of public space (“land grabs”); remaking of working class neighborhoods for middle class tastes; expulsion of working class, poor and homeless residents from public spaces

As is evident from the examples above, gentrification in San Antonio has a variety of localized manifestations, yet each of these cases is merely a dot connected by the same set of underlying forces: the profit logic that organizes private imperatives to accumulate land and land values, publicly subsidized by local government and justified ideologically by rhetorics of “economic development” that prescribe a growth-at-any-cost agenda.

To fully understand how these forces work, however, and how they have produced the case of Mission Trails, it is necessary to take a step back and situate the local—San Antonio's “Decade of Downtown”—in the national and global. What is happening in San Antonio is not unique, but rather lies at the confluence of two world historic forces. First is the global shift to a neoliberal urbanism well-documented in urban sociology and urban geography; however, this has been layered onto and complicated by a second, longer colonial history that continues to shape the city's approach to economic development, reflected most recently in the push to designate the city's five Spanish colonial missions as “World Heritage” sites.

With a population just shy of 1.5 million, San Antonio is the 7th largest city in the United States and the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest in Texas. It is known as a sunbelt city, according to political scientist Richard C. Jones, a designation that emerged in the 1970s coincident with broader “transformations in the national capitalist economy,” as historically industrial cities in the Midwest and Northeast lost their manufacturing base to corporate outsourcing and consequently lost population. Southern cities in turn experienced population gains and also economic growth, with Texas considered a premiere location for economic growth among all sunbelt cities because of its “business climate—a favorable tax structure, lack of unionism, and general probusiness sentiments.”<sup>15</sup>

Yet Jones argues further that even within Texas, San Antonio is distinctive in that it has always had a “low industrial profile,” with its economic base long rooted in the service industry—especially tourism—and military/government employment, reflecting the city’s historical origins in Spanish colonialism and Anglo settlement. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century establishment of the Missions as military outposts and centers for Native conversion, and in the Battle of the Alamo which came to symbolize the triumph of Anglo settlement westward, we see the foundational removals on which San Antonio has been built as a city. One has been physical, in the extermination and enslavement of Indigenous and African populations; while the latter has been economic and political, in the subordination and segregation of their Mestiza/o and Black descendants. In this way, the urban removals of 21st century gentrification can be understood as an extension of a longer colonial history that dates back to the 16th century. The Austin-based organization PODER (People Organized in Defense of Earth and Her Resources) suggests as much in its argument that gentrification in East Austin represents the “continued relocation of native people from their homeland,”<sup>16</sup> as do Atkinson and Bridge in their description of gentrification as “the new

<sup>15</sup>Jones 1981. “San Antonio’s Spatial Economic Structure, 1955-1980,” in *The Politics of San Antonio: Community, Progress, and Power*: 30.

<sup>16</sup>Almanza, Herrera, and Almanza 2003. “SMART Growth, Historic Zoning, and Gentrification of East Austin: Continued Relocation of Native People from their Homeland.”

urban colonialism.”<sup>17</sup>

San Antonio’s colonial legacy continued in a different form after Anglo settlement began full force in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, driven by desires to extend slavery into Texas. The political structure which emerged after the city’s incorporation in 1837 reflected this new social order. Despite the majority Brown and Black demographics of San Antonio, Anglo rule in local government prevailed from incorporation until the 1970s. Whereas the first city council in 1837 was entirely Spanish-surnamed, by 1850 only one Spanish-surnamed alderman remained on Council; and from Reconstruction through the early 1950s, when the rise of the Good Government League institutionalized tokenized Brown and Black representation, only 7 council seats of 399 were held by council members with Spanish surnames.<sup>18</sup> Only since the late 1970s have city councils reflected San Antonio’s demographics, after a Department of Justice ruling which required the city to shift from at-large elections to single member districts.

Despite this apparent shift in complexion, the policy agenda in San Antonio has remained the same from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century until today—economic growth and development, as analyzed by Rodolfo Rosales in *The Illusion of Inclusion* from a race/class perspective.<sup>19</sup> As with other municipalities, urban policy in San Antonio is driven by what urban sociologists John R. Logan and Harvey Molotch famously called “growth machines” in their classic *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place*.<sup>20</sup> According to Logan and Molotch, growth machines are the coalition of business and civic interests that promote economic growth, seemingly at any cost, as both taken for granted good and proper object of policy. This growth is measured not in terms of population, but rather the city’s ability to attract private investment and lure large employers.

We can see the outline of this growth agenda in the city’s many public subsidies for incentivizing private development—tax abatements and refunds, fee waivers, tax increment financing, inner city incentive funds, as well as the historic role of utility rate hikes as a regressive tax that offloads the costs of expansion onto the poorest households. This agenda is also reflected in the influence of a development lobby that is still overwhelmingly white, male, and wealthy, despite the demographic changes in who occupies mayoral and council seats.<sup>21</sup> This influence is abetted too by the political

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<sup>17</sup> Atkinson and Bridge 2005, *Gentrification in a Global Context: The New Urban Colonialism*.

<sup>18</sup> Numbers have been compiled from historical records maintained by the City of San Antonio for each City Council from 1837-present (see <http://www.sanantonio.gov/MunicipalArchivesRecords/AboutArchivesRecords/Officials.aspx#13098666-1850-1837>). David Montejano has made a similar point in *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (1987, 40), as do David R. Johnson, John A. Booth, and Richard J. Harris in *The Politics of San Antonio* (1981).

<sup>19</sup> Rosales 2000.

<sup>20</sup> Logan and Molotch 1987.

<sup>21</sup> For this reason, María Antonietta Berriozábal, former San Antonio Councilwoman and the first Chicana Councilwoman on any city council in the United States, refers to this lobby as the “17 White Men.” In her political memoir *María, Daughter of Immigrants*, she describes how she arrived at this name. “One day,” she writes, “I made a list, drawing on my experiences in City Hall. I counted the big developers, bankers, realtors, construction magnates, media moguls, environmental engineers representing big businesses that wanted to locate over the aquifer, and other major business leaders. These were the individuals in town who wielded the power in City Hall to determine when, how, and where our city would invest major resources. That day I counted seventeen people—they all happened to be men and they were all white. So instead of using the terms ‘the establishment’ or ‘the business elite,’ I started describing our establishment as ‘the seventeen white men’ who run our city. Over the past twenty years when I have used the term to drive home the point that ‘we, the people’ are not determining our city’s future, some have taken exception to the use of the term ‘white.’ But that is simply a fact, as much as is the fact that all are men. Most who hear me use the phrase want to know the names of the men, but that is irrelevant. One will leave and another one with the same interests and power to advance them will replace him” (2012: 236).

structure of the city, which since the 1950s has placed day-to-day policy implementation in the hands of an unelected city manager and staff, precisely to avoid the ethnic- or class-based interests possible under a mayor-council system, which would risk compromising the “value neutral” appearance of a unified growth agenda.<sup>22</sup> These features of the city's political structure have locked in place the racialized patterns of uneven development resulting from a growth agenda, with the affluent and historically Anglo Northside developing at the expense of the Mexicana/o and Black East-, West-, and Southsides. Although these dynamics have been muddled by the northward migration of middle-class Latina/os, uneven development to the North has been the overarching trajectory that even today informs the rationale for the “Decade of Downtown.”

While a consensus on growth and the racialization of uneven development characterizes many U.S. cities, in San Antonio these dynamics coincide with a geographically unique feature in the city's hydrology. From the city's founding in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the establishment of Spanish missions along its riverbanks, the San Antonio River, along with the springs that feed the river and the aquifer that feeds the springs, has been central to the political geography of colonial and neocolonial development in San Antonio. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the spring-fed headwaters of the River—now dry except during heavy rains—became the city's main source of water for residential needs and industry, including the Riverwalk that lies at the heart of San Antonio's contemporary tourist economy. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, new understandings of the Edwards Aquifer as the life source of San Antonio's watershed played a significant role as a limit to Northward growth, suggesting that environmental degradation and structural inequalities of race, gender, and economics have a common root in the growth machine that privileges private interests over public goods. And in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the river has again become the focus of efforts to redirect capital back to the center city, reflecting conflicting impulses between newer emphases on ecological preservation and a vision of the river as “amenity” for cultural tourism and downtown redevelopment. From the beginning of San Antonio's colonial history to the present moment, then, the River has served as “anchor/pawn” for destruction of Indigenous lifeways and relations to place.<sup>23</sup> Yet it has also been a symbol of survival and resistance to those same forces of destruction and a powerful physical check on growth politics.

Contemporary understandings of San Antonio's political geography frame it less in terms of colonialism or racism than poverty concentration and income segregation, but contemporary maps of these phenomena are nonetheless striking. In 2012, the Pew Research Center released a study showing that among all large U.S. cities, the San Antonio-New Braunfels metropolitan area has the highest level of income segregation.<sup>24</sup> The geographical pattern of this segregation reflects the racialized histories of uneven development that have promoted growth to the North at the expense of the inner city:

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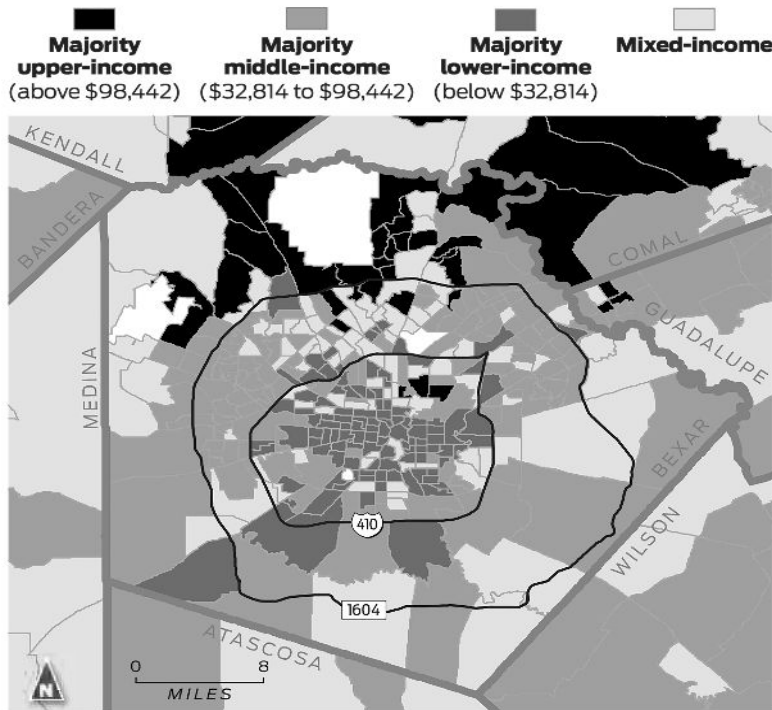
<sup>22</sup> Booth and Johnson 1981, “Power and Progress in San Antonio Politics, 1836-1970”: 24.

<sup>23</sup> For a powerful statement that connects the dots between the long histories of genocide and the contemporary realities of displacement that San Antonio's Missions represent, see Vecinos de Mission Trails's response to a city-sponsored World Heritage celebration that took place in October 2015, with support from the Carrizo-Comecrudo Tribe and the American Indian Movement of Central Texas: <https://www.facebook.com/events/438602016328045/>

<sup>24</sup> Taylor and Fry 2012, “The Rise of Residential Segregation by Income.” See <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/08/01/the-rise-of-residential-segregation-by-income/>

## Residential segregation by income in 2010

Census tracts in Bexar County and surrounding counties shaded based on income, with \$49,221 being the median household income for this area in 2010.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau    Research by Joe Yerardi, Data Editor

Figure 1: Income segregation in San Antonio<sup>25</sup>

The “Decade of Downtown” in some ways has responded to these entwined patterns of uneven development and environmental degradation, seeking to reverse sprawl to the North and return investment to the center city. Both the name and the concept emerged from a visioning process called SA2020, instigated by then-Mayor Julián Castro soon after his election in 2009. The purpose of SA2020 was to bring hundreds of community leaders together—selected with the help of the Greater Chamber of Commerce—to examine “the city’s challenges and goals for the next decade,” as described by Jennifer Hiller in the *Express-News* on June 20, 2010. Much of the emphasis focused on “revitalizing” downtown to create a “lively 24-7 urban vibe” marked by walkable sidewalks and bike lanes; a “world class” performing arts center coupled by a “world class” park at Hemisfair Plaza; a downtown grocery store; a street car connecting two major mixed-use development projects; and, most importantly, the construction of multifamily housing that would add 7,500 units and attract new residents to the downtown area. These residents would be young, single, and professional: “It’s the ‘Decade of Downtown,’” Julián Castro commented in an *Express-News* article by Vianna Davila from September 24, 2011. “It’s making our city more attractive to the creative class.”

Toward this end, the policies associated with the Decade of Downtown intended primarily to attract private capital to the downtown core, remaking historically disinvested neighborhoods so as to attract

<sup>25</sup> Hamilton and Hicks 2012, “Income is S.A.’s Great Divider.” See [http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local\\_news/article/Income-is-S-A-s-great-divider-3755547.php](http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local_news/article/Income-is-S-A-s-great-divider-3755547.php)

workers from new “creative” professional sectors. To facilitate these transformations, the city created new organizations, passed new ordinances, and developed new policies, the most significant of which has been the Inner City Reinvestment Infill Policy (ICRIP). Created in February of 2010, ICRIP identified large areas inside Loop 410 within which development projects would be eligible for fee waivers, tax abatements, grants, and loans (see Figure 2). Simultaneously, the city created Centro Partnership, a private-public partnership charged with undertaking downtown redevelopment. This was followed in June of 2012 by the creation of the Center City Housing Incentive Program (CCHIP), which updated the incentives offered by ICRIP specifically to encourage the construction of apartments and condos in the central city. Originally inscribing a target zone that covered roughly the original 36 square mile footprint of the city, CCHIP offered low-interest loans to housing developers, along with real property tax reimbursement grants, SAWS fee waivers, and a more streamlined, guaranteed process for accessing incentives.<sup>26</sup> In other words, under CCHIP, the city relaxed its permitting process so that developer incentives would be more automatic—a technicality rather than a matter for public discussion—and center city housing projects would move through the permitting process more quickly, in 2-6 weeks instead of 3-12 months.

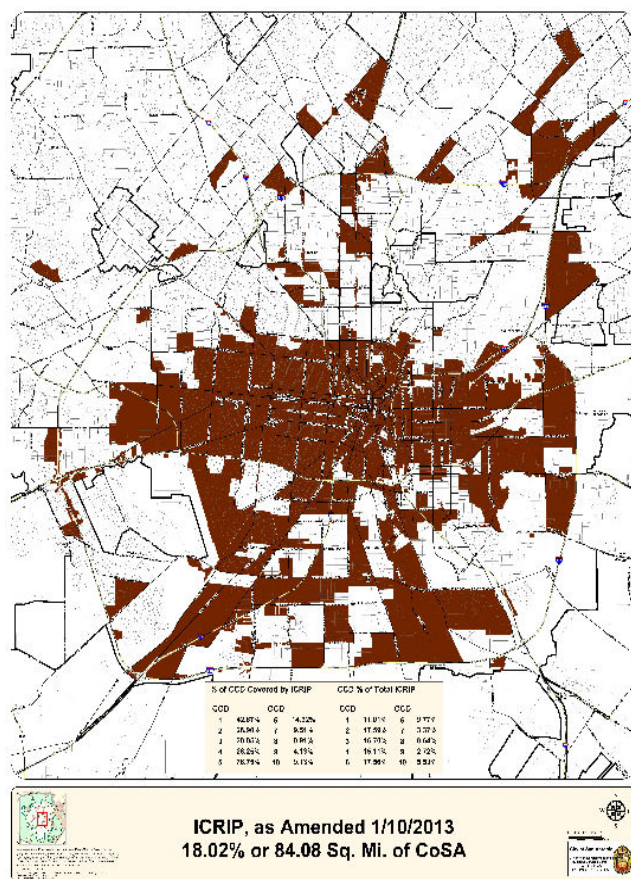


Figure 2: City-granted incentives for new residential development: the Inner City Reinvestment Infill Policy zone<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> In June 2016, in response to concerns that these incentives were promoting gentrification, the CCHIP zone was restricted geographically from 36 square miles to the 5.2 square mile Central Business District (see <http://www.mysanantonio.com/real-estate/article/Council-shrinks-coverage-area-of-downtown-8247682.php>).

<sup>27</sup> City of San Antonio 2013. See <http://www.sanantonio.gov/CCDO/Resources/ICRIPMap>

Other policies which have assisted the displacement of working class and poor people from the central city include a tougher downtown panhandling and solicitation policy; grants of up to \$10,000 to city employees for downpayment and closing cost assistance for homes within the ICRIP zone; and a vacant building ordinance that makes no distinction between absentee corporate owners sitting on property for purposes of land speculation and small property owners lacking resources for maintenance. Zoning processes (as in the case of Mission Trails) and code compliance enforcement (used as a tool of house flippers looking to acquire inventory in hot housing markets) have also been used to remove long-time residents from land become suddenly valuable due to publicly-subsidized reinvestment.

There is a progressive case to be made that the goals of these policy shifts are admirable—reversing sprawl to the North, reducing development over the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone, and lessening the subsidies extracted from inner city residents to support new growth. However, it is important to note that the ICRIP map and the map of income segregation in San Antonio are virtually the same, meaning the lowest-income neighborhoods are those most incentivized for redevelopment and thus prime for the appearance of rent gaps. Without policy protections whose strength matches the support given developers, the importation of higher income residents into poor neighborhoods to produce “mixed income” neighborhoods has meant the ravages of displacement, as in the case of Mission Trails.

On a national scale, Mission Trails inevitably evokes histories of Urban Renewal for those who lived through it. As a major metropolitan area, San Antonio took part in Urban Renewal policies intended to remake downtowns through the removal of “blighted” neighborhoods and houses. Perhaps the most famous local example is the clearing of 1,200 homes on the eastern edge of downtown to construct Hemisfair Park as the site for the ‘68 World’s Fair; but residential and commercial areas on the near-Westside were also removed, as were neighborhoods on the western edge of downtown, only to sit vacant for decades. Mission Trails also recalls the razing of Victoria Courts, a public housing complex across the street from Hemisfair Park, as part of 1990s welfare reforms. Under Clinton’s HOPE VI, what Tony Roshan Samara calls a “dispersal consensus” led to the closure and demolition of public housing under theories of poverty deconcentration, a close cousin to the “culture of poverty” argument that the cause of generational poverty is living around other poor people, and the solution thus to move them out “for their own good.”<sup>28</sup>

The most recent history to inform the Decade of Downtown is also the largest in scale: namely, the global economic shifts to a neoliberal form of capitalism that have equally shaped relationships between corporate and state actors at the local level. *Neoliberalism* refers to a form of governance specific to post-industrial capitalism, characterized primarily by a closer, more accommodating relationship between capital and the state. Under industrial or monopoly capitalism, corporate power was held in check by the “Keynesian compact,”<sup>29</sup> consisting of a New Deal safety net and large, national trade labor organizations. Under neoliberal capitalism, however, austerity politics have prevailed, with services and public goods previously ensured by local and national governments increasingly outsourced to non-state and quasi-state agencies. This is often interpreted as a rollback of state protections, but it is better viewed as an active handing over—the state on all scales (global, regional, local) *actively* relaxes its responsibilities for human and environmental wellbeing in order to facilitate a more intensive mobility of capital across national borders. For these reasons, neoliberalism is famous for undermining democratic process, relocating the externalities of profit accumulation so that national governments have no mechanism for holding corporations accountable for their environmental and social impacts.

<sup>28</sup> Samara 2012, “Citizens in Search of a City: Towards a New Infrastructure of Political Belonging”: 39.

<sup>29</sup> Purcell 2012, “Insistent Democracy: Neoliberal Governance and Popular Movements in Seattle”: 173.

Numerous urban scholars have understood gentrification as neoliberalism on a neighborhood scale, arising from transformations in the relationship between capital and municipal government. Purcell has argued that while local governments previously were points of distribution for federal money, the slashing of public budgets generally has meant that cities are forced to function like businesses, competing on the global market for private investment.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, Lees et al. state that “city governments now act less as regulators of markets to protect marginalized residents and more as entrepreneurial agents of market processes and capital accumulation.”<sup>31</sup> In this way, real decision making, particularly around land use, is increasingly made behind the scenes by developers and their lobbyists—the “Seventeen White Men”—or by the public-private partnerships that effect subtle forms of eviction with less accountability to public participation (for example, park conservancies whose formation restricts long-time small vendors for expensive food trucks).

The Decade of Downtown is not exceptional, then. In fact, it is textbook—an outgrowth of the broader economic shifts reorganizing cities globally, according to the dual logics of austerity on the one hand and privatization on the other. Because San Antonio’s economy was never heavily industrial to begin with, it perhaps took longer for “third wave gentrification” to reach San Antonio’s shores compared to highly deindustrialized metropolitan centers like London, New York, and San Francisco.<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, what is happening in San Antonio in the 2010s is part of the same unfolding process that Lees et. al. describe as “the leading edge of neoliberal urbanism.”<sup>33</sup>

The neoliberal turn in San Antonio intersects with another world historical force that is as long-running as it is contemporary, and as specific to San Antonio as it is global—namely, the colonial histories of European settlement and Indigenous removal embodied in current efforts to orient development around the recent “World Heritage” designation of San Antonio’s Spanish Colonial Missions. While the Decade of Downtown preceded UNESCO’s designation both chronologically and within the public imagination as a primary driver of inner city redevelopment, the relationship is arguably reversed: it is the global push for “creative cities” which has thought up the Decade of Downtown. For instance, a report back from a 2010 conference on the “Creative Cities movement” identifies this movement as a well-established global force since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century: “Since 2004, UNESCO has promoted a Creative Cities Network highlighting cultural diversity, heritage and the unique products of urban centers.”<sup>34</sup> Although discussed as temporally and geographically distinct phenomena, both the Decade of Downtown and World Heritage designation can be viewed as local, contemporaneous expressions of

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<sup>30</sup> Purcell 2002, “Excavating Lefebvre: The Right to the City and Its Urban Politics of the Inhabitant”: 100-101.

<sup>31</sup> Lees, Slater, and Wyly 2008: 49.

<sup>32</sup> Jason Hackworth and Neil Smith (2001) have proposed a “wave” or “stage” model of gentrification, according to which gentrification becomes more nakedly corporate-driven and global in nature as it progresses. First wave or “classical” gentrification began in 1960s London and New York City and is associated with individual, middle-class homebuyers restoring homes in “blighted” neighborhoods with some public subsidy. In the post-recession 70s and 80s, second wave gentrification moved out to non-global cities and to more stable neighborhoods, becoming more integrated with “new cultural strategies of economic redevelopment, meaning new investments in museums and art galleries” and at the same time with “global systems of real estate and banking finance” (Lees et al 2008: 177). Beginning at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, third wave gentrification has become “more corporate, more state facilitated, and less resisted than ever before,” (178). Here it is corporate developers and finance capital buying and flipping properties—hardly the quaint image of aspirational young couples investing sweat equity into run-down neighborhoods.

<sup>33</sup> Lees et al 2008: xvii.

<sup>34</sup> Borup 2010, “Creative City Fever: The 2010 City, Culture, and Society Conference, Munich.” See <https://decipheringculture.com/category/arts-community/politics/>



the same global movement to place culture at the center of local economic development strategies.<sup>35</sup>

And while the "world heritage" on display here may be specific to San Antonio, further evidence of the global scope of this strategy can be seen in other cities reorganizing land use policies around efforts to cultivate a cosmopolitan image. For example, half a world away from South Texas, slum clearance and mass displacement is on the rise in millennial Delhi too, driven by the same aspirations to "world class city" status. As Gautam Bhan points out, neoliberal restructuring in India has shifted views of both the government's role and the rights of the poor to occupy urban space, such that eviction of informal settlements—once condemned by the courts as unjust—is "understood as acts of governance rather than violation."<sup>36</sup> With the poor now represented as illegal squatters and defilers of public land, Bhan argues that the visual dimensions of poverty come to eclipse its historical and social production, such that "the slum is ... consumed as an image: flat, without history, without structure and emptied of those who live within it."<sup>37</sup> The solution becomes to simply banish it from sight through mass eviction, an erasure which "is necessary to transform the city's appearance into a 'world class city.'"<sup>38</sup> Like the slum, the city itself is aestheticized: flattened to an attractive image for global consumption.

Mission Trails, then, has been as much a casualty of the "creative cities" push for World Heritage recognition—or, to be more specific, the celebration of Spanish colonial histories of Native removal and assimilation—as of the Decade of Downtown. For it was the river restoration project known as the Mission Reach, which preceded but also led to World Heritage designation, which triggered the rising land values that attracted speculators to the area not long after. The Mission Reach development, an eight-mile stretch of river south of downtown which connects four of the city's five Spanish Colonial Missions, was part of a larger, \$381.4M project to extend the Riverwalk, San Antonio's famous downtown tourist attraction, to the North and South, from the river's headwaters all the way to its southernmost Mission. Construction of the Mission Reach segment began in 2008 and was completed in October of 2013 with \$271.4M in federal, city, county, and private funds, the bulk contributed by Bexar County at \$196.3M. One of the objectives of the Mission Reach portion of the project was to ecologically restore a river that had been channelized in the 1960s and 70s by the Army Corps of Engineers for flood control, renaturing its banks and planting native habitat; another was to create a recreational space that would function as a linear park along the river, with funds used to construct 15 miles of hike and bike trails, foot bridges, park pavilions, and other amenities. And a third objective was to angle for World Heritage recognition for the Missions. While UNESCO did not declare the Missions a World Heritage site until July 2015, lobbying efforts began nine years earlier, in 2006—not coincidentally in concert with the genesis of the project.

In 2017, you can walk or bike along the banks of the San Antonio River and see egrets flying overhead and black river snakes poking their heads above stands of native grasses, startled to attention. Indeed,

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<sup>35</sup> Tellingly, the city's mission statement (appended to all press releases and official communications) was revised in 2015 to reflect this cultural focus, emphasizing San Antonio's "vibrant culture and economy" amidst its continuing economic base in military employment and tourism. Titled "One San Antonio," this statement reads, in part: "We are 'Military City USA, home to crucial military commands supported by a patriotic citizenry. We welcome 31 million visitors annually who inject \$13.4 billion annually into our economy, and UNESCO recently designated the city's Spanish colonial missions as a World Heritage Site. Celebrating its 300th anniversary in 2018, San Antonio is a city with a storied past and an even brighter future."

<sup>36</sup> Bhan 2009, "'This is No Longer the City I Once Knew'. Evictions, the Urban Poor and the Right to the City in Millennial Delhi": 131.

<sup>37</sup> Bhan: 140.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

all the artifacts of nature and its preservation are there for the enjoyment of residents and tourists alike. Ironically, a key part of this restoration process has been the literal removal of human inhabitants from the riverbanks to make room for an aesthetics of restoration. As in India, the global push for “creative cities” has flattened the mobile home park as eyesore so that it can be literally emptied of its residents, in the process generating an image of the river for consumption as “World Heritage” site.

### 3. CHRONOLOGY: MAKING ERASURE VISIBLE

For the community members who supported residents of Mission Trails in their fight to remain in their homes, one of the central questions emerging from efforts to document this struggle is: How do you make erasure visible? Insofar as trauma—historical or personal—so frequently resides where language fails or becomes impossible, how do we write about the lives and stories of those who have been willed to disappear—especially those who are missing, who cannot talk about what happened or who have passed away? The following section, assembled from a review of archival material (newspaper articles, city documents, internal communications obtained through Open Records requests, organizing notes, interviews, photographs, and our own memories) refutes this erasure by piecing together a timeline of the Mission Trails struggle. In reconstructing this history, what we see again and again is an institutional denial of residents’ “right to rights,” but at the same time a refusal by residents of this denial. Against efforts by city and developers to treat residents as *not mattering* in the most literal of ways—*not materially present* within urban space and thereby legally dismissible—residents insisted on claiming rights to participation based on *inhabitation*. The simple fact of their material presence on the land, in other words, gave them a right to matter in public conversations on land use. At the risk of over-chronicling, I suggest that in the face of planned erasure, chronology itself is resistance, is insistence, is survival.

#### *Rezoning Signs to Rezoning Vote (February 17 – May 15, 2014)*

In February of 2014, residents of Mission Trails Mobile Home Community—a 21-acre park opened in 1972 as Cheryl Ann Mobile Home Park—noticed two yellow rezoning signs posted near the entrance of their community. After attempts to contact their City Council representative Rebecca Viagran met with no response, they contacted the city number printed on the sign and learned that a local developer, White-Conlee Builders, had applied to rezone the park for a 600-unit luxury apartment complex.<sup>39</sup> The proposed project was to be “mixed use,” with commercial spaces below and apartments above; one-bedroom apartments were to rent for around \$1000/month, consistent with the “average rental rate” for the downtown area, and would boast luxury features and a “mission theme.” In the words of Bill Kaufman of Kaufman & Killen, the powerful land use law firm hired by White-Conlee to lobby for the rezoning before the city, “there are people downtown that want to live there—they want options.”<sup>40</sup>

Prior to the appearance of the yellow rezoning signs, Mission Trails residents had not received any notice of possible rezoning from either park management or from American Family Communities (AFC), the out-of-state landowners who had purchased the park less than two years before and during that time consistently neglected basic maintenance responsibilities. Months later, residents would learn that AFC had in fact directed White-Conlee not to communicate with them about their plans to rezone and purchase the land; if those plans fell through, AFC did not want to lose any of its paying tenants. As Kaufman would explain to *Express-News* columnist Gilbert Garcia on April 23, 2014, speaking on behalf of White-Conlee, “The challenge was that the seller [AFC] is saying, “You’re the ones who want the zoning, and I don’t want you to do anything that’s going to run off my tenants in the event that you

<sup>39</sup> Most articles list number of units as 600, but some list 400 and one of the most recent articles inexplicably states 300. From the beginning to the end, numbers presented in reporting on this case by the media and in city records—units, residents, households, dollar figures, how many moved when—are consistently inconsistent, changing from article to article, report to report. Arguably, this speaks to the uncomfortable incompleteness of any methodology of accounting for traumatic impacts: we can never be sure that what we’re seeing is the full picture or the real impact.

<sup>40</sup> Valentino Lucio, “Homes Are Threatened; Mobile-Home Park’s Residents Now Sitting on Prime Property,” *San Antonio Express-News*, February 27, 2014.

fail to rezone it or you fail to close.” ... They didn't want anyone soliciting their tenants to leave before a buyer had closed on the property.”

This treatment of Mission Trails residents as both beneath notification and jealously guarded proprietary object was entirely consistent with what residents learned not long after about AFC's basic business model. A profile in the *Denver Post* from July 13, 2007 describes Colorado-based American Family Communities CEO Scott Van Ramshorst as one of several “mobile home millionaires” whose fortunes were made acquiring mobile home parks as an investment and flipping them when land values rose. “Van Ramshorst’s interest in mobile homes began just five years ago,” wrote the *Post*, “when he attended a talk by local entrepreneur Robert Raskin, an owner of Mountain High Homes Inc., which flips mobile homes with minimal improvements. ‘My aim is not to do any rehab work at all,’ Raskin said.” And when maintenance costs became too great for investors, “[I]and banking can turn out to be a profitable exit strategy[.] ... It refers to investing in property expected to gain value as a city’s need for land expands.” For example, “[n]ow standing on a plot once occupied by [fellow mobile home millionaire] Doug Ottersburg’s earliest mobile home parks are a Wal-Mart and a Target store.”<sup>41</sup>

True to this account, AFC had purchased the park in October 2012 from its previous owner, a Michigan-based company which had owned the park for a decade before selling to AFC about a year before Mission Reach improvements were complete. While public records of the city's dealings with White-Conlee give no indication of when the deal was first broached or who first approached whom, the likeliest scenario, given descriptions of AFC's business strategy, is that White-Conlee approached AFC some time in late 2013 with an offer, after the official opening of the Mission Reach made the riverside park a desirable location for new development. At that time the land was assessed at \$1.7M; it would be sold in July 2014 for \$6M.

But if the landowner and developers treated Mission Trails residents as beneath regard, so too did the city. By the time residents spotted the yellow rezoning signs and in response organized themselves to speak at the first Zoning Commission meeting on February 18, 2014, the city had been engaged with White-Conlee and its attorneys for some time on their rezoning request, and much had happened already to move the case forward through the required channels. Just a week before, the developer's lawyers had gone before the city's Planning Commission and successfully lobbied for an amendment to the South Central San Antonio Community Plan, a required first step in making further land use changes at Mission Trails, and a process that began as early as December 2013 with a Traffic Impact Analysis.

According to the application submitted by White-Conlee to the City's Development Services Department on January 10, 2014, amendments to the South Central Community Plan would change the “future land use designation” at 1515 Mission Road from “low density residential” to “mixed use” and also allow Infill Development Zoning—a designation intended to encourage development or redevelopment on vacant or “underutilized” inner city land. Just a few days later the land had been professionally surveyed, and on January 17, 2014, White-Conlee submitted an application to rezone Mission Trails, paying the city a fee of \$5,500. As part of this process, White-Conlee also met in January with the head of Blessed Sacrament Academy, sole neighbor to Mission Trails, to “show her the proposed site plan and ideas for the development,” according to an email sent in February by Kaufman & Killen's office to the District 3 Planning and Zoning advisor (communication sent by Ashley Farrimond on February 14, 2014).

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<sup>41</sup> Full article available at <http://www.denverpost.com/2007/07/13/mobile-home-millionaires/>.

And despite failure to respond to anxious calls and emails from her constituents about about the meaning of the rezoning signs, the District 3 Councilwoman by the time of the first Zoning Commission meeting on February 18, 2014 had already been approached by White-Conlee to discuss relocation plans. In an *Express-News* report of that meeting from February 19 by Valentino Lucio, Viagran was quoted as stating that, in response to White-Conlee, her office had started talks with the city's Department of Human Services, who would assist on "case by case" basis.

In participating in the public process leading up to the rezoning vote, the first, hardest, and most enduring lesson for residents was simply that they—their lives, their children, their health, their homes, their survival—did not matter. Not only did they have no legal right to remain in their homes in the face of White-Conlee's desire to buy the land and American Family Community's desire to sell, but they also had no basic right to notification about this desire, nor to information about the public process it triggered. They were beneath consideration by Texas state law, which required notification of rezoning only for mobile home owners who designated their homes as real estate rather than personal property. They were beneath consideration by the city's Unified Development Code, which required notification of rezoning for property owners within 200 feet of a proposed zoning change but not for tenants—even if those tenants were located at ground zero of a proposed rezoning change. According to the city's zoning process, White-Conlee did its due diligence in meeting with Blessed Sacrament; there was no one else to notify by law, no one else who mattered. This was equally the message at the core of the statement of purpose included in the rezoning application filed by White-Conlee, which—contrary to instructions that the applicant include “a description of all existing ... activities” at the site—makes no mention at all of the park's existence, as though the land was simply vacant:

The zoning change is requested to allow for multi-family and commercial development on the subject property. The property is located within the South Central Community Plan and has a future land use designation of “Low Density Residential.” The requested zoning is inconsistent with this future land use designation. An amendment to the South Central Community Plan has been or will be submitted to the City of San Antonio. The zoning change request will not substantially nor permanently injure the property rights of the owner(s) of all real property affected by the proposed change in zoning. The zoning change request will not adversely affect the health, safety, or welfare of the general public.

In strategically omitting any details about the land's “existing activities”, the disingenuousness of denying any adverse impacts to “health, safety, or welfare” slipped by the City's Planning Commission, apparently unnoticed in their approval of the amendment.

Equally evident from a review of city documents, however, is that the process did not bank on residents organizing on their own behalf. The rezoning, closure, and removal of the Rolling Homes Trailer Court had been surgical, transpiring overnight without protest or news coverage. In the case of Mission Trails, neither the Zoning Commission, White-Conlee and their lawyers, the city's Department of Human Services, nor even those from the community who happened to be attending the Zoning Commission that day—like Jessica Fuentes quoted in the introduction to this report—would anticipate the powerful impression made by residents on February 18, 2014. One resident would later recall the impact their presence made on that and other meetings:

Kaufman, he thought it was going to happen overnight. He didn't think he was going to have a

fight on his hands, because he is probably used to winning outright just like that. He thought we weren't going to say anything. So I know that day that we showed up ... and he saw us, I didn't know who this man was, but I noticed him looking around the building and looking at us like [makes face of surprise.] You know, and I asked my husband, and I said, "This man, what is he doing?" And he said, "Maybe he's looking for something," and I said, "No, I don't think so." It's just too odd the way he is looking at everybody. Then when he introduced himself ... when he went up to go speak ... I said, "That's who he is." And that's why he was looking like, "Where did all these people come from?" The manager told him probably, "You're not going to have any problems with these Mexicans, they're not going to speak. They're not going to say anything." ... And when it didn't happen—he wanted the land, but he had to fight for it. He actually had to work for once and earn his money. It didn't come easy to him that time.

In fact, one of the most incredible things to come out of the first Zoning Commission meeting on February 18, 2014 was Kaufman's startled embarrassment in the face of resident testimony—almost entirely in Spanish, forcing Zoning Commission Chair Orlando Salazar to provide improvised translation—when called to the podium by the Commission for questions. "The, um—do we know what the buyer is proposing [to build]?" one of the Commissioners asks in the meeting's audio recording, and it suddenly becomes clear that the purpose of the proposed rezoning has gone unstated throughout the entire meeting. Here Kaufman responds haltingly:

K: Yes sir, we—we maybe mistakenly didn't present the project because—

S: Right.

K: —of the sensitivity—somehow didn't feel right—but it is a first-class, Spanish revival, really nice project. So—

S: Revival as far as, um—is it multi-family, is it...?

K: It's multi-family. But very high quality—it's for people that work near or around downtown, or probably South San Antonio. It'd be the—one of the nicest projects to be developed in District 3, probably ever.

At this point Salazar interrupts in order to translate for the residents in attendance, briefly explaining that the project will be apartments and stores but omitting details about its luxury aspects. When he returns his attention to Kaufman, the lobbyist sounds almost ashamed. "It was just...awkward to talk about it," he says.

The Zoning Commission also seemed to register shock at the proposal before them, moving to defer the issue for a second meeting a month later. And that Sunday, a small group of community supporters, alerted by Fuentes, went to Mission Trails to meet the residents and offer support. It was the beginning of what would be a year of weekly organizing meetings each Sunday, held first at Mission Trails and then at a nearby library next door to Mission San José, as residents and community supporters banded together to fight the rezoning, then to file suits against American Family Communities and the City of San Antonio, and finally to support each other through the process of relocation. Residents were adamant *que no nos moverán*—that they would not be moved—and though some acknowledged that the owner had a right to sell the land, they were uniformly outraged that they were the last to know, and that

their councilwoman in particular was nowhere to be seen despite their appeals to her.

The second Zoning Commission meeting on March 18, 2014 had an even stronger turnout than its predecessor, with 50 residents in attendance and two-way translation provided by a community member. Signed up to speak that day were six residents and seven community supporters, speaking in both Spanish and English and unanimously urging the Zoning Commission to deny White-Conlee's request, as in Ana Cortez's powerful testimony (translated from Spanish):

I've been living in this community three years. Before Mission Trails, I lived in an elegant apartment. I really like this community, though, because I have a child that is going through chemotherapy treatments. I like it here, and what I like is that kids play outside and can take in the fresh air. I left an elegant apartment for a not-so-elegant space, because in my community there is humanity. There's a unity, like now. And it's for that reason I'm here today. To support my people. True, each of us might have our problems, but I know we are all here together to say no, we don't want this change. Since I moved here my son has been doing well—it's totally different from where we lived before, where he was always inside. I prioritize my family's health, and that's why we're here. ... There's so many things I'd like to say, but I really ask you all to take note of the people here and think about what we need. We are not things that can be destroyed just because you don't like them. We are people, we are human, and we have families. That's all I ask.

Significantly for a public process in which city boards and commissions tend to approve most developer requests unanimously, the Zoning Commission in this case moved to deny White-Conlee's rezoning request after hearing over two hours of testimony from residents and supporters. Several commissioners spoke strongly against the project, but with only five commissioners voting in favor of denial, two against, and the District 3 commissioner absent, the motion to deny the rezoning ultimately failed by one vote. Equally damning, though, it would proceed to City Council with no formal recommendation.

It was clear things were not supposed to turn out this way, and that developers and city alike expected to rubber stamp the process unopposed as they had at the Planning Commission. City correspondence obtained via Open Records Request suggests as much in the startled response of city staff from the Department of Human Services, assigned to attend the Zoning Commission meeting on March 18 so as to hand out flyers on the city's emergency homelessness prevention programs. In an email report back on the meeting from March 20, unusual for its length and editorial commentary, the DHS Assistant Director Richard Keith wrote to Director Melody Woosley and to Gloria Hurtado in the City Manager's office that he'd had to request that DHS staff not pass out flyers on relocation services until the rezoning request was actually approved. "Doing so beforehand would send a message that the approval was already a done deal and would be bad for us and for DSD [Development Services Department]."

In the same email, Keith reported that Kaufman testified to the Zoning Commission that his firm and White-Conlee had identified several other parks with adequate vacancies to accommodate displaced residents, and stated that the city could also assist by "provid[ing] services through our ESG grant for eligible residents, potentially providing relocation assistance to an apartment or other rental, deposit, and the first month or two of rental and utility assistance. Relocation of mobile homes is not allowable under the grant." Here Keith was referring to Texas's "Emergency Solutions Grant," a HUD-funded program available to cities to "provide the services necessary to help persons that are at-risk of

homelessness or homeless quickly regain stability in permanent housing.”<sup>42</sup>

It is unclear whether this suggests initial conversation about the city providing financial assistance for relocation, beyond just services. However, this seems likely, given media reports from February 2014 stating that White-Conlee had reached out to the District 3 office to inquire how the city could support displaced residents. A year later, however, in a statement released once the final residents had been removed, Viagran would take care to indicate that, as promised, her office had successfully relocated everyone “without spending taxpayer money.”<sup>43</sup> We can only speculate that the fulcrum of the city’s negotiations with White-Conlee was to use their power to deny the rezoning request to force the developers to cover all monetary assistance—whether or not it met the real costs of relocation—in the process skirting questions about their own responsibility, given that the project eventually received city incentives.

From the Zoning Commission, White-Conlee’s rezoning request went before City Council a first time on Thursday, April 17, 2014. With eighty residents and community supporters in attendance, mostly residents speaking along with community supporters, District 1 Councilman Diego Bernal moved to postpone the vote until May 15, 2014, and city council voted in favor over the desires of Viagran to move forward. However, the primary reason for postponement was a positioning of residents as “not understanding” what was happening or what was being offered by the developers, rather than opposition to the project per se. Here the city referred in part to the fact that residents had received information from AFC about the developers’ relocation assistance package only a day before the April 17 council meeting—a letter taped to the door of each home. As presented by Kaufman in the meeting and reported on April 18, 2014 by columnist Gilbert Garcia in the *Express-News*, residents would be given “nine months to relocate,” and White-Conlee would “cover the costs for their moves and utility hookups, and provide financial assistance on a case-by-case basis for people who have old homes that can’t be moved.”

At the same time, however, references to residents’ lack of understanding patronizingly implied that if residents resisted the city’s plans, it was because of a lack of intelligence or because they didn’t speak English—as though residents did not understand what a great deal they were getting from the city or how generous the developers were being, given that they could have gotten nothing. Or, as Bill Kaufman told us directly outside the Zoning Commission meeting on March 18, 2014, if residents did not want to leave their homes, it was because “they don’t know any better.” By helping relocate them from squalor and blight, the city and the developers were “making their lives better.”

Yet the postponed vote bought time, and in the month between City Council meetings both city/developers and residents/supporters sprung into action. From the city side, City Manager Sheryl Sculley tapped DHS to be lead city agency on facilitating communication between White-Conlee/Kaufman and the residents on the relocation assistance offer. In turn, DHS put together a draft “relocation communication and implementation plan,” goal of which was to “ensure that information about the project and White-Conlee’s relocation incentive package is appropriately communicated to Mission Trails residents ... prior to the City Council hearing the Zoning Case on May 15;” but also to “ensure timely, smooth, and safe relocation of Mission Trails families to alternate housing to include assessment, financial, and housing counseling, and case management as needed.” In the weeks to come, as outlined in this plan, District 3 Councilwoman Rebecca Viagran and DHS staff would make three

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<sup>42</sup> See <https://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/community-affairs/esgp/>

<sup>43</sup> Gerlach 2015, “Mission Trails’ Last Families OK Deal; Trailer Park’s Residents Must Leave by Feb. 28.”



visits to the park; DHS would develop outreach material; the developers and their lawyers would lead an open house on the assistance package; DHS would administer a questionnaire in the park to assess level of resident knowledge about the rezoning case and the assistance package; and DHS would offer individual appointments to residents about their options.

On the resident end, there were meetings and more meetings, for which residents would cancel doctor's appointments and take time off work to attend—large community meetings each Sunday, and in between, meetings with other residents, with community organizations and organizers, with attorneys and city staff. In these early months before the rezoning vote at least one family moved, seeing the writing on the wall. With enough savings that they could leave without assistance, they relocated to one of the parks eventually approved for incentives. A year-and-a-half later, however, the husband of the woman I interviewed from this household had died after committing suicide.

The housing options communicated by the city and White-Conlee looked very different on the ground. As stated plainly in a letter from residents' attorney Nicole Elizalde Henning, forwarded on May 12, 2015 by former councilwoman María Antonietta Berriozábal to District 5 Councilwoman Shirley Gonzales: "there appear to be no real options." As residents received information from the city about the developers' offers, questions went unanswered about whether the assistance would cover the prep work required to move or any repairs required after moving or the cost of raised rent, not to mention what would happen to residents with homes that could not be moved. Residents also pointed out that many mobile home parks where they might have moved had numerous restrictions that prohibited moving there: homes had to have new skirting or a certain type of roof or could not have window unit air conditioning; some parks did not allow pets, and others did not allow brothers and sisters to share a bedroom. Parks required credit checks, background checks, employment verification, and proof of citizenship, all of which made relocation uncertain for many residents. Some parks did not take homes older than a certain date, and even those with more lenient age restrictions required photos of the home first and case-by-case evaluation. Many parks were located far beyond city limits with limited access to public transportation and few amenities. As the date for the second City Council meeting approached, communication about the assistance package raised more questions than it settled.

Moreover, the city's supposed safety net programs for homelessness prevention—the ESG-funded services referenced by Richard Keith at the March Zoning Commission meeting—were almost entirely inaccessible for most Mission Trails families because of their own restrictive eligibility requirements. Beyond the long list of paperwork required just to apply, residents could not be undocumented, and had to be living at substantially below the federal poverty line to qualify. For instance, a family of four could not earn more than \$17,650 a year, or approximately 74% of the 2014 federal poverty line, while a family of eight was ineligible if they earned more than 58% FPL. "Single mother and 3 children...she stated that she made more than the requirement of the assistance that was being provided," noted one caseworker sent to the park in the weeks before the May City Council meeting to conduct a questionnaire on behalf of DHS. How long had they lived there? asked the questionnaire. Did they rent or own? How many lived in their household? How many children, and where did they go to school? What did Mission Trails families know about the Mobile Home rezoning case? "9 months to leave and not so great assistance," state the caseworker's notes, capturing this resident's words.

Shortly before the rezoning vote on May 15, 2014, Henning, two Mission Trails residents, and community supporters met with representatives from DHS, White-Conlee and their lawyers, and Implicity Property Management—a company brought in to administer the relocation assistance on

behalf of White-Conlee—to discuss the status of the assistance offer. As described in an early draft of the presentation given by DHS at the May 15 Council meeting, when Henning requested developer commitments in writing, White-Conlee attorney Scott Weems responded that they couldn't do so beyond the \$2,000 previously promised, until each household had been assessed individually. When Henning asked if White-Conlee was willing to postpone the vote again until this was complete, Weems replied that buyer was not. Arguably, one implication here is that if City Council had voted to defer decision on the rezoning once more, as numerous constituents had suggested in emails to Council during this time, it is possible the deal could have been stopped.

But the view expressed by many on Council on May 15 was decidedly more fatalistic. "It seems the zoning change is inevitable," District 5 representative Shirley Gonzales had written to former District 5 councilwoman Patti Radle a few days before the meeting, and several others on Council expressed similar sentiments the day of the vote: given the landowner's desire and right to sell, the best the city could do was leverage their power over rezoning to force the developer to provide some relocation assistance. If they voted no, the owner might sell anyway, leaving residents with nothing.

Henning had in fact refuted this line of reasoning in the letter forwarded to Councilwoman Gonzales, reporting that she had called Scott Van Ramshorst, the mobile home millionaire himself, "and was told by the person handling the property that he did not know if they would sell the property to someone else should the zoning change fail. In fact, I can find no evidence that this property was ever on the market for sale. It appears that the incentive for selling is that the owner [AFC] is being offered double the land value as listed by the Bexar County Appraisal District [by White-Conlee]. ... Thus, while anything is 'possible,' to represent to the residents that the sale of the property or redevelopment into duplexes is 'probable' appears to be a misrepresentation." By the time White-Conlee closed on the property just two months later, the sales price would be triple its 2014 appraised value of \$2.1 million. The real issue, then, was speculation—the landowner and developer's mutual interest in exploiting a locationally-specific rent gap that had appeared because of public investments unaccompanied by policy protections—rather than the owner's more general desire to sell.

Some on Council were far less conflicted about voting in favor of rezoning than those who worried that a "no" vote would place residents in the same situation except without the benefit of relocation assistance. Framing her support for rezoning via an argument for mixed-income housing as a path to poverty deconcentration, District 2 representative Ivy Taylor submitted a statement in absentia in which she "strongly supported the rezoning which will allow for redevelopment of the property. While this is certainly a difficult issue, in my estimation, this boils down to our commitment to providing a variety of housing options throughout our city, or whether we will continue policies that concentrate poverty and lead to disinvestment in humans and neighborhoods" (email communication sent May 15, 2014). District 10 representative Mike Gallagher, with whom residents had met and felt was sympathetic, went further in personally chastising residents for protesting the city's actions. In coverage of the meeting printed in the *Express-News* on May 16, 2014, reporter Josh Baugh captured Gallagher's comments and residents' response, noting that he drew "audible groans ... when he told them they 'do not understand' the deal negotiated for them. 'I can tell by the applause in the room,'" he said, "'that may people do not understand this[.]... If you hear anyone say they're going to vote no, they are going to hurt your future.'"

As with previous meetings, residents turned out in force on the day of the vote, taking off work and pulling their children out of school to attend. With the support of various organizations and multiple

individuals, they organized caravans and carpools to transport elders and children to the City Council chambers and back. The night before there had been a vigil at the park, residents praying together that their words and stories might soften the hearts of those on Council. In their testimony before Council on May 15, 2014, many residents wept. Children spoke, stating that they didn't want to leave their homes, their school or their teachers and friends. The stress of the meeting induced an asthma attack in one elderly resident, who had to be transported by ER to the hospital during the meeting.

Henning waited to speak until the end of the meeting, just before the vote, raising a critical issue that had emerged for those residents in lease-to-own contracts with American Family Communities. According to these contracts, homes could not be removed from the park until they had been paid off, and in some cases for a set number of years after that. Rezoning the park would effectively break all those contracts, Henning argued, prompting Council to break into an anxious, last-minute executive session to discuss the legality of the pending vote. Upon reconvening, however, the Mayor called to proceed, votes were taken, and the rezoning passed—albeit narrowly, with four council members voting against (including District 5 representative Gonzales and Mayor Julián Castro) and six voting in favor (including the residents' councilwoman Rebecca Viagran).

The following day, photographs would appear in the *Express-News* of residents sobbing at the decision. In one photo, Mayor Castro comforts a weeping nine-year-old girl, whose mother would stay in the park until the end before becoming essentially homeless and eventually developing debilitating PTSD in the process. “It was said very poignantly that we move mountains to create jobs in this city,” Castro had orated just before the vote, as captured by Josh Baugh in the *Express-News* on May 16, 2014. “We move mountains to preserve our aquifer. We move mountains to save bats. And we move mountains to preserve historic buildings. And we need to move mountains for people, which is ultimately the reason we serve you all.” In the days following the city's vote on Mission Trails, local news would trumpet another announcement, casting the magnanimous words that crowned his failure to drum up just one more “no” vote in a far more cynical light: Julián Castro had been nominated for appointment as Director of Housing and Urban Development. Two months later, he had left San Antonio for D.C., and Ivy Taylor was appointed Interim Mayor.

#### *Rezoning Vote to Land Sale (May 15 – July 24, 2014)*

After voting to rezone Mission Trails, City Council once more receded from view, ceding the task of relocating residents and administering assistance to the city's Department of Human Services, working in tandem with Implicit Property Management. In the weeks after the vote, DHS mailed residents a packet of information that included a handout of frequently asked questions on what to expect next. In the weeks to come, licensed movers would assess the movability of all homes and White-Conlee would put together individual assistance packages; while representatives from DHS and Implicit would make daily group presentations about the assistance package, hold individual appointments, and host an open house where residents could ask questions of representatives from local mobile home parks, legal assistants from Catholic Charities, and officials from the San Antonio Independent School District. After the economic and logistical burden of having to move, one of residents' chief concerns was whether their children could stay enrolled in their neighborhood schools. An earlier draft of the FAQ references the McKinney-Vento Act, which states that homeless children are eligible to stay at their current school for the remainder of the year with transportation possibly available; in final drafts this was edited out and parents given a more general referral instead to the district's Family and Student Support Services office.

The most important piece in DHS's informational packet, however, was the info sheet officially detailing the developers' offer of relocation assistance, which would become available once sale of the land was final and White-Conlee took ownership, anticipated for July 2014. As summarized below, relocation assistance was determined according to four scenarios:

<b>If home was movable and resident elected to move to one of six<sup>44</sup> parks on an approved list:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$2,600 paid to other parks to move and connect home</li> <li>• \$2,100 paid to other parks to offer reduced rent for one year</li> </ul>
<b>If home was movable and resident elected not to move into an approved park:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$2,100 cash after receipt of move out plans and new lease</li> </ul>
<b>If home could not be moved:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents receive their 2014 appraised value</li> </ul>
<b>If moved out by October 15<sup>45</sup>:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents receive an additional \$2,500 cash (\$1,000 up front upon signing and the remaining \$1,500 upon move out).</li> </ul>

Technically, then, residents could receive up to \$7,200 in assistance.<sup>46</sup> However, this was highly situationally-specific. Many residents did not want to move to another mobile home park because they did not want to risk displacement again, and chose instead to incur higher out-of-pocket moving expenses just to have a modicum of choice about where they would move. Some residents stopped paying rent so that they could afford to move and had this money deducted from their relocation assistance. This figure likewise obscured the situation of residents forced to burn through upfront cash assistance to fix cars or make home repairs so that moving to one of the parks on the list was even feasible. Unqualified by these complicated on-the-ground realities, references to the dollar value of White-Conlee's offer eclipsed its lived insufficiency (see page 65 for data on how much residents actually received). All too often, this figure was used to imply that residents who protested their relocation were greedy and ungrateful.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Originally eight.

<sup>45</sup> Originally August 15th, then pushed back to September 15th when sale did not close until late July, then extended to October 1st, then October 15th, then indefinitely when it came down to the final residents.

<sup>46</sup> More numerical slipperiness: while news reports most frequently cite maximum assistance of \$7,600, the numbers given in the incentive summary provided by DHS only add up to \$7,200. The discrepancy is likely due to an ambiguous statement in the summary which specifies that “this \$2,100 from White-Conlee” for reduced rent “may result in \$2,500+ in rent credits depending on park selected.” One article from January 2015 even reports—completely inexplicably, without clear itemization or explanation for the discrepancy—that residents who moved before October 1<sup>st</sup> received up to \$12,600.

<sup>47</sup> For example, in an article from May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015 by Bob Rivard, editor of *The Rivard Report*—an independent online news journal that frequently serves as mouthpiece for downtown redevelopment interests—Rivard writes, in copy ironically interrupted by an ad for apartment space at a high-end downtown complex: “Under Texas law, White-Conlee had no legal obligation to help renters relocate, but the company, while vilified by many, actually demonstrated remarkable sensitivity to the tenants and spent \$900,000 relocating them, paying them cash stipends, and in legal fees. Critics can question their motives, but not their actions. In the end, White-Conlee gave every trailer owner \$2,500, paid in \$100 bills. White-Conlee did not pursue reports that some trailer owners or renters who really lived elsewhere were paid, too. In the end, no one who lived there turned down the money.” (See <https://therivardreport.com/from-blighted-trailer-park-to-mela-luxury-apartments/>) This last statement is not in fact true; public records reveal that five households elected to move before the sale of the park, receiving no assistance; and five that moved after assistance became available did so without signing release forms, meaning they did not receive assistance. Likewise, when asked in interviews how much assistance they received, five households responded that they received nothing.

But with the relocation assistance still an abstraction until White-Conlee closed on the land, residents had other things on their mind. The organizing momentum they had built in the lead up to the rezoning vote continued, buoyed by their decision to file two lawsuits, one against American Family Communities and the other against the city. On June 10, 2014, on behalf of over 130 individual plaintiffs, Henning filed suit in the Bexar County Courthouse against AFC, seeking \$1 million in damages for almost two dozen allegations, "including failing to maintain sewer and water services; losing rent checks; withholding security deposits; and failing to maintain an accessible property manager to respond to concerns."<sup>48</sup> A second suit against the City of San Antonio was filed by Mission Rescue, a nonprofit formed by Henning, alleging that the City Council violated the Open Meetings Act during the May 15, 2014 meeting when they went into executive session without announcing the section of the Texas government code associated with that action. On the afternoon of June 10, residents rallied at City Hall for a press conference before marching a couple blocks west to the Bexar County Courthouse in the deep afternoon heat, holding aloft a banner bearing the image of La Virgen de Guadalupe.

Yet the months between the rezoning and sale of the park were also a time of limbo. With the park soon to close, the lack of maintenance that had become the basis for residents' suit against American Family Communities accelerated—a harbinger of things to come—as when one resident discovered raw sewage seeping from the ground in her yard, creating standing water that bred mosquitos and exacerbated her asthma. Internal city emails reveal a quick response to this particular crisis by DHS and other city departments, but also perceptions by other residents of an overall abandonment by the city's decision makers following the decision to rezone, especially by District 3. At the beginning of July, a member of the Mission Trails Resident Council would send an email to District 3, addressed to Councilwoman Viagran but answered by her chief of staff, who cc'ed several other D3 staff members in his response but not Viagran. "Since the rezoning has been approved," wrote this resident, "we have not heard one word from our representative who is so dedicated to the community. I had the opportunity to talk with Viagran and Mayor Castro who both reassured us we would be taken care of only to not hear a single word except the lies told to the media."

Finally, on July 24, 2014, White-Conlee closed on its \$6 million purchase of the land at 1515 Mission Road. As reported in the *San Antonio Business Journal*, American Family Communities, doing business as Mission Trails SA MHC LLC, transferred the deed to a company formed by the developers for the project called Mission Escondida LLC—"hidden mission," in an irony not lost on those still living there.

#### *Land Sale to 1<sup>st</sup> Incentive Deadline (July 24 – October 15, 2014)*

Between the sale of the park at the end of July 2014 and the first major deadline for assistance on October 15, 2014, DHS and Implicity would expend the most energy trying to move residents out of Mission Trails, even converting the park's management office into a temporary "resident assistance center" for administering the relocation assistance. However, in a letter dated August 20, 2014, attorney Henning informed City Council that some residents were not receiving assistance, being told instead they had to drop out of the suit first or waive their right to join. In internal communications the following day, DHS staffer Jessica Dovalina at first tried to deny this: "Can we add something ... about how this message is not consistent with communication/coordination between DHS and the developer? That staff who are on-site have not witnessed this occurring?"

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<sup>48</sup> Valentino Lucio, "Mission Trails Residents Suing; Claim Alleges Violations by Owners," *San Antonio Express-News*, June 11, 2014.

But after reviewing the release forms residents were signing, DHS head Melody Woosley verified that what Henning alleged appeared to be true. In an email from August 21, 2014, she wrote, "The release that Implicity is asking them to sign does release the sellers and buyers from claims (#6) and prevents the tenants from suing (#7). So that part is true." In the same email, Woosley also raised questions about whether those leasing-to-own or renting their homes were getting the same assistance from Implicity as those who owned their homes. After checking with Implicity, DHS staff reported that in fact Implicity was only offering assistance to those who owned their homes; and that the 32 families in lease-to-own contracts with American Family Communities would have to work with them directly to receive any assistance.<sup>49</sup>

After revising its updates accordingly, DHS then sent them up the chain to the City Manager's office for review. And upon their receipt, something interesting happened that gives insight into how the city, especially at its upper echelons, managed both information and conflict in this case. Without even implying an intention to minimize the appearance of a problem or grievance on residents' part, revisions suggested by the City Manager's office nonetheless neatly edit out this perspective by reframing it in terms of a simple accounting distinction.

"All we need to do," wrote Patrick Steck, Executive Assistant for the City Manager's Office, "is clarify:  
--There are X home owners, they work with Implicity, compensation package is X, numbers on receiving explanations, signed, moved, as you have it.  
--There are Y renters, they work with AFC ... compensation package is #, explanation received, signed, moved, etc."

By mid-September, with an early move-out incentive deadline of October 1, 2014 and roughly three-quarters of families still in the park, the head of DHS emailed her staff with a list of questions to research: "What happens after 10/1? When does offer of assistance expire? What is the drop dead date before eviction proceedings begin? Updates on school transfer issues?"

The only definitive piece of information reported back was that, of 21 families with school-aged children originally enrolled in the San Antonio Independent School District for 2014-2015, 7 families—approximately a third—had moved out of district.<sup>50</sup> Most of Woosley's other questions would never really find definitive answers, as a handful of residents would stay until their legal deadline, forcing the developers to keep extending deadlines and changing "rules." DHS staff did report, however, that "the number of families coming in [to sign move out forms] ha[d] visibly increased in the past week due to the approaching deadline," and its September 19 update also reported that White-Conlee had extended the deadline for incentives to October 15, 2014.

At the same time, DHS would realize by its September 19 report that it had been documenting move-out numbers incorrectly in previous reports, stemming again from confusion around the distinction between those leasing-to-own and those who owned their homes. In a mea culpa email to DHS Director Woosley on September 19, 2014, DHS staffer Jessica Dovalina explained that "the difference in the total number of households who have moved out was due to our receipt of two reports, one from

<sup>49</sup> Based on other records, this figure likely combines those with lease-to-own contracts and those renting their homes.

<sup>50</sup> It is unclear from the records whether this was the total number of families with children enrolled in SAISD schools or just those DHS and Implicity had met with to date; the figure seems low given that approximately half of the nearly 300 residents displaced were children.

Mission Trails and one from AFC. These groups were combining their numbers to represent both homeowners and renters who had received the explanation of benefits and moved out. In our receipt of the reports, we assumed that these numbers were being reported separately and added them together to determine the total number of households that had moved.”

This accounting problem was only compounded by AFC's almost proprietary reluctance to release information about "how many households they have met with and how many have signed releases," an echo of the company's earlier efforts to bar White-Conlee from talking to "their" residents about its rezoning proposal for fear it would cut into rent collection. "I spoke to the [AFC] lawyer earlier this week," wrote DHS staffer Holly Frindell to other DHS staff on September 18, 2014 "and he had some concerns about giving us this information, so I'm not sure if we will get it or not."

Either way, just a few days later, in its report from September 23, 2014—about two months after the sale of the park and three weeks before an extended October 15 deadline—DHS reported that 32 families had moved out, approximately a third of the 101 present at the time of the land sale (five additional families had already moved before then, three after the rezoning vote but before the sale, and two even before the rezoning vote). The September 23 updates also noted that of 11 families scheduled to move out that week, only four actually did "due to issues at the destination mobile home park." DHS was looking into the nature of these issues, staff wrote, but later emails did not reference it again.

As explained in an interview with one resident, however, the situation was that one of the mobile home parks on the list approved for incentives changed owners in the midst of residents' move out preparations:

We went and signed the papers and picked the lot we wanted, and the man there said that he would move our trailer and let us know in a couple of weeks. After this time passed, he still didn't come to move us, so I called him, and he told me he would call me right back, as he was making arrangements. The next day I received a call from a lady who said that [he] had sold that trailer park. I told her, "What do you mean he sold it? I just talked to him yesterday and he didn't tell me anything about selling it." The lady said he sold the park, and there is a new owner and management. She asked me if I had already signed a contract with him, and I told her that I had already filled out the papers and that we would sign everything once we moved our trailer over there. She said, "Now we are the new owners and we will have to do the background check and everything again." She wanted pictures of my trailer, which I sent her. She wanted the size of it, title, numbers and everything. I sent her pictures of everything. Then, the lady called me and said that they would not be able to move us there because I didn't pass their background check. That we didn't qualify. ... My husband was upset, and he said, "That's the second time, they already sold the trailer park and we haven't even gotten there yet!"

This was only one problem residents faced in trying to meet the early move-out incentive deadline. Although legally Mission Trails residents had until February 15, 2015 to leave, in interview after interview residents mentioned the constant refrain of park management and Implicity: *you have to leave, you have to get out*. This sense of urgency between the land sale in July 2014 and the October 15 deadline also coincided with the hottest months of the year; combined with the time constraints, this undoubtedly contributed to one elderly resident suffering a stroke while moving out in August, resulting in a loss of speech ability he still has not recovered. To make the deadline, many residents were forced to move places they did not want to go, leading to multiple moves in a short span of time—four or five

in a year in the most extreme cases—and high rates of housing insecurity and "hidden homelessness." Beyond deaths and serious health impacts, this would be the biggest impact of displacement for residents (as detailed on pages 52-56).

An *Express-News* article from October 5, 2014 by Vianna Davila listed other difficulties residents had in locating safe and secure housing by the October 15 deadline. Many couldn't find a place that was affordable, couldn't afford to move even with the assistance offered, or couldn't find a place that was safe, desirable, and in good condition. Many—especially parents with school-aged children—did not want to leave the area. Others, like the resident quoted above, ran into restrictions at the list of approved parks, which prohibited pets or required homes to be a certain age or in a certain condition. Those with older homes found themselves having to make expensive repairs to be able to move into one of the parks approved for incentives. Others who could not move their homes faced losing significant equity they had built through repairs they had made to their homes, which were not reflected in its assessed value. There was also confusion over what residents needed to do to receive assistance. As the deadline approached, Henning had been able to get rid of the clauses requiring residents to drop out of the lawsuit against AFC if they wanted to receive relocation assistance, but new forms were not printed up; instead residents were told to simply strike out that part of the agreement, creating confusion and anxiety.

The article by Davila is haunting for other reasons apparent only in retrospect—through our knowledge, gained through interviews, of what happened to residents profiled hopefully in the article as "finding options" in the last few days before October 15. One such family sold their home on Craigslist and had it moved out of the park before figuring out where they would go. A photo that accompanies the article shows Elva Medina, blurry in the foreground, standing in the street before a plastic-wrapped section of her mobile home mounted on wheels, just before its removal from the park. "She and her entire family still had no permanent place to live," wrote Davila, "but planned to stay with her mother at her home off Martin Luther King Drive on the East Side." They would stay there for eight months, in a family situation that was both unwelcome and at times unsafe—requiring Medina and her two children to sleep in a park at times—before having to move again when her mother became too ill. After selling off their old home, they were forced to buy a new one and move into another mobile home park.

Other photos that accompany this article capture little girls playing in the streets of Mission Trails at dusk, still dressed in their school day white uniform shirts and khaki pants, on what would be the last night in town for one of the girls and the beginning of a year-and-a-half of homelessness. Pictures of girls riding piggyback, laughing, splashing barefoot in puddles, wedged in a tree, nuzzled together under a blanket on top of one of the large concrete pipes placed in the common areas of the park as playground equipment. A picture of two little girls sitting in an open van stuffed with boxes and plastic bags full of belongings, gazing off into the distance—waiting to leave. Where would that van go? The article doesn't know yet, but we do. A year and a half later we would interview the mother of the little girls, and learn that after that photo they were on the streets three days in their van before leaving town to drive back to New Mexico, because they could not find a rental place they could afford in San Antonio. At Mission Trails they had rented their home; they received only \$1,000 in assistance. They ran out of money for gas before they made it back to New Mexico and had to panhandle the last leg of the trip. After that they were in and out of shelters for a year before finally accessing public housing and getting stable just three months before the interview.

These photos, and the knowledge of destinations and impacts they now embody, clash jarringly with the



words of attorney Barry Snell, a lawyer for White-Conlee, who would state at the time in Davila's article: "By February 15, we expect everyone will have hopefully left voluntarily and peacefully like many have already, who have been very happy in their new locations."

Just before October 15, only 13 families remained in the park who had not yet signed paperwork agreeing to move. When the day of the deadline came, six of these families had signed last minute, leaving just seven families—mostly mothers with their children, mostly Spanish-speaking—to participate in a protest outside the entrance of the park. Photos from the protest printed in the *Express-News* on October 15th show bicyclists in Spandex riding past on their tour of the Mission Reach, as residents held up signs reading "Si tienes familia y corazon apollanos" ("If you have a family and a heart, help us"), "Queremos una reubicacion DIGNA" ("We want a DIGNIFIED relocation"), "Queremos un terreno" ("We want land"), and "Y Viagran Donde Esta?" ("And where is Viagran?"). "We are very sad we are moving," one of the children's signs reads in English.

For most families, October 15, 2014 turned out to be the critical date the developers had intended it to be. Whereas on September 23 only 32 families (about a third of an original 106) had moved out, by October 17 this number had almost doubled to 67. By the end of October, another nine would leave, leaving the park mostly empty with only 25 families remaining, most of whom had signed and were preparing to leave. Only seven remained who had not signed, and would not until the very end.

The DHS updates from October 17 also state, ominously, that "utilities will not be cut off on October 15, although some services, such as the swimming pool, will be reduced." This is likely a reference to a section of Davila's article from October 5, 2014, which described the park's deteriorating condition in the weeks leading up to the deadline—with homes abandoned or removed or demolished around those still living there, orange surveyor ribbons tied around trees in preparation for clearcutting, and notices from White-Conlee stating that utilities would be "scaled back" after October 15. Intending to reassure, this line nonetheless portends the situation to come for the remaining families, who, unable to locate housing that was affordable and secure from further displacement, or witnessing the cascading problems faced by others forced to move out in a hurry, decided to stay until their legal deadline of February 15, 2015. They did not want to go through what Ricky and Judy Reyes had gone through—their home breaking upon move out, first at one end and then at the other during a second move out attempt, leaving them stranded in the middle of the street for days, living without electricity or water. Judy a paraplegic with a catheter, Ricky a three-time heart attack survivor in his 50s. The DHS report from October 31 referenced their situation but glossed over it, neglecting to mention what actually happened en route to pronouncing it officially dealt with: "The Reyes family, whose mobile home was damaged by movers, was able to repair their mobile home and successfully relocated on October 30. The family received \$2,500 in cash assistance from the developer."

#### *Early Move Out Deadline (October 15<sup>th</sup>) – Eviction (February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015)*

By the beginning of November, three-quarters of Mission Trails had been vacated. Even the makeshift "resident assistant center" set up at the park's old management office was abandoned after October 15, with Implicity and DHS available by appointment only. By Thanksgiving only 14 families remained, half of whom had signed and were preparing to move out. By early December, DHS staff would report that although most families had relocated, "[n]o additional households have signed the release or indicated plans to move since early November. ... DHS contacted or left information for the seven remaining households on November 14th; most households reported they were planning to wait until a final eviction notice to move." But exactly when this eviction notice would come—or the final deadline

for relocation assistance—was uncertain. As the last few families settled in for the winter, White-Conlee and DHS quibbled over whether it would be November 1 or December 1 or January 15, and whether residents would get 30, 60, or 90 days' notice.

With many homes abandoned and many others being torn down around the remaining residents, conditions in the park worsened quickly in late 2014, as residents informed the Mayor directly during a "Meet the Mayor" event held at the end of October. The following day, the Mayor's communications director would send Mayor Ivy Taylor and her staff a follow up email recapping his conversations with Mission Trails residents, who had described to him some of the conditions they were facing. "They say that strangers, knowing the place is being vacated, come on to the property attempting to break into homes and that people are also dumping stuff there. ... We know that as soon as the last family, the last person, has left that area the folks who now own it will secure and clean up the property. Why can't they do that now out of simple decency, code, sanitary, health and safety reasons?" (Cary Clack, email communication on October 29, 2014). In fact, one resident was forced to flee her home shortly after Thanksgiving because of a break-in while she was inside, and spent the next eight months homeless, bouncing between homes of family and friends.

In another email from November 6, 2014, community supporter Jessica O. Guerrero requested an urgent meeting with District 5 Councilwoman Shirley Gonzales, describing other dangerous conditions that had developed. Residents who remained at the park were "living among debris, heavy machinery, and stripped vacant mobile homes infested with rats. The majority of the families left are immigrants that are now facing the challenge of searching for housing programs and services that they qualify for. Their children range in ages from infants to high school age and are showing signs of depression and anxiety due to the strain of their circumstances." It was during this time period that one resident, an undocumented, single mother of two, became so severely traumatized that she was later hospitalized on several occasions for what she thought was a heart condition, before being diagnosed with PTSD. She reports flashbacks from this time, of being woken up by the sound of abandoned mobile homes being torn down outside her home.

Although White-Conlee had not technically cut off utility services, problems with trash service and eventually with water became acute. Because families discontinued trash service upon moving out, piles of debris and trash left behind went uncollected. Summarizing a call he had received from a resident, District 3 Chief of Staff Ruben Elizalde emailed City Public Services in early November, stating that "[t]he issue is when the Trash Collector comes onto the site for regularly scheduled trash pick-ups they only service those paying customers, and by pass the empty lots with the bins full which is starting to cause insect and rodent issues."

Eventually interruptions to water service, which had plagued residents once AFC took ownership of the park, also hit a crisis point for the remaining families. On December 16, 2014, residents contacted District 3 staff to report that their water had been off for two days. DHS and the Development Services Department immediately visited, reporting that a four-inch water main had broken; repairs began that day and restored water by the following day. The water crisis would spur an emergency meeting about conditions in the park between residents, community supporters, DHS, and District 3—including Rebecca Viagran, who finally returned to Mission Trails—and then to a series of negotiations over the holidays about what residents would need to be able to move out safely. As DHS summarized in its updates from December 19, 2014, residents demanded additional security over the holidays; city investigation into potential health hazards created by nearby demolition of mobile homes; transportation

assistance; movability assessments for their homes, previously available only upon signing release forms; access to information about the eviction process and their rights as tenants; and support in acquiring land so that they might move together. The city agreed with most of these demands, but also made a note of its opposition to residents' desire to acquire land and move there together, expressing concerns that this option would take too long.

Following these conversations, and in anticipation of a deadline of January 15, 2015 for both eviction notice and relocation assistance, the remaining families also began negotiating with White-Conlee on the final terms of their move out. The assistance package was essentially the same as what other residents received: \$1,000 cash up front upon signing, \$1,500 cash upon moving out, and \$2,100 in moving costs, paid to one of the approved parks or to residents for handling their own move. However, one of the residents was in a lease-to-own contract and was eligible for only \$2,500; she also faced threats that this amount would be reduced further because she had stopped paying on mortgage in an effort to save for the move. "What I'm hearing," wrote Guerrero to D3 Chief of Staff Elizalde on January 12, 2015, "is that people were not 'qualifying' for the whole \$4,600 because they owe on their mobile home. Some of them are being asked to break their contract, move out, relocate, AND continue paying on their home."

By this point it was deep winter, and three of the remaining seven families had moved out. One had moved her home to a park on the far Southwest side, but because of the distance moved herself, her two children, and her elderly mother into a rental house closer to her work on the Westside, paying double rent as a result. Another, a veteran with a chronic pulmonary condition still in recovery from a two-week hospitalization for pneumonia, moved into three free months of temporary housing in an apartment complex on the city's distant Northeast side, arranged by community supporters working in conjunction with a housing organization. By the end of these three months, a house donated to him by a veteran's organization was supposed to be ready for move-in; when the repairs did not materialize in time, he went homeless, both visibly—living in his van for three weeks—and invisibly, living in a chain of temporary, poorly maintained apartments for the next year. The third resident, the single mother who later developed PTSD, had also become invisibly homeless, moving herself and her two children into a single, shared room in her boyfriend's father's house, where they continue to reside as of this writing.

Three days before the January 15 deadline for assistance, and with rent-to-own contract issues yet unresolved, White-Conlee's lawyers unexpectedly moved the deadline up by three days to January 12, 2015. Refusing to sign under pressure, residents held a press conference instead, calling out the developers for denying them a fair process and just compensation, and calling on community supporters to demand that City Council and the Mayor hold them accountable. "Once again," read the press release, "developer Scott Weems has not delivered on his promise to offer \$4,600 to each family being forced to move. Residents have not been given written details of their respective offers ahead of time, yet now are being asked to sign written agreements with the developer. Moreover, the majority of remaining residents are Spanish speakers and need full translation of the legal documents they are being asked to sign today."

Ignoring the January 15 deadline, the final four families continued to confer and negotiate until everyone was comfortable with the terms, and when they finally signed on January 26, 2015, they did it together, requesting that DHS, Viagran and her staff, the media, and community supporters be present as witnesses. They had demanded the full amount promised to other residents—\$2,500 in cash assistance, \$2,600 in moving assistance, and the \$2,100 in rent credits—and a move-out deadline of

March 31, 2015. In the end, White-Conlee agreed to up to \$5,600, with a final move-out deadline of February 28, and American Family Communities agreed to forgive outstanding rent and late fees.

Throughout February of 2015, one year after the yellow rezoning signs appeared—even as a city task force on gentrification formed by Julián Castro (the Mayor's Task Force on Preserving Dynamic and Diverse Neighborhoods) began meeting to draft policies for preventing another Mission Trails—the last four families struggled to move out. With the assistance of the city, the one family that had been leasing-to-own with AFC accessed a downpayment assistance program and moved into a house. Over the concerns of DHS, the three remaining families went in together on a piece of land outside city limits, on the far southern edge of the county, where they would move their homes together. Since the land was not ready, two of these families rented a duplex together near Mission Trails for six months, paying double rent until this became too difficult financially, at which point they moved to the new land despite its lacking electricity and water. The third family had moved directly to the land, where they lived without water for a year. Altogether, it has taken a year-and-a-half to get the land platted, to install septic systems, and to connect water and electrical utilities. The process is still not complete; two of the families still lack water service.

For the most vulnerable households, then, the ones who felt they had no choice but to stay until the end, downtown redevelopment effectively has meant a housing policy of destroying already-affordable residential units and, in their stead, creating homelessness on the one hand and colonias on the other—the unregulated, off-the-grid housing developments more associated with rural border communities than with one of the largest cities in the United States. On March 4, 2015, a few days after the final move-out deadline, a final article on the relocation process appeared in the *Express-News*: at that time, one family was still left at Mission Trails, unable to move their home to the new location because of financial difficulties.

It wasn't quite the last mention of the land at 1515 Mission Road. On July 30, 2015, the *Express-News* would report a 100,000+ gallon sewage spill at site of the former Mission Trails Mobile Home Community while the city's water utility worked on a large sewer line. A construction crew had broken the line while leveling land for the new Mission Escondida apartments; later SAWS had patched the line only to reopen it while working on sewer improvements. For nearly two years afterwards the empty park would sit there—vacant, undeveloped, and overgrown. On occasion the temporary chainlink fence stretched across the former entrance to Mission Trails even hung open, prompting almost a quarter of residents interviewed to ask some version of: *so what was the hurry to get us out, then?* (See pages 87-88 for direct quotes.)

Then, in September 2016, the developers of Mission Escondida appeared before the city's Historic Design and Review Commission to present conceptual plans for the new apartment complex, meeting with opposition from the neighborhood association for their vision of, essentially, a gated community that would cut off river access to the surrounding neighborhood. As of this writing, signs have appeared announcing that construction will begin in Spring of 2017. The old wooden fence that once surrounded Mission Trails and largely hid it from view has been removed, replaced with new fencing topped with barbed wire. The grass has been mowed. And despite Council protestations in 2014 that the displacement of Mission Trails residents was wholly unsubsidized by the city—however unfortunate it was to be located along the banks of public investment in the Mission Reach—an Open Records Request reveals that the Mission Escondida Luxury Apartments are in fact slated to receive an incentives package of \$1,787,518 through the City's CCHIP program, nearly twice what White-Conlee

paid out to remove Mission Trails residents. And in April of 2017, the editorial board of *The San Antonio Express-News* would endorse District 3 Councilwoman Rebecca Viagran for re-election, citing her decision in the Mission Trails case as particular testament to her “persistent toughness” and “willingness to make hard decisions that aren't always popular.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Express-News Editorial Board. 2017. “Viagran Best Choice in District 3.” *San Antonio Express-News*, April 12. See <http://www.mysanantonio.com/opinion/editorials/article/Viagran-best-choice-in-District-3-11069273.php>

#### 4. IMPACTS

In April of 2015, one month after the final resident left Mission Trails, Vecinos de Mission Trails began the process of documenting what had happened, systematically tracking down and interviewing all former residents we could locate to gain information on how the rezoning and relocation had affected them and their families. While we utilized a survey instrument that collected some quantitative data, our methodology was primarily qualitative, using an open-ended interview format more similar to that used in oral history research, given that we were concerned primarily with understanding the lived experience of displaced residents (see Appendix A for interview questions). We collaborated with residents in writing the interview questions, meeting with a group of them to present a draft and get feedback, which we then used to make revisions. As we began to conduct interviews, we also used feedback from interviewees to update and further revise these questions so that they best captured resident experiences.

Our ability to locate residents for interviews, and their willingness to share their stories with us, grew directly out of the relationships built in the year prior as we attended meetings and Council hearings, vigils, and protests in support of resident organizing. From sign-in sheets shared at meetings as well as snowball sampling (asking interviewees to refer us to other residents for whom we lacked contact information), we were able to locate 86 of the 106 households originally displaced. Of these 86, we contacted all but one and ultimately interviewed 51, comprising 62 individual residents. This represented a response rate of almost 60% among households for which we had contact information and nearly half of the total number households displaced. Altogether, these 51 interviews accounted for 178 residents (interviewees plus family members) of the almost 300 residents displaced. In addition to the 51 households interviewed, we also had definitive knowledge of particular impacts for an additional 11 households that we were not able to interview directly, either as reported by family members interviewed or through first-hand knowledge based on personal contact. The following table summarizes some of these basic numbers:

<b>Total # Households with Contact Info</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Interviewed</b>	<b>51</b>
Not Locatable (Number Disconnected, Deceased)	14
Declined to Participate	4
Multiple Attempts to Contact with No Response	16
No Contact	1
<b>Additional Households for which we have information about specific impacts</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Total # Residents Interviewed</b>	<b>62</b>

<b>Residents Accounted for in Interviews</b>	<b>178</b>
<b>Response Rate for All Households with Contact Information</b>	<b>59.3% (51/86)</b>
<b>Response Rate for All Households Displaced</b>	<b>48.1% (51/106)</b>

We conducted interviews in person where possible (25 out of 51 interviews), meeting residents largely at their homes or at restaurants where this was preferable, but interviewed residents over the phone when meeting in person was not feasible or where it made participation more likely. 52.9% of interviews (27 of 51) were conducted in English and 47.1% (24 of 51) in Spanish, according to language preference of interviewees. All interviews began with a short statement informing residents as to interview purposes and how the information collected would be used, after which we asked residents directly for their consent to participate. Those interviewed in person signed a written consent form, while we relied on verbal consent for those interviewed over the phone. Where residents were comfortable with it, we audio recorded in-person interviews which were later transcribed, ultimately ending up with recordings and transcripts for 19 of 25 in person interviews. For those interviews we did not record (those conducted over the phone and those who declined recording), we took detailed notes during the interview which were input afterwards into the online survey form as quickly as possible to preserve direct quotes.

We interviewed residents over a period of 14 months (April 2015 – June 2016), until all households but one for which we had phone numbers had been contacted and invited to participate. After this began a process of entering all interview data into SurveyMonkey, an online survey form. Some of this data had already been entered at the time interviews were conducted, but in many cases interviews had to be transcribed first. Interview transcription and data entry/standardization took place from June through November 2016.

Once all data had been entered into SurveyMonkey, we began a process of coding and analysis. SurveyMonkey allows users to organize responses by question for easy comparison and analysis across respondents, and we exported and printed data by question. We then organized questions into broad thematic categories that had emerged from a preliminary analysis we completed and presented to the City in March 2016.<sup>52</sup> These broad analytic categories included Basic Numbers, Demographics, Destinations, Housing Impacts, Health Impacts, Economic Impacts, Social/Family Impacts, Biggest Overall Impacts, Positives and Protective Influences, and Policy. Data within these very broad categories was then coded by hand according to a grounded theory approach, a common data analysis method within the qualitative social sciences in which themes, categories, patterns, and ultimately theories and conclusions emerge “upward” from the data (as opposed to the researcher imposing them from “above”, prior to the process of analysis. A grounded theory approach, in other words, doesn't know what the data will “say” until it looks).

In what follows, we present the heart of our analysis—the most significant findings from our interviews with Mission Trails residents about their lived experiences of displacement.

<sup>52</sup> See <https://vecinosdemiSSIONtrails.wordpress.com/research/> for this preliminary analysis.

## *Demographics*

First, who were the residents of Mission Trails? Exactly who was displaced from their homes?

- **Residents were disproportionately Mexicana/o and Chicana/o (85.5%).** This is a smaller percentage than for the census tract in which Mission Trails was located (92.1%), but a significantly higher percentage than for San Antonio at large, already majority Latina/o (63.3%).<sup>53</sup>
- **An overwhelming majority of households (92.2%) were low income, with over half of households interviewed (55.6% or 25/45) making under \$20,000 a year.** According to categories used to determine housing assistance, 1 in 5 households interviewed (20.0% or 9/45) would be considered Low Income (51-80% of San Antonio's Area Median Income of \$46,744), over half (55.6% or 25/45) would be considered Very Low Income (31-50% of AMI), and about 1 in 7 (15.6% or 7/45) would be considered Extremely Low Income (30% or lower of AMI). Only 4 out of 51 households interviewed (7.8%) were not low income.
- **Mission Trails interviewees were far more likely to be monolingual Spanish-speakers compared to San Antonio at large.** Over 2 in 5 households interviewed (43.1% or 22/51) were Spanish-dominant, compared to just 12.0% in San Antonio who speak Spanish and also report speaking English “less than very well”. Likewise, interviewees were much less likely to be English-dominant (about 1 in 5 interviewed compared to over half for the city at large).
- **Just over half of those we interviewed were immigrants (51.6% or 32/62)** and about 1 in 5 among all residents living in households interviewed (21.3% or 38/178). By contrast, the foreign-born population of San Antonio at large is only 14.1%.
- **The Mission Trails community was significantly younger than the city at large,** with youth under 18 comprising almost half of residents living in households interviewed (44.9% or 80/178) versus 26.0% for San Antonio.
- The proportion of elders, people with disabilities, single-parent families, and veterans were comparable to San Antonio at large. However, **Mission Trails households had a higher proportion of residents on fixed incomes** (41.9% of interviewees, compared to 33.4% for those receiving Social Security or SSI within San Antonio).<sup>54</sup> Around 1 in 5 were fixed-income households (with all members on fixed incomes).
- Finally, **interviewees were disproportionately female**—around 7 in 10 interviewed. While this may represent selection bias (with females more likely to participate), it more likely reflects the reality that women were more likely to be active in the struggle against rezoning and displacement. Men and women attended meetings in equal numbers, but men but took leadership roles far less frequently than women (the Resident's Council, for instance, was made up of all women). Women were thus more likely to come into our orbit as researchers whose project grew out of our earlier role as community supporters of resident organizing.

## *Destinations: Where Did Residents Move?*

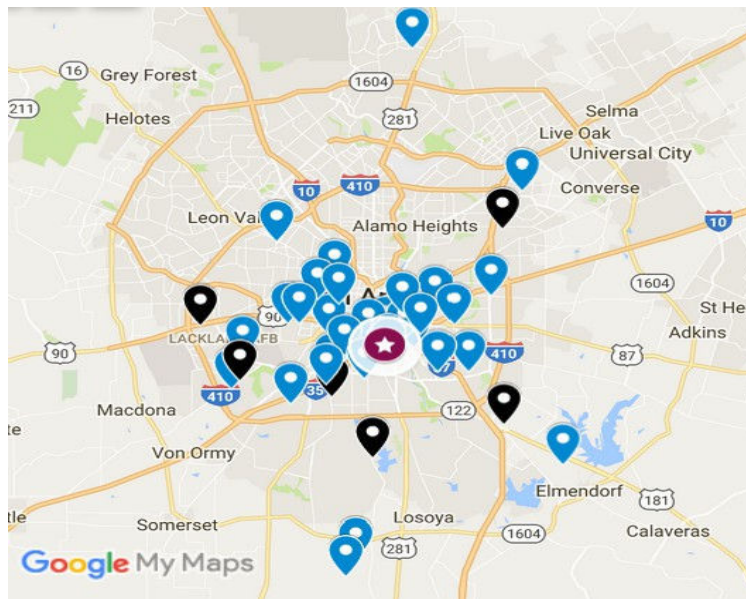
Of the 67 households for which we have addresses or know general locations, **only about 2 in 5 (40.3% or 27/67) were able to stay on the Southside** and about half (50.7% or 34/67) were able to

<sup>53</sup> All census data for census tracts and for San Antonio is from the 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

<sup>54</sup> Note that Census data does not break out how many within these categories receive Social Security or SSI as their SOLE source of income. The discrepancy between Mission Trails interviewees on fixed incomes and San Antonio generally may thus in fact be greater.



stay within the central city. **Another nearly 2 in 5 households (37.3% or 25/67) moved near or outside of 410**, likely because five of the six mobile home parks approved for relocation assistance were located there. Five households (7.5%) moved outside Loop 1604, while three (4.5%) moved outside San Antonio, one to another city within Texas and two out of state altogether:



Map of Resident Destinations

Star marker indicates Mission Trails, while black tabs indicate mobile home parks approved for relocation assistance.

In addition to geographic location, we also collected information about the housing options residents accessed after displacement:

Post-Move Housing Situation	#	%
Mobile home park resident (27 in parks on list provided by developer/city, 3 in parks not on list)	30	42.9%
Renter (8 house, 5 apartment)	13	18.6%
Homeowner (8 with mortgage, 1 with house donated, 3 unknown)	12	17.1%
Moved mobile home to own land (4 mortgaged land, 2 unknown)	6	8.6%
Living with friends/family	4	5.7%
Accessed Public Housing	3	4.3%
RV	1	1.4%
Other - living in place of business	1	1.4%
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

What we see here is that, while the largest category of post-move housing situation continued to be mobile home parks, this group nonetheless represented less than half of the households displaced from

Mission Trails whose housing situation was known to us. In other words, **more than half of these households elected not to move into another mobile home park**, highlighting the inadequacy of this option as the standard or default assistance offer. **Nearly 1 in 5 households that had been homeowners at Mission Trails became renters**, and in an effort to secure housing free from the possibility of further displacement, about 1 in 4 were able to purchase either a house or land where they moved their mobile home. However, as discussed in the section below on housing impacts, this did not necessarily translate easily into greater housing security. Many who purchased houses or land struggled to afford high mortgages or other difficult conditions, as expressed by one of the residents who moved her home to land that effectively became a colonia, lacking infrastructure for basic utility connections:

Vivo en un terreno del otro lado de 1604. Llevo un año viviendo sin agua, no porque no la quieran poner, pero porque no tengo el dinero para hacerlo. Cuando estábamos en Mission y pasó lo de la reubicación, las últimas personas enteradas fuimos nosotros. No nos apoyaron como debieron de haberlo hecho. Cuando nos salimos de Mission Trails, salimos sufriendo. Ahorita aquí donde vivo—pues, te digo que no tengo agua, y la tengo que acarrear de unos vecinos, también siempre que lleve pongo botes para juntar más agua. (I live on a piece of land outside Loop 1604. I've been living here for a year with no water, not because they can't hook it up, but because I have no money to pay for the job to be done. When we were at Mission Trails and the displacement happened, we were the last people there to leave. They didn't support us as they should have, and when we left Mission Trails, we left suffering. Now here where I live—as I said, I don't have water, and I have to carry it here from some neighbors, or when it rains I put out bottles to collect the water.)

Moreover, as detailed in the next section, the numbers on destinations greatly obscure the reality that only about 1 in 4 households interviewed or reported (27.8% or 15/54) could be considered settled economically and housing-wise at the time of the interview, without any prior period of homelessness or multiple moves between displacement and relocation<sup>55</sup>. Conversely, almost 3 in 5 (57.6% or 31/54) were still unsettled (facing one or more forms of displacement pressure), while another 1 in 7 (14.8% or 8/54) were settled but only after a period of homelessness or multiple moves.

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<sup>55</sup> We define “settled” households as relatively stable economically and housing-wise, without any form of displacement pressure that makes further moves likely. By contrast, “unsettled” households experience displacement pressure stemming from one or more problems with their current housing conditions (lack of utility service, mold or other environmental hazards in rental home, damage to home that can't be fixed, bad management at current park or apartment complex, overcrowding, lack of air conditioning, poor physical condition of house or mobile home park, crime and other safety issues). Note that the distinction between “settled” and “unsettled” does not reflect whether households are happy with their location (which we asked about as well). Some families were in fact extremely unhappy or suffering ongoing health or financial impacts of displacement, but nonetheless were relatively stable economically and housing-wise. Conversely, some families were happy with their new location but not settled. The numbers on settled vs. unsettled households, then, derived after looking at each family's situation in its entirety, pertain only to whether households were or were not experiencing any form of displacement pressure at the time of the interview, making it more likely that they would have to move again.

## Biggest Impacts

Based on interviews, we found that **the rezoning, displacement, and relocation had four main impacts: 1) on housing security; 2) on health; 3) on economic security; and 4) on social/family wellbeing.**

### 1. Housing Security

One of the most significant findings to emerge from the interviews was the extent of housing insecurity residents experienced following the rezoning and closure of Mission Trails. While this may seem an obvious point in a case study about displacement, what was less obvious was that the simple question “where did you move?” would reveal that while many may have ended up in another mobile home park or an apartment or a house, they often did not move directly there. Often there were several moves or a period of homelessness before they located more permanent housing. As stated by a man whose family moved out in a hurry to an unsafe apartment complex where they were broken into and had their car stolen, forcing them to break the lease, purchase another mobile home and move into another mobile home park a year later, losing an estimated \$43,000 over the entire process: “The City thinks that everybody is happy with their new location, but in reality they have no idea what happened in between.”

However, before looking at how the rezoning and forced relocation impacted residents' housing security, it is important to provide a portrait of Mission Trails as a community prior to its disruption. We asked several questions that provided this kind of data. First, **looking at length of residency suggests a community that was settled, without high turnover; by and large, residents moved in intending to stay.** Indeed, four households interviewed had lived there over 30 years, with the longest-term there 38 years and the average length of residence just over a decade (10.3 years). As expressed by one of the residents who had lived there almost since the park opened, “My sister and I [lived there] for 37 years. So we knew a lot of people there, a lot of kids that ... they were in Pampers, you know? And then years later here they're graduating and here they have their own kids.” Over half of households interviewed (56.9% or 29/51) had lived there between one and nine years, and only three of 51 households had been there less than a year. However, even one of these stated: “That was my dream—to move [to Mission Trails] to stay.” A majority of families owned their homes (69.8% or 74/106), which were older (primarily from the 1980s), with another quarter in rent-to-own contracts with the park (23.6% or 25/106) and only 7 households renting.<sup>56</sup>

In addition to being a stable, settled community of homeowners, another important dimension of housing conditions at Mission Trails was captured in a question asking residents to rate their perception of conditions at the park when they first moved in. **The average score was 4.03, with about 3 out of 4 (75.6% or 34/45) describing it as “good” or “pretty good”:**

Rating	# Households	% Households
5 (Good - no major problems)	25/45	55.6%
4 (Pretty good)	9/45	20.0%

<sup>56</sup> Numbers of homeowners and rent-to-own households derived from a Department of Human Services update on the relocation process from August 25, 2014. Number of renters documented in an email by residents' Attorney Nicole Henning, forwarded from Maria Antonietta Berriozábal to District 5 Councilwoman Shirley Gonzales on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Both documents were obtained via Open Records request.

3 (Okay - park had some issues)	3/45	6.7%
2 (Not great - lots of issues)	5/45	11.1%
1 (Terrible - really bad condition)	3/45	6.7%
Average Score	4.03	
Reporting 4 or 5 (Good or Pretty Good)	34/45	75.6%

Some of the things residents liked about Mission Trails included:

- Good management before AFC came in (8 residents). Some of the words used to describe this management included “clean,” “nice,” “fair,” “friendly,” and “caring.”
- Good neighbors and family-orientedness made the park feel like a community (8). “El parque estaba bien, era como una comunidad chiquita, nos cuidábamos uno al otro. Nos gustaba mucho ahí.” (“The park was good, it was like a little community—we took care of each other. I liked it a lot there.”)
- The park was “muy bien, a gusto, tranquilo” (“very nice, content, calm”). Other words along these lines included “peaceful,” “quiet,” “comfortable,” and “decent” (7).
- Park was accessible—close to things, on bus line (4).
- Residents appreciated the park's natural aspects, especially its many trees and proximity to the river (2). “Oh, when I move in there, it was nice. I said, oh man, I like this place because it's near the San Antonio River, right on the banks, I could see the river. And I liked it, I put up chairs, and ... a barbecue pit, and ... a round table with an umbrella. I said, I like it here, you know! We can sit over here, cook out, and see the river, you know. And people would go there and say, hey that's a nice place you've picked. Right here in the corner, right here, where you can see the river and everything. See the people walking, and bicycle riding.”
- Park felt settled and stable (1). “It was very family-oriented, it's always been. ... It was always a good place to live. We liked it from the start. We thought, well, this is where we ended up, we're gonna be here a long, long time. We never imagined that the park was gonna be sold. I know it had their problem. The water, this and that. We thought that, well...it was going to be remedied and stay open and continue.”

This is not to say that Mission Trails did not have its problems, as this last resident suggested. Most frequently mentioned were the park's consistent water and gas shut-offs. “I lived there twelve years,” said one resident, a woman who took care of her elderly mother, “and the problems with the water were there from the start. Sometimes I would wake up and try to shower, and there was no water. ... But they wouldn't even let people know—oh, we're going to turn off the water, sorry for the inconvenience. ... They would just do their thing and leave it off the whole day and into the night. ... It was hard. They kept telling us the pipes were no good underneath.” In some cases the water problems made residents sick, as in the case of one single mother who described a severe skin allergy exacerbated by the water shut-offs that would leave her unable to wash soap off her skin. “I was really really sick when I was there [with the rash]. I couldn't even go outside. I couldn't wear pants. The doctor couldn't find what it was. It changed my life completely. I had to buy a special soap, had to take steroids. And we didn't have gas for a year. That's so stressful to make food for the kids.”

Five other residents mentioned abuses by park management, much of which took place during AFC's tenure and some of which occurred under previous owners. For instance, some talked about the park effectively stealing rent money. "They said we didn't pay rent when we did," said one of the few renters at Mission Trails. Others mentioned AFC illegally master-metering water usage and thereby overcharging residents for water, as well as continuing to sell homes even as they knew they would soon sell the park.<sup>57</sup> Others described the park's earlier practices of selling homes in bad condition and charging for property taxes but then not paying the county.

Two other residents additionally mentioned problems with crime—theft, drugs, and once a shooting that left someone dead—as well as problems with maintenance. "When I arrived," said one man who owned a landscaping company and helped out with park maintenance tasks, "it was totally bad. Trash everywhere, and the manager there at the time would come and demand people clean up. But he should have been the example. Keep the park clean so other people would keep it clean. With my business, I had trucks and took 20 loads of trash to the dump once—sofas, tires, mattresses. I had gone to the manager and offered to help clean it up. ... After awhile things got better, though." Similarly, a number of those who had lived there longest pointed out that conditions had always fluctuated depending on managers.

However, **a question about when conditions began to get bad at Mission Trails reveals that 70.2% (33/47) felt it was only in the last two to three years, with the purchase by American Family Communities.** In fact, many expressed a feeling that the increasing number of water and gas shut offs toward the end of their time at the park were a subtle form of harassment or eviction, as captured in this conversation between an elderly woman and her daughter:

D: When American Family took over, that's when everything started going downhill. That they were not reading our meters or charging us whatever they wanted for water and all that, and then our rent went up. ... Before that, everything was fine, they were reading our meters, we got our bill and they told you from how much to how much. ... I could spend twenty-something dollars in water. But not no \$100, you know. So when they sold it to them, that's when everything...

M [interrupting]: It was like they were trying to drive us out before even communicating with us.

Another elder similarly recalled how, when she complained to the manager about AFC beginning to master-meter the water, she was told, "If you don't like it, you can get out." Others speculated that AFC had purchased the park knowing they were going to sell it. "Initially, when AFC first took over," said one woman

there was all those big promises on how they were gonna clean the community up. They were gonna get everything fixed. Everything was gonna get taken care of. And initially, when they first came in, they would do repairs. The pool still stayed in pretty good condition. And slowly, to me, it almost felt like they were intentionally letting it get run down. The pipe busting. ... The grass wouldn't get cut, the stray dogs running all over, the pool being green. And I'm not talking

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<sup>57</sup> Master-metering is the practice of dividing the park's total water bill by the number of tenants, charging them equally for water use rather than according to what they actually used. Because it is illegal without certain kinds of permitting, it became one of the bases of residents' lawsuit against American Family Communities.

sometimes, I'm talking full-blown moss growing off the walls. ... Seemed like AFC bought the park knowing they were going to sell it.

Overall, however, even when residents acknowledged ongoing issues with maintenance and upkeep, most did so in the context of saying that they liked living at Mission Trails and considered it home: “Tenía unos problemas con el agua,” said one single mother, “estaba en malas condiciones de servicio, pero lo hacíamos bonito por los niños. Por lo económico, más barato que una casa...[pero fue] en malas condiciones. Lo bonito eran los niños, una vecindad muy bonita...a pesar de las trailas viejas pozos, malas condiciones, vivían felices.” (“It had some problems with the water and was poorly maintained, but it was nice for the kids. Economically, it was less expensive than a house, but it was in bad condition. The nice thing was the children—it was a very nice neighborhood for them. Despite the bad condition of the trailers, they were happy there.”)

**One major reason the displacement was so destabilizing was that, despite a relocation plan that theoretically should have covered the cost of moving and connecting all homes within a new mobile home park, only about half of all households for which we have data on current housing situation (51.4% or 36/70) ended up actually keeping and living in their homes.** Of those remaining, almost half (16/34) became renters; about a third (12/34) became conventional homeowners, albeit saddled with high mortgages that raised their housing burden considerably; and five households became homeless.

Questions about whether residents' homes were movable revealed something similar. Although most households (51/58 or 87.9%) reported that their homes were movable, many who did so also offered a more qualified response (“yes, but”):

- 1 in 3 (33.3% or 17/51) said their home was movable but that they did not keep it, for a variety of reasons. The most common (6 of 17) was not wanting to go to another mobile home park “and take the chance that, here we are again.” Others were forced to sell off their home because they needed the money, because no park would accept it, because the movers never showed up, or because another park would have been too far away; while some residents felt it was easier not to keep it because of complicated tax or title issues or because there was too much left to pay on it for the condition it was in.
- Five households (9.8% or 5/51) stated that while their home was movable, it sustained significant damage in the process. As one resident stated, “Se fregó en la movida, las paredes. Se maltratado la traila.” (“It was movable, but the walls broke in the move. The movers mishandled the trailer.”)
- Three households said that while their home was movable and they moved it into a park, they themselves did not actually move into it, in all cases because they did not like the new location.

Looking just at “movability”, then, eclipses the reality that for many, moving their home was not a viable option that met their family's specific needs in the face of the trauma represented by displacement. Other situations residents found themselves in suggest the same:

- Some did not want to keep their home but the park would not buy them out. One resident felt that because she was purchasing from the park, had a contract, had already put in thousands of dollars in equity and yet they were making her break the contract, it was only fair that the park

buy back her home and return the money. However, the park refused, wanting her to either move the home and keep paying it off or sell it to someone else.

- Others who rented wanted to keep their home, but the park would not let them. “When I offered to buy,” said one renter, “they said they had sold [the homes], someone had already got them. There were maybe four of us in the park who were renters. I didn't even get an option to buy. I would have bought it, moved to that park on Presa and 410. The money they gave [for relocation assistance], I was ready to put down as a deposit in that park.”
- Others thought their home would not be movable but were told otherwise. One resident commented that he felt there were many cases where the developers did not respect the reality that the home was not movable, even though they said it was. “A neighbor of ours—we would say, 'Their trailer is not even going to make it to the corner, it'll fall apart.' Even hers, they made her take it, and they moved it that way, to Lackland.”
- And others felt their home was movable but were told it wasn't. One man recalled how, when the office sent the movers to inspect his home, they informed him they couldn't move it because of a piece that was bent. He felt that this didn't affect its movability, but the company refused. As a result, he left his home at Mission Trails and bought another one from a neighbor who was moving into an apartment complex. The office gave him \$1,000 for his old home, which he gave to his neighbor plus an additional \$3,500.

**Another major reason residents lost their homes was the timeline of the moving process itself, which put tremendous pressure on families to move before they were ready.** For instance, a review of media reporting and of open records maintained by the city's Department of Human Services gives a sense of the temporality of displacement, demonstrating that the majority of the 106 households moved after the park was sold in July of 2014, but before an early incentive deadline on October 15 that fell four months before residents' legal deadline to leave:

Question: When did residents move?

Before rezoning approval on May 15, 2014	2	1.9%
After rezoning but before sale of park on July 24, 2014	3	2.8%
<i>Note: 5 units that moved before sale got no assistance.</i>		
Between sale of park on July 24 and extended deadline of Oct 15	67	63.2%
<i>Note: 4 of these moved without signing a release (no assistance)</i>		
Between October 15 and 31	9	8.5%
<i>Note: 1 of these moved without signing a release (no assistance)</i>		
Between November 1 and 25	11	10.4%
Between November 26 and December 19	4	3.8%
Between December 19 and January 15, 2015	3	2.8%
Between January 15 and February 28	4	3.8%

After February 28	1	0.9%

In more open-ended questions, residents likewise underscored how much of an impact these early move-out deadlines had on their decision-making processes. In fact, when we asked how residents decided where to go and when, six households emphatically stated they were “one of the last ones left” at the park, before specifying that they had actually moved in September or October 2014, many months before the legal deadline of February 2015. For instance, one resident stated: “I waited until the end. ... [But] I had no choice [about when]. [Management] kept telling me, 'you have to move, you have to move.' I was getting threats of getting locked out.” Ironically, with a move-out date of September 1<sup>st</sup>, this resident was one of the first to go.

Indeed, the two most frequently mentioned factors involved in resident decisions about *when* to move included:

- **Pressure from Mission Trails management, developers, and buyers (33.3% or 18/54 residents).** “El señor me estaba ... presionando mucho. Para que moviera la traila, y me dijo, 'la van a tener que mover, la van a tener que mover.' Me estaba hablé y hablé. ... Y pues, ya le dije, bueno, 'Pues, está bien.' Y ya dije: 'Pues, busque el parque, porque yo no lo voy a buscar.’” (“The man at the office was pressuring me a lot so that I would move the trailer, and he told me, 'You're going to have to move it, you're going to have to move it.' They were talking and talking at me. ... And so I told them, 'Okay, fine then.' And I said, 'Well, you find me a park because I'm not going to look for one.’”)
  - Eight residents reported that this pressure took the form of threats from Mission Trails management, including:
    - A renter who was pressured to leave, with management telling her that if she didn't it would ruin her sister's credit (who had co-signed the lease). “They said it definitely would mess up her credit and my sister was getting mad.”
    - Homeowners threatened with being locked out of their homes, as in the case of the resident quoted above (“[Management] kept telling me, 'you have to move, you have to move.' I was getting threats of getting locked out.”) Another resident described how management told them that if they stayed longer, they could close the gate on them, lock up the house, cut off the mail, and shut off the water and electricity.
  - Four respondents reported that they were pressured in particular to make the early incentive deadline of October 15, 2014: “They had already told us that we had only a certain amount of time. They were sending notices, saying the money was running out and if we didn't move we wouldn't get any assistance.” Another man said that his family and other residents moved when they did because they were getting letters threatening them, saying that if they didn't move by the deadline, they wouldn't get assistance. “That's why a lot of people left, because of those threats.”
  - For one respondent, threats escalated to outright harassment by management: “I wound up staying. I was one of the ones that stayed toward the end, till I got broken into while being asleep the day after Thanksgiving in my home. So that scared me out of there. So I left. ... And it's kinda weird. I'm thinking, man, was it him [the Mission Trails manager]? 'Cause there was no one else around. And after that, I personally caught him very close to my mobile home, not once but twice. Why would he lie to me? 'Oh, I'm checking my oil.' What



do you mean, you're checking your oil right here looking toward my mobile home? ... He was just against us. ... Why he was stalking my mobile home, I don't know. But they got what they wanted, and that was me leaving. And they got it eventually. They did, they got it."

- Two residents described the developers bringing in construction equipment while residents were still living there: "They already had machines clearing the land, tearing down the empty trailers, they were almost kicking us out with them too. It was scary for our kids to be near that, with all the cables and broken things."
- One resident described utility shut offs in her last months at the park: "They cut off our water ... [and] charged me a couple times \$150 for water."
- **Another major factor mentioned in the timing of move-outs was the park becoming unsafe (20.4% or 11/54).**
  - Four residents described how, as neighbors began moving out, the park became scary: "[We moved at that time] because everyone was leaving! Everyone was moved when we moved! We were like the last ones! Ten families or left when we moved. I remember because it was almost start of school and the kids didn't have school lined up. ... So I decided I had to get everything ready before they came back. It was scary to live there alone. I didn't have neighbors anymore. I was afraid in the night to sleep there."
  - Two residents had their homes broken into and had to flee before they were ready to move. "I heard the door, and when I woke up—you know, I was asleep. I heard the door, and I get up and I go toward the living room, not even expecting anyone to break in. I kinda thought it was one of my kids. So when I got to the door, my door was wide open and there was no one there. I went outside and there was no one there. So I never knew—they did come back and stole my TV. They tried to break in again. And that's when I—I left. The next day I left. I was afraid. There was hardly anybody left, hardly anyone around me, I was practically on my own. So my friends just said, hey—it's best for you to leave. So I did."

Other significant factors around timing that residents mentioned included:

- Seasonal considerations (13.0% or 7/54)
  - Wanting to move before school started for children (3). "I didn't want to wait. I wanted to go before school started rather than wait til midyear and have to pull the kids out. I was able to get [my son] enrolled out here so that he could start out here, and I would just bring him out here. We had to do some little deceiving to do it, and say he lived with [my daughter, who had already moved to the new park]. But I just felt like it was better, and especially with his disabilities, to start him fresh than to start him and then have to pull him away."
  - Wanting to move before school started for teachers (1). "It [the timing] was the most awful thing in the world. School was about to start, so there were trainings and inservices. ... I moved August 18, 2014, the first day I was supposed to be in my classroom setting up. It was a nightmare."
  - Wanting to move before summer hit and it got too hot (1). "See, I was lucky enough. We could afford to move. I felt sad for people ... that I knew could not afford to move their homes and really didn't have a whole lot. We left in April 2014, the Monday after Easter Sunday. I felt the need to find a place and get settled before summer started, because my husband worked for SAWS—he worked in the heat and was stressed. Plus, with everyone moving out, I knew that newer homes had the advantage in locating a spot in another park. My home was old. I feel kind of like a traitor, cuz I got out when the going was good."

- Wanting to move before winter hit and it got too cold (1). "I didn't want to move when it was cold. We had all the way till February to move out. And I said, I bet if I move now that people can help me. Because it's going to be cold in a few months, and nobody is gonna want to help you."
- Wanting to wait until after the holidays (1).
- Knowing they had to leave sooner or later (13.0% or 7/54). "I knew if I stayed till the last day, it would be the same situation. Nothing would be any better, I didn't feel like, for us. Other than longer stress, longer heartbreak. So that's why I felt like it was best to go ahead and get out of here, and just deal with it. Get used to it kind of feeling."
- Worry about what would happen if they didn't move out (9.3% or 5/54)—that parks would not have space, especially for older homes; that they would not get any assistance; or that they would "get in trouble."
- Wanting to hold out to see if more money would be offered (5.6% or 3/54). "They had rezoned it, and when they did I found a house and purchased it in May, but we didn't move until a few months later, because we were trying to hold out until last minute, to get the best deal. I wasn't just going to settle. I actually owned two mobile homes there. That's why I was waiting for the best deal. They threw the wrench in my plans, so I was going to throw it in theirs."
- Feeling that they did not have a choice about "when" (5.6% or 3/54): "There was not much of a decision about it [timing] when, if I didn't move, I couldn't find where to live."
- Having the resources to move early (1)
- Lacking the resources to move earlier (1)
- Having to wait until family members were safely relocated before they could move (1). "Once [my mother] was settled and I knew she was okay, then I would look for somewhere to go."
- Knowing they were not going to receive any assistance, so leaving early (1).
- Wanting to support those who stayed (1). One man reported that he stayed as long as he did in part because he wanted to support other residents who were fighting. He felt the more people there were at the park resisting the better and more powerful it looked. He would tell his neighbors, "I'm going to stay here and fight with you."
- Feeling unable to deal with what was happening (1). "Porque batalle mucho para poder, este—para así como dicen: Una asimilarlo y otra era muy difícil para mí, este—acoplarme. Y, o sea, a veces como que no lo quieres aceptar, verdad? Y dices tú, no pues—piensas muchas cosas, verdad? Dices, muchas cosas que pueden pasar, y dices tú, a lo mejor se pueden, este—como se diría—vaya que resolver [la situación]. Pero no. Nosotros en una manera nos sentimos bien presionados, y a veces no quieres aceptar las cosas, verdad?" ("I struggled a lot, to be able to...like they say, one accepts it and for another it's very hard. I had a hard time coming to grips with it. At times you didn't want to accept it. And you tell yourself, well—there are a lot of things, right? You say, a lot of things can happen; maybe the situation would resolve itself. But no. We felt really pressured and sometimes you don't want to accept things, you know?")

**A third and final reason the rezoning and displacement created such lasting housing insecurity for so many was because of the many unexpected problems that resulted from the physical process of moving, in particular damage to mobile homes.** 17 of the 30 households that kept their homes (56.7%) reported that the move resulted in alignment and leveling issues; cracked or bent doors, walls, roofs, and floors; broken windows; and problems with plumbing, electrical, wiring, and/or siding. One family, for instance, described how their home had actually overturned during the move, causing structural damage that led to water entering the home and causing secondary damage to walls, ceilings,

and floors:

Mira, allí está. Allí está esa cuarteadura. Toda, toda, toda está cuarteadura. ... Y este—me dijo el esposo de mi hijo, 'Suegra, usted quédese aquí mientras movían la traila'—los que llevaron el camionsote. 'Quédese aquí para que mire como mueven la tráila.' Son pura personas que hablan inglés. ... Cuando movieron la traila de aquél lado, donde están las llantas, había un pozo allí por donde la llanta tenía que pasar. Y ellos no le pusieron una tabla, algo para que la llanta pasará. No, la traila se movió toda así. Allí es cuando yo digo, si ellos hablan inglés y yo no lo hablaba como les digo, 'Oiga, fíjese como está sacando mi traila.' Yo no les podía decir. Y la sacaron así. Estaba allí gente y me decían, “No'mbre! Ya parecía que su traila se volteaba toda porque con el pozo!” ... Al tiempo—claro, pues, se cuartió allí y empezó a llover allá. En ese pedazo empezó a llover. Y allí! ... en el pasillo. Ese se compuso porque empezó a llover. Donde la traila—el techo lo molestaron con esa caída. (Look, see that? Over there is that crack. Everything, everything, everything is all cracked. And like—my son-in-law told me [when we moved], 'You stay here [at the park] while they move the trailer'—the ones who were taking it on the truck. 'Just stay here so that you can watch how they move the trailer.' The movers were people that only spoke English. When they moved the trailer from that side where the wheels are, there was a hole there where one of the wheels of the trailer had to pass. And they didn't put a board or something so that the wheel could pass over. No, the trailer moved all like that. That's when I said—like I said, they spoke English, and I couldn't tell them, 'Listen, watch how you're pulling out my trailer!' I couldn't tell them. And they took it out like that. People were there and they said—“No'mbre! It already looked like your trailer totally flipped over, because of the hole!” ... Then in time—of course, well, it began to rain over there, in the part that was damaged. And there—in the hallway. Where the trailer—that damage happened because it began to rain. Where the trailer—the fall damaged the ceiling.)

Other problems with the physical process of the move included:

- personal belongings getting damaged, lost, stolen or discarded (33.3% or 16/48 households)
- delays in hooking up utilities at new site (18.8% or 9/48), in six of those cases for 1 month or more
- physical difficulties moving (10.4% or 5/48), especially in the heat and especially for elders and people with disabilities. Two residents reported coming very close to heatstroke trying to move, and one older man actually suffered a stroke.
- sustaining injury during or on account of the move (4.2% or 2/48)
- having to dismantle and reassemble landscaping (4.2% or 2/48). “I had to start all over again because there was nothing but dirt [in my yard at the new park]. Who wants to come over to your house, you've worked everyday, come home, work an hour or two on your landscaping, and then for it to be gone? In an instant...”
- in one case, movers did not show up, leading a family of four to abandon their home and move unassisted into a one-bedroom rental house too small for them.

Because half of households with known locations did not keep their homes, coupled with the pressured move-out timeline and the losses endured from the physical process of the move itself, rezoning resulted in a significant loss of equity or wealth for residents, only part of which was monetary. In *Urban Fortunes*, Logan and Molotch point out that within Western societies, the places we call home have both exchange/market value and use value. “The earth below,” they write, “the roof above, and the

walls around make up a special sort of commodity: a place to be bought and sold, rented and leased, as well as used for making a life.”<sup>58</sup> For mobile home residents, the rezoning of a park is uniquely destabilizing not primarily because it represents the loss of the market value of one's home, but because residents lost the *use* value of their home. However little their homes were worth on the market, and in fact arguably *because* their homes had so little exchange value, they provided an inversely unquantifiable security. It was this form of wealth—stability—that was liquidated in the city's decision to rezone the park, and in turn appropriated by American Family Communities and White-Conlee Builders.

Consequently, one of the biggest impacts revealed by the interviews was the level of housing insecurity created in the wake of displacement. An article in the *American Journal of Public Health* defines housing insecurity as crowding (more than two in a bedroom or more than one family per household) and/or multiple moves (moving more than once in the previous year).<sup>59</sup> Looking at just one of these measures of housing insecurity—multiple moves—it is striking that over 2 out of 5 households interviewed (43.4% or 23/53) had moved more than once at the time of the interview, as the rushed and forced conditions of displacement meant that many had to move initially to undesirable or unsafe locations. As one resident explained, "Nos cambiamos para allá, y comenzamos el proceso de comprar una casa. Nos daba miedo que nos vaya a pasar lo mismo otra vez—que tal si deciden vender ese parque también?" ("We moved over there [to Garden Valley Mobile Home Community] and right away started the process of buying a house. We were afraid that the same thing could happen to us again—what if they decided to sell this park too?")

In the worst instances of housing insecurity, **about 1 out of 5 households (21.6% or 11/51) experienced homelessness**. In most of these cases (9 of 11), families technically had a roof over their heads but were doubled up with other families, living in non-residential spaces, or else were in a state of severe and ongoing housing instability, as provided by federal definitions.<sup>60</sup> The following table

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<sup>58</sup> 1987: 1.

<sup>59</sup> Cutts et. al. 2011, "US Housing Insecurity and the Health of Very Young Children."

<sup>60</sup> According to the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, "official" definitions of homelessness vary by federal agency. For instance, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines a homeless person broadly as "an individual who lacks housing (without regard to whether the individual is a member of a family)," including those living on the streets, in vehicles or abandoned buildings; residing in shelters, transitional housing, or single room occupancy facilities; doubled up with friends or family because of a lack of secure, permanent housing; or living "in any other unstable or non-permanent situation. ... A recognition of the *instability* of an individual's living arrangements is critical to the definition of homelessness" (2017, emphasis mine). See <https://www.nhchc.org/faq/official-definition-homelessness/>

The Housing and Urban Development has narrower criteria, in 2012 finalizing an updated federal definition of homelessness that includes four broad categories. As summarized by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, these are: "1) People who are living in a place not meant for human habitation, in emergency shelters, in transitional housing, or are exiting an institution where they temporarily resided[;] ... 2) People who are losing their primary nighttime residence, which may include a motel or hotel or a doubled up situation, within 14 days and lack resources or support networks to remain in housing[;] ... 3) Families with children or unaccompanied youth who are unstably housed and likely to continue in that state. This is a new category of homelessness, and it applies to families with children or unaccompanied youth who have not had a lease or ownership interest in a housing unit in the last 60 or more days, have had two or more moves in the last 60 days, and who are likely to continue to be unstably housed because of disability or multiple barriers to employment; and 4) People who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, have no other residence, and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing." (See <http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/changes-in-the-hud-definition-of-homeless>). Mission Trails households were included in statistics on homelessness if they met criteria outlined in either of these definitions.

summarizes these cases:

*Housing Insecurity and Homelessness among Mission Trails Households*

<b>Experienced &gt;1 move at time of interview</b>	23/53	43.4%	
<b>Experienced homelessness</b>	11 of 51	21.6%	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A single mother of two sold her mobile home and moved herself and her two children into a single room in a nearby house owned by her boyfriend's father. For awhile she tried living in another house in very bad condition that she had purchased under predatory terms, but that house lacked a working bathroom and she had no resources to fix it, so she moved back into the room of the first house where she continues to live two years after displacement from Mission Trails.</li> <li>• Two families, comprised of two adult children and their children who had all been living with their elderly father and his partner at Mission Trails, became homeless for at least a year after their father sold off the home and moved into an apartment. From there they bounced between the homes of family and friends, even pulling the children out of school at times because of the instability, and at the time of the interview were living squeezed together in one apartment.</li> <li>• One woman had moved three times by the time of interview (a year after displacement from Mission Trails) and at the time was looking at a fourth move. Her first move was to the same public housing complex where her elderly mother moved; then, because of complications at this complex related to turnover in management, she lost her housing there and moved in with her daughter for a time, and then into a friend's house. At the time of the interview, she was desperately trying to move back in with her mother, an elder with end-stage kidney failure who depended on her daughter's assistance as caregiver.</li> <li>• A woman living on her own was able to access a downpayment assistance program and buy a house with a mortgage, but only after eight months of jumping between friends and family after a break-in at Mission Trails forced her to flee the park before she had secure housing lined up.</li> <li>• One family sold off their home and moved into a relative's home for eight months, at times sleeping in parks because of unsafe conditions at the house where they were staying.</li> <li>• One single mother of two sold her home and almost everything she owned and moved into a friend's apartment with nothing to her name.</li> </ul>
--Doubled up with friends/family	7		
--Living in vehicles, in shelters or on the streets	2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An veteran in his 70s ultimately moved into a house donated to him by a veterans' rights organization; however, he moved five times in the process: first to temporary housing for three months, then into his van for two weeks; then to a rental efficiency on a temporary basis, then to another temporary apartment, then to the donated house over a year after leaving Mission Trails.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A single mother of three could not locate affordable housing in San Antonio after displacement from Mission Trails and returned to Albuquerque, New Mexico, where she is from. As a renter, she received only \$1,000 in relocation assistance, most of which she used to fix up her van for the trip; she and her children had to panhandle to purchase gas for the last leg of the trip. A year-and-a-half after leaving Mission Trails she had accessed public housing, but only after living out of her van for several weeks, then in two apartments she described as “crappy” and “temporary,” then in a shelter, and finally in her present location.</li> </ul>
--Forced to live in place of business	1		An elderly couple moved their home into one of the parks on the list approved for relocation assistance, but the park management took two months to connect it, in the process reneging on promises to cover hook up costs and scamming them out of the six months' free rent promised as well. While waiting for their home to be set up, they moved into their appliance shop, intending for the arrangement to be temporary. Ultimately they had to pay out of pocket to connect it, and afterwards tried staying the night at the new park. However, the woman was profoundly anxious at the new location, experiencing panic attacks, and as a result they have continued to live out of their shop since July 2014.
--Families with children experiencing severe, ongoing housing instability	1		A family with four children first moved in with a relative because the new park did not have their home ready for three weeks; after this they moved to a temporary mobile home without electricity at the new park while they waited another week for their home to be connected. Several months later, they were evicted after the park claimed they had not received rent they had mailed. Leaving their home behind, they moved into a rental house temporarily; shortly thereafter, the husband was incarcerated and the woman gave birth to a baby. On her own with four children and a newborn at the time of the interview, the woman then managed to retrieve their home and move it once more into another mobile home park.

The majority of these cases involved family with children or others reliant on caregiving:

- Five households consisted of single mothers with children
- Three were single adults (one elderly/disabled and one a caregiver to elderly/disabled parent)
- Two were two-parent families with children
- One was an elderly couple

Moreover, the majority of these cases were “invisible” or “hidden” forms of homelessness, which one prominent child welfare organization has defined as a situation in which individuals or families are “not living in shelters or on the street,” but rather, “move frequently, often into overcrowded apartments or double up with other families.”<sup>61</sup>

Indeed, for many of the cases listed above, homelessness was even hidden from interviewees themselves, who did not necessarily recognize their situation as such or else did not want to think of their experience in those terms. For instance, when asked directly if they had experienced “homelessness,” one family denied that they had, perhaps because they had a narrow view of what homelessness meant (living on the streets or in shelters) or because they did not want to acknowledge this to the interviewer. However, later in the interview, they explicitly described “dealing with living in

<sup>61</sup> Children's Health Watch 2016. See <http://www.childrenshealthwatch.org/housing-insecurity/>

the streets,” at some points “sleeping on the ground.”

On the other hand, the woman who had initially moved into public housing with her elderly mother intuited exactly what she was dealing with, and yet the enormity of it eluded naming: "And my grandma told me, come stay over here. But over there they only allowed them to have people stay over a couple weeks and that's it. She's on Section 8, you know. I mean, she got a one-bedroom. ... [She] tells me, well, come stay here and you sleep in my bed, I'll sleep on the recliner. I said, no—like, I'm not gonna put you out! I'm okay, I'm okay. I'm like—I don't have a place, but I have a room where I'm staying at, you know? I mean—it's just like, going from a home to a room or to a couch, that's like, kind of like...you know what I mean? It's—it's—it's...when you had your home and it was yours and paid for. And now you have to be renting and living off people or combining homes because that's the only way you're going to maybe meet—and have some money left over for gas, you know?"

For one single mother who moved into a friend's apartment, the realization that her situation was also homelessness eluded even us until long after the interview. Initially, this woman had described moving to a nice apartment on the far Northside where the schools and neighborhoods were good and where she felt content and settled. It sounded like the furthest thing from homelessness until we began to analyze her interview, realizing in the process that the apartment belonged to a friend and that she had sold off everything in the process of moving there: “It's like I don't have anything,” she commented. “If I had to start on my own—for example, if tomorrow I have to move, I don't have no living room, no nothing—fridge, washer, dryer.” Only afterwards did we realize that she had essentially nothing to her name and that her housing situation was entirely dependent on the generosity of her friend.

A fourth and final case, of the couple living in their shop, suggests the difficulty residents had not only naming or recognizing homelessness, but even admitting aloud to themselves how uncomfortable their post-displacement housing situation was. At first, when her husband was around, one elderly, legally blind woman insisted they were comfortable living in the shop. They had lived there before they lived at Mission Trails, so in a way they were returning to something they knew before:

W: We've been in this shop for over 30 years. We're comfortable here. We adapt. I don't really need...I'll adapt to what's there. God willing, one day if we can find a little house we can buy, we'll sell the trailer and leave it there. The bedroom is there at the shop, with a little bed. Even if we're right on top of each other, we're comfortable. We're fine. You have to adapt to anything.

H: We come from a country where there's no bed. The floor is your bed. There's no problems here. You don't have to pay for high rent, new car, insurance...when you don't have many money problems, your body is relaxed. When you have a lot of debt your mind is stressed.

However, after her husband left the room, the woman shared a different story: being there at the shop gave her a lot of stress and anxiety, as there was nowhere to go. She felt like she didn't have a home, nowhere she could go to rest, no change in environment—she was trapped there 24/7. For awhile they had tried staying at the new park at night, but she hadn't liked the lot where they moved their home, which was at the back of the park with the outer fence right behind them, next door to a lot where someone burned down a mobile home right after they moved in. Whenever they tried to stay there, she would have anxiety and be unable to sleep, hearing noises outside and having to get up and look out the

windows. Staying there, she felt like she was "in an elevator" and couldn't breathe; as she described it, the new park "[gave] me a lot of depression."

But being at the shop was just as stressful for the woman. As she explained, displacement had greatly restricted her mobility, exacerbating limitations created by her visual impairment and confining her to the shop. "I don't go anywhere," she said, "and if I do it has to be with him, because I can't go out on my own. ... It's like being in a prison." At the shop her husband went to bed at 6pm and left her there, where she would try to distract herself by turning on the TV or radio and going through her nighttime routine of turning off blinds and lights. If she tried to go to bed before 10pm, however, she felt restless and unable to sleep. During the day when people were dropping by and talking to her, she was okay. But when evening came, the visitors stopped and anxiety and depression set in. And yet, because they technically had a place to sleep, this couple would not regard their situation as homelessness, despite living "in a place not meant for human habitation," as specified in one of the federal definitions given by HUD.

**Notably, predominantly Spanish-speaking residents experienced housing insecurity differently than English-speaking or bilingual residents. Whereas Spanish speakers experienced higher rates of multiple sequential moves (52.2% or 12/23 vs 35.5% or 11/31 for English-speakers), English-speaking/bilingual residents experienced higher rates of homelessness (23.3% or 7/30 vs 13.0% or 3/23).**

What this discrepancy suggests is not so much that Spanish speakers, more likely to be undocumented or to live in mixed-legal status households, had some kind of protective advantage. Rather, in a sad irony, it suggests that those not dealing with citizenship issues on top of displacement could afford the visibility associated with becoming homeless (even the invisible kind experienced by most of the residents who became homeless). This is borne out by the fact that the three most "hidden" cases of homelessness, in which people remained technically housed while living in informal or grossly inadequate living circumstances, were all monolingual Spanish-speaking families.

Of the 11 households that had experienced homelessness after displacement, five to our most recent knowledge continue to experience "hidden" forms of homelessness, including four households headed by single mothers with children.

## *2. Health Status*

Overall, residents saw a decline in their health as a result of the rezoning and forced relocation, which we attempted to measure both quantitatively and qualitatively. To quantify overall impacts on health, we asked residents to rate their health on a scale from 1-10 at three points: 1) before things got bad at Mission Trails (which most defined to coincide with the start of rezoning, though some defined it as when AFC bought the park); 2) right around the time of the move; and 3) currently (at the time of the interview).

Compiling and taking the average of all responses shows that

- Residents' health status dropped by about half (from 8.3 to 4.2) from before things got bad at Mission Trails to their displacement, with 78.0% rating their health as 5 or below (not great or poor).



- Residents' health recovered from that point, but at the time of the interview was not as good as it had been before things got bad at Mission Trails (7.0 after vs 8.3 before);
- **Before things got bad at Mission Trails, over three-quarters of residents interviewed (76.1%) rated their health as good or pretty good (8-10), while at the time of the interview, this number fell to under half (47.5%);**
- **Conversely, only 10.9% of residents rated their health as not great or poor (5 or below) before things got bad at Mission Trails, while this number rose to 17.5% at the time of the interview, as a result of the impact of forced relocation.**

The following tables present findings on changes in health status in greater detail:

	#	%	Resident Voices
<b>Average health rating before things got bad at Mission Trails</b>	<b>8.3</b>		
8-10 (good or pretty good)	35/46	76.1%	<p>Residents in this category did not have health problems or had pre-existing conditions that were well-maintained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I was in wonderful health. Never got sick. I'm a person who goes and goes. I could work three jobs, take care of my home, cook, bake...no stress whatsoever."</li> <li>• "I think [my health] was pretty good. I've had these illnesses for awhile. But as far as getting bad, I would say about 8. And then once things started going, it was like, foomp! Downhill."</li> <li>• "Mi vida era estable y diabetes regular." ("My life was stable and I could maintain my diabetes.")</li> </ul>
6-7 (so-so)	6/46	13.0%	
5 or below (not great or poor)	5/46	10.9%	<p>Residents in this category already lived with significant health conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Mine was always bad."</li> <li>• She was already dealing with some serious health issues when rezoning hit. In 2004 she had cancer; radiation treatments destroyed her hips. "Since then it's gone downhill."</li> </ul>
<b>Average health rating during rezoning</b>	<b>4.2</b>		
8-10 (good or pretty good)	4/41	9.8%	<p>Residents in this category acknowledged some effects on mental health, although they made a distinction between this and physical health impacts: "At that point [of moving]? [My health was] still about 8-9. But I had a lot of worries, I kept wondering about the storage, hoping no one would break into it and take whatever I had, what little I had. And having just to worry—okay, the month is up, gotta go pay storage again...hey babe, can I have some money, whatever?" And I hate to beg. I hate to ask. I've always been a hard worker."</p>

6-7 (so-so)	5/41	12.2%	
5 or below (not great or poor)	32/41	78.0%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Oh my god, it was just...like a 5."</li> <li>• "That's when I started getting really sick."</li> <li>• "Estaba muy triste y deprimida por lo que estaba pasando y por no saber qué hacer. Me sentía muy mal." ("I was really sad and depressed from what was happening and not knowing what to do. I felt really bad.")</li> <li>• "No me he podido recuperar bien desde que nos sacaron." ("I haven't been able to get back on my feet since they kicked us out.")</li> <li>• "Hasta abajo...me enfermé muy feo. La fibromialgia es horrible, me quedaba tirada en la cama con fiebres y todo me dolía." ("All the way to the bottom...I got sick really bad. Fibromyalgia [which she developed during the displacement] is horrible, it leaves me lying in bed with fevers, my whole body hurting.")</li> <li>• "My life changed. I got sick, anxious, and my diabetes got worse too. It was giving me attacks of hysteria. I didn't know when I might burst out yelling—I said enough already!! You already know, why are you doing it anyway?? And that's not me."</li> </ul>
<b>Average health rating at time of interview</b>	<b>7.0</b>		
8-10 (good or pretty good)	19/40	47.5%	<p>Residents in this category had mostly settled and recovered, despite some remaining worries or health impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "About an 8. I'm slowly getting back up."</li> <li>• "Now I feel a lot better because—I worry about the girls, because they're still out there without a home. But as far as we're concerned, well...we're okay here."</li> <li>• "Mas o menos 8. We just resigned ourselves."</li> </ul>
6-7 (so-so)	14/40	35.0%	<p>Residents in this category felt their health had improved or was improving, but also felt their health had been permanently impacted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I don't feel the 'I'm gonna jump out of my skin' feeling anymore. It's [my health has] improved. But I don't think it'll ever be 100% again."</li> <li>• She's slowly getting better, but not recovered. "It's not like it used to be."</li> <li>• "I know it's hard to explain. I'm just not who I used to be. I lost almost 15 pounds since the move."</li> <li>• "Lower than the 10 I was before, now a 6. Before I'd be sick the whole week, now it's less."</li> </ul>
5 or below (not great or poor)	7/40	17.5%	<p>Residents in this category were still struggling with significant, ongoing impacts on their health.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "It's not the same at all." She was already at 1 before, now feels health is "worse than 1."</li> <li>• "Me estreso, me frustró y me desesperó. Me siento triste, preocupada y muy mal. Yo creo que estoy como un 3-4. Me siento mal pero sé que le tengo que echar ganas por mis hijos." ("I get stressed out, frustrated, and I despair. I feel sad, worried, and really bad. I think I'm probably around 3-4. I feel bad but I know that I have to keep going for my kids.")</li> </ul>

Beyond overall impacts on health, **one of the most striking health impacts uncovered by the interviews was the fact that three residents died in the wake of displacement:**

- One woman in her 70s, a frail elderly woman who relied on a walker, passed away in March 2015, six months after moving to another mobile home park with a housemate. The coroner's report ruled her death the result of a heart attack, but a close friend and adopted daughter from Mission Trails feels that the woman's housemate, who had a known history of abusive behavior and had already been charged once with elder abuse, was involved because of an incident of domestic violence witnessed by the friend just a few days before the woman's death.
- An elderly woman in her 80s died in August 2015, nine months after moving to a distant mobile home park with her daughter. At the time of the interview, the woman was alive but largely housebound. Two months later, she had passed. Her daughter reported in Dec 2015 that while she feels her mother was already in poor health, she declined quickly after the move.
- A middle-aged man who along with his wife had been one of the first households to move—even before the park was rezoned—committed suicide in September 2015, approximately a year and a half after moving. In her interview with us, his wife relayed the news: “You don't know this, but... [beginning to cry] my husband killed himself the day after Labor Day [2015]. I can't say for sure—in his note he did not say anything about not liking it here. But if I had to hazard a guess, I think it contributed. ... In his suicide note he said he had wrecked the company truck three times and he would get fired. That was not true—he'd had no accidents, he was a good worker.” When asked if he had depression, she said she did not think he had, but that he “worried about everything. I did not know that was considered a condition. I would have to tell him, especially during the move, 'Just go to work, I'll take care of it.' And it went off without a hitch [the move]. I thought he'd adjusted. ... then I went out the back door and there he was.”

Because of small population size, it is difficult to assess whether these numbers reflect an elevated mortality rate, and if so to what extent we can definitively attribute excess deaths to the impacts of forced relocation.<sup>62</sup> What cannot be disputed, however, is that surviving family members understand these deaths not as random or “normal” but rather in the context of, and connected to, what happened at Mission Trails.

This is likewise true for residents discussing other significant health impacts, which they attributed to the stress of the rezoning and displacement:

- **Approximately 1 in 5 residents interviewed or reported by those we interviewed (21.2% or 14/66) experienced life-threatening health impacts requiring hospitalization**, most often diabetes complications (2 residents) and stroke (2 residents). For instance:
  - a blind man with diabetes had to be hospitalized with diabetes complications and severe depression after the move, leading to the amputation of toes. According to his sister (who also lived at Mission Trails), he actually flatlined during one surgery, but they were able to bring him back.
  - An elderly veteran with a chronic lung condition reports that he got sick frequently during the rezoning and year of homelessness that followed. He went to the ER twice with pneumonia and bronchitis toward the end of his time at Mission Trails, and had just been

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<sup>62</sup> The background mortality rate within the general U.S. population is 9.5 deaths per 1000 persons per year. Three deaths out of a total of 178 residents interviewed/reported is equivalent to a mortality rate of 16.9/1000 deaths, which appears to suggest excess mortality. However, it must be noted that this figure includes one death that occurred 17 months after moving (the other two took place within 12 months) and additionally does not adjust for age.

released from the hospital and was still sick with bronchitis when he had to move in February 2015. In March 2016, at the end of a year-long period of homelessness, he was hospitalized with a collapsed lung and feared he would need to move into a nursing home.

- An older woman developed a heart condition (afibrillation) leading to multiple hospitalizations. “I have afib,” she explained, “and some people it affects them certain ways, some people it only happens once or twice in their life. And I was having episode and episode and episode in the trailer park. Here I haven't had one. The doctor said probably because of the stress, because I told her what was going on at the trailer park. We had to call EMS...several times.”
  - According to a single mother, “Tuve que ir una vez al hospital porque me sentía muy muy mal, un dolor horrible y me tuvieron que dar morfina. Me dijo el doctor que era estrés. Fue la noticia y lo que pasaba, por eso fue.” (“I had to go to the hospital once because I had terrible pain. The I felt really really bad and they had to give me morphine. The doctor told me that it was the stress. The news of the relocation and what was happening was the cause.”)
- **1 out of 3 (33.3% or 22/66) experienced a worsening of chronic conditions**, most often diabetes (10 residents) and hypertension (8 residents). This resulted in residents having to begin carting oxygen tanks, start insulin treatment after managing diabetes by diet alone, start a second medication for hypertension, and start dialysis when previously stable diabetes became unmanageable. A conversation between one elderly couple captures how displacement affected those who already had chronic conditions:

M: His got worse, because we didn't know—I would hear him like...huffing and puffing. I said, well, what's wrong with you? And then once we got here we started looking into it. First they found the sleep apnea.

S: 'Cause I got vertigo también.

M: I said, well, why is he huffing and puffing when he gets out of the shower?

S: Got high blood pressure, I'm a diabetic...

M: The sleep apnea only happens when you're asleep. So I called the doctor and he said no, something's going on. Go ahead and bring him back. So that's when they started the testing and they found the COPD.

Interviewer: Did all of the stress also affect his diabetes? [To S]: Did your sugar go up?

M: Yeah, I think so too, because his sugar was always high—somehow it just—

S: And it affected my vertigo, too.

M: The vertigo! Oh god. That really—but then we found out that the vertigo gets awakened when you have a lot of stress, and we didn't know that.

S: When you worry a lot or have a lot of stress.

M: Other than that it's just, okay, but...they had to put him on an extra medication to keep that blood sugar low all the time.

- **About 1 out of 4 (27.3% or 18/66) developed new physical health conditions they did not**

**have before the rezoning**, most often cardiovascular conditions (3 residents) and insomnia (3 residents). For instance, one single mother developed fibromyalgia during displacement: “Yo me enfermé muy muy feo—era muy estresante el último tiempo en Mission Trails. No sabía donde íbamos a vivir, mis hijos estaban muy tristes, pensaba que nosotros íbamos a quedar en la calle. Me sentía muy cansada, me dolían los huesos, me daba fiebre alta—parecía como una gripe, mucho estrés. El doctor me dijo que tenía fibromialgia. Eso fue justo cuando estaba buscando donde vivir—me dió mucho estrés, mucha tristeza...la fibromialgia no la tenía.” (“I got sick really really bad—it was really stressful at the end at Mission Trails. I didn't know where I was going to live, my children were really sad. I thought that we would be living on the streets. I felt so tired, my bones hurt, I had high fevers—felt like the flu, so much stress. The doctor told me I had fibromyalgia. This was just around the time when I was searching for where to live and couldn't find a place. Before I wasn't sick, but the search for the house and where to live gave me so much stress and sadness...I didn't have the fibromyalgia before.”)

- **Almost 3 out of 5 (57.0% or 45/79) experienced impacts on mental health**, most frequently depression (29 residents) and anxiety (17 residents), but also psychosomatic pain (7 residents) and PTSD-like symptoms (6 residents). Five residents reported mental health impacts severe enough to be disabling, to require hospitalization, or to result in suicidal feelings or acts.
  - For instance, one woman, a single mother of two who became homeless, went to the ER on more than one occasion following displacement because of panic attacks and what she thought was a heart condition, eventually diagnosed as PTSD. The trauma of the displacement sent her into such deep depression and anxiety that she was forced to stop working, and her symptoms still interfere with her ability to work. She reports flashbacks from when she was at Mission Trails at the end—being woken up by the sound of homes being torn down outside her house—and for this reason was not able to participate in the interview, fearing it would trigger flashbacks and panic. However, other residents we interviewed remember her telling them that she was experiencing suicidal thoughts and feelings. “It wasn't that bad for me,” said one of her neighbors, “but for a lot of people it was hard, it was bad. I was in touch with this lady who lived behind my house at Mission Trails. For her, it was bad. Really, really bad depression—she wanted to die. What was her name...I lost contact with her. The last time I spoke with her she said she wanted to die.” Like this resident, another neighbor could not recall the woman's name, but nonetheless remembered how deeply traumatized she was. “Otra señora que también me habla a veces, este se llama...no recuerdo el nombre ahorita. Este también es una muchacha joven, y dijo que fue a vivir ella con su novio en un cuartito no más. ... Ella estaba enferma y llorando, yo todo me dijo que la mera verdad ella estaba sufriendo mucho, y pues...es difícil, me entiende?” (“Another lady that I also talked to sometimes, her name was—I don't remember her name right now. She was a young woman too, and and she said that she was going to live with her boyfriend in just a single little room. She was sick and crying, and the real truth, she told me, was that she was suffering a lot, and well—it's hard, you know?”)
- **About 1 in 5 households (20.4% or 10/49) reported health impacts on children**, mostly anxiety and depression severe enough to prompt medical attention (6 households). Three households reported impacts on pregnancy or newborns, including one extended hospitalization after birth and two cases of neonatal weight loss because of stress affecting mother's milk supply. In one case, a woman who moved to a very distant park reported that her son, who had a

congenital heart condition, required another surgery after they moved to the new park. She wondered if his condition was made worse by the fact that they had to walk more to get to school: "Maybe he needed it [surgery] because he can't walk a lot, and there are no buses here to take him to school like at Mission Trails, so I walk with him to school every morning and afternoon, and he can't do that."

Tables with greater detail on the kinds of health conditions residents reported for each of these impacts, as well as their direct words and experiences, are available on request.

In addition to the stress of rezoning and displacement, the geographic challenges posed by relocation affected residents' health in other ways:

- Two households described how the move disrupted a previously healthy lifestyle they had enjoyed at Mission Trails, which many recalled as wooded and open, with streets that were safe for children to play in. One single mother who had moved into a rental house observed: "Mi niña, la más chica, subió de peso por los cambios del lugar donde vivimos. Estaba muy acostumbrada a correr y jugar...ahora ya no." ("My daughter, the littlest one, gained weight from all the changes in where we were living – at Mission Trails she was used to running and playing...now she doesn't.") Similarly, a father whose family had moved to a mobile home park that many others who had moved there described as claustrophobic and cut off commented on how the shift in location had affected their overall wellbeing. Whereas at Mission Trails, they would do things together as a family to improve their health, such as go for a run or to the park, at their current location they had no ability to do those things.
- **Approximately 1 in 3 households (34.1% or 15/44) reported that relocation had negative effects on their access to medical care:**
  - Because their doctor was now farther away (10 respondents)
    - and they had no transportation, relying on taxis or buses to access medical care, which was expensive in terms of both money and time, not to mention exhausting (3). "Sé de una vecina que era en Mission Trails, y se mudó también a Lake Village. Y ella sí, batalló mucho, porque estaba embarazada y tenía que ir a las citas del doctor, y el bus pasaba como dos veces no más. Lo tenía que esperar siempre y se veía cansada." ("I know a neighbor who was at Mission Trails and also moved to Lake Village. And she did struggle a lot, because she was pregnant and had to go to a lot of doctor's appointments, and the bus passed by only like twice a day. She was always having to wait, and she looked tired.")
    - and they had only one vehicle, requiring husband to miss work if children needed to see a doctor, whereas when they lived at Mission Trails they could just ride the bus.
    - and no one on the Northside took Medicaid. "I drive all the way into town to see my kids' doctors. In this part of the city nobody accepts Medicaid. In this part of the city, people are rich. Out here no one wants to see my kids—I have to go to the Southside."
  - Two households had to change doctors because of the distance.
  - Two households lost health insurance because of the impact of the move on household finances:
    - An older woman who had health insurance dropped it because of the financial impact of

- displacement. She is a veteran and can access the VA, but the system is much more restrictive and cumbersome than private insurance. "You have to get referrals; there's not a whole lot you can do."
- One father of six, who had taken on a high mortgage on a house that required him and his wife to work longer hours, explained: "Now that I pay more money on the house, it's hard to get access to health insurance. When we applied for Medicaid, they said we made too much money. My girlfriend was actually thinking about quitting her job so we could get help."
  - One elderly couple on a fixed income who moved into a rental home described how difficult it was to pay for medical costs, since they are now paying 75% of their monthly income on rent and utilities.
  - One resident recalled how she neglected health care during the stress of the rezoning. "I haven't been to the doctor when all of this started. I was cancelling doctor's appointments because it was like we never knew when we were going to have to go to another meeting ... when we were first trying to get them to stop the rezoning. So there were doctor's appointments that I had rescheduled and I had to cancel, and so I'm just now getting back with meeting those doctor's appointments that need to be made."
  - One household reported needing a new doctor for health conditions arising from stress of displacement.
  - One household reported increased medical bills due to new health conditions that developed as a result of displacement.
  - In one household, an elderly woman with end-stage renal failure and who needed round the clock caregiving was split up from her daughter, who had lived across the street from her at Mission Trails and provided care for her.
  - One household that moved outside Loop 1604 reported having to stockpile medications because their providers were so far away. "Mis hijos tienen alergias, y pues ahora que vivimos acá, siempre tengo que tener la medicina en el refrigerador y mucha. Porque si no, pues de aquí a que llegamos a donde los ayuden." ("My children have allergies, and now that we live here, I always have to have their medicine in the fridge, and a lot of it. Because if an emergency were to happen it would take a long time to get help.")

On the other hand, three households (of 44 responding, or 6.8%) reported that the move had given them closer access to their doctors, and two households (of 62 responding, or 3.2%) reported improved health because of the move, in both cases because they had been made ill by conditions at Mission Trails under American Family Community's ownership.

For instance, one elderly woman's health improved after moving from Mission Trails to a rental house, because a sewage leak at her old home had made living conditions hazardous there, exacerbating her asthma. However, even after moving from Mission Trails, she started having to use an oxygen tank, carrying it with her at all times. Although her health saw an immediate improvement, then, overall she has experienced a worsening of chronic conditions. "I continued getting sick, and that was my problem there," she says; "I came out sick from there, and to this day I'm still sick."

Even those whose health was less impacted, however, acknowledged protective influences that others did not have such as age and savings, and commented on how much anxiety they experienced at the time. As one father stated, "If you ask me how I am now, how do you feel—to be honest, I'm okay. But

everything that happened for me to get here—there were lot of problems. We lost a lot. The sleepless nights, 'what happens to my kids?' 'how am I going to get to my job...?'"

### 3. Economic Security

The main economic impacts revealed by interviews were:

- **out-of-pocket expenses;**
- **increases in housing burden;**
- **impacts on employment, income, and equity; and**
- **transportation impacts.**

**Around 3 out of 4 households (76.6% or 36/47) reported paying out of pocket for expenses generated by the displacement, with only 6 households of 47 (12.8%) reporting that the relocation assistance they received from the developers covered everything.** Average expenses were around \$9,000 (\$8,973-\$9,223), although there was a considerable range in what households reported spending (noting too that these numbers likely underreport total costs, as most residents tallied only expenses associated with the physical process of relocation and omitted those resulting from health and housing security impacts):

Amount	# Households	%
<\$4600	6/28	21.4%
\$4,601 - 6,999	6/28	21.4%
\$7,000 - 9,999	9/28	32.1%
\$10,000	2/28	7.1%
\$15,000+	5/28	17.9%

**Average out-of-pocket expenses, by contrast, were around \$4,250 (\$4,184-4,302), with equally great variability across households:**

Amount	# Households	%
\$0	6/37	16.2%
\$400-500	6/37	16.2%
\$1,000-\$1,500	2/37	5.4%
\$2,000-2,500	4/37	10.8%
\$3,000-4,000	7/37	19.4%
\$5,000-6,000	2/37	5.4%
\$6,000-7,000	2/37	5.4%
\$7,000-8,000	3/37	8.1%
\$9,000	1/37	2.7%
\$10,000	1/37	2.7%
\$15,000+	3/37	8.1%



For a significant majority of households, then, moving expenses were greater than the relocation assistance offered by the developers, which offered the possibility of \$7,200 in the ideal scenario that residents kept their home and moved it without incident to one of the six parks approved for assistance. Because this ideal scenario only applied in the case of 7 out of 51 households, what residents actually reported receiving in assistance was far less than the \$7,200 package quoted by developers and politicians:

Amount	# Households	% Households
\$0.00	5/51	9.8%
\$1000-\$1999	5/51	9.8%
\$2000-\$2999	8/51	15.7%
\$3000-\$3999	2/51	3.9%
\$4000-\$4999	7/51	13.7%
\$5000-\$5999	7/51	13.7%
\$6000-\$6999	5/51	9.8%
\$7,200	7/51	13.7%
> \$7200	5/51	9.8%
\$7201-\$7999	1/51	2.0%
\$8000-\$8999	2/51	3.9%
\$10000-\$10999	2/51	3.9%

**Overall, the average amount of relocation assistance received was \$4,451, with 13.7% (7 of 51 households) receiving the maximum amount promised, 76.5% (39 of 51) receiving something less than this, 9.8% (5/51) receiving more than the maximum amount from selling off their home, and 9.8% (5/51) receiving nothing at all.** As one woman wryly commented, “They kept claiming it was gonna be a total of \$7,500. I never saw anybody get \$7,500 out of them.”

**Most households (64.6% or 31/48) did not report problems receiving this assistance, but a significant minority (35.4% or 17/48) did.** Several of those who answered “no” indicated that if they did not have issues, it was because “ya querían que se salieran” (they just wanted them to get out).

For those who answered “yes,” some of the problems they reported included:

- harassment by developers or Mission Trails management (12.5% or 6/48). One woman recalled: “When we were signing our papers, [the property manager for the developer] said, 'you know, the developer isn't...how did she put it? 'He's not obligated to give you all anything, anything at all, none of you.'”
- pressure to drop out of lawsuit against AFC in order to receive assistance (10.4% or 5/48). When Mission Trails management told one woman and her daughter that they would have to drop out of the suit to receive any assistance, “We walked right back out of the office. I ain't signing. And we played that game for probably about two or three months. And finally, like I said, when it came time for getting close to school to start, that's when I just said, I'm not waiting on them. I'll pull my own money, I'll move my own self. If ever they decide to give it to us, we'll collect then. Which, after [my daughter] moved out first, then I moved later, about the time I moved, they had finally said they would pay. Which, for me, it was too late. I'd already

- pulled money out and lost out on my savings, basically.”
- delays in receiving assistance (8.3% or 4/48). "When we signed and we said we'd be out of there, we kept our end of that. They didn't." When it came time for this woman and her husband to move, Implicity did not have their check ready: "That's the way I guess they've done everybody. Because that's the way they do business. I don't know. Because when I told them, they just said as soon as you get it hooked up. They knew we were scheduled to move that Monday—why was she not in the office? Why was she not there to give us the money and sign and we're out of there?" Because the check was not ready at the time of the move, they were not able to pay the movers after they moved their home, which was mortifying for this resident: "I felt bad that I couldn't give them their money, because when I went back... Well, I went and told the manager, and he said, 'Well, you just tell us when you're going to move and we're going to have the money there,' but that wasn't true. It's never been true. It was never true from the beginning. It was just a way to—okay, they're hooked [up], they're leaving, they're out."
  - difficulties arising from not receiving assistance until they were moved out (6.3% or 3/48), such as
    - out of pocket expenses (2). "You got money to move out, but they didn't give assistance till after you left, so you ended up paying out of pocket anyway." Another woman reported that the Mission Trails manager "didn't want to give the money. They told me to get out by a Friday. I got out. And then the guy [buying my home] didn't move the trailer out for another two weeks." As a result, this household ended up having to pay another month's rent. "The buyer did not want to pay to move it right away because it was raining—he said it was not his fault." But Implicity would not release the assistance until she removed her home. So not only did they have to pay additional rent but the assistance was delayed as well.
    - having to sleep in mobile home without utilities (1). Before they moved in with a relative, one family was sleeping in their mobile home without electricity and gas while they waited for the assistance check. She remembers telling them, "I'm not going to move until you give me my check," but Implicity told her that she had to move before they would get it.
  - no one in the office to give out assistance checks (6.3% or 3/48)
  - Implicity withholding rent owed from assistance or threatening to do so (6.3% or 3/48)
    - without telling them until they were moving out (1). "They were offering \$2,500. And we got...like about \$1,800, around there, because they took out from the rent. ... We didn't pay the rent for September, because we were already supposed to be at Lakeside Village. And when that didn't happen, we went and spoke to them and they said that they were going to charge us partial rent for half the month of September. Because she was like, that wasn't their fault that it didn't work out at Lakeside. Even if we would have left at the middle of the month of September, they would have wanted us to pay for half of that month. But I didn't know all of that until the day we left. As she was giving us the money, she was telling us that we weren't gonna get the \$2,500 because she was going to take out our rent for the September and half the October. So I was like, What do you mean? That wasn't our fault, we were ready to leave! That's why we didn't pay, because we were ready to go, but it didn't go through with that man, cuz he sold the park! And she was like, yeah, well, the minute that he had sold it and we knew that, you should have came and paid the rent. I was upset, but I didn't want to argue with her, because there was no point arguing with her, they're still going to give us what they want. So I just signed the paper, got the money, and we left."
    - withholding more than was not paid in rent (1). "Well, with me it was different [in terms of how much I got]. Because I ended up not paying the rent. I think it was maybe \$300 or \$600,

I think, that I ended up not paying rent, so that I could put up the boards and other things that I needed [to move] the house. I didn't pay rent for maybe 2-3 months, so [Implicity] said, you won't be receiving the money that you were supposed to be getting. I go, you know what, okay. Just give me what, you know—what I should be getting then. 'Well, we're gonna take this off and that off.' Okay. So, I think I ended up with, what...\$500 and something? Or \$600 and something? \$561. Something like that.” Thus, Implicity seems to have withheld more (almost \$2,000) than she would have not paid in rent in 3 months' time (around \$1,000).

- Threatening to withhold rent (1). “I told 'em I couldn't afford to pay for those months if they wanted me to move out. I told them if they were to deduct the money, that I wouldn't be able to move out. So they waived what I owed and gave the money.”
- Two households (4.2%) reported that their destination park reneged on assistance promised. One older couple felt they were cheated, because of the \$5,000 they were given, \$2,100 went to the park to move their home, and the \$2,500 they were supposed to get when they signed (waiving their right to participate in the lawsuit against AFC) went to the park to connect the utilities and fix the skirting. But even that \$2,500 didn't cover it, and they ended up having to pay \$850 out of pocket for the skirting. They were also promised six months free rent if they moved to that particular park, but they weren't able to move in for two months since the park had not tied down the home to stabilize it. The park counted those months as part of the six months nonetheless. As this couple described it, the owner of this park took advantage of the situation to get the incentive money from the developers, visiting the park with flyers offering six months free rent and free utility connection, and then scamming the residents who actually moved in. Two months after coming to the park to recruit residents, that owner had sold the park to another owner who went back on the promises offered. “All the men in that business are just a bunch of liars,” this couple commented.
- Two households (4.2%) expressed confusion about how much they received. One elderly man thought he would be getting moving expenses or something for the value of his home, but since he was not going to another mobile home park, he did not; and since the home was technically movable, Implicity did not want to buy it. So he was taken aback that he got so little compared to other residents. Another woman was perplexed that Implicity did not give her anything beyond paying to move her home to another park. “I don't remember if I have the papers. I don't remember when I signed the papers that they were going to give me the money...they didn't give me anything.” She knows that others who stayed until the end got money and is not sure why she didn't. “I heard that they had received money. But not me.”
- One household reported that management cheated them out of assistance owed: “Okay, so after that, I ended getting the mobile home out. I end up leaving, forgetting about the incentive of \$1,000 that they were supposed to give us, totally forgot about that, didn't know we were still going to receive that. So he [Mission Trails manager] never mentioned nothing to me about that money. I never brought it up. Time went on, to where I end up walking into the office, asking him to give me the paperwork that I'm to fill out, you know, when I'm ready to leave, so I can just look over it, and he gives me just this one simple sheet. And I ask him, 'Hey, this is it?' He goes, 'Yeah, that's it.' Well, when I went back to fill out all the real paperwork—of course, it wasn't just that one sheet, there was lot more sheets to it—I come across one sheet that was a receipt for the \$1,000. And right before I signed it, I asked him, 'Hey, what about this, it's saying it's a receipt?' He told me ... that Implicity was suppose to give me that \$1,000, and also told me that I had to go ahead and sign it. Then I did. I go on to find out—I go to Implicity to pick up the

rest of the money that they were supposed to give me, and I brought up to her about that \$1,000 that they were supposed to give me, and she told me that no, he was supposed to give it to me. And it was like—her words were, 'Well, you signed it.' So that was the end of that. My understanding was that I lost out on that \$1,000. So, well, I just left it as is, what could I do about it? ... It was my mistake, I signed the receipt. So, you know. I guess he ended keeping that \$1,000 for himself.”

- One household described the difficulties posed for elders and those with disabilities in having to completely empty their home before any assistance was given. “Remember [Implicitly] said, 'I'm going to send somebody to see that the trailer's completely empty, and then I'll write you the check,' and they did that. Had to be empty empty. They wouldn't give you a penny before.”

**As to be expected from the average amounts residents reported receiving and paying out of pocket, an overwhelming majority (91.3% or 42/46) stated that the relocation assistance was not sufficient.** Only four households stated that it was, with one a tepid yes (“We made it work.”)

The list of out-of-pocket expenses collectively compiled from interviews gives a sense of the many costs unanticipated by the developers' assistance package. **Over 1 in 3 households (13/36 or 36.1%) mentioned needing to make repairs or upgrades so that homes could meet the requirements of their new locations**—installing or fixing decking; installing central HVAC systems; fixing siding, stairs, and skirting; disassembling and reinstalling fencing; purchasing new appliances; painting; and fixing screens and windows. **Nearly 1 in 3 (11/36 or 30.6%) mentioned needing to repair damage from the move:** “Salen muchos muchos gastos siempre,” said one woman. “Cuando nos movimos, veía que mi esposo siempre compraba madera para reparar cosas, reparando la traila, muchas partes se estaban cayendo, reparar el baño y el techo.” (“There were lots and lots of expenses. When we moved, I saw my husband always buying wood and other materials to fix the trailer, fixing the walls, roof and bathroom. It was falling apart in a lot of places.”)

Other out-of-pocket expenses included:

- Motel stay or other transitional housing (such as helping relatives with rent and utilities while waiting for homes to be connected) (25.0% or 9/36)
- Deposit on house/apartment or per person (25.0% or 9/36)
- Food during transition/move. This could often be very expensive if there were delays in locating permanent housing or in connecting mobile homes, especially for families with many children (22.2% or 8/36)
- Deposits to reconnect or open new electric or water utility accounts (19.4% or 7/36). One woman reported unexpectedly having to pay a \$250 deposit to CPS. “I don't know why, because I had the light for so many years under my name and had to pay a deposit.”
- Uninstalling/reinstalling a/c units (19.4% or 7/36)
  - having to hire licensed a/c technician to uninstall/reinstall (1)
  - having to drive to Mexico and back to pick up a/c unit (1)
- Storage items and rental (16.7% or 6/36)
- Parts or repairs needed to connect utilities (16.7% or 6/36). One family paid the movers for a replacement hitch even though the park might have provided one, because they were scared that if they let the park know, they might not let them move in.
- Moving assistance, either a company or friends/family (16.7% or 6/36)

- Value of items lost, stolen, broken or sold during move (8.3% or 5/36)
- Moving truck rental (13.9% or 5/36)
- Downpayment and closing costs on a house (13.9% or 5/36)
- New mortgage payments after buying a house (13.9% or 5/36)
- Unquantifiable things (costs of health impacts or homelessness) (13.9% or 5/36)
  - Loss of pets (2). “I lost my dog in the process of it. Because over there we had a fence. And over here, they had a fence but it was all messed up. And she got out. We weren't even there five days. She got out one of the holes in the fence. And they ran her over. So I lost my puppy in the process of that too. Who's going to replace my dog?”
- Having to buy a new mobile home after selling off one previously owned (11.1% or 4/36)
- Having to buy or repair vehicle to be able to move out (11.1% or 4/36)
- Labor/time/parts to connect mobile home themselves (11.1% or 4/36)
- Transportation costs during transition (driving back and forth between Mission Trails and new location) (11.1% or 4/36)
- Uninstalling and reinstalling carport, garage, sheds, stairs, decks, patios, landscaping (11.1% or 4/36). When we arrived at one woman's home for the interview, she proudly pointed out her beautiful landscaping—flowers, patio, picnic table, yard decorations. She had clearly spent a lot of time on it. Referring to this landscaping during the interview, she said, “But here you see I've brought all my bricks over here [from Mission Trails] to make ends meet...or, to make the house look nice. I mean, I could have just left 'em there and walked out. Sure, if I would have had the money. I didn't. I broke my back. I sweated it out and brought every damn brick that I had out there.”
- Lost equity paid into home (8.3% or 3/36)
- Having to pay double rent (8.3% or 3/36)
- Permits/platting to install electricity or water (8.3% or 3/36)
- Loss to savings or equity (8.3% or 3/36)
  - taxes on early withdrawals (2)
  - penalty on early withdrawals (1)
- Lost wages from having to take time off work (5.6% or 2/36)
- Payments to family who helped with expenses (5.6% 2/36)
- Health costs associated with stress of displacement (5.6% or 2/36)
- First month's rent (5.6% or 2/36)
- Repairs to new household (5.6% or 2/36)
- Additional rent after owning (higher housing burden) (5.6% or 2/36)
- Buying and installing missing appliances for new house (stove, sink, fridge, water heater) (5.6% or 2/36)
- Water/electric meter installation (2.8% or 1/36)
- Digging water line to home (2.8% or 1/36)
- Higher transportation costs (2.8% or 1/36)
- Cleaning septic tank (2.8% or 1/36)
- Trip insurance (2.8% or 1/36)
- Cleaning supplies for transitional housing (2.8% or 1/36)
- Towing car to new park (2.8% or 1/36)
- IRS penalties due to Mission Trails management stopping mail immediately (2.8% or 1/36)

- Disconnecting/reconnecting Direct TV (2.8% or 1/36)
- Transportation costs out-of-state (2.8% or 1/36)
- Replacing gas appliances with all-electric (2.8% or 1/36)
- Lost deposit (2.8% or 1/36)
- Pet rent (2.8% or 1/36)
- Installation of septic system (2.8% or 1/36)
- Children's new school charges for lunch (2.8% or 1/36)
- Fee charged for breaking lease after fleeing unsafe housing conditions, sent to collections (2.8% or 1/36)
- High interest on loans taken out to cover moving expenses (2.8% or 1/36)

To pay for these out-of-pocket expenses, the majority of households either used up equity they had built over time; or, where they lacked any kind of equity, they went into debt:

- **More than 1 in 3 households (35.7% or 15/42) used up equity:**
  - Eight spent their savings. "I had \$12,000 saved up and moving wiped me out."
  - Four tapped into 401K or retirement funds. One woman pulled \$7,000 out of her 401K to pay for moving expenses upfront, as she did not want to drop out of the lawsuit in order to receive assistance. "Finally, like I said, when it came time for getting close to school to start, that's when I just said, 'I'm not waiting on them. I'll pull my own money, I'll move my own self.' If ever they decide to give it to us, we'll collect then. Which, after [my daughter] moved out first, then I moved later, about the time I moved, they had finally said they would pay. Which, for me, it was too late. I'd already pulled money out and lost out on my savings, basically. If I had not gotten money back from developers [after paying upfront moving costs for her daughter] it would not have been enough for me to move."
  - Three pawned or sold belongings. One family described how they purchased everything new when they moved into Mission Trails—furniture, appliances, fridge, stove, TV, sofa, bedroom items—as they intended to save up to move into a house. When instead they were displaced, they had to discard many things because everything was so rushed, and in addition were forced to downsize, given that they were moving into a 2 bedroom/1 bath apartment from a 3 bedroom/2 bathroom home. Altogether, they estimate that they lost \$10,000 in home furnishings.
- **Another 1 in 3 households (35.7% or 15/42) went into debt:**
  - Seven borrowed from friends/family. "Tuve que pagar como \$3,000 de mi parte, pero yo no los tenía. El papá de mi niña la más chica nos hizo favor de prestarme \$8,000, y depositarlos en el banco para demostrar que tenía dinero para pagar la casa, cuando en realidad no los tenía. De ahí tuve que agarrar \$3,000 para pagar deudas." ("I had to pay around \$3,000 of my own money, but I didn't have it. The father of my youngest daughter did me a favor and loaned me \$8,000, depositing it in the bank to demonstrate that I had enough money to pay for the house, when in reality I didn't have it. From that I had to take out \$3,000 to pay off debt.")
  - Four took out a loan. "Pidiendo prestado, sacando prestamos, puse cosas a empeñar y casi todo lo perdí. Pero tenía que sacar ese dinero de algún lado...y aún sigo pagando unas cosas. Me estreso mucho." ("Asking friends and family for money, taking out loans, pawning my belongings and I lost almost everything. But I had to get the money from somewhere...and I am still repaying some debts. I get really stressed.")

- one with high interest. "When you're not ready to make those sort of expenses and you live day-by-day, it's really hard to get out of debt. I'm still paying it, because of the interest."
- Two used credit cards.
- One entered into an installment plan with the park. One man reported that, to pay for the skirting required by the park, he had to go on an installment plan with them, which raised his lot rent from \$350/mo to \$450/mo.
- Over 1 in 4 households (28.6% or 12/42) reported paying for things little by little with wages. "I just paid little by little. Yeah, I—I end up paying them little by little out of my earnings."
- Five households (11.9%) reported that friends/family gave them money
- Five households (11.9%) reported no out of pocket expenses
- Three households (7.1%) reported increasing work hours, taking on another job, or a spouse having to start working. "With my son, well, his wife had to start working too. To make it."
- Two households (4.8%) reported going without necessities. "You know, you gotta take away from this, not pay this, and pay from that to pay that."
- One household (2.4%) reported panhandling to cover out of pocket expenses. "We didn't have family or friends to borrow money from. We had to panhandle for at least a month after arriving in New Mexico, until my first paycheck."

Another major economic impact was the increase in housing burden experienced by many households that did not move their homes, electing instead either to rent or to take on a mortgage for a house or for land. In both cases, residents found themselves paying a substantially larger proportion of their monthly income on housing costs (rent/mortgage + utilities) than they did at Mission Trails:

Housing costs (rent + utilities) at Mission Trails	
Average per month - all residents	\$540-\$586 <sup>63</sup>
Average per month - renters and those in lease-to-own contracts	\$760-\$794

Housing costs (rent + utilities) currently	
Average per month - all residents	\$670-\$687
Overall housing cost increase per month	\$84-\$147 (14-27%)

Roughly consistent with the number of households that did not keep their homes, **nearly half of households interviewed reported increased housing burden following displacement from Mission Trails, with an average increase of 26%.**<sup>64</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Ranges reflects variable utility costs seasonally; residents also made distinction between what they paid when they moved in to Mission Trails and what they paid at the end, after increases in rent and water after AFC took over.

<sup>64</sup> To calculate how many households experienced housing burden increases, we created a table that allowed us to compare each household's housing burden at Mission Trails (cost of rent and utilities / monthly income) to housing burden at each household's current location. This allowed us to visualize whether a household had experienced an increase in the proportion of income spent on housing costs, a decrease, or no change. Additionally, we were able to easily assess 1) whether households were housing burdened at Mission Trails (paying 30% or more of monthly income on housing); 2) whether households are currently housing burdened; and 3) how many households are now housing burdened compared to at Mission Trails. As this chart is very detailed, we have omitted it here; however, it is available on request.

Reporting increased housing burden (or housing costs, where monthly income not disclosed)	23/49	46.9%
Reporting decreased housing burden (or housing costs)	13/49	26.5%
Reporting no change in housing burden (or housing costs)	12/49	24.5%

As stated above, most of these increases stemmed from former homeowners becoming either renters (39.1% or 9/23 households, paying an average of \$665/mo) or taking on new mortgages (30.4% or 7/23 households, paying an average of \$971/mo). For three households of the 23 that saw housing burden increases (13.0%), this was because households were paying double rent on either lots (in one case where the new mobile home park was not equipped for double-wide homes) or homes (in cases where residents had moved their homes to a park but lived and paid rent elsewhere). For those who became renters in particular, this increase in monthly housing expenses was drastic. As stated by one single mother who had moved into a rental house, “The expenses involved in living in that house are huge. Before, I could buy little things I wanted or that my kids wanted because living at Mission Trails was more economical. Now I can't get tacos or sodas or anything, we can't afford it.”

For about a quarter of households (13/49 or 26.5%), housing burden decreased compared to Mission Trails, although in only three of these situations was this due to positive developments directly resulting from displacement (discounted rent at new park for one year, accessing public housing, and lower mortgage/utilities on own land). In the remainder of these cases, decreased housing burden was either unrelated to displacement (i.e. paying off home) or else the indirect result of other hardships (fewer housing-related expenses because homeless; income higher because taking on additional loans or living off savings).

Looking before and after displacement, we also see that the number of households considered housing burdened (paying more than 30% of monthly income on rent/mortgage plus utilities) increased significantly. **While around half of households interviewed were already housing burdened at Mission Trails, this increased to 7 in 10 households after displacement:**

Paying >30% of monthly income on rent and utilities	# Households	% Households
At Mission Trails	22/42	52.4%
After displacement	30/42	71.4%

Another way to consider this is to examine what happened to those households that were *not* housing burdened at Mission Trails. Of 20 households that paid 30% or less of their monthly income on rent and utilities at Mission Trails, 12 out of 20 (60%) now pay *more* than 30%. In other words, only 8 households originally *not* housing burdened are still not housing burdened. Conversely, of those who *were* housing burdened at Mission Trails, only 4 of 22 households (18.2%) have moved out of this category. Of the rest:

- 8 of 22 (36.4%) are more housing burdened than before;
- 6 of 22 (27.3%) are equally housing burdened; and
- 4 of 22 (18.2%) are less housing burdened than before (but still pay over 30% of monthly income on housing)



Another major economic impact was on employment, income, and equity. **Over 2 in 3 households (68.0% or 34/50) reported that their job or wages were affected negatively**, due to:

- lost income (40.0% or 20/50). “For us it wasn’t as devastating. Our income was a lot higher than many others, so we had more options. But it was still pretty traumatic. Basically we went from being able to save a little each month...now we’re living paycheck to paycheck.”
  - Eight households had to take time off work to move, losing wages
  - Seven households reported that their incomes were affected by unexpected moving costs
  - Three households reported having to stop working altogether
    - indefinitely, in the case of one woman who reported that after they moved to a distant park, “I had to quit my job because I don’t have any transportation.”
    - for one year, in the case of a woman who had to quit her job “because I had so many things to do here [with the move].”
  - One man lost side income he earned doing maintenance at Mission Trails
  - One man had to look for a new job because of the traffic and distance involved into getting to his previous job at a carnicería. In that position he made \$1,000/week, but he had to leave it and now makes \$600 a week, a loss of \$1,600/month in income.
- Lost equity (20.0% or 10/50)
  - Four reported using up savings—\$2,000, \$3,500, and in one case \$12,000
  - Two reported losing the investment they had made into their homes. One man described how since he owned his home but wasn’t able to move it, he lost equity and had to go back to renting.
  - Two reported withdrawing funds from their 401K, leading to IRS penalties. One woman had to tap into her 401K twice, the first time to cover costs of displacement not covered by relocation assistance (\$5,000), the second time to pay for out of pocket medical costs (\$3,400), which arose because she had dropped her health insurance after the displacement to save money, as she could no longer afford her premium. Additionally, she had to pay \$1,100 in penalties for early withdrawal, for a total of \$9,500 in equity lost.
  - Two reported losing or being forced to sell off valuable possessions.
- Having to get a second job, new job, or increase work hours (12.0% or 6/50). “Before, I lived on a fixed income with social security which would cover all the bills. Now it covers just half the house payment and my girlfriend covers the other half.”
  - including two cases where caregivers of young children or elders had to go back to work. “Pero sí, yo no trabajaba cuando vivíamos allá, por mis niñas que estaban muy chiquitas. Pero desde que nos movimos para acá, me metí a trabajar y de allí salió para todos también los pagos que se alinearán.” (“I didn’t work when we lived there because my children were very young. But since we moved over here, I started working again to pay for all of the bills that piled up.”)
- Higher transportation costs (12.0% or 6/50). “Afecto a mis ingresos, porque donde vivo está mucho más lejos y eso es más gasolina, más temprano que nos tenemos que levantar.” (“It did affect my income because where I live it’s so far that we spend more money on gas, and we have to wake up earlier.”)
- Stress affecting job performance (6.0% or 3/50). “It did [affect my job] because of the pressure I felt in having to move out. I would go to work everyday and think, oh my God, I’m not sure what’s going to happen—I’m going to have to move tomorrow, and everyday it was tomorrow,

tomorrow, tomorrow.”

- in one case causing a woman to be turned down for a raise. “I think the biggest problem I had was the stress. ... I would get really uptight easily. ... I, at one point, was told by my boss that my problems with my home were affecting my job performance. And I wasn't allowed to have a raise because of it.”
- One household reported a loss of benefits (children's health insurance, food stamps) due to changes in income/assets related to move. “Now that I pay more money on my house the food stamps – I used to get medical for my kids, food stamps. But now that I have a bigger mortgage they tell me I'm no longer qualified. I pay for food out of pocket every day now.”
- One household has increased expenses from having to buy water, since her home is not yet connected to utilities. “Tenemos que ir al súper y comprar muchas cosas entre ellas mucha agua.” (“When we go grocery shopping we have to buy more things, a lot of water.”)

One woman who did not work outside the home denied any impacts on job or income, but described the increased emotional labor required for her to keep her husband calm and steady so that he could keep working throughout the stress of the rezoning and move. “That's one thing I made sure of,” she said. “Even though we were moving, I tried to keep everything on an even keel. I still cooked at home, but we ate out a little more. He was already a worrier. I didn't want to stress him out.”

Two households described positive impacts on job or income:

- for one family, the year of discounted rent included in the relocation assistance package has enabled them to have more of a cushion from month-to-month and save up more money.
- another family stated that their job was now closer after they moved a second time to a house. “El trabajo cuando vivíamos en Lakeside Village [the first location to which they moved] estaba mucho más lejos. Ahora, pues, más o menos...está mejor.” (My job was much farther away when we lived at Lakeside Village [where we first moved]. Now, well, more or less—it's better.”)

Overall, however, the picture that emerges is of displacement as a destruction of community wealth built up over time in place. Indeed, a few residents interviewed described living at Mission Trails as an equity-building strategy: “We lived at Mission Trails because we were saving for retirement,” explained one woman, “because the rent was cheap.” Similarly, the family that lost \$10,000 in furniture and appliances they had purchased new described moving into Mission Trails as a way to save up for a house. Likewise, a woman who had lived at Mission Trails for 38 years explained that they had moved into the park because “we tried to live in our means. We bought the trailer because it was what we could afford. But also we placed more value on our kids' education [than an expensive house]. The little surplus we had for emergencies, travel money...got eaten up.”

One final economic impact was on transportation, which often had far broader implications for household wellbeing beyond just the economic. While one elderly resident who relied on the bus reported that her new location was more accessible as the bus stop was closer to her front door, **over half of households interviewed (56.3% or 27/48) reported that the displacement negatively impacted their ability to get around.** Some of these impacts included:

- Higher transportation costs (18.8% or 9/48 households)
- Greater difficulty living without a car or relying on the bus (16.7% or 8/48). “I depend on other

people to do everything, I have to wait until my husband is here to go run errands and go to groceries. I have to walk my kid to school. When I can find someone to take me where I need to go I need to give them money for gas. At Mission Trails, I could walk or take the bus—it was easy."

- Greater difficulty getting children to and from school (14.6% or 7/48). "Right now [my son has] gotta come for the kids at three different schools. The little ones still go to Riverside. My other granddaughter goes to Brack. And the other one goes to Lowell. He would be going to Page. Right? But there the bus would pick them all up. They just walk to the front, get all picked up, go to school, come back, they would drop them off at their home. Now you gotta be taking them to three different schools."
- Being farther away from daily necessities (doctor, groceries, pharmacy) (14.6% or 7/48). "It is 14 miles originally from where I was at and so everything is further, like our doctors, our pharmacy, grocery store. So I tell my husband whenever I have to go on an errand, and try to do it ... all together, so I'm not running all over the place because of gasoline and everything. So I always tell him well, I'm going into town because that's how I feel—like I'm going to into town."
- Psychological impacts of traffic of distance (10.4% or 5/48). Residents who moved to one park in particular on the Northeast side reported that the traffic and construction surrounding the park was a major source of physical and psychological stress, contributing to a feeling of being enclosed, hemmed in or trapped.
- Longer commute to work (6.3% or 3/48).
- Disruption of family support networks—greater difficulty caring for elderly parents or receiving needed support from family (6.3% or 3/48).
- Being forced to purchase a vehicle (4.2% or 2/48).
- Elders becoming more homebound (4.2% or 2/48). "All day long I don't leave from here. Not for anything. ... Or, like today, when you arrived [for the interview], I was here all day long. And it's not just today, it's everyday. My life changed, because over there at Mission Trails, we would take the bus to the store, to the doctor, and it would take us about half an hour. But not here. Here you have to plan to go out."
- Health impacts arising from transportation difficulties requiring more walking (4.2% or 2/48)

Beyond the narrowly financial, then, impacts on transportation pervaded multiple dimensions of residents' lives, from their health to their psychological wellbeing to the integrity of family relationships. In one of the most severe cases, an adult daughter and her elderly mother moved to the far Southside of the city and found that transportation challenges impacted almost every aspect of their quality of life. Without a working vehicle, with her mother in a wheelchair, and with the closest bus stop half a mile away, this woman was were forced to rely on foot travel and taxis to meet basic needs:

R: [At Mission Trails] everything was close by—the stores, the bus stops, the doctor's office. My mom, it was easy for me to take her on a taxi or the bus, but now it's kind of far. The bus stop right here, it's half of a mile.

Interviewer: Oh my goodness. How do you get your mom there, if she's in a wheelchair?

R: I don't. I call a taxi for her.

I: Oh my goodness.

R: Or I myself get a taxi if I need to go to the store. And I buy groceries. I have a little cart that I used to use over there. Here there are no sidewalks. [Laughs, but in a kind of disbelieving way.]

I: How old is she?

R: 86. So mostly taxi.

I: And that can be expensive.

R: Yeah. But, you know, set the money aside ahead of time before the month starts.

One result of these challenges is that the older woman became more homebound. Transportation impacts have also exacerbated underlying health conditions for her daughter, which has in turn made getting around even more difficult, in a vicious circle: “I already had the [underlying] conditions, but they were not as bad. And I think now the toll that it's taking on me...you know, the walking [farther to/from bus stop]...it's getting worse.” At one point she injured her back and this made getting around almost impossible. She had to call a former neighbor from Mission Trails to take her shopping:

My back went out. And I needed groceries, and I had no one. ... So I called [my friend]. 'Could you do me a favor and take me to the grocery store?' Cuz she lives way out there. ... She took me, and ... she ended up putting the groceries into the cart. I could not move at all. I couldn't get in or out of her van. I'm like, oh my God... I couldn't even stand the potholes sometimes. ... It was bad. My back went out really bad.

Two months after this interview, her mother had passed away, and a couple months later she got a job near the medical center. She still relies on the bus to get to and from work, in a commute that adds four hours to her work day.

### *Social/Family Impacts*

In our interviews, we asked specific questions about how the rezoning and displacement affected children and others reliant on caregiving relationships, as well as social and community networks. While we did not ask directly about impacts on family dynamics, many of the most tragic stories to surface in interviews resulted from the separation of families following displacement. In the following section, we summarize interview results related to the impacts of displacement on children and caregiving relationships, on family dynamics, and on social networks and sense of community.

**Just over half of households (54.2% or 26/48) reported negative impacts on their children, across various aspects of their daily lives:**

- **Over 1 in 3 households (37.5%) reported impacts on schooling**, such as:
  - Having to change schools and not wanting to (5). "She cried for three months straight because of the change, because she missed her friends from school."

- Commute would have been too long otherwise (1). "I had to take them out of school to move them over here. Some of them, like Riverside Park, they wanted for them to take the bus. But I said, for what? They're only going to take the bus till the school year ends, and then I'm going to have to re-enroll them over here again. I said, and for what, so they can get up at 4:30 in the morning, the bus picks them up at 5? I said, no, I'm not going to make my kids lose out on sleep just so they can continue going to that same school for them [the school/district]. I think they were doing it [making that suggestion] for them [the school] instead of the kids. Cuz who's gonna want to wake up their kids at 4:30 in the morning to catch the bus at 5? So I said no, I'm gonna just take them out. They were upset about it, because they lost lots of friends."
  - Grades dropping (5). "The only thing is my kids—their grades were affected." At her old school her daughter was on the A/B honor roll. When they moved, all her kids' grades dropped. "Now that some time is passed they have gotten better, but two are still struggling."
    - in one case due to English-only instruction at new school. "The reason [for their grades dropping] is because at Riverside they had more Spanish than English. Over here it's all English." The kids grew up with Spanish as their first language because her mother, who speaks only Spanish, took care of them when they were young. "It was hard for me to help them with their homework—almost all the work at Riverside was Spanish. So now at the new school—my daughter never brought me a 70 or 50...the other one was bringing 40s. You saw a big difference."
  - Staying at old school, resulting in a long commute (5). "You gotta get up extra early to fight traffic to get em over there. At Mission Trails the bus was right there. You could just get up, get ready, walk across the trailer park."
  - Difficulty adjusting to new school (3). "The kids were afraid because of the district we moved to, they were afraid of not making new friends. When we moved my oldest was a junior in high school, my daughter was in 8th grade and my youngest was starting elementary. They had all their friends there, and they were really scared of how things were going to go here, if they were going to be bullied or something."
  - Losing motivation to succeed in school (3). "They were in shock from what had happened, with no motivation to start over. They did not want to go to the new school—they were unenthusiastic." Another woman who experienced homelessness reported that her high school-aged children commented during this period that they did not see the point of staying in school since they had changed schools so often.
  - Having to miss school or increasing absences (2). "Yes, in the transition, [my daughter] did miss out on some school. Of course, the principal knew already from the school, because like I said, it was 300 [displaced at Mission Trails]...so there were quite a bit of kids that were already going there." Another woman reported that her younger children now got sick more often and did not want to go to school. "Before they never missed, even if they were sick."
  - Getting pulled out of school because of homelessness (2)
  - Difficulties enrolling in early college program (1).
- **Over 1 in 3 households (35.4% or 17/48) reported impacts on children's mental health:**
  - Reporting children were/are sad, upset, hurt or unhappy (11).
    - "My kids continue to be very sad and are still getting used to things."

- "[One grandson], he's the more sensitive guy, so he'll tell me, 'I miss so-and-so... Remember at Mission Trails, and we used to go swimming, and all the kids?' And we'd all talk about stuff. And you can tell by the look on his face that he's sad. He's hurt over it."
  - Reporting children were/are stressed (3). "The little girl [her great-granddaughter] got stressed out too."
  - Reporting children experienced mental health symptoms severe enough to seek medical evaluation (3)
    - "My daughter got really nervous...she lost a lot of hair. She's getting better but she still has spots. I don't know when it started, but I noticed when I was brushing that she had spots. Little by little the spots are disappearing. The doctor told me it was stress. He gave her medicine, said if it didn't get better she would go to a specialist, but that it was probably stress. You don't think it's hard for them, but it is."
    - "Mentally it hasn't been good for the kids. They developed bad anxiety...everybody in the house has anxiety and sees therapists."
  - Reporting children were affected by parental stress/problems (2). "At their new school, the kids asked a lot of questions, if they had been kicked out of their home, if they were the ones that were on TV, if their mom was the one that said they had no water and stuff...my kids did not want to answer that, and they didn't have to. They were carrying adult problems, and that was not fair for them."
  - Reporting children were/are angry (2). "They got very sad and angry because they had to move."
  - Reporting children were/are scared (1). "One of the little ones was really scared as to where they were going to wind up."
  - Reporting children felt "kicked out" (1). "And in the beginning, they would ask me, 'Why did we have to move?' And to have to explain that, they won't really understand it. For the longest, all I heard was how bad those council people were. The kids, they blamed it on them. They blamed it on the city. And at times, they made the same comments as I—'You feel like you're a dog kicked out to the curb.'"
- **A little over a quarter of households (27.1% or 13/48) reported impacts on children's social wellbeing:**
  - Losing friends (11).
    - "Coming out here, it's just not the same. People just...they don't let their kids come out to play. And the kids miss that going out, and going and visiting this one, and then they go over and they get this other one, and they were used to that. And here, it just... It doesn't happen."
    - "It affected them in their school, their friends. Once we got here, they were bored. They didn't want to go outside because they didn't know nobody. They were always inside, all the friends was over there at school. ... [One son] had one good friend that ended up going to Garden Valley I think. The grandmother spoke to me too, told me that it was over there, but they were not taking older trailers. ... So I told my son, you know, we have to do it. You're going to have to keep in touch with him through phone, something. Because we're not going to be able to go over there. And then, yeah, as soon as we moved over here they would talk on the phone. But now that we're over here, they barely talk to each other."

- "They just missed their friends – they used to hang out in front of house and play basketball."
- Losing play space, leading to greater social isolation or impacts on physical health (4).
  - "Tengo dos niños, la niña ya tiene 20 años y el niño tiene 12. La niña está bien. El niño lo sintió más. Se la pasaba encerrado con los videos y programas de televisión. En este parque no quieren que los niños anden afuera. Él tenía amigos y jugaba afuera en Mission Trails, pero aquí ya no podía." ("I have 2 children, the girl is 20 years old and my boy is 12. The girl is fine. My boy felt it more. He would stay inside all the time with his videos and TV programs. In this park, they don't want children outside. He used to have a lot of friends at Mission Trails and played outside, but he can't here.")
  - "[My grandson] has one little friend [here at the new park that] he goes and plays with. I don't think [my granddaughter] has any. She has friends at school, but then when school let out, she just kinda sits in her room with her little cellphone, and tablets, and that's... To me, that doesn't feel right. I'm used to seeing them running around, playing, happy, and it's not the same feeling."
  - "They didn't want to go outside because they didn't know nobody. They were always inside, all the friends was over there at school."
  - "They asked me when they would have water again, when they would they be able to go out and do what they did. They stay at home all day now."
- Five households (10.4%) reported impacts on children's physical health:
  - Children sick more often (2)
  - Sleep disrupted (1)
  - Impacts of having no water (1)
  - Heart surgery due to condition made worse by having to walk to school (1)

Two households (4.2%) did report positive impacts on children. For one high school-aged boy, displacement removed him from problems at his old school, according to his mother:

He got into so much trouble in the public school system. So much trouble. And when we got out here, I was getting phone calls, back when we lived in Mission Trails, probably at least once a week from the schools. I think I've had maybe four calls out of the whole year. So, I just—that part, the school part, for him, was like a blessing to have to come. He's Mr. Cowboy, so he puts his boots, and his hat, and his jeans, and everything on, and he just fit in here perfectly. We're in East Central, so, that's pretty much what the kids are, all little redneck cowboys and cowgirls. And he loves it out here. ... Everything's like it just totally changed for him. And I think a lot of it is is nobody bothers him. We had incidents for a while there, right, I'd say, about a year before the move, where he had a knife pulled on him and things over there. So, it kinda kept him in a little more turmoil than what he already experienced. So I think the move, for him, was good. I don't so much like it for myself, but [chuckle] for him, it was good.

Similarly, another mother reported that there were more special needs services at their new school: "My son changed schools and it wound up being a great benefit to him. He has dyslexia and they hadn't been able to work with him at his other school."

**Nearly a quarter of households (22.9% or 11/48) reported negative impacts on family dynamics more broadly, and over half of these (six) were cases of family separation resulting from the displacement. While comprising a small group numerically, some of the most severe impacts on housing and health nonetheless occurred among these households.** In the case of one extended family headed by an older couple, two adult daughters and their children who had been living with their parents became homeless when the displacement broke up the household. When asked to tell their story of what happened at Mission Trails, this was the very first thing this couple talked about:

B: One of them had to go and live with another sister, to be able to, you know, put the kids in school and so on.

F: She hasn't got the money to get a hold of an apartment, to pay the deposit. So she is just jumping from place to place, because—her and the children. There are four children involved.

B: Another one actually had to go with the boyfriend, and the boyfriend lived with the mom. So they were there, and then they go—luckily she had an older daughter that had her own place, so they go to the daughter's, and back to the boyfriend's...there they were just like that. For awhile the kids weren't even going to school, because it was too much...you know, back and forth.

In another case—worth reconstructing in its entirety from the original interview—a grandmother adopting her two traumatized grandchildren from foster care had just moved into Mission Trails as a renter when the park was rezoned, and as a result the adoption fell through:

[The boys] were small, but I had to talk to them that they had to leave...they didn't understand. Because their mom had abandoned them and my son [their dad] went to prison. She lost them, so then they were with an aunt, and she left them. And then they were in foster and bounced around everywhere. They were even in Austin. But the lady who fostered them left them with a boyfriend, and he killed another little girl, 18 months, and they saw it. They were at a park and he slammed her down onto the concrete. I didn't have them because my son was going to lose his parental rights, and when that happened I would lose custody rights too. But I never gave up, I never gave up, I never gave up...when I heard about it [the murder of the little girl] in the news, Sunday night I read about it in the newspaper, and at the very end there was a line about three other children were removed from the home, and they were three, five, and six...I said, oh my god, that's [them]. I started calling and calling and calling CPS. I said, those are my grandkids. I just knew it. She said, "Are you still interested in adopting?" She said, "They're fine, they're here." So she talked to the judge, and he approved it. So [when they moved in with me at Mission Trails ] they were already traumatized. They came with me a couple weeks later, then a couple months later they had to move again.

When R moved into Mission Trails in late January of 2014, she said, her dream was "to move to stay." Before Mission Trails she had been living in a one-bedroom apartment, but as it was too small for the boys, she was searching for a two-bedroom home. Her daughter had already gotten custody of the boys' sister, but couldn't take them because she already had a girl, and CPS adoption rules required girls and boys to room separately. Because her daughter would have had



to find a three-bedroom home to accommodate all of them, R was going to take the boys. Her daughter-in-law lived at Mission Trails already and had recommended the park to her, and R's caseworker at CPS helped her move in.

Later she realized that Mission Trails management knew about the impending rezoning and sale of the park when she moved in and yet didn't tell her. "Why didn't [they] let me know—hey, there's a possibility...? I would have never made that expense of putting the boys through that." Instead she learned about the rezoning from "notes, letters, meetings. At first I thought it was just gossip. These people have been here generations, years and years...how could it close? I didn't even think it was for real. I wasn't even there long, but I had met people who lived there for years."

Right before she moved, she called the caseworker handling the adoption, who suggested she apply for public housing. She applied right away and was approved quickly.

R: We were considered emergency homeless, and since I was a senior.

Interviewer: That's great—I know a lot of others who applied were told there was a long waitlist.

R: I don't know how—God is good.

But although she found housing for herself, because of the move she had to tell CPS she couldn't go through with the adoption, set to be finalized in June 2014, with all paperwork submitted. She contacted the boys' other grandmother, who agreed to adopt them instead, and the caseworker flew them to Dallas.

I: How old were they?

R: The boys were 6 and 7 at the time.

I: Was it traumatic for them?

R: Very much. When the lawsuit came up, they were in the suit too, but we had to drop out. I just had to move, and they gave us the run around—"You're just a renter, blah blah blah." I didn't have my own trailer like other people. ... For my part, I should have been warned before moving there. They already knew, [the manager] and them knew that it would be purchased by someone else already. I feel like they should have helped a lot more—I offered to buy the trailer, but the park had already sold them [the rental trailers]. It happened so fast! In my situation, it wasn't just me, I had two little boys I had to think about. And it changed their lives because I had to give them up, and separate them from their sister here.

Later she recalled the impact of this trauma on her own physical and mental health:

I went thru a very, very, very heavy depression after that. It just affected me—I was taking medication, and I still do. But at the time it really affected me—very depressed. I

was so severely depressed that I started drinking. I used to be a social drinker, but I started drinking more and more. Just to escape. [She walks out of the room so her daughter can't hear, saying, "she doesn't like to hear it".] I would cry and cry and cry. Like—why God, why did you give them to me and take them away? But it wasn't God. And maybe this was the best thing for them—the other grandma is younger, in better health. If it wasn't for God I would have lost my mind. Just live day by day, that's all I can do. [Crying, she puts interviewer on hold for a minute and then comes back.]

I: Are you okay to continue? Are you okay?

R: No, it's okay. It just depresses me. And since we kept my granddaughter, she couldn't understand why her brothers were leaving her. I know the boys are doing good. They've adjusted to [the other grandmother]. But it affected my son, it affected everybody. It was a big thing.

For her the trauma of family separation was so great that details about moving expenses were almost insignificant. “Like I said, it was not so much the money—it doesn't buy everything. Money can never replace me losing the boys. Never.”

R currently lives in a public housing complex on the Eastside where she has found solace in becoming heavily involved in the community center there:

I'm down the street from my daughter and granddaughter. My friends are good, my ex-boyfriend lives down the street with his wife. And he's been a big inspiration, a friend...he helped through a lot of the move—he's always been there. I got good friends, made good friends here who are elders. And all that about the drinking, it's gradually gone away. I don't go to the bars in the Southside anymore. I'm real involved with the center where I live, Vice President at the center. Last Christmas they gave out a gala award for volunteer work at the Center, where only four got the award, and I got one. I met the housing directors, got a plaque, and they put my picture up. So I'm real involved and it keeps me going. [But] it's just that part of my heart.

Another way separation impacted families was in making it more difficult to care for elderly parents with critical health needs. At Mission Trails, one adult daughter had lived across the street from her mother and looked after her. When she had to leave the public housing complex to which they both moved after leaving Mission Trails, this not only put a huge strain on her as a caregiver but also created a dangerous, desperate situation for her mother:

My mom's in end state renal failure. My mom can go any day. You know, anytime. And we have the documentation where her doctor put on there that she needs me to be with her like as her companion, because she can't be by herself. ... And you know, I'm not here anymore, across the street, I'm way over there by Alamodome. So if something happens to my mom, I can't just run across the street and save her.

If she moves in without permission, her mother risks eviction:

I can't leave her here and I'm not allowed to come in here because they are so strict. You

know, without them knowing, if I stay here, I move in just because, then—they'll throw her out. Because my brother was here a couple of weeks and somebody told on her and they got on her, said that she violated the lease or whatever. ... It's just that they can't understand our situation. [Beginning to cry.] I mean, we all had different situations, and maybe some people are worse off than we were, but the convenience of having us across from each other, you know, that she needed something and I would look from my kitchen window to her front door.

Other impacts on family dynamics include:

- Stress and trauma affecting ability to care for children, grandchildren, and elderly parents (3). For instance, one single mother who developed PTSD after displacement has at times been so unwell that she has had to send her children out of the country to stay with her mother.
- Marital strain (3). “Oh—it's a lot of...stressful. Depression. Oh, it was hard to get up in the morning, because I knew what I had to do, you know—look for places to go. And not just that, my husband was the type that—he makes all the money, he pays all the bills, so it was my job to look for where we can move, because everything's in my name. Everything's in my name, so I'm the one who has to talk to people, ask the questions, fill out the papers. And then, I ask them these questions and I come back and talk to him and then he asked me questions and then I didn't know how to answer them and he's like, you didn't ask them this?? And I'm like ... in between. Oh, it was stressful. Real, real stressful.”
- Extended family farther away (3). “Well, my family lives closer to Mission so I see them like once a month and I used to see them all the time.”
- Strain on relationship with adult children (2). “My daughter and I have always been close. And I can always rely on the fact that she's always been respectful. I know that I've pissed her off a couple times. And I understand it. I noticed that there were just because—we just weren't connecting as well anymore. And I'm pretty sure it all had to do with all this changing. Anyway, I felt, because, as I said, I'm not as young as I used to be, I'm not disabled or nothing like that, but it's just as far as physical—I mean, I've always been physical, I've always taken care of myself, I've been independent, I didn't have to depend on nobody. And I found myself having to do that. And that was really belittling to me.”

Whereas family impacts were less frequent but often more severe, social impacts were incredibly pervasive. **Just over 3 in 4 households (38 of 50 or 76.0%) reported disruptions to friendships, social networks, and broader sense of community**, with “everyone that we knew ... now scattered everywhere”:

- **2 in 5 residents (40.0% or 20/50) lost friends or lost touch with people:**
  - “Y no nos hemos visto, ya no se ni donde viven. Ya no es mismo que en Mission, no es igual.” (“I haven't seen anyone from Mission Trails, I don't even know where they live. It's just not the same as it was there...it's not the same.”)
  - “The loss that we had was our friendship, with all our friends around that we had years and years of knowing each other, now they don't even come around. It's like living in a ghost town now. Just me and her all the time.”
  - “I think what bothers me the most is, because my friends are my same age, I don't get to see them as much. Usually what I try to do is when I'm going to be on that side of town, I'll go

ahead and make plans if I can. We probably have not seen each other as often as we used to because of that. Some of the ladies where I used to work sometimes would—'Hey, do you have a doctor's appointment?' 'Well, not coming up.' 'Well, when you have one, let's make plans to go to lunch.' So that's kind of been limited."

- **Over 1 in 5 residents (22.0% or 11/50) reported social isolation, loneliness or not knowing anyone:** "Pues estoy sola y sin amigos. Todos se quedaron allá en Mission...nos regaron a todos." ("Well, I am alone, with no friends. Everything got lost at Mission Trails...they scattered us."). Another woman stated, "I've been living here for 2 years and I don't know my neighbors. We just say hi like with a wave and that is it. It is just my friend that moved here to the same park that I know."
  - Of these, five residents reported being more homebound:
    - "Ahorita desde que yo me cambié de allá, mi hija claro que tiene que andar en la calle por su trabajo y por sus niñas. Pero ahorita desde que yo me cambié de allá mi vida me cambió mucho. Porque mi hija es la que me mueve a los doctores. Mi hija es la que me mueve a recoger mi medicamento. Ahorita, en todo el día, yo de aquí yo no salgo. Para nada." ("Now since I moved from there, my daughter has to go out for her job and for the kids. Since we've moved here my life has changed a lot. Because my daughter is the one who takes me to the doctors, picks up my medications. Now all day long I don't leave from here. Not for anything.")
    - "Now I don't even go out much. Before we were all there. And now I don't really feel like going out."
    - After her son got in trouble for messing around in empty homes at the new park, one single mother felt as though they were both confined to the house: "He doesn't get to go outside very much anymore. Which is, to me, isn't a good thing because they need to be able to get out and run and play. And I just feel like he's safer to stay in the house 'cause I can't take the risk of being thrown out, and losing what all I have invested this far. So I just kinda—'Stay inside. Go play your video games. Do things in the house.' He goes to friends' houses, or he gets out and gets away for a while, but otherwise, we're just kinda like prisoners in our own home."
  - Three of these residents reported that isolation has led to depression and anxiety: "I don't know nobody here. I don't have no friends. All my friends are back there. I practically lost all my friends. No one calls. I don't see them no more. It was really sad. I cry sometimes because of needing friends." Another woman stated: "Solo me acuerdo que lloraba mucho, porque estaba sola en una casa que no era mía." ("I just remember that I cried a lot, because I was alone in a house that was not mine.")
- Over 1 in 5 residents (22.0% or 11/50) reported that their sense of community had been disrupted. "I knew a lot of people there—by sight if not by name. And people had lived there for years. I knew my neighbors. ... The move greatly affected my sense of community. I may not have socialized with folks, but I knew who they were, their vehicles."
  - Four reported that the loss of a community centered on children/families was particularly hard:
    - "It's not the same here at all, because Mission Trails had families."
    - One woman who had lived at the park for 37 years and worked at the neighborhood high school said, "I get to see quite a bit of the kids, you know, they go buy the school lunch, and I get flashbacks seeing them play basketball, just seeing them go up and down the street, roller skating or whatever. And it hurts to see...now you're in this place, different

- place, and there's no one, no noise, everything is totally quiet...and that's it.”
- Another man pointed out that former Mayor Julián Castro had commented that at Mission Trails you would see children in the streets playing. “At the new park, you don't see that. If the kids want to play outside, they have to physically leave the park and go somewhere else—it's less of a community than it was at Mission Trails.”
  - Three stated that relationships with neighbors at Mission Trails had been “like a family”. One woman described how, since she didn't have family in San Antonio, she had found a good sense of community at Mission Trails that was hard to leave. If she was missing something to cook with she could go ask from a neighbor, or if her children did not want to do their homework, they got together with other kids to do it. Her kids played a lot with other neighbors. They would go on walks everyday, whereas now they did not. Almost every week she herself would get together with neighbors and play *lotería* or have a cookout. Now she sees them maybe every two months, and some she hasn't seen since.
  - One man found the move from a mobile home park to a neighborhood to be more isolating, describing how at a mobile home park, everyone knows everyone.
  - One older woman and her adult daughter described not feeling safe to be outside anymore, recalling how at Mission Trails they would keep their doors open and go out at night walking in the park. At the new park they felt they had to close and lock their doors: “We really don't know anyone here.”
  - Seven residents (14.0%) described losing protective social networks. “I don't have my body guard across the street no more,” said one woman. “She would call me. Or I would call her. When I would hear something out there—'Somebody's out there! Did you hear?' She would go, 'Did you see a car? Or did you—?' And over here I don't have that. Or she'd be calling me, 'Where are you going so early in the morning?' [Laughs] She always kept an eye. If I wasn't home, she would call me to check up. 'Where are you, are you all right?' 'Yes, I'm working late, I'm on my way home.' 'Just checking, mi'ja. Making sure you're all right.' I don't have all that [anymore].”
  - Three residents (6.0%) described their new park as “not friendly”:
    - One woman stated, “every time we open the door, everyone is looking at you but they're not friendly. It's not a friendly place.”
    - Another woman told a story about how her husband, trying to be a good neighbor, once cut the grass for their next door neighbor. “The lady came out and said, 'No, don't do that, leave it along—this is my place!' Everyday you'd hear her cursing. At Mission Trails there wasn't any of that.”
  - Finally, one elderly resident, who had lived alone at Mission Trails, described having to abandon a rescue animal that he had adopted as a companion. “I had an abandoned dog [living] with me. That abandoned dog, white dog. I saw it yesterday on the news. My dog there. It was an abandoned dog, I started feeding him, taking care of him. He would follow me around, and we'd go down to the river, walk, he would follow me, and I had to leave him behind.”

While the loss of friendships and social networks may seem trivial compared to other impacts on housing, health, and finances, in at least one case the disruption of these networks was the difference between life and death. In this case, the separation of an older woman from a close friend and adopted daughter who had always played a protective role led to fatal consequences for the older woman, who lived with an abusive housemate. When Carol passed away in March 2015, six months after moving out, her friend Sherry suspected that domestic violence played a role. On the last day she saw her friend

alive, Sherry witnessed the housemate driving erratically with Carol inside the car, at one point braking abruptly and causing the older woman's head to hit the dashboard. Two days later, Carol was dead, officially because of a heart attack, but as Sherry explained:

He's just always drunk, popping pills, doing illegal activities that's caused a lot of problems. And what Carol did is when she moved out there to Lackland, she should have left [him] behind. But like me and like her, we're kindhearted people, so...but he's still facing the charges of the abuse that he hasn't been back to court for. They want to give him a ten-year sentence. And he deserves it. Because that lady did nothing wrong to him. ... He would take her food out of the refrigerator there that she would buy for him to eat and throw it in the middle of the street. He would take cans of soda she would buy, throw them into the street. Because he would say the refrigerator belonged to him. And that's just...really, elderly abuse. And when she came to me for help, I took her [to the police] and got her the help. But then she backed down [and dropped the charges] because she was scared of him. So that's the only thing between me and Carol was that I didn't approve of her backing down all the time. I wanted her to stay strong. But she was afraid of him. And she had every right to be.

After her death, the housemate took Carol's will and other legal papers specifying where and how she wanted to be buried; Sherry still has not been able to locate the body. “So with the fact that Carol passed away and everyone still asking me what happened to her body...it's really keeping me depressed. Because I can't find her now. I can't find her body.”

For two residents interviewed, watching the break up of a tight-knit community was the worst aspect of what happened at Mission Trails. One woman who worked as elementary school teacher had grown up in Texarkana, and recalled having to leave her home as a child when a highway was routed through the town:

We lived on connector road they chose. I remember how devastated my parents were. Because the state was making my dad give up our home. I remember how horrible—the road going right down the middle of my yard. I was 12, and I remember seeing my parents scramble to find somewhere to live. Leaving the only home I had known.

Decades later, she reflected on seeing the same thing happen to the children of Mission Trails:

Now that all is said and done and over, my biggest concern was just for the children. Because some of the kids had gone to Riverside Elementary since Pre-K. That's devastating for a child to leave everything they've ever known. Those kids had friendships that they had had all their lives. Because I'm a teacher, I felt like it was devastating for the kids. Because I remember when I was a kid and having to do that. And then going on to the adult level, some had been there 30-40 years and were leaving behind people they had known that long. That was the most devastating thing. you were literally breaking up the community you had. And there was no way to get your community back.

Echoing these words, a woman who had lived there for 37 years agreed that what had the biggest impact on her was

seeing everybody pack up and leave...all them trucks in and out, houses going out by the dozens.

*There goes another one—oh, there goes another one, there goes three—oh, did you see that one? Did you see that one parked over there? That was a big blow to us. Sometimes standing at the windows and crying. [Crying a little] People have their...their axels and their houses were halfway broken...for what? And for what? For this? Nothing's being done about anything?*

### *Biggest Overall Impacts*

In addition to asking about the very specific impacts described above (housing, health, etc.), we ended each interview with an open-ended question about what residents ultimately felt had the biggest impact on them and their families. While many of them named things covered in previous sections (increased housing burden, homelessness, depression), several additional themes not covered in these sections came up here.

**Most frequently mentioned by around 1 in 5 households interviewed (22.9% or 11/48) was the suddenness of displacement—“having to move without notice.”** As many residents stated, the biggest impact was “the way they went about it. How fast it went,” and the fact that they were not notified:

To me and I know to a lot of the residents, it was a traumatic experience ... because of the fact that they didn't let us know. ... We wanted to sit down and talk to the owner. They never wanted to talk to us. They never let us know. We never said that the owner never had a right to sell. He had every right to sell, but we have the right to know. ... That was the main thing, we had the right to know and they were trying to keep it from us, trying to hide it. So that when the time came and they did it, that it would just be done and there wouldn't have been any [resistance]. None of that would have taken place because we would have been completely in the dark. From one day to the next we would have been rezoned and they would have been knocking on our door, giving us a letter saying you have whatever time period they gave us to move.

**Equally often mentioned (22.9% or 11/48 households) was the displacement having been “for nothing” given that nothing had been done to the land since:**

- “The other issue—I drive by there sometimes and they haven't done a thing. So I'm like, okay, so what was the big giant rush to throw us out? And where are all these little shops and restaurants and that big apartment complex? The grass is as tall as the trees. That point is the point that should really be stressed. That AFC was not fair, and they weren't fair from the beginning.”
- “What's really sad, to me, is you go by there now, and they're not even doing anything. And I think, 'God, it was in bad shape before, [now] it looks like a jungle.' The grass is the size of the fence now. And I think, 'Why were they so persistent to get us to move when they're not even starting anything? Why didn't they let us stay longer?' But I think they're having problems.”
- “You know, it looks horrible. I went by there not long ago. ... It's all wooded! You can't see anything! Why haven't they worked on it? That's what I look to see is, are they building stuff? And I can't even see [in]. Seems like they would be cleaning or clearing the area, but nothing's going on. I don't know who it was told me that there's something going on because of the lawsuit. But I haven't heard anything. Anyway, it's all—it's real pretty green trees. It's all you can see. Can't see anything else.”

- S: We're just wondering what happened there, that they didn't—

M: What was all the rush there? for nothing.

S: For nothing.

M: Displacing people, their lives.

- “Look where we're at now, when we could still be in our own place. They have not even touched that place. Only thing that they touched is thousand people's hearts and shattered them to pieces.”
- “They didn't do nothing, right? I heard on the news that they don't want them to let them construct anything. I heard a long time ago on the news in English. They don't want to let them because it's a historic zone. They don't want to do nothing, they just move the people out! All the pain, all the suffering, all the things they did to us, for nothing?”
- “At the end I think it wasn't worth it, cuz they haven't even built nothing. At least I have a house now. But I think we went through a lot of stress for nothing.”
- “Every time I go visit my family, we go past Mission Trails and we see that they haven't done anything to the park. It is frustrating to see that they kicked us out of there for nothing.”
- “I understand they want to make the Southside more better, but come on! They could have rented the condos out to us...didn't make no sense then and doesn't make no sense now. Especially because they didn't do anything to the land. We could have been there all that time.”
- “Porque, pues, yo he pasado por ahí y veo que está el parque solo. Hace como dos meses creo pasó por allí, o más—no se si ya estarán ahorita haciendo algo, pero está todo inutado, o sea...no se ve que vayan a hacer algo, no se.” (“Because well, I had passed by there and I see that the park is empty. Two months ago I think it was that I passed by there, maybe more—I don't know if they're still going to do something with it, but everything is totally undeveloped. Whether they're planning on doing anything with it, I don't know.”)

**Almost as frequently, almost 1 in 5 households (18.8% or 9/48) mentioned that the biggest impact was feeling betrayed by or not listened to by city leaders:**

- “And to think that the city played a big role in it was the worst part, because you always think that your city leaders are there to protect you. And instead, they were there to stab you in the back.”
- “I did let [Mayor] Ivy Taylor know when we met at the Mission Library ... I told her, the bottom line, ma'am, is that nobody cares. No one really cares what happened to the residents there. And she said, 'I care.' And I said, well, hopefully, you'll show us that you do. And to this day, you know, she... I know she was in favor of it to begin with. So it was just something for her to just say, I guess.”
- “I'm very angry about Ms. Rebecca Viagran, because I know what she did. I'm not stupid. It really pissed me off. I'm not standing against progress. See, if they would have just come and told us and given us at least a year, there would have been no resentment. The people would have moved out. But the way they did it, like rushing us and giving us limited options, that really pissed everybody off. It was like being evicted. We got evicted! That really pissed me off.



That really angered me. It was they way they did it. ... Behind our back...the Zoning Commission and all of that was all rigged. That's really what pissed us off. That was the only negative thing there, was the way we were treated. If you do write anything about it, it was the way they treated the people.”

- “I feel like I was let down, like I was... How do you call it? Tricked into, or... Like, like they [city, park owners] lied to me. Like they pulled the rug from under my feet. ... And I remember... Remember when we went, and they voted? I remember that day too. I can't forget it, I can't forget that day. When they... Ivy Taylor voted for yes [on the rezoning]. And all the other ones, and I remember them when they voted for no, and I remember that.”
- “The trust is gone. In our government. Their lack of care was so overwhelming. If I could get elected, I would go under the 'I Don't Give a Fuck Party.' I called Viagran the 'c' word, and she didn't like it—'corrupt.'”
- “De que como las personas que fueron elegidas para representarnos no tuvieron el valor de hacerlo. No nos pudieron ayudar; no estaban preparados para manejar una situación así, sólo se echaban la culpa uno al otro. No tienen vergüenza. Se veía que ya tenían acuerdos, que habían hecho negocios a puerta cerrada y no quisieron ver como nos afectaban. Como nos trataron al desalojarnos, como nos presionaron tan feo. No debió de haber sido así.” (“[The biggest impact was] how the people we elected to represent us didn't have the courage to do so. They couldn't help us and were not prepared to handle a situation like this, they could only blame each other for everything. Shame on them! You could tell that they had previous arrangements, that they had done their business behind closed doors and didn't want to see how badly it affected us. How badly they treated us when they kicked us out, how horribly they pressured us. It should not have been like that.”)
- “El día de la cita a la corte, sólo veía las caras de las personas que estaban enfrente...parecían piedras. Personas sin corazón que, aun después de ver y oír a los niños decir que no querían dejar la escuela o la gente que batallaba no se movían ni se les veía cara de arrepentimiento. Gente sin corazón que pudo hacer eso.” (“The day of the court date [city council meeting], I saw the faces of the people in charge—they looked like stone. Heartless people that, even after seeing the kids and hearing them say that they didn't want to leave their school, or after hearing the people that struggled to move, still they didn't seem to feel anything. Heartless people that could do something like that.”)
- “Pensar que el rico siempre con poder puede destruir a quienes más lo necesitan. Pensar en que la ciudad puede apoyar esto y que a nadie le importó.” (“To think that the rich with their power can always destroy those most in need. To think that the city can support this and nobody cared.”)

In some of these latter statements, we see another “biggest impact” frequently expressed by residents (10.4% of households or 5/48), which was the realization that “none of us mattered to any of the people on the council... even people crying, babies.” While this was closely related to feelings of betrayal by the city, it rent a deeper and more intimate wound:

You know, and it's just like ... in going to meetings, and sitting down with them and talking to them, and it's like okay, they'll listen to us in one ear, out the other, like it's not happening to them. So I've always felt that you go through life treating people... Being a decent human being and having integrity and treating them right because people are, you know—you just don't do that to someone as though they didn't matter. Look at poor Carol. When I think about her I

remember ... when she made the statement to one of the reporters at one of the meetings that we had, and she told them ... she knew that when she moved that she was not going to be around longer. And she wouldn't be. And I thought well, it's just that sad and she passed away in March [2015]. I think she had just moved in November [2014]. She used to get around by herself in her vehicle there at the Mission Trails, all that area. And I was told when she moved over there that because it was so close to the freeway and she wasn't familiar she had kind of stopped driving, I guess. But, you know, these people, they hear, oh okay, so she passed away, okay. She was in her 80s. You know, life is precious. You don't have a, "oh, because you're 80, you've lived a full life so it's okay." It doesn't matter at what age or what stage you are. Life is precious. But that's just it. They don't see that. No, I'll take that back. They do see it. The bottom line is they don't care.

This brings us, then, to the realm of the unquantifiable and irretrievable—what we would call the “intimate impacts” of trauma. Beyond mental health, these were the subtle, hidden, and deeply internal effects of displacement on residents' sense of identity, dignity, self-worth, and core feelings of stability and security.

For instance, three residents related similar experiences of disorientation in the wake of displacement, which were as existential as they were geographic. According to one young man in his 20s:

One time when we were in the process of moving, I got stopped by the cops coming home from work. They asked, "Where do you live?" I was confused, disoriented—we were moving, and on top of that it was late and I was tired from work. They thought I was, like...huffed up, cuz I didn't know where I lived. I tried to explain that we were from Mission Trails and had just gotten kicked out and had to move, but he didn't believe me. I was looking stupid in front of him. They tried to charge me with a DWI and forced me to take a blood test. I fought the charges and got them dismissed. But it affected me in little different ways like that.

Though the circumstances were different, an older woman experienced a similar disorientation:

But you know what the biggest part was, was when we were finally going to make the move—and they had told us, don't worry, we're going to move it early morning and then we are going to set you up the same day. The thing is, the night before—you know, I had not moved from a mobile home before. I really had no clue of the impact it would bring up. I picked everything up so the night we were still at Mission Trails, I had left no blankets out, I had left nothing to sleep on. It was miserable at night, cuz I had to sleep on the floor, and it was cold. Anyway, everything was turned off, and then we got going the next day. And my daughter says she'll take the dogs in the morning and I'll take them in the evening. And we had to get a place to sleep, so there was a Motel 6 here where we were able to take the dogs with us. It was right down the street too, so it was convenient. But then my daughter had to go to work the next day, so I had the dogs with me. And of course checkout was at 11. We had to keep the truck for two days because things weren't ready. And...of course, how can I move by myself? I don't want to get emotional, but I guess I'm going to. [Crying, long pause] Talk about feeling old. I didn't know where to go. ... And I had put so much pressure on my daughter that I felt like I had to back off, you know? So I needed to know how much money I had left and I couldn't find the bank, and I got lost, and the traffic... [crying] When I got to Bank of America, I had to go inside, right. I needed help. I didn't have any cash. And they were really nice. They got me a statement, so I

figured out how much I had. Finally left. So I decided to drive, see where I was at. [Crying] I got lost. ... Anyway, it was just—made me feel [crying, long pause] I felt like I was really stupid, I couldn't figure nothing out. Nothing worked. ... I felt horrible. You talk about depressed, and crying, and carrying on. ... I really felt like, why couldn't it happened early when I'm a lot younger and I can lift, I can pick up, I can do this. Always, my mother said there's—you can always do something. But I felt like I couldn't do anything. It was just overwhelming, and I think it just kind of got to me. I sat on the floor and I cried for a while. [Crying, remembering] ... I think it's feeling the sadness of—not that it [Mission Trails] was the most wonderful place. But we had been there for 12 years.

What was disorienting about this experience was not simply the spatial confusion of being “lost,” but rather the way displacement shook a fundamental sense of self-worth and identity:

Well, the thing what I feel bad about the most is the fact that I have always been this strong person. Where someone would say, oh, you think you're just a big, you know...bitch, I guess! [Laughs] I don't know. And then all this happened, and I revert to a total weakling—or, I felt like a weakling, that I'm helpless. You know, it's like how can you feel like you're so strong, and all of a sudden you're at the bottom. ... I always thought I've been tough. And then this [displacement from Mission Trails] happens [and] I reverted down to an old person that lost their strength.

A third woman described the disorientation she felt upon watching the surreal sight of her house in pieces traveling down the road to its new location. As with the second woman, the feeling of being forcibly uprooted and helpless triggered powerful feelings of worthlessness:

And I'll tell you the damndest thing is when you're sitting somewhere and you're watching your house go down the road. That is the worst feeling. I followed them out, and they hit a point where they had to move some barricades to get through on Roosevelt 'cause they were doing the work there. So I stopped at an icehouse. And I'm in there buying me a drink, and I look out the door, and I started crying. And the man that was working at the store said, "Are you okay?" And I just looked and I said, "There goes my house." And he looked out the window, he goes, "Oh, that's your house?" And I go, "Yeah." And I just felt like it was a dream or a daze. And he says, "Well, where are you going?" And I said, "Well, we lived in Mission Trails. We were forced out." And he says, "Oh, yeah, I heard about that. I'm so sorry." But that was the most strangest feeling, is to see your house traveling down the road. I don't know, it was just weird. Like I said, I just started crying because it was like, "There goes my house." Kinda one of those, "There goes your life." You made your roots somewhere, only to be uprooted and taken elsewhere. ... It's bad that they can just kick you to the curb like that. That was the feeling we felt. I felt like we were stray dogs. And that's how we were treated, almost like a stray dog, "We don't want you anymore, get out of here." And we're people. We're not dogs. We're humans, we have feelings. We have hearts. We shouldn't have been kicked out like that. And other people that don't know the situation—"Oh, you all just move on, shush up and go on." You're not in our shoes. You can't judge on that, until you have to go through that, people really don't understand how you feel, and the way you've been treated. It's not right.

Another woman described how relocation destabilized a core sense of security and safety she had acquired in moving into Mission Trails:

Al comprar la traila, dijimos—pues sí ... esta comunidad tiene muchos, muchísimos años de estar aquí. Pues sí, vamos a comprar. Para tener una mejor vida para que las niñas tengan una mejor vida. ... Porque no es lo mismo andar de casa en casa de renta que tener uno ya lo de uno, verdad? ... Entonces para nosotros era importante y es importante que las niñas estén en un lugar limpio. Por eso fue que nosotros la quisimos comprar. (In buying the trailer, we said, well yes—this park, this community has been here for so many years. And so yes, we'll buy and live here. To have a better life, so that our girls could have a better life. Because it's not the same, moving from house to house, versus having one of your own, right? ... So for us, it was important that the girls are in a clean place. That was the reason that we wanted to buy the trailer.”)

Later in the interview, this woman linked this sense of destabilization to fears for her legal status, as when they first moved from México they were asked how many years they planned on living in the U.S. At the time she had said ten, and now worries on some level that the displacement will jeopardize her residency. “This impacted me a lot,” she said, “because having a roof over your head, you feel safe. Protecting you from the sun, the rain. But when it was time to move, all of that was gone. Because things aren't the same anymore.”

Many residents who experienced the displacement as traumatic—chiefly women—likewise described a sense of being lost temporally as well as spatially, with the deepest and most intimate impacts recurring in flashbacks, casting them back in time as though they were still living through traumatic events in present tense: “There's times when you're sitting there,” said the woman who had watched her house moving down the street, “and you think about somebody, or...and you just burst into tears over it. Like I said, it's just a matter of feeling like your life's disrupted. When you finally found what you were gonna do and where you were gonna be, and then suddenly, you gotta go.”

Another woman stated:

Even though we all went through the same process and we tried to help each other out, I think it's a hurt that's always going to be there. No matter...I mean, yes, there's time I'm not thinking about it, dwelling on it. But when I talk about it, it comes back and all you relive, that whole time frame. It's a nightmare. And it's like, one lady told me...when she heard I was giving one of the talks, the one I think at the City Hall, and I tried to be able to get up there and talk without having, you know...but it's not something you can control when it hits you. It just hits you at times in your life, not able to...And she said it's probably something you'll always have. That when you talk about it, you know there's times you'll be able to be okay and then you always hear that little quiver, that little shaking in your voice because it's a hurt that goes so deep.

For this woman—like the four households which stated that the biggest impact for them was how the displacement affected their children—what was most traumatic was the time lost with her family during the rezoning, a fight in which she'd been very active:

It seems that when all this started, ... it stole a lot of that time from me from my kids and my grandchildren. Time you can never get back. ... My life with my children has always been important, and I feel that during that time frame, so much was put on hold ... because this consume[d] so much of our time. My kids were ... having games—my grandson is in his last two years of high school and he plays ball—I said no, I'm going to his games. I'm going to enjoy my

life because so much was taken from us. ... There's no amount of money that can ever make up for that time, for what was taken from us. ... My husband would say, well your mom's out and she's got another meeting to go to. They knew what was happening, they knew and they were always supportive and everything. But it was just so hard because I felt like in all the years of them growing up, as their grandmother I had never missed any of their events and this robbed me of that.

At this point, she became overwhelmed emotionally and began to cry, explaining again that when she talks about what happened it's like reliving it again in the present, and requesting that we turn off the tape and not take notes. As with several other residents who could not participate in the interviews because they were too traumatized by what happened, the most intimate and traumatic forms of violence are paradoxically those that cannot be recorded or spoken or preserved. And yet it is precisely these impacts that most need to be documented, as the real effects of city policy.

### *Positives and Protective Influences*

While we have taken care to highlight any positives mentioned in sections on specific impacts (housing, health, etc), in this section we consider the issue in a more general sense: when everything is said and done, are residents happy?

Among those who answered this question directly, responses were fairly evenly split, with slightly more households saying no (19/36 or 52.8%) than yes (17/36 or 47.2%). However, as with the question of whether residents' homes were movable, open-ended responses about current happiness (coupled with analysis of interviews in their entirety) reveal a more complicated picture:

- **About 2 in 5 (41.2% or 21/51) gave a qualified yes (“yes, but”)**
- **About 2 in 5 (39.2% or 20/51) gave an unequivocal no.** “I do not like this lot. I do not like this park. I'm not happy here. I don't know anyone here.”
- 7.8% (4/51) reported mixed feelings or stated that current conditions were “so-so” or complicated. “Yes, I am, but no, I'm not. It's not home. Even after a year. ... Thanks to Mission Trails, unless I own a house, I will never be comfortable.”
- 7.8% (4/51) gave an unequivocal yes, reporting happiness or good living conditions currently AND not dealing with other major impacts from the move). "I'm happy over here, and it was the best move that could have happened for me. I picked the right place...no regrets."
- 3.9% (2/51) reported not much change from Mission Trails. “The only difference,” said one man who moved to another mobile home park, “is when I go outside.”

Some of the positive things residents mentioned about their present living conditions were:

- House/apartment is in better condition than Mission Trails (5 households)
- New park is well-maintained or in good condition (4)
- Good neighborhood—quiet, friendly (4)
- Likes apartment complex or house itself (3)
- Owns house/land – more security (3)
- Change of schools benefitted children (3)

- Likes living in an apartment more than mobile home (2)
- Neighborhood or new park is safer than Mission Trails (1)
- New place is more affordable (1)
- Discounted rent has helped (1)

However, it would be a mistake to take these responses as evidence that the new location represented an overall improvement in living conditions or that the displacement helped "make their lives better."

**Notably, only four households stated that they were happy with their present living conditions AND were not also dealing with other major impacts of displacement (economic, health, family). Many more gave some version of "yes but," or else their "yes" had to be qualified by situating it within the context of what they had shared in their overall interview.** These 20 residents liked some aspects of their current living conditions, but also discussed how:

- They could not afford their current location, causing significant hardship and stress (9)
  - One elderly couple is happier with their new neighborhood, but is also stressed because of greatly increased housing costs in moving from a mobile home to a rental house, spending 75% of their fixed monthly income on rent and utilities.
  - Another couple is much happier with their new neighborhood and with living in a house, but also report that their mortgage payment is \$1,400/month and that they have to borrow money from family to pay it each month.
- They or someone in their family experienced or are still experiencing severe mental and/or physical health impacts triggered by displacement (5)
  - One single mother says that the house they bought is in better condition than their home at Mission Trails, but that she developed fibromyalgia from the stress of displacement.
  - One older man responds to the question of whether he is happy in his new location by saying, "sí, está tranquilo, no hay ninguna problema." ("Yes, it's peaceful here, there aren't any problems.") However, he also reveals that displacement immediately caused his diabetes to become unmanageable, to the point that he has had to begin dialysis, and at many points repeats that he is depressed, sad, and worried about the future.
- They became homeless at some point or experienced multiple moves (5)
  - One woman is overwhelmingly happy to have accessed a downpayment assistance program that has allowed her to purchase a house, but this followed 8 months of homelessness in which she became severely depressed.
  - A single mother of three was able to access "a really nice house now through a New Mexico housing program that is like Section 8," but only after 18 months of severe housing insecurity that included living out of her van and in shelters.
- They wound up with nothing to their name (1). "Here is very good," one single mother of two said of the Northside apartment complex where she moved in with a friend. "Neighborhood, people, schools. No trouble at all. Where we lived before, there was a lot of prostitution, drugs. But here is really nice. It was hard but it's nice now." However, as the interview progresses, she reveals that the apartment belongs to a friend and that she sold off everything she previously owned in the process of moving.
- They experienced a traumatic family separation (1), as in the case of the grandmother whose adoption fell through.
- They sustained significant damage to their home that they could not afford to repair (1). For instance, when asked if she was happy at her new location, one woman said, "I would say it's

good. It's a lot better than Mission Trails. It's a lot quieter. We haven't had any problems with theft here.” She also reported that the one year of discounted rent helped a lot. However, she also shared in her interview how “[i]n the middle room, the sinks, the pipes—our pipes were leaking with the movement. Our bathroom kind of came undone, so he has to fix—he hasn't fixed it yet. It was already loose, our bathtub. But with the movement it came a little bit more loose now. Even the wall from the shower too. ... I don't know if you seen our hallway, but our hallway is like that much—you can see outside from the floorboard? It was like that much. But when they moved the trailer, now it's about that much. Where you can see outside. So I was worried that the whole thing was gonna fall apart.”

If some residents reported improvements, then, this was not necessarily proof of net beneficial impact as much as it was testament to the protective role played by various mitigating factors. In other words, **those who were doing well did so *in spite of what happened and not necessarily because of what happened***. Some of these factors referenced directly by residents included:

- Assets (savings or equity). As explained by one father of six who moved into a house, "Basically, for me, I had been saving money the time I was living [at Mission Trails]." This was in part because he felt like he saw what was coming; he'd picked up on it a couple years before when they didn't want to give him a gas permit. "But even before that, I had been hearing rumors throughout that they were fixing to sell it. I always plan for the worst." This enabled him to put a downpayment on a house, where he reports being happy, although he is also paying 75% of his monthly income on mortgage and utilities.
- Age. One woman stated, "I just feel bad for lotta people out there, especially like the older people that had to move. Me, I can survive—I'm younger." By contrast, an older woman expressed frustration that the displacement hadn't happened when she was younger: "I really felt like, why couldn't it happened early when I'm a lot younger and I can lift, I can pick up, I can do this?"
- Employment versus fixed income: "Them that have fixed incomes," said one woman who worked as a taxi driver, "[moving is] a big step. I work with a lot of elderly people, so I know where—I pick up people that are on dialysis. And I take them to the vascular clinic. And they'll wanna—'Oh, I'm hungry, but I don't have no money'—you know, their check only reaches so far for them and stuff like that. That's the thing I didn't really like. I struggled, but they're probably struggling worse. Because rents are really high out there." This was echoed by one elderly couple on a fixed income, who talked about how "we're paying like twice as much for a 1-bedroom apartment than we were paying for rent for a 2-bedroom trailer. So that is a hardship."
- Good job/steady income: One of the residents who was least affected by the displacement and self-reported as doing really well also acknowledged that this was in part because his current and future economic situation was so secure. He worked at a hospital in a position with a good income, and he was also in school for biomedical engineering and about to graduate. As such he considered his current living conditions temporary, talking about soon being able to build the house he wants.

Other factors that we would assume shaped outcomes (race/ethnicity, gender, legal status, disability, owner vs renter) are harder to quantify given the small sample size. However, looking just at one basic outcome—whether households were settled or not at the time of the interview (and omitting a third, complicated category of those who were settled after long struggles with homelessness), we can see that

race, gender, and primary language all seemed to be significant:

#### Race

	<i>White</i>	<i>People of Color</i>
Settled	16.7% (3/18) vs 11.3% total	83.3% (15/18) vs 87.1% total
Non-Settled	10.8% (4/37) vs 11.3% total	89.2% (33/37) vs 87.1% total

Race conferred slight advantages and disadvantages, but not much. Among those settled at the time of interview, white interviewees were slightly overrepresented compared to their proportion of total interviewees, while people of color (Brown, Black or mixed) were slightly underrepresented. Among those not settled, both white interviewees and people of color were roughly proportionate.

#### Gender

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Settled	33% (6/18) vs 29% total	66% (12/18) vs 71% total
Non-Settled	21.6% (8/37) vs 29% total	81.1% (30/37) vs 71% total

Gender conferred slight advantages and more significant disadvantages. Men were slightly overrepresented among those settled and underrepresented among those non-settled, relative to their representation within interviewees at large. Conversely, women were slightly underrepresented among those settled and significantly overrepresented among those not settled. Also notable is the fact that, of the four interviewees who were settled housing-wise AND who stated most unequivocally that they were doing well, with no ongoing health, family, or economic impacts of displacement, three (75%) were men (all Brown, two Spanish-dominant and one English-dominant/bilingual), though men made up only 18/62 respondents (29%). By contrast, only 1 of those 4 was a woman (white), although women made up 71% of respondents in total.

#### Primary Language

	<i>English-Dominant or Bilingual Households</i>	<i>Spanish-Dominant Households</i>
Settled	66% (10/15) vs 59.6% total	33% (5/15) vs 43.1% total
Non-Settled	51.6% (16/31) vs 59.6% total	48.4% (15/31) vs 43.1% total

Primary language was fairly strongly associated with being unsettled at the time of interview, with English-dominant/Bilingual households overrepresented among those who were settled and Spanish-dominant households significantly underrepresented compared to their proportion of overall interviewees. Among those *not* settled, English-dominant/Bilingual households were underrepresented, while Spanish-dominant households were slightly overrepresented.

While difficult to precisely quantify the protective impact of gender, race, age, economic circumstance and other factors, what was more plain was that those revealed by the interviews to be faring best after displacement tended to be male and able-bodied (whatever their race or primary language) with stable employment and few dependents. By contrast, the faces of the final families, those who had no choice but to stay until the legal deadline and consequently who were most devastated by the displacement, were almost entirely those of Brown, Spanish-speaking women with children.



## 5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

In addition to documenting the lived impacts of displacement, another important goal of the interviews was to collect information we can use to strengthen policy protections for mobile home residents and prevent another Mission Trails. Our main argument here is simple: those who went through displacement have the best policy ideas about how to prevent it. The residents have the solutions, and those in decision-making positions within city and state government should be actively seeking out their input, instead of what we have too often seen—that we/they have to fight for their experience to be acknowledged, much less regarded as necessary expertise for effective policy making. In this final section, then, we highlight responses from questions that give direct and indirect insight into policy solutions to displacement.

One of the main questions we asked that indirectly revealed residents' policy ideas was, “When you heard that the park would be rezoned and closed, what would have been the ideal outcome? What should have happened?” Out of 41 total responses, some of these included:

- **Not having to move in the first place (29.3% or 12/41).** “For them not to do that to people no more!”
- **To be able to move somewhere free from threat of further displacement (26.8% or 11/41)**
  - To be able to afford to move into a house, especially in the same area (6)
  - To be able to buy land and move home there (3)
  - To be able to move mobile homes into neighborhoods. “One alternative would have been if people could have moved their trailers into neighborhoods. [My mom] wanted to know if we could put a trailer in the neighborhood where there’s houses. But I was told ... that you couldn’t do that. [They] said, you’re not the only one that’s been asking that, because there’s other people that’s been coming in here saying, well, I see a little lot in between houses, maybe I can move my trailer there.”
- **Notification—to be told up front (12.2% or 5/41).**
  - “I think the main thing is that if they had been honest to begin with and told us from the beginning what was going to take place, what was happening and not ignored us, we would have been in a different stage. We would have been in a different place as far as health, what we went through, the road we had to travel. Because of their not being honest with us. Trying to discard us as though we were nothing.”
  - “S: The way I found out about it, it was when that guy that did my restroom said, what are you putting all that money, you gonna move this trailer? I said, why? He said, well, you know they’re selling this place, right? I said, nawwww, we didn’t even know that.

M: We didn’t even know that! They hadn’t even sent any notices. And he knew!

S: He knew, the guy—

M: And he was from Mexico.

S: And he didn't even live there [at Mission Trails]! ... And he's the one that told me—you know, you're putting all this money into the trailer and they're gonna sell this place? I said, what?? He said, yeah. They're gonna sell it. Ohhh wow. I didn't know...nobody told me nothing."

- More time to move out, so that residents could move out on their own timeline (12.2% or 5/41)
  - At least a year
  - Six months to a year
- Fix the park (7.3% or 3/41).
  - "My thing would have been to fix the park. They could have generated more income and had better renters."
  - "Pues, que el cambio iba a ser mejor, pero fue lo contrario. Lo mejor es que hubieron arreglado, más estable y más cómodo para vivir bien, sólo faltaba que arreglaran las trailas viejas y de eso. ... Nos sacaron para nada. Solo murieron gentes y ni han hecho nada. Solo hicieron el mal." ("Well, [the ideal thing] is that the change would bring about something better, but it was actually the opposite. The best thing is if they had fixed the park, to be more stable and comfortable for us to live well there...it only needed for the older trailers to be fixed, things like that. ... They kicked us out for nothing. People died and they haven't even done anything [with the land]. It's only been for bad.")
- Just relocation assistance that covered the true costs of moving (7.3% or 3/41)
  - City supplement amount given by developers so that residents are not forced into debt. "When I was reading in the paper that year that all of this was taking place, and they talked about that the city had given \$54.5 million in incentives alone to developers, I thought, really? You have that? ... You could have given at least 2 or 3,000 of that to each resident of the Mission Trails so that they wouldn't have had to go into debt. Where we ran out, and you actually placed us into debt that we didn't have."
  - Enough to buy land
- Better assistance from local government (7.3% or 3/41)
  - City representatives who actually responded to residents (1)
  - Better assistance locating stable housing, and same level of assistance for everyone (including renters, undocumented) (2)
- Developers find land or another park in good condition where residents could move together as a community (4.9% or 2/41). "I really wanted them to find a piece of property where they could... They footed the bill, they paid for everything, and had to deal with all the hassles of doing it. But get a piece of property where everyone could go together."
- Allow residents to stay in the same area (4.9% or 2/41)
- Receive equity residents had built up (4.9% or 2/41)
  - into their home (1)
  - into the land itself (1). "So many people lived there for so long. I was only there seven years. I wasn't asking a lot, just a little bit more—\$4-5,000. Some people were there 30, 40 years...that wasn't right. They helped support that land, because they were living there. The

people that were there longer should have gotten more.”

- Not have to continuing paying rent once park was rezoned (1/41).

With regard to the relocation assistance, when asked “What would have been a fair amount?” 36 households gave an amount averaging \$8,828. However, a better way to visualize responses to this question is to create a breakdown by amount and frequency:

Fair Amount	# / % Respondents	Resident Voices
At least \$1,000 (one resident who had received nothing)	1 (2.8%)	"Pues de perdido unos \$1000, no se. Algo para apoyarnos." ("Well, at least \$1000, I don't know. Something to support us.")
\$2,000	1 (2.8%)	
\$3-4,000	1 (2.8%)	
\$4-6,000	7 (19.4%)	"At least \$6,000. I lost everything. We lost everything. All that I could take with me was what I could carry in my van. And I had the kids too. I had no choice."
\$7-8,000	8 (22.2%)	"Enough to move into a house. Most housing we looked for, if you don't have enough money...if you only have \$1-2,000, that's not enough for a downpayment. They want \$7-8,000."
\$7-10,000	1 (2.8%)	
\$10-11,000	10 (27.8%)	"A fair amount? ... Gosh, I would say at least \$10,000. Because, maybe with that extra money, I could at least have found me a real small efficiency meantime, and I wouldn't be homeless half this time, and jumping from place to place."
\$10-15,000	1 (2.8%)	
\$12,000	2 (5.6%)	
\$14-15,000	3 (8.3%)	"I wanted the property value of the house. I lived there for 14 years, and all of a sudden we had to get out. ... I wanted what it was assessed at; it had a value of \$14,000."
\$23,000	1 (2.8%)	"At least what it [his home] cost. I paid off \$17,000 and I still hadn't paid it off. I think it cost \$23,000. At least they could have given half of what I put in, and allowed me to keep the trailer. But they said no."

What becomes apparent when we break responses down in this way is that most residents are clustered somewhere either in the \$4-8,000 range (likely an estimate of assistance required in addition to the \$2,500 or \$4,600 received) and in the \$10-15,000 range (likely an estimate of total expenses for moving and resettling). This suggests that a fair *minimum* benchmark for estimating total costs to relocate per household would be \$10,000, compared to the developer package that in theory totaled \$7,200 but was experienced as something less than this amount by 76.5% of households responding, with an average amount of \$4,451.

Several residents could not assign a dollar value to the question of what amount would have been fair (or gave a dollar value but qualified their response), for a number of reasons:

- Because what was fair depended on the person/household/situation (4).
  - Those who lived there longer should have gotten more, because they helped maintain the land over time.

- Giving \$3,000 per person would have been better than giving a set amount per household, because some families were larger.
  - Those who were more vulnerable should have gotten more assistance. “Que hubieran sido más realistas, que hubieran visto la necesidad de las personas de la condición en la que estaban y de su familia. Por ejemplo, los discapacitados, los ancianos, los veteranos...son diferentes situaciones a la de uno. / I wish they had been more realistic, that they had seen and evaluated the needs of each person, the condition they and their family were in. For example, disabled people, the elderly, veterans...each of their situations is different.”
  - Developers should have taken into consideration the reality that some households consisted of multiple families that got split up and required their own assistance package. “Well, you know what, I feel that it [the amount they gave] wasn’t [fair], on this fact: because [his] daughters lived there, and they didn’t give them nothing to relocate. ... I feel that they should have done the same thing for them, right?”
- Because costs were unquantifiable (3)
    - “You can’t put a price on life. Those were our house, whether they were cardboard or whatever they were. They were *our* homes.”
    - “Like I said, it was not so much the money—it doesn’t buy everything. Money can never replace me losing the boys. Never.”
    - “No sé, pero mis sentimientos, y los de mis niños, no tienen precio. Los ancianos que han fallecido no se puede pagar, pero tuvimos que salirnos. Pero sí, sé que no fue suficiente por tanto tiempo que vivimos ahí y que nos sacaran no más, porque sí...aunque no quisiéramos.” (“I don’t know [what amount would have been fair], but my feelings, and those of my children, have no price. You can’t pay for the elders who passed away, but we had to move out. I do know it wasn’t enough for all the time we lived there, and then to kick us out just because...even though we didn’t want to [leave].”)
  - Because what they were given wasn’t the problem so much as lack of follow up by the city and follow through by developers/parks on what was promised (2).
    - “The truth is that the money isn’t everything. For me it isn’t that important. For me, if they would have taken care of the relocation and the move, connections and all like that I thought, I would have been happy. Because afterwards supposedly the office where they took the trailer was going to connect it. A month went by and I called the office about the connections, and they said, ‘I don’t have anything to do with that. I already moved the trailer for you.’ They washed their hands of it.”
    - The fair situation would have been to ensure that she and other residents were settled in a safe/secure location with everything they needed, and to have follow up on their situation to ensure fairness.

However, beyond ideas about ideal outcomes once the park was proposed for rezoning and closure, the most frequent response of all to the question of what would have been the ideal outcome was **not**

**having to move in the first place—in other words, for the city to enact preventative rather than reactive policy solutions.** Often when we asked residents directly what that would look like concretely, they didn't know how to respond immediately. However, we can work our way upstream from the responses highlighted here to sketch out some beginning points. Three in particular merit mention:

- *The right to simply be notified.* Local and state laws should change to recognize mobile home residents as homeowners with legal rights to notification and comment in the event of rezoning.
- *Being able to move mobile homes into neighborhoods.* The City of San Antonio is currently considering how to change the Unified Development Code to allow “tiny houses” and granny flats. Why not mobile homes?
- *Fixing the park.* This one takes a little more unpacking, because it was not straightforwardly the case that Mission Trails was the eyesore it was depicted as in media accounts and public discussions, which used living conditions at the park as justification for arguing that rezoning was for residents' own good as much as for property values. However, data we collected challenges this.

Recall that when we asked residents to rate conditions at Mission Trails on move-in, the average score was 4.03 out of 5 (pretty good—a few issues, but overall liked living there), with about 3 in 4 households rating conditions as either 4 or 5 (good or pretty good). Of those who rated conditions as 2 (not great—lots of issues) or 1 (terrible), about half had lived there 2-3 years or less, coinciding with the purchase of the park by AFC.

In our preliminary analysis from 2016, we took these findings to mean that conditions only got bad when American Family Communities took over. And based on residents' testimonios, conditions certainly did seem to deteriorate quickly when AFC came in, with many feeling the final owners had purchased the park intending to cash in on rising land values and consequently abandoned maintenance responsibilities. However, looking at all 51 interviews, a more nuanced picture emerges, particularly from those who had lived there longer and had witnessed conditions improve and decline and improve again over many years as managers came and went.

Policy-wise, then, the takeaways from residents' suggestion that the ideal situation would have been to fix up the park are three-fold:

- 1) Living conditions at Mission Trails did not decline uniformly until sale became inevitable, but rather rose and fell depending on who was running the park at the time.
- 2) Good management was and is possible, when we look empirically at the history of Mission Trails. For instance, residents almost unanimously praised a husband-and-wife manager team who took care of things before AFC came in.
- 3) To focus entirely on quality of management, however, is to miss an important point, which is that the real vulnerability in the case of Mission Trails, and the real policy issue if we want to take a preventative rather than reactive approach to displacement, is not necessarily landlords who don't maintain good conditions at their parks—although, to be sure, this is the crux of the issue in another recent case of residential displacement from Oak Hollow Mobile Home Park. In the case of Mission Trails, however, *the real issue was land speculation*, and the lack of public policy protections that have accompanied public investments in economically depressed areas. This in turn triggered the predatory activity of investor owners like AFC, whose very business

model is to acquire parks—not to maintain them in good condition, but to run them down so that they can be flipped. Local government perhaps cannot prevent owners from buying and selling, but it can create a policy context that mitigates against and discourages the worst forms of speculation that nip at the heels of public investment and redevelopment.

For that reason, we continue to insist—as we did in April and May 2014 when begging City Council to deny White-Conlee’s rezoning request—that the real and lasting solution is resident ownership. As Peter Moskowitz writes in *How to Kill a City Gentrification, Inequality, and the Fight for the Neighborhood*,

In nearly every other industrialized nation besides the United States, there is near-consensus that purely private land markets will not meet the [housing] needs of the poor, and so measures have been taken to ensure that at least some land remains off the market or subject to regulations that make it affordable.<sup>65</sup>

On the state level, this means changing laws to allow resident right of first refusal in the case of a proposed rezoning/sale. On a local level, it means cities partnering with organizations established to provide the kind of technical assistance and access to capital to allow mobile home residents acquire and collectively manage their parks. It also means that the city’s Housing Commission to Protect and Preserve Dynamic and Diverse Neighborhoods, formed in 2015 specifically to develop policies for preventing displacement, needs to be directly accountable to the experiences of mobile home residents. This means making a special effort to have these residents—as well as others vulnerable to various forms of displacement pressure—at the table when solutions are drafted.

As those who witnessed firsthand the chaos, trauma, and human rights violations that occurred in the absence of good public policy, Vecinos de Mission Trails presents these findings to city leadership and to the wider community in the hope that they may assist in identifying policies to prevent another Mission Trails from ever happening again. However, as those who also witnessed the power of resident organizing, the most important lesson for the city, beyond anything we might recommend, is that those most impacted by gentrification and displacement have many of the policy solutions. The real question is: Do policy-makers have the political will not simply to listen, but to seek them out as advisors?

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<sup>65</sup> Quoted in White 2017. See <https://www.citylab.com/housing/2017/03/the-steady-deconstruction-of-americas-cities/519081/>

## Appendix A: Interview Questions

### I. Oral History

Tell me story of what happened at Mission Trail and how it affected you and your family, from when you first heard about the rezoning to the move, and then how you're doing now.

### II. Specific Impacts

1. How long did you live at Mission Trails?
2. What was it like when you moved in, on a scale from 1 to 5 (with 1 being "terrible" and 5 being "good – no problems")
3. When did conditions start to get really bad?
4. How old is/was your home?
5. Was it movable? If not, what happened to it?
6. Where did you move? What is your current address?
7. How did you decide **where** to go?
8. When did you move?
9. How did you decide **when** to move?
10. When you learned that Mission Trails would be rezoned, what would have been the ideal situation or outcome for your family? For all Mission Trails residents?
11. How much did you get in relocation assistance?
12. Did you have any problems receiving it? If yes, explain.
13. Was the assistance you received sufficient? If no, explain.
14. If no, what would have been a fair amount (or situation, if they don't want to or can't give a dollar amount)?
15. Looking back on the entire process of moving and resettling, can you give me a list of all the expenses you had?
16. What was the total cost of all of that?
17. You said you got \$X in relocation assistance. That means you paid \$Y out of pocket?
18. How did you pay for the out-of-pocket costs?
19. Tell me what it was like to physically move your household from one place to another. Did you encounter any major issues?
20. How would you describe your current living conditions at your new location? Are you happy where you're living now? Why or why not?
21. What did you pay for rent and utilities at Mission Trails?
22. What is your total rent/mortgage and utilities now?
23. What is your monthly income? (Or, if they don't feel comfortable responding: About what percentage of your total household monthly income goes to rent/mortgage + utilities?)
24. How did the rezoning, the sale of the park, and the move affect your health or the health of other family members?
25. On a scale from 1 to 10 (where 1 is the worst, 10 is the best), how would you rate your health before things got bad at Mission Trails?
26. On the same scale, how would you rate your health around the time you moved?
27. On the same scale, how would you rate your health now?

28. If they experienced a decline in health: What sorts of health conditions (physical or mental) did you develop (or what kinds of preexisting conditions got worse)?
29. How did the move affect your children or others you care for? (If applicable.)
30. How did the move affect your job or income? (If not already detailed.)
31. How did the move affect your access to medical care? (If not already detailed.)
32. How did the move affect your ability to get where you need to go (transportation)? (If not already detailed.)
33. How did the move affect your friendships, social networks, or sense of community?

### **III. Demographic information**

34. How many live in your household?
35. How many in your household are:
  - Born in another country (an immigrant)
  - Disabled (self-defined)
  - Fixed income
  - Elder (over 60)
  - Minor (under 18) and how old
  - Veteran
  - Single parent
36. What is your primary language (English, Spanish, Bilingual, Other)?
37. What is your annual household income? (Can also extrapolate from monthly income reported)

### **IV. Wrapping Up**

38. Do you keep in touch with other Mission Trails residents? Do you have their contact information/can you connect us?
39. Overall, looking back over everything, what would you say was the biggest impact of what happened at Mission Trails?
40. Any other thing you didn't get to say, or any questions for me?