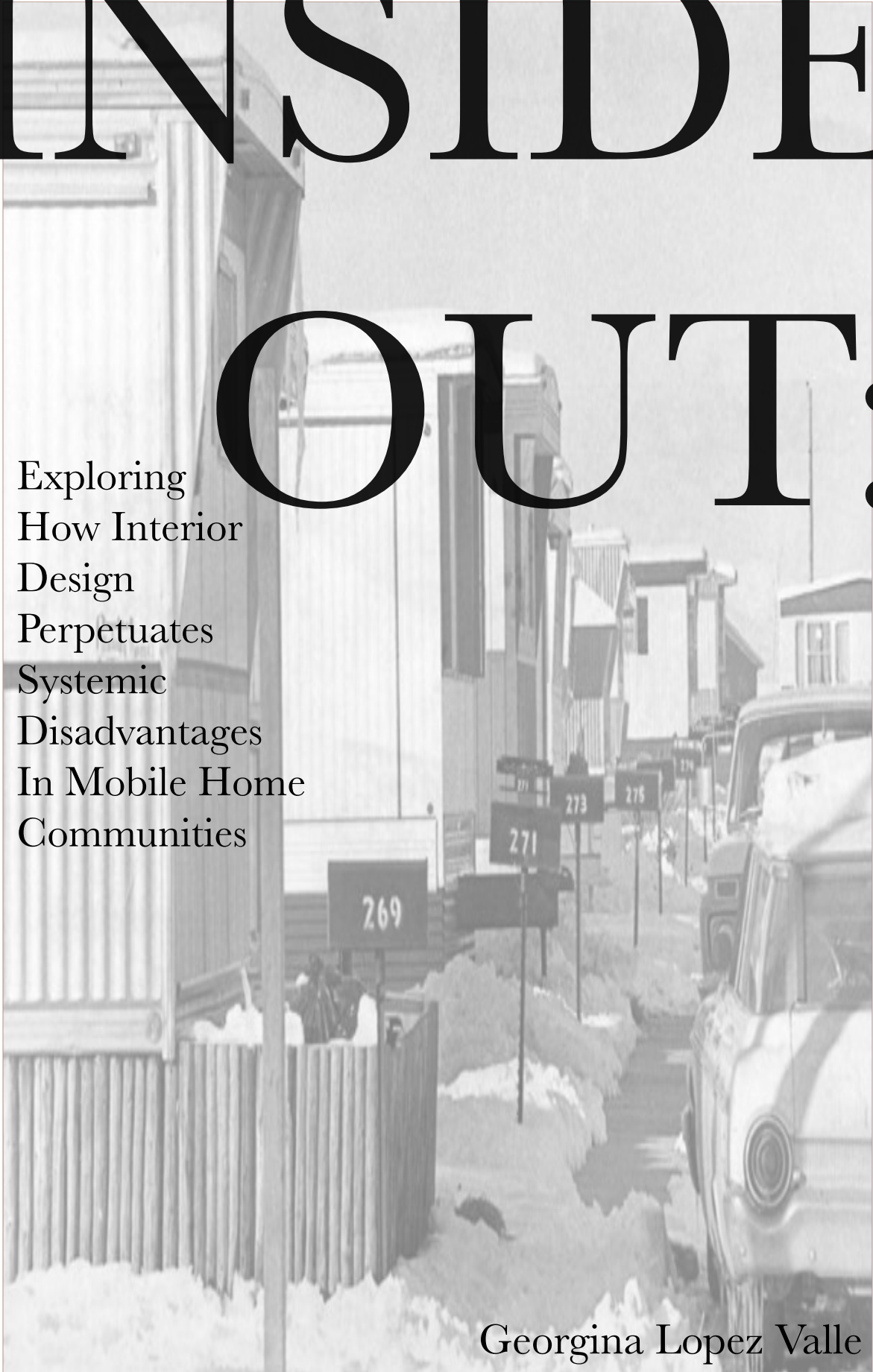# INSIDE OUT:

Exploring
How Interior
Design
Perpetuates
Systemic
Disadvantages
In Mobile Home
Communities

Georgina Lopez Valle

University of Colorado Boulder
Defense Date: March 20, 2025

Thesis Chair Advisors:

Gregory Crichlow,
Architecture, Product Design,
Sustainable Planning & Urban
Design

Jessica Ordaz,
Chicanx/Latinx Studies

Defense Committee:

Jota Samper,
Architecture,
Sustainable Planning & Urban
Design

This project is dedicated to my parents, whose
unwavering love, sacrifices, and resilience have
shaped the person I am today. To my peers, and the
faculty at Environmental Design, Nate Jones &
Gregory Crichlow, and everyone who has guided me,
your mentorship and encouragement have been
invaluable throughout this journey.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the Latinx
community, whose strength and perseverance
continue to inspire me. Being a person of color
means navigating systems that were not built for us,
yet through resilience, we carve spaces of
belonging and transformation. This work is a
reflection of that spirit, and I hope it contributes to a
future where equitable and dignified living
environments are a reality for all.

1. ABSTRACT

This research project investigates how spatial arrangements and interior design in mobile homes impact the quality of life, social interactions, and health of Latinx communities, focusing on the San Lazaro Mobile Home Park in Boulder, Colorado. Mobile home parks often serve as affordable housing solutions for marginalized communities but are rarely designed to accommodate the diverse needs of their residents. The physical and social constraints within these homes frequently contribute to systemic disadvantages and perpetuate racial stigmas, reinforcing white hierarchy in urban planning and housing policies. Spatial arrangements and interior design of mobile homes influence the quality of life, social interactions, and health of Latinx communities by creating overcrowded spaces that limit privacy and individual freedom. This lack of sufficient space makes it challenging for residents to focus on school or work, often leading to a desire to escape due to inadequate rooms for comfortable and productive living. This project explores the intersections of housing design and social justice by addressing key questions:

How do these spatial and design challenges perpetuate systemic inequities?

How can design interventions promote more equitable living conditions for underserved Latinx communities?

By analyzing the physical layouts and social dynamics of mobile homes, the research uncovers the deeper implications of residential space on daily life and broader societal outcomes. The research methods combine qualitative and ethnographic approaches, incorporating interviews and case studies to understand the lived experiences of residents. Findings are analyzed through the lens of social and spatial theories while referencing existing literature on housing equity, residential psychology, and interior design. This work also highlights the importance of involving residents in the design process to ensure their needs and voices are prioritized. The significance of this project lies in its potential to advocate for design interventions that transform mobile homes into spaces that foster dignity, privacy, and productivity, ultimately contributing to more equitable housing policies and practices.

table of contents

table of figures

2. INTRODUCTION

"The house is a machine for living in."
-Vers Une Architecture (Towards An Architecture, Le Corbusier, 1927).

Le Corbusier's radical vision for modern living revolved around the belief that homes should be designed with the same precision and efficiency as industrial machines. His approach prioritized functionality, modularity, and spatial efficiency, principles that aimed to create livable spaces for the modern individual. One of his most influential ideas regarding small-scale housing was the "Maison Minimum" a concept that sought to design homes with only the absolute essentials while maximizing space efficiency and livability. His work on the Cabanon de Vacances (1952), a compact wooden cabin of just 16 square meters (172 sq. ft.), exemplified his approach to small living spaces, proving that thoughtful design could create a dignified and comfortable home, even in minimal square footage. Le Corbusier's ideas on compact and prefabricated housing also influenced his Unité d'Habitation (1947–1952), a high-density housing model based on modular, self-sustaining units designed to support urban living.

While these projects showcased the potential of standardization and prefabrication in housing, mobile home communities today, though seemingly aligned with some of these principles, often fail to achieve the same functional, dignified, and livable environments.

Instead, they have become synonymous with neglect, overcrowding, and social marginalization, far removed from the promise of efficiency and comfort envisioned by modernist architects.

Mobile home parks, often regarded as the housing option of last resort for low-income families, occupy a unique position in architectural design and housing equity. They serve as affordable housing solutions while simultaneously fostering community cohesion and cultural identity. However, the reality for many residents of these parks, such as those in the San Lazaro Mobile Home Park in Boulder, Colorado, is shaped by systemic neglect, inadequate infrastructure, and spatial constraints. These conditions perpetuate cycles of disadvantage and reinforce racial stigmas, reflecting broader inequities in urban planning and housing policies. Despite their potential to serve as accessible housing options, mobile home parks frequently fail to meet the holistic needs of their residents, highlighting critical gaps in both design and policy. Poorly maintained infrastructure, overcrowded living spaces, and a lack of privacy often result in environments that diminish quality of life rather than enhance it.

The San Lazaro Mobile Home Park provides a poignant case study, showcasing how these structural inadequacies intersect with broader societal issues such as racial stigmas and economic instability. Residents not only contend with physical limitations but also face the emotional and psychological tolls of living in spaces that inadequately support their needs. This stark contrast between Le Corbusier's vision of highly functional, small-scale housing and the reality of mobile home parks underscores a critical flaw in modern housing systems. Where his designs sought to optimize space and improve daily life, mobile home communities are often improvised, neglected, and constrained by economic and policy-driven barriers. The lack of thoughtful spatial planning, coupled with social stigmas and economic precarity, means that these environments frequently restrict mobility and limit opportunities for upward progress rather than serving as stepping stones toward stability.

One of the most significant challenges facing mobile home residents is land insecurity. While residents may own their homes, they typically rent the land beneath them, placing them at risk of sudden rent hikes, eviction, or displacement (Desmond, 2016). This instability is exacerbated by corporate acquisitions of mobile home parks, in which private investors prioritize profit over resident well-being (Gutierrez & Sandoval, 2022).

As a result, many residents find themselves trapped in a cycle where they cannot afford to move, yet their cost of living continues to rise, making homeownership a fragile and often illusory concept.

Ethnographic interviews conducted for this research reveal that the lack of designated study or workspace increases distractions, making it difficult to focus on coursework or job-related responsibilities. This issue is especially pronounced in multi-generational households, where bedrooms often serve multiple functions, from sleeping quarters to storage areas and home offices.

Beyond privacy concerns, the structural limitations of mobile homes also impact daily routines. Kitchens in many units measure less than 90 square feet, restricting storage, counter space, and cooking capacity. This inefficiency places additional strain on families, particularly those preparing meals for larger households. Likewise, the compact design of bedrooms, often averaging between 110 to 140 square feet, barely accommodates essential furniture, leaving residents with limited room for movement. Such constraints create feelings of crowding, which have been linked to increased stress, decreased personal autonomy, and negative impacts on mental health (Miller & Evko, 1985).

These challenges are compounded by the stigmatization of mobile home communities, which are often viewed as undesirable or transitory rather than as stable and viable housing options. Such perceptions further marginalize

residents, limiting their access to resources and opportunities. This project investigates how these spaces, ostensibly designed to provide affordability, can paradoxically perpetuate inequities, underscoring the critical need for design interventions. By exploring the lived experiences of residents and analyzing the spatial and social dynamics within mobile home parks, the research aims to uncover how design can either reinforce or disrupt these cycles of disadvantage. The study seeks to advocate for more inclusive and equitable design practices that prioritize the dignity and well-being of marginalized communities.

Recent legislative efforts, such as those signed by Governor Hochul in New York, provide a framework for policy interventions that could benefit mobile home residents nationwide (North Country Public Radio, 2023). These laws include protections against unfair rent increases and predatory community ownership practices, signaling a growing recognition of the need for stronger regulatory safeguards in manufactured housing communities. While these measures represent progress, a more comprehensive approach,one that addresses both economic security and interior living conditions, is necessary to create meaningful change.

Reimagining mobile home interiors with an emphasis on dignity, functionality, and inclusivity is a key component of addressing these systemic inequities. Culturally responsive design, which integrates elements that reflect the identities and lived experiences of residents, fosters a greater sense of pride and community ownership.

This research underscores the importance of interior spatial planning in shaping resident well-being. HUD regulations governing manufactured housing could be revised to include stricter insulation standards, greater flexibility in room layouts, and enhanced privacy measures. Additionally, incentivizing developers to incorporate sustainable and space-efficient designs could create pathways for long-term improvements in mobile home livability.

Beyond individual design interventions, this research contributes to broader discussions on community empowerment and equitable urban planning. Examining the intersection of architecture, social justice, and economic precarity, this study challenges traditional design paradigms that often exclude marginalized populations. By integrating perspectives from architectural design, environmental psychology, and housing policy, this research offers a multidimensional framework for improving mobile home living conditions.

The implications extend beyond San Lazaro, providing a model for inclusive and equitable design practices that prioritize resident well-being. As housing affordability continues to be a pressing issue nationwide, mobile home communities represent an important area for intervention and reform. Addressing these challenges requires collaboration between policymakers, architects, and community advocates, ensuring that mobile home residents are not only protected but also empowered to shape the future of their living spaces.

3

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Roots of Systemic Discrimination in Housing

Understanding the historical roots of systemic discrimination is essential for framing the current challenges faced by mobile home parks and their residents. My research focuses on how the design and spatial arrangements of mobile homes contribute to systemic disadvantages experienced by marginalized communities. To contextualize this issue, it is important to examine how historical practices like redlining, initiated in the 1930s, systematically denied minority communities access to housing loans and quality neighborhoods based on racial and ethnic backgrounds. These discriminatory practices laid the groundwork for enduring social and economic segregation, which persists today and disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations, including mobile home residents. Griffin and Sturdivant's (1973) seminal work, Discrimination and Middle Class Minority Consumers, provides a critical lens for understanding how racial and ethnic biases extend beyond economic barriers to influence access to housing. They document how discriminatory practices persisted beyond formal redlining policies, particularly affecting minority middle-class consumers. Their findings reveal that Black households often paid 5–10% more than their white counterparts for comparable housing in urban areas, illustrating that racial inequities in the housing market are not merely a reflection of economic status but are deeply rooted in systemic bias.

This "discrimination markup" underscores how the marketplace functions as a site of racial inequity, where minority group membership directly impacts consumer experiences and access to basic needs. This legacy connects directly to the plight of mobile home park residents today. Decades of marginalization have forced many minority families, especially those excluded from traditional housing loans, into mobile homes affordable yet often substandard living arrangements with limited opportunities for upward mobility.

Griffin and Sturdivant also highlight how discrimination inflates not just housing costs but utility expenses for minority households, further entrenching socioeconomic disparities. These findings illustrate the cumulative burden of systemic discrimination, which disproportionately affects minority consumers even at middle-class income levels. This economic exclusion has played a significant role in shaping housing trends over the decades, pushing marginalized communities toward alternative and often precarious housing solutions, including mobile homes. The transformation of mobile homes from a status symbol of mobility and innovation to a last resort for affordability reflects larger systemic shifts in housing accessibility, federal policy, and market driven inequities.

The Evolution of Mobile Homes: From Travel to Affordable Housing

The history of mobile home parks reveals a complex trajectory, evolving from luxury travel accommodations to affordable housing.

•1920s: Travel trailers rise in popularity

The origins of mobile homes can be traced back to the rise of automobile travel in the early 20th century. As Frank Rolfe (2024) explains in The History of Mobile Home Parks, before roadside hotels and motels existed, travelers often camped in tents beside their cars. Wealthier travelers commissioned elaborated trailers featuring luxury interiors, establishing the foundation for what would later become mobile home living.

•1930s: Mass production of travel trailers begins

As demand for travel trailers increased, manufacturers began producing standardized models, making mobile living more accessible. This period marked the beginning of the industry's shift from a niche luxury market to a broader consumer base.

•1940s: Wartime housing shortages lead to trailers being used as temporary housing

During World War II, the U.S. government faced a critical housing shortage for military personnel and war workers. Mobile homes provided a quick and flexible solution. The government purchased approximately 500,000 units, using them on military bases and later repurposing them for veterans attending college under the GI Bill.

•1950s: Industry name change to "mobile home"

With the postwar economic boom, mobile homes became an increasingly popular housing option. During this period, the industry shifted terminology from "trailers" to "mobile homes" to reflect their evolving purpose as permanent residences rather than temporary travel accommodations. Many middle-class families embraced mobile home living, and parks were often seen as aspirational communities.

The Evolution of Mobile Homes: Fro

INDUSTRY NAME CHANGE TO "MOBILE HOME"

MASS PRODUCTION OF TRAVEL TRAILERS BEGINS
1930s

1920s

1950s

1940s

1955

TRAVEL TRAILERS RISE IN POPULARITY

WARTIME HOUSING SHORTAGES LEAD TO RISE OF TRAILERS AS TEMPORARY HOUSING
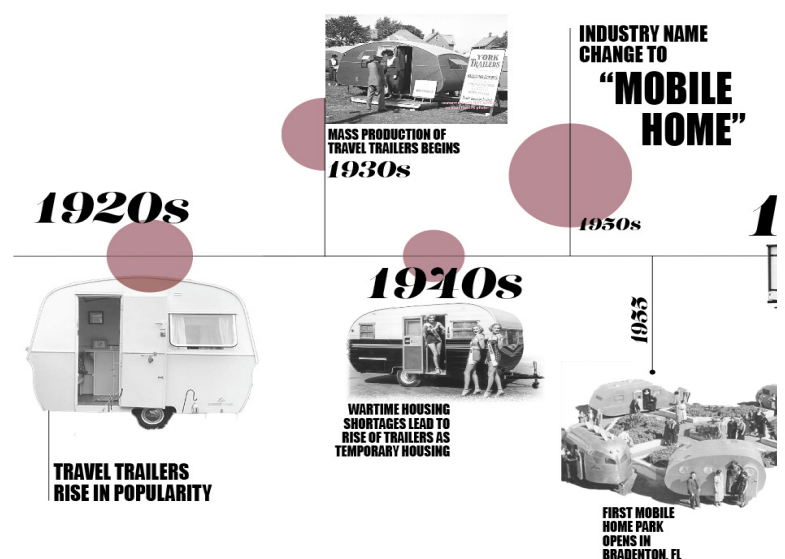
FIRST MOBILE HOME PARK OPENS IN BRADENTON, FL

Figure 3.1 Timeline of Mobile Home Development

•1955: The first mobile home park opens in Bradenton, FL

The establishment of the first formal mobile home park in Bradenton, Florida, signified a shift from informal trailer communities to organized residential developments. This development helped standardize the mobile home industry, encouraging growth and investment.

•1963: Mobile Home and Travel Trailer industry split

Up until the 1960s, mobile homes and travel trailers were essentially the same product. However, as manufacturers sought to create larger, more permanent structures, the industry split into two categories: mobile homes (stationary housing) and travel trailers (recreational vehicles or RVs). This distinction marked the beginning of a long-term shift toward mobile homes being viewed primarily as affordable housing rather than travel accommodations.

m Travel to Affordable Housing

NATIONAL MANUFACTURED HOUSING CONSTRUCTION AND SAFETY ACT IS PASSED

MANUFACTURED HOUSING IMPROVEMENT ACT IS PASSED

963

1974

2000

MOBILE HOME AND TRAVEL TRAILER INDUSTRY SPLIT

1975 1976

INDUSTRY NAME CHANGE TO

"MANUFACTURED HOME"

•1974: National Manufactured Housing Construction and Safety Act is passed

The 1970s marked a turning point in the mobile home industry. The federal government, recognizing the need for standardized safety regulations, passed the National Manufactured Housing Construction and Safety Act in 1974. This legislation introduced uniform construction codes for mobile homes, ensuring higher quality and safety standards.

•1975/1976: Industry name change to "manufactured home"

In the mid-1970s, the industry officially rebranded mobile homes as manufactured homes. This shift, influenced by the federal government's new regulations, reinforced the idea that these structures were not simply "trailers" but legitimate, permanent housing solutions.

•2000: Manufactured Housing Improvement Act is passed

The Manufactured Housing Improvement Act of 2000 sought to further regulate and support manufactured housing, ensuring that these homes adhered to modern safety and quality standards. This act also sought to protect residents from predatory lending practices and unsafe housing conditions.
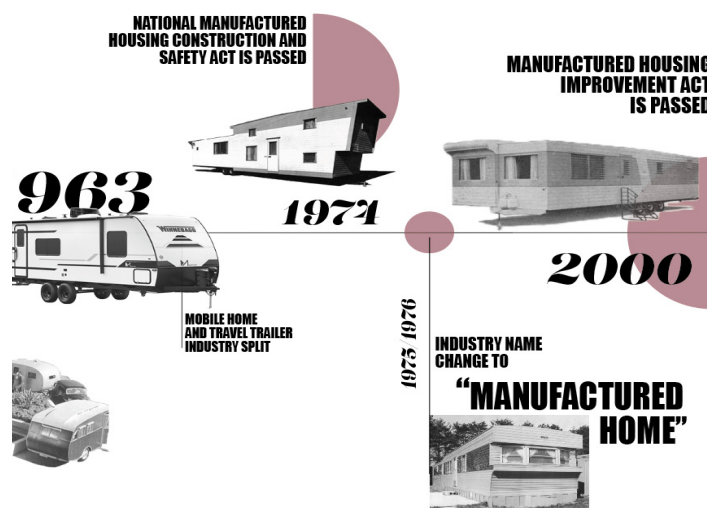
As policies and market forces shaped the trajectory of mobile home development marginalized communities increasingly found themselves pushed towards these housing options often with limited protections and upward mobility. By linking historical housing discrimination to the challenges faced by mobile home residents, Griffin and Sturdivant's work reinforces the importance of addressing these inequities. It provides a framework for examining how entrenched biases in housing markets perpetuate precarious living conditions for marginalized communities. My research builds on these insights by exploring how redesigning mobile home interiors and spatial arrangements could mitigate systemic disadvantages and promote equitable living conditions.

The origins of mobile home parks can be traced back to the post-World War II era, a time when the demand for affordable and flexible housing surged due to returning veterans and a booming population. Initially celebrated as innovative solutions to housing shortages, mobile homes provided a cost-effective, rapidly deployable alternative that met the immediate needs of families seeking accessible living spaces. However, as Hart, Rhodes, and Morgan (2002) explain in The Unknown World of the Mobile Home, what began as a promising approach to housing quickly transformed into a stigmatized and exploitative system. Mobile homes, once symbols of postwar innovation, became associated with affordability and transience, leading to their stigmatization as substandard and undesirable.

This shift in perception not only limited the potential of mobile home parks as long-term housing solutions but also created fertile ground for systemic neglect and exploitation.

Corporate Ownership and Housing Instability

Hart et al. emphasize that the lack of regulatory oversight played a significant role in this shift. Without robust legal protections, mobile home parks became arenas where profit-driven park owners prioritized revenue over the well-being of residents. One of the most significant exploitative practices involves the financial arrangements within these parks, where residents often own their mobile homes but not the land beneath them. This precarious ownership model leaves residents vulnerable to rent hikes and potential displacement, trapping them in cycles of economic instability that reinforce broader patterns of inequality. The absence of protections also enables park owners to impose restrictive rules without accountability, perpetuating a system where housing stability remains elusive for residents. These dynamics are especially prevalent in communities like San Lazaro, where residents continue to struggle for housing security in environments designed to prioritize profit over equity.

Gutierrez and Sandoval (2022), in their analysis Colorado's Mobile Home Parks Are Becoming a Lucrative Business, But Not for Residents, build upon these themes by illustrating how corporate interests have intensified the exploitation of mobile home residents.

Mobile home parks, initially conceived as affordable housing solutions, have become lucrative opportunities for investors who exploit residents' dependence on affordable living spaces.

The authors note that rising rent hikes, often as high as 10% annually, disproportionately affect low-income and minority residents, exacerbating financial stress and limiting their options for relocation. These rent increases, compounded by inadequate maintenance and infrastructure, reflect modern manifestations of systemic discrimination that echo the practices of redlining. This economic exclusion systematically pushes vulnerable populations into precarious financial situations, where they face persistent exploitation within segregated, underserved communities. In addition to rent hikes, Gutierrez and Sandoval highlight the insecurity of land ownership within mobile home parks. Although residents may own their homes, they remain dependent on park owners for land access, leaving them vulnerable to eviction or displacement when ownership changes or rental terms shift. This dependency, exacerbated by the rise of corporate acquisitions, traps residents in a financially exploitative arrangement where they have little control over their living conditions.

The study further critiques the inadequacy of legal protections, noting that while Colorado's Mobile Home Park Act provides some safeguards, enforcement remains weak, leaving residents with limited recourse against unfair practices.

This lack of robust legal protections perpetuates a power imbalance in which corporate interests dominate, and residents are left vulnerable to escalating costs and instability.

The patterns of economic precarity and systemic inequity described by Hart et al. and Gutierrez and Sandoval align closely, illustrating a historical throughline that connects postwar exploitation to contemporary challenges. Mobile home parks, while offering shelter, are often located in less desirable areas with fewer community resources, perpetuating social and economic segregation. Hart et al. underscore that this marginalization reflects broader structural inequities originally established through discriminatory practices like redlining. Similarly, Gutierrez and Sandoval emphasize that today's corporate ownership of mobile home parks functions as a form of indirect segregation, confining low-income and minority communities to underregulated environments. These practices ensure that residents remain economically marginalized and socially isolated, with few opportunities for upward mobility.

The link between living environments and mental health is a critical component of understanding the impact of mobile home park conditions on residents. In The Psychology of Home Environments: A Call for Research on Residential Space, Graham, Gosling, and Travis (2015) explain that residential spaces play a significant role in shaping mental health, social interactions, and overall life satisfaction.

Their research advocates for a deeper exploration of how living environments influence psychological well being, positing that one's home environment is not merely a backdrop to life but a fundamental contributor to mental health. Poorly designed or maintained spaces can act as stressors, intensifying feelings of discomfort, anxiety, and depression, especially for residents who may already face socioeconomic challenges. For residents of communities like San Lazaro, where systemic neglect often results in substandard living conditions, these effects are particularly pronounced. Graham et al.'s research shows that individuals living in cramped, poorly ventilated, and under maintained spaces are more likely to experience heightened stress levels, anxiety, and depression. The crowded layouts common in mobile home parks, combined with limited access to outdoor space and inadequate infrastructure, compound these mental health risks.

This insight informs the need for improved design modifications, such as optimizing natural light, enhancing ventilation and creating more flexible spaces. By addressing these physical conditions, there would be a creation of an environment that promotes mental well being rather than exacerbates psychological distress.

Further supporting this perspective, Tawil et al. (2021), in The Living Space: Psychological Well-Being and Mental Health in Response to Interiors Presented in Virtual Reality, provide evidence on how strategic interior design can mitigate stress and improve comfort. Their study utilized virtual reality simulations to expose participants to various interior layouts, demonstrating that thoughtfully designed spaces could reduce self-reported stress by 25%. These simulations underscored the importance of elements such as spaciousness, light, and color schemes in influencing mental states. For mobile home parks like San Lazaro, even modest improvements such as adjusting lighting or reorganizing layouts for better flow could have a tangible positive impact on residents' mental health. By incorporating these findings into future design we can reinforce the argument that enhancing interior spaces in mobile homes can foster not only physical comfort but also psychological resilience among residents.

Creating living spaces that are not only functional but also culturally resonant is essential for fostering a sense of belonging and well being. In Building Cultural Competence in Interior Design: When Good Intentions Go Awry, Young (2022) emphasizes the risks of overlooking cultural contexts in design, warning that design practices that fail to consider cultural nuances can inadvertently reinforce stereotypes and perpetuate power imbalances.

Young's analysis is particularly relevant to marginalized communities, such as those in San Lazaro, where residents may feel alienated by generic or standardized design choices that fail to reflect their identities and heritage. For these residents, the home environment serves not only as a physical space but also as a cultural sanctuary. Ignoring this aspect in redesign efforts risks stripping away personal and cultural significance, further alienating residents from their surroundings. Young's insights highlight the importance of cultural competence. By acknowledging and integrating the cultural backgrounds and traditions of San Lazaro's residents, design could potentially create spaces that reflect and honor the identities of the people who live there.

This could include incorporating culturally significant colors, patterns, or symbols within the design or even designing layouts that align with cultural preferences for space usage and communal areas. Respecting cultural identities within the design reinforces a sense of community and belonging, enhancing residents' connection to their living space and, by extension, their overall well-being. Complementing Young's focus on cultural sensitivity, Maha Ibrahim (2019) in The Integration of Interior Design and Neuroscience: Towards a Methodology to Apply Neuroscience in Interior Spaces explores how neuroscience can inform design decisions to enhance cognitive and emotional health.

Ibrahim's research highlights that elements such as light, acoustics, and spatial configurations can positively impact cognitive function by up to 15% and reduce stress. These insights suggest that scientifically-informed design choices can lead to measurable improvements in mental health and cognitive well-being. For mobile home communities like San Lazaro, where residents often live in dense and over stimulating environments, applying neuroscience-informed design principles could alleviate some of the cognitive and sensory stressors they encounter daily. By integrating neuroscience into the design process of mobile homes we are able to optimize elements such as lighting to promote a natural circadian rhythm, acoustics to minimize disruptive noise, and spatial arrangements to reduce visual clutter and enhance spatial orientation. These adjustments not only make the living environment more comfortable but also support cognitive and emotional health. The use of neuroscience-informed design principles aligns with the commitment to creating spaces that are not only aesthetically pleasing but also scientifically grounded in promoting residents' well-being. In combination with culturally competent design, these neuroscience based improvements ensure that the living spaces in San Lazaro could potentially be both personally meaningful and supportive of residents' mental health, addressing the multifaceted needs of a diverse and often underserved community.

4
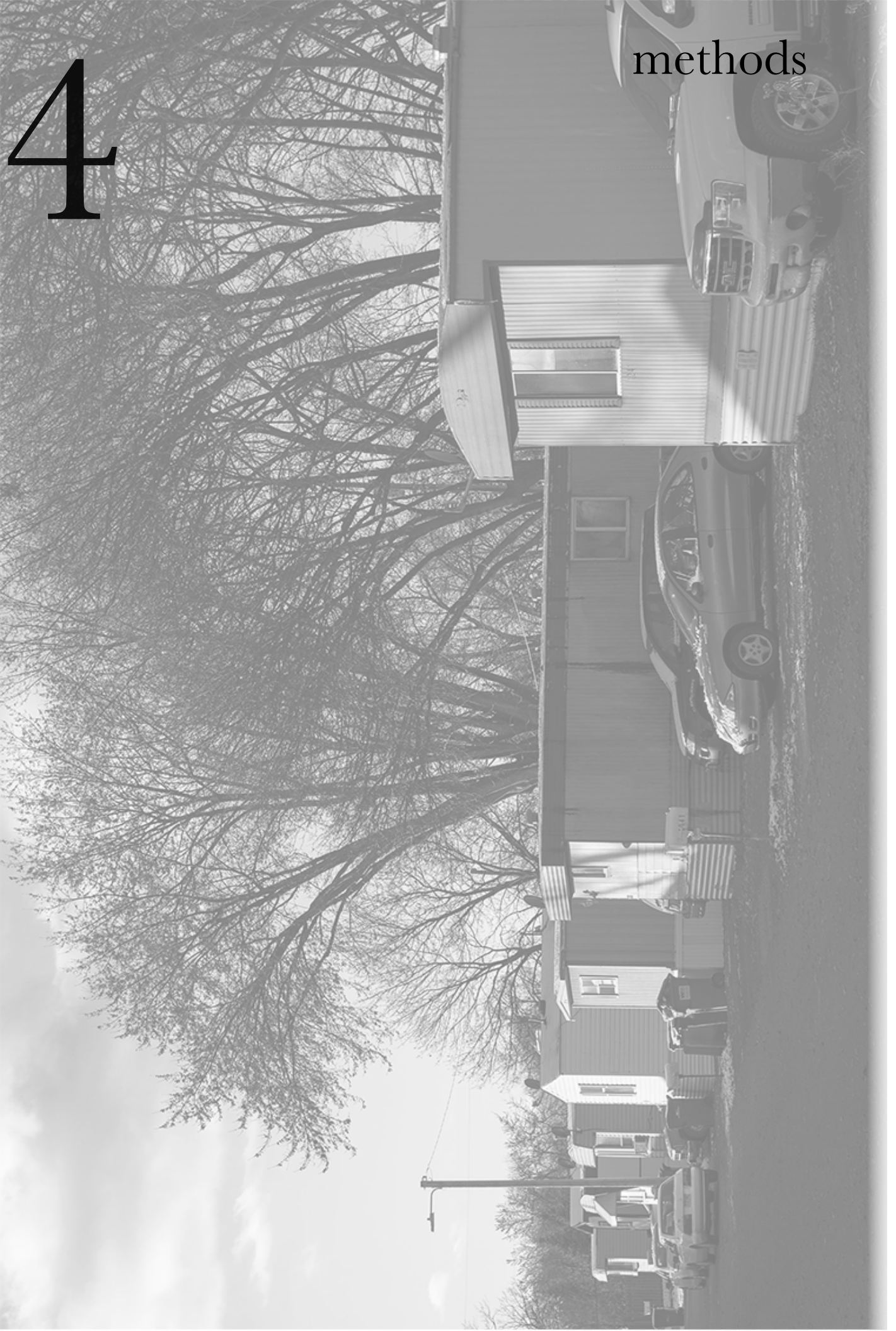
4. METHODS

In my project, I investigate how the spatial arrangements and interior design of mobile homes influence the quality of life, social interactions, and health of Latinx communities living in the San Lazaro Mobile Home Park in Boulder, Colorado. This study focuses on both the physical and social impacts of these spaces, aiming to identify how design choices might perpetuate systemic disadvantages or hinder equitable living conditions.

The primary research subjects for my study are both human and environmental. On the human side, I am engaging directly with residents of San Lazaro Mobile Home Park. particularly Latinx individuals and families who face unique challenges due to language, income, and accessibility barriers.

By interviewing a diverse group of residents, including multi generational households, single residents, and families with young children, I hope to capture a broad range of experiences and perspectives. The environmental subjects of my research include the mobile homes themselves, specifically their interior layouts, room sizes, and overall design. I am also studying the communal spaces within the mobile home park, such as shared facilities, recreational areas, and parking layouts.

By examining these physical environments alongside residents' insights, I can better understand the intersection between built space and social factors. For instance, I pay attention to aspects such as room dimensions, storage options, light access, and ventilation, which can impact mental health, physical well being and social relationships within a household. For example, the 3 foot wide hallway is not only narrow but also potentially hazardous, as it limits movement and may not accommodate mobility aids like wheelchairs or walkers.
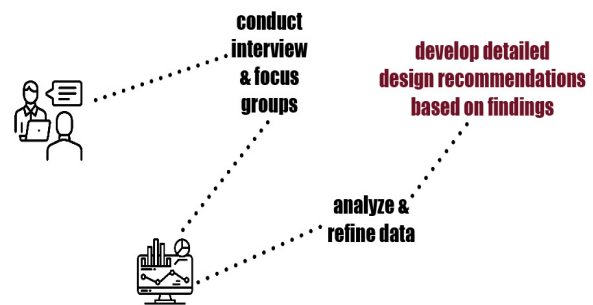

Figure 4.1 Chart representing research process

This poses significant challenges for elderly residents or individuals with disabilities, making their daily navigation within the home more difficult and potentially unsafe. The kitchen's limited size, at just 90 square feet, further illustrates how small design choices affect functionality. With such minimal space, there is likely insufficient room for proper counter space, storage for cooking utensils, or even room to move comfortably while preparing meals. This creates a strain on larger households, where cooking may require more space and resources, leading to inefficiencies and stress. Additionally, the restricted dimensions of a 110-square-foot bedroom and a 140-square-foot bedroom highlight the challenge of fitting essential furniture while maintaining a functional living space. These confined quarters offer little room for personal privacy or comfort, often leaving residents feeling cramped and overwhelmed. The overall size of just 600 square feet for the entire mobile home in this case underscores a larger issue, these homes are optimized for efficiency rather than overall livability, frequently placing affordability ahead of resident well-being. While compact layouts may work for individuals or small families, they present significant limitations for larger households, affecting daily routines, personal space, and overall quality of life.

These constraints exacerbate daily challenges, from limited storage and privacy to reduced ability to host visitors, reinforcing a cycle of systemic disadvantage tied to socioeconomic status.

My research process began with an initial phase of community engagement to build trust and establish rapport with San Lazaro residents. I introduced myself and my research goals through flyers distributed in both English and Spanish, and I attended a community meeting to discuss the project with residents who were interested in participating. This initial engagement was essential in creating an atmosphere of trust, allowing residents to feel comfortable sharing personal experiences about their homes and challenges. I conducted semi structured interviews with residents who volunteered to participate. These interviews were held in residents' homes, a setting that allowed participants to speak freely and comfortably about their experiences. During each interview, I asked questions related to their daily routines, the physical aspects of their homes that either support or hinder those routines, and how their home environments affect their family dynamics, health, and sense of security.

In addition to the interviews, I conducted detailed observations of the mobile home interiors. For each home, I observed room dimensions, hallway widths, and storage areas, noting any structural limitations that residents mentioned. Also noting environmental factors like lighting, insulation, and airflow, which could impact the comfort and health of the residents. These observations helped me visualize the lived realities that residents experience every day and provided concrete data to support their testimonies.

I have developed a survey for a broader set of residents within San Lazaro Mobile Home Park to gather quantitative data that complements the qualitative insights from interviews. The survey includes questions that help identify trends and shared experiences among residents, allowing me to generalize my findings across a larger sample.

The survey was administered through paper, ensuring accessibility for residents with varying preferences. This analysis revealed specific trends related to space constraints, privacy issues and environmental discomforts, such as poor insulation and ventilation.

This iterative process was instrumental in refining my insights and ensuring that the voices of San Lazaro residents were accurately represented. Re-engaging with the community strengthened the validity of my findings and ensured that my recommendations reflected their needs and aspirations. By combining interviews, observational studies, and survey data, I developed a comprehensive analysis of how mobile home design impacts the daily lives of marginalized communities in San Lazaro Mobile Home Park. This project not only sheds light on the complex housing challenges these residents face but also amplifies their experiences and aspirations, contributing to both the fields of interior design and social justice. Ultimately, I hope these findings will inspire future design practices and policies that prioritize equity, inclusivity, and well-being in underserved communities.

5

Anatomy of a Mobile Home

1. End rail
2. J-rail
3. Top starter panel
4. Exterior metal panel
5. Double hung (egress) window
6. Mobile home exterior door
7. Bottom starter panel
8. Wall sheathing
9. Carpeting
10. Carpet pad
11. Heat duct system
12. Furnace base
13. Running gear (wheels, tires, axles)
14. Bottom plate
15. Gusset
16. Water supply lines
17. Drain line/Sewer pipe
18. Fiberglass flooring insulation
19. Bottom barrier (blackboard, belly board, shepherd board, etc.)
20. Junior I-beam (main rail)
21. Outrigger
22. A-frame
23. Hitch & jack
24. Front cross member
25. Floor joists (16" on center)
26. Stringer
27. Vapor barrier
28. Floor underlayment
29. Bottom sill
30. Vinyl floor covering
31. Fiberglass insulation in exterior walls
32. 2" x 4" studs (16" on center)
33. Header
34. Top plate
35. Belt rails
36. Second layer of fiberglass roof insulation
37. Ceiling panels
38. Second roof vapor barrier
39. Truss rafter
40. Tie rail (cross rafter)
41. First roof vapor barrier
42. First layer of fiberglass roof insulation
43. Galvanized steel roof
44. Furnace roof stack
45. Electrical outlet box
46. Electrical wires

Illustrations represent typical mobile home construction and components which sometimes vary by manufacturer.
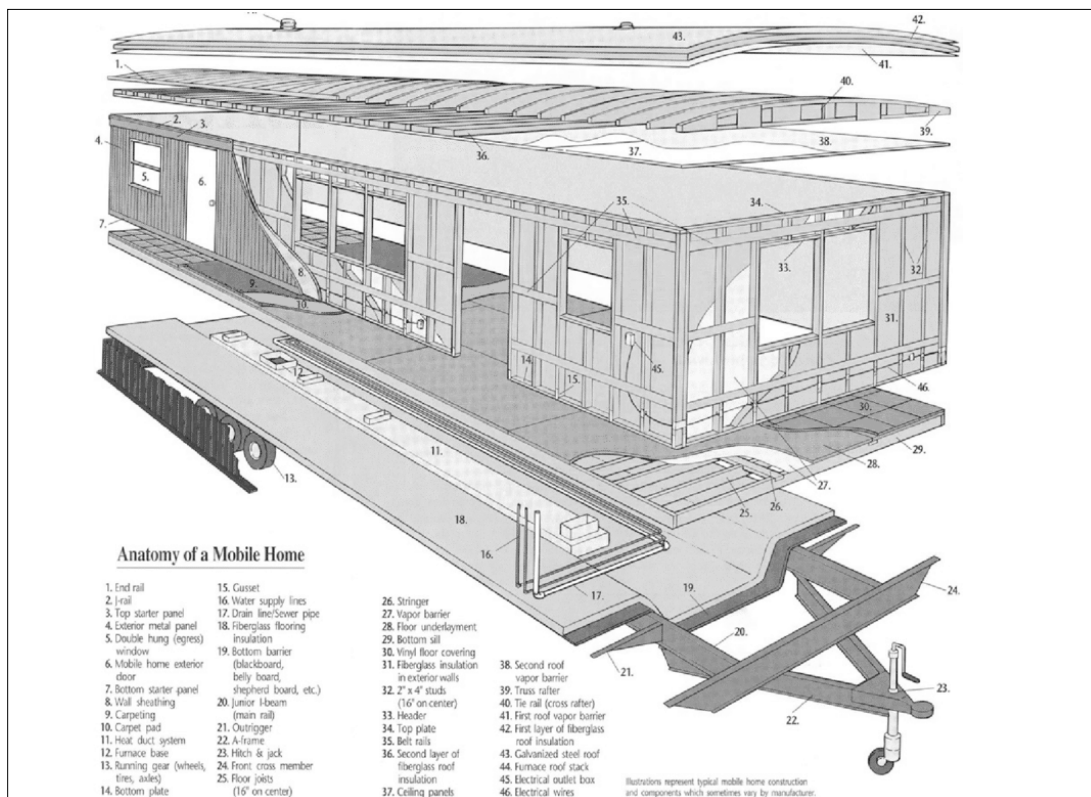
Figure 5.1 Anatomy of a Mobile Home

The Anatomy of a Mobile Home diagram illustrates how manufacturers prioritize cost and mobility over durability and functionality, creating housing that falls short of meeting the needs of residents. A central flaw in this design philosophy stems from the construction regulations set by the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Established in 1976 under the HUD Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards (commonly referred to as the HUD Code), these regulations set minimum construction, design, and safety standards for manufactured homes. However, while the HUD Code aims to provide basic protections, it often allows for lower standards than those outlined in the International Residential Code (IRC), which governs site built homes and prioritizes safety, durability, and long-term stability (HUD, 2021).

The foundation of a mobile home relies on a steel chassis and hitch system (13, 22, 23), which allows for transportability but compromises structural stability. Unlike permanent housing regulated under IRC Section R403 (foundations), mobile homes often shift and settle, causing issues such as uneven floors, structural gaps, and compromised safety. In communities like San Lazaro, these problems worsen as homes age, forcing residents to live in unsafe and uncomfortable conditions. This lack of stability perpetuates inequities and reinforces the cycle of systemic disadvantage. The floor system uses materials such as plywood subflooring (28), fiberglass insulation (18), and thin vinyl or carpet coverings (9, 30), failing short of IRC recommendations regarding thermal efficiency outlined in Section N1102 (Energy Efficiency).

COLD

San Lazaro Park Properties is located in Climate Zone 5. A COLD climate is defined as a region with between 5,400 and 9,000 heating degree days (65°F basis)

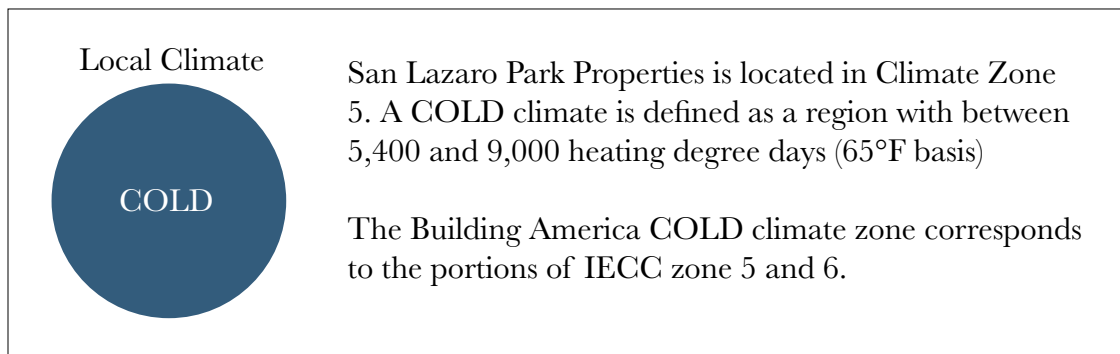The Building America COLD climate zone corresponds to the portions of IECC zone 5 and 6.

Figure 5.2 Climate Zone of San Lazaro Park Properties

These insufficient materials contribute to poor temperature regulation, leaving residents exposed to extreme temperatures and elevated energy costs, an issue particularly pressing in Climate Zone 5, where the San Lazaro community experiences harsh winters with 5,400 to 9,000 heating degrees annually. Residents often struggle to adapt to these constraints, which impact both physical and mental well being.

Similarly, mobile homes wall systems built with lightweight 2"x4" studs (26), exterior panels (4), and basic interior sheathing (31), fall short of the IRC's stringent R-value insulation requirements (Section N1102.1), which are designed to regulate indoor temperatures and enhance energy efficiency. These walls lack durability and proper insulation, failing to buffer sound effectively and reducing privacy, contributing to increased stress levels for occupants and their families. Thin insulation and poorly fitted materials exacerbate issues by allowing heat loss during the winter and heat gain in the summer, further straining residents' resources.

Ethnic studies research, such as that by Anzaldua (1987) in Borderlands/La Frontera, illustrates how physical environments can contribute to psychological stress among marginalized communities, with these design flaws intensifying feelings of isolation and marginalization, particularly among Latinx residents.

The roof system combines galvanized steel roofing (43), fiberglass insulation (41), and vapor barriers (38). While this layered structure offers basic weather protection, the shallow pitch of lightweight materials leaves roofs vulnerable to damage from wind, hail, and other severe weather events. Repairs often become unaffordable for residents, forcing them to live with leaks or structural deterioration that worsens over time. This reality underscored how mobile homes designs leave residents disproportionately affected by environmental challenges. Plumbing and electrical systems (16, 17, 19) integrated into the undercarriage, add another layer of difficulty. Their placement exposes them to weather, pests and wear, making routine maintenance more complex and costly.

Residents in San Lazaro report frequent breakdowns, which disrupt daily life and highlight inadequacies of this design approach. These design and construction elements not only constrain residents physically but also limit their ability to improve their living conditions. For example, narrow hallways and cramped kitchens reduce functionality, while poor insulation and inefficient layouts increase utility costs and discomfort.

The average size of mobile homes in San Lazaro Mobile Home Park varies, with typical dimensions around 14 feet in width and 66 feet in length, totaling approximately 924 square feet. This size is consistent with many single-wide mobile homes, which generally range from 600 to 1,300 square feet. In such layouts, room dimensions are often compact. For instance, a master bedroom might measure approximately 12 feet by 12 feet, while secondary bedrooms could be as small as 8 feet by 10 feet. Living rooms and kitchens are typically combined into an open area measuring around 12 feet by 20 feet.

These constrained dimensions can impact functionality, privacy, and comfort for residents. Limited space may lead to challenges in accommodating furniture, appliances, and personal belongings, potentially resulting in cluttered environments that hinder daily activities. Privacy is also a concern, as smaller bedrooms and thin walls can make it difficult for residents to have personal space without disturbances.

Comfort may be compromised due to restricted room sizes that limit movement and the ability to create distinct functional areas within the home.

When compared to industry standards for residential spaces, these mobile home room sizes are notably smaller. For example, the International Residential Code (IRC) suggests that habitable rooms should have a minimum area of 70 square feet and not be less than 7 feet in any horizontal dimension. While mobile homes often meet these minimum requirements, they fall short of the more generous dimensions found in traditional site-built homes, where master bedrooms may average 14 feet by 16 feet, and living rooms can be 16 feet by 20 feet or larger.

Single Wide Homes

Limited square footage poses challenges for full time residency, particularly for families or multi-generational households.

Narrow width (typically 14ft) leads to restricted interior layouts and limited storage
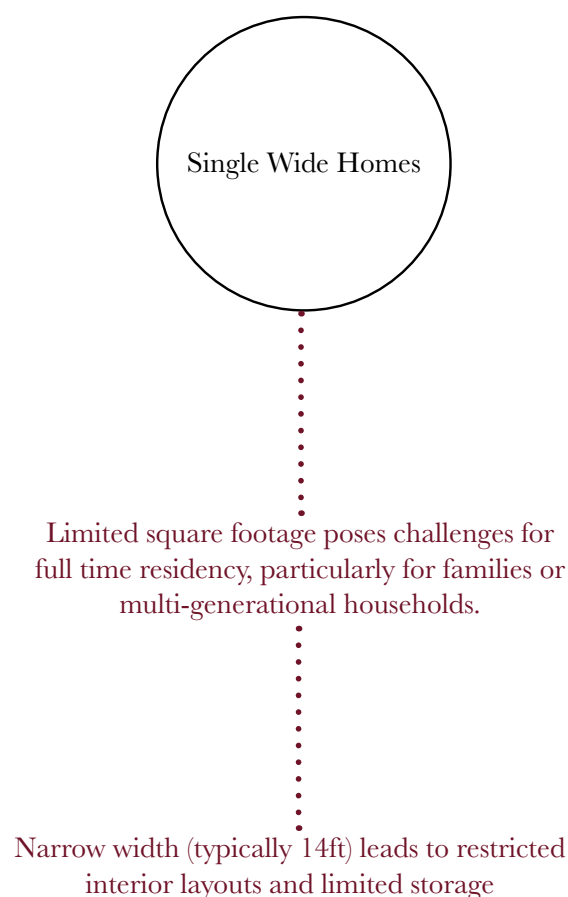
Figure 5.3 Chart for Single Wide Home Issues in San Lazaro Park

The classification of mobile homes into categories such as tiny homes (100-400 sq ft), park model homes (300-600 sq ft), single-wide homes (500-1200 sq ft), and double-wide homes (1000-2000 sq ft) illustrates the range of available housing sizes.

However, within low-income mobile home communities such as San Lazaro, the predominant home type is single-wide mobile homes, which offer limited square footage while attempting to accommodate full-time residency needs. These space constraints, when combined with outdated construction regulations and limited adaptability, reinforce structural vulnerabilities and long-term affordability concerns for residents.

home types

		takeaways
100-400 sq ft ○	tiny mobile homes	very compact
300-600 sq ft ○	park model mobile homes	slightly larger
500-1200 sq ft ○	single wide mobile homes	MOST COMMON
1000-2000 sq ft ○	double wide mobile homes	more spacious
2000-3000 sq ft ○	triple wide mobile homes	less common
2000-4000 sq ft ○	modular homes	pre fabricated
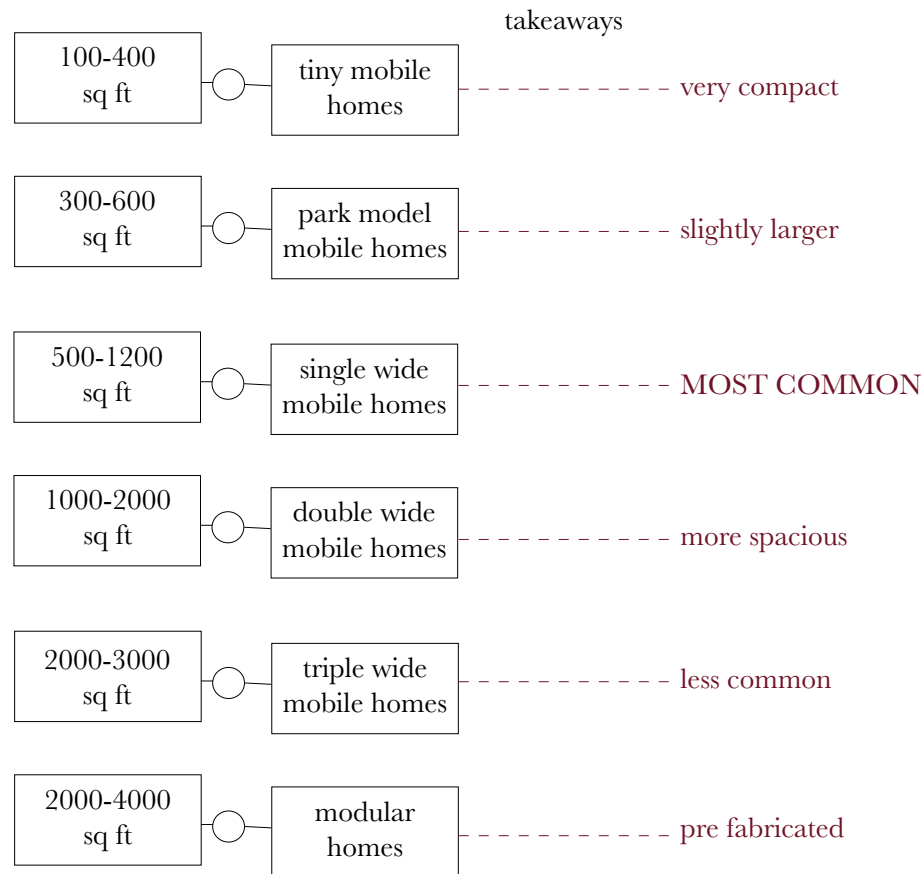
Figure 5.4 Home Types

SPECIFIC AREA OF THE MOBILE HOMES	LENGTH (feet)	WIDTH (feet)	AREA (square feet)
BEDROOM 1	11	10	110
BATHROOM	10	7	70
BEDROOM 2	14	10	140
HALLWAY	10	3	30
LIVING ROOM	16	10	160
KITCHEN	9	10	90
Total for Each Mobile Home	**6**	**10**	**600**

Figure 5.5 Table of Dimensions of a Mobile Home

The graphical data presented in the Table of dimensions of a Mobile Home highlights the physical limitations that mobile home residents often face, underscoring how constrained spaces can lead to tangible challenges. For example, the 3 foot wide hallway is not only narrow but also potentially hazardous, as it limits movement and may not accommodate mobility aids like wheelchairs or walkers. This poses significant challenges for elderly residents or individuals with disabilities, making their daily navigation within the home more difficult and potentially unsafe. The kitchen's limited size, at just 90 square feet, further illustrates how small design choices affect functionality. With such minimal space, there is likely insufficient room for proper counter space, storage for cooking utensils, or even room to move comfortably while preparing meals.

This creates a strain on larger households, where cooking may require more space and resources, leading to inefficiencies and stress. Additionally, rooms like Bedroom 1 (110 square feet) and Bedroom 2 (140 square feet) show limited dimensions that can barely accommodate essential furniture, let alone provide residents with enough personal space for privacy or comfort. Such tight quarters can lead to feelings of crowding, which impact mental health by fostering stress and a lack of personal autonomy. The cumulative total of just 600 square feet for the entire mobile home in this example illustrates the broader issue: these spaces are designed for efficiency rather than comfort, often prioritizing affordability over livability, The compact design might be suitable for individuals or smaller families, but for larger households, it significantly limits their quality of life.
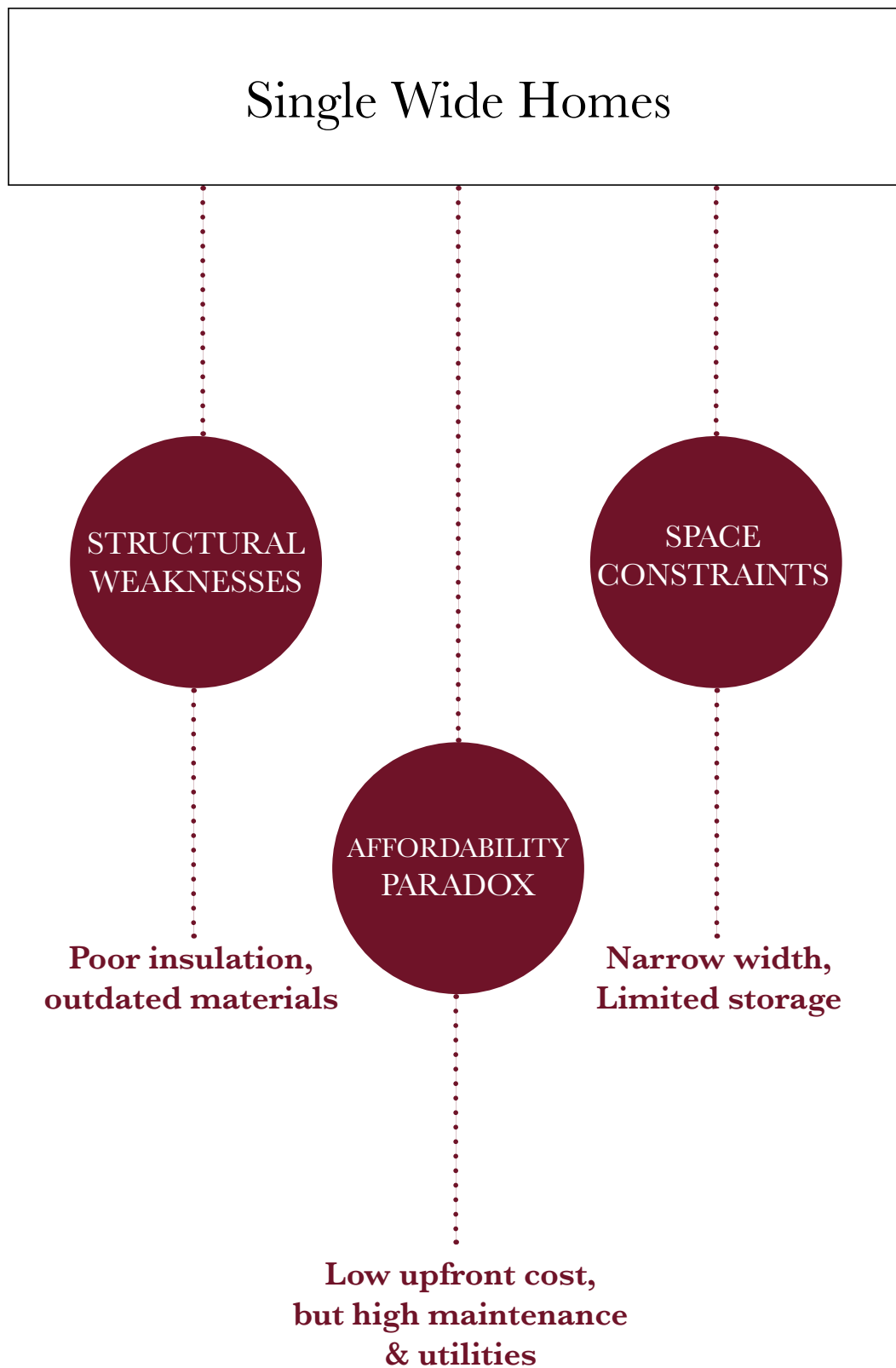
Single Wide Homes

STRUCTURAL WEAKNESSES

SPACE CONSTRAINTS

AFFORDABILITY PARADOX

Poor insulation, outdated materials

Narrow width, Limited storage

Low upfront cost, but high maintenance & utilities

Figure 5.6 Challenges of Single Wide Homes   30

Structural &
Material
Improvements

Energy Efficiency
& Sustainability
Measures

Potential
Evolutionary
Solutions

Spatial Redesign
& Modular
Adaptability

Policy & Housing
Regulation
Improvements
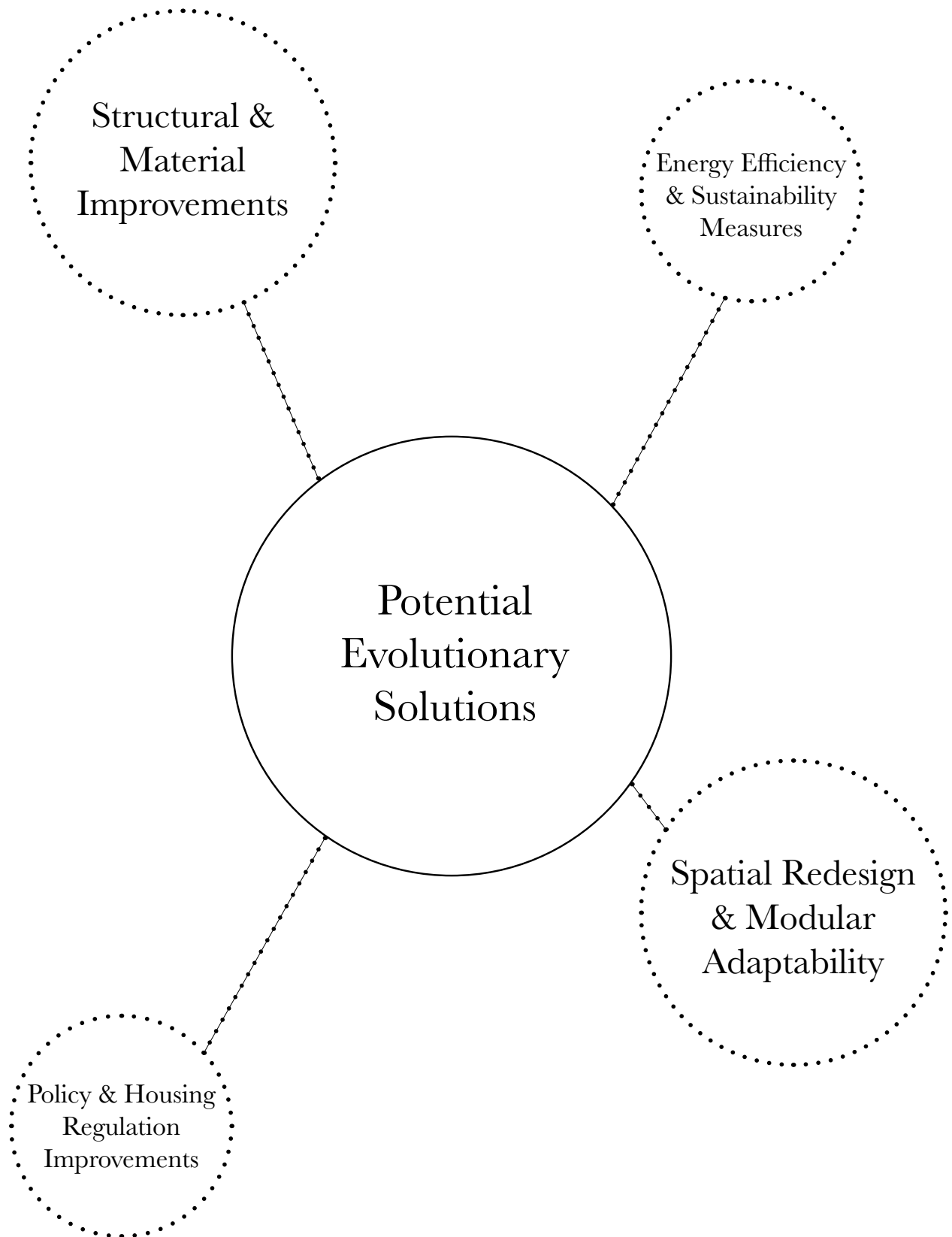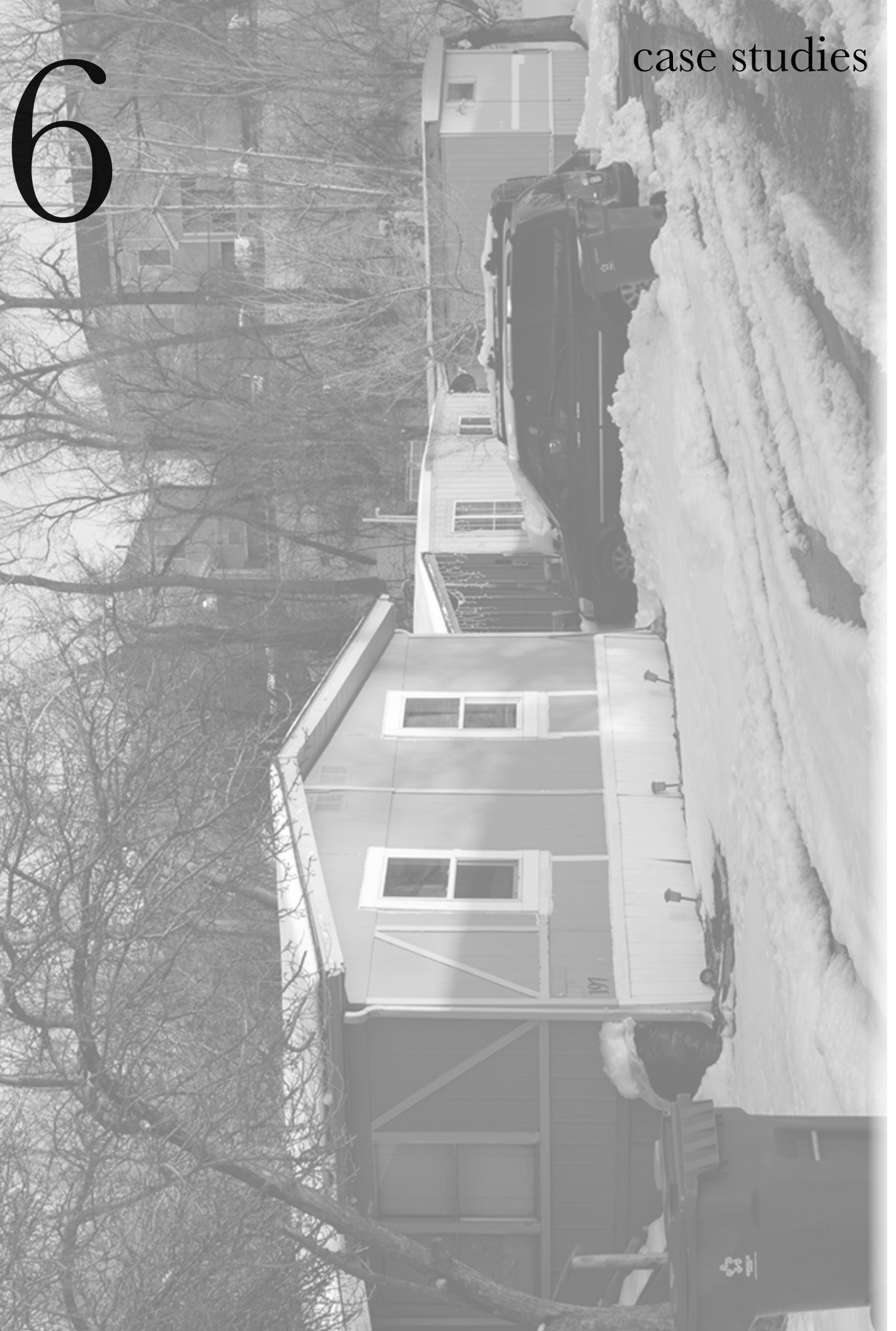
Figure 5.7 Diagram of Potential Solutions   31
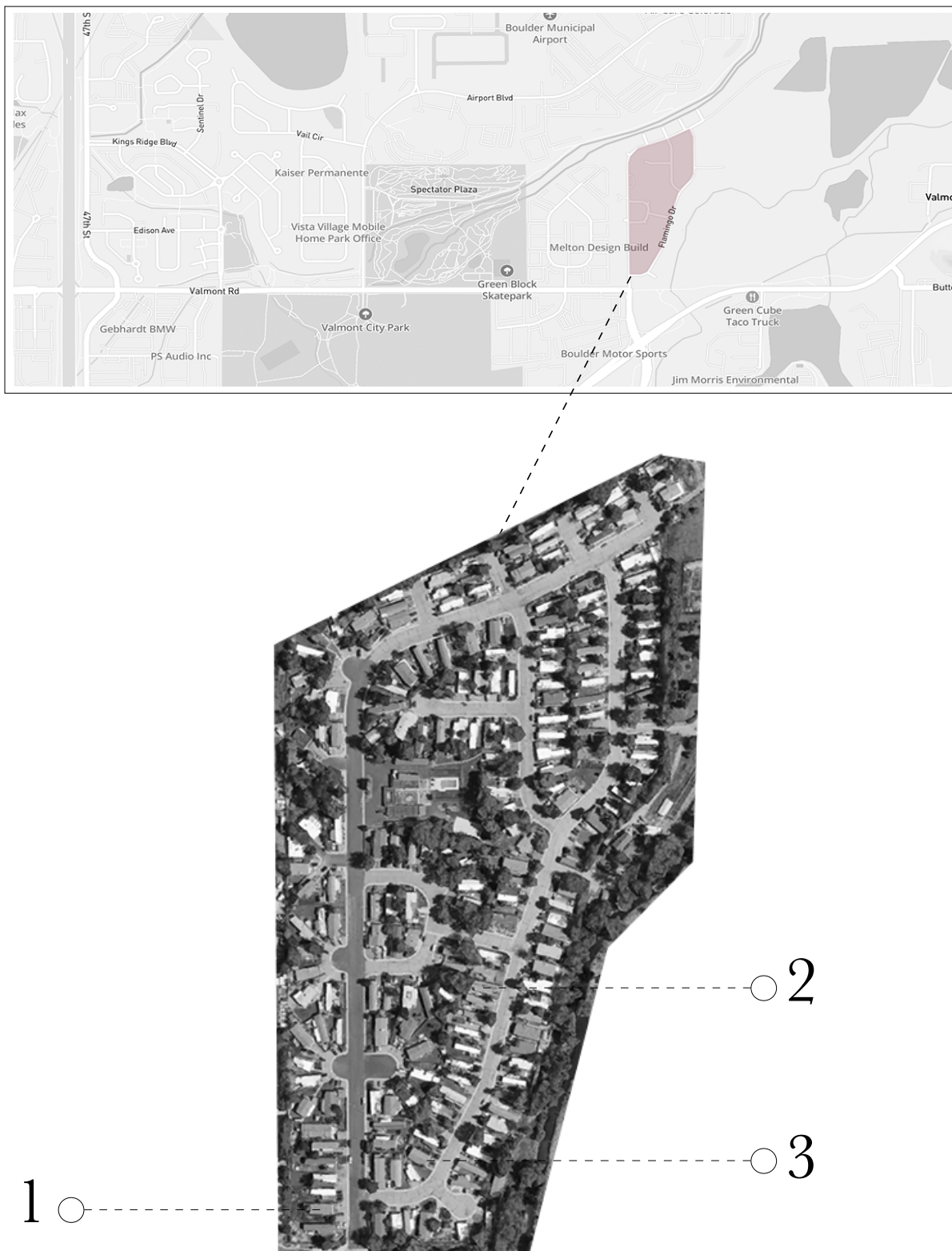
6

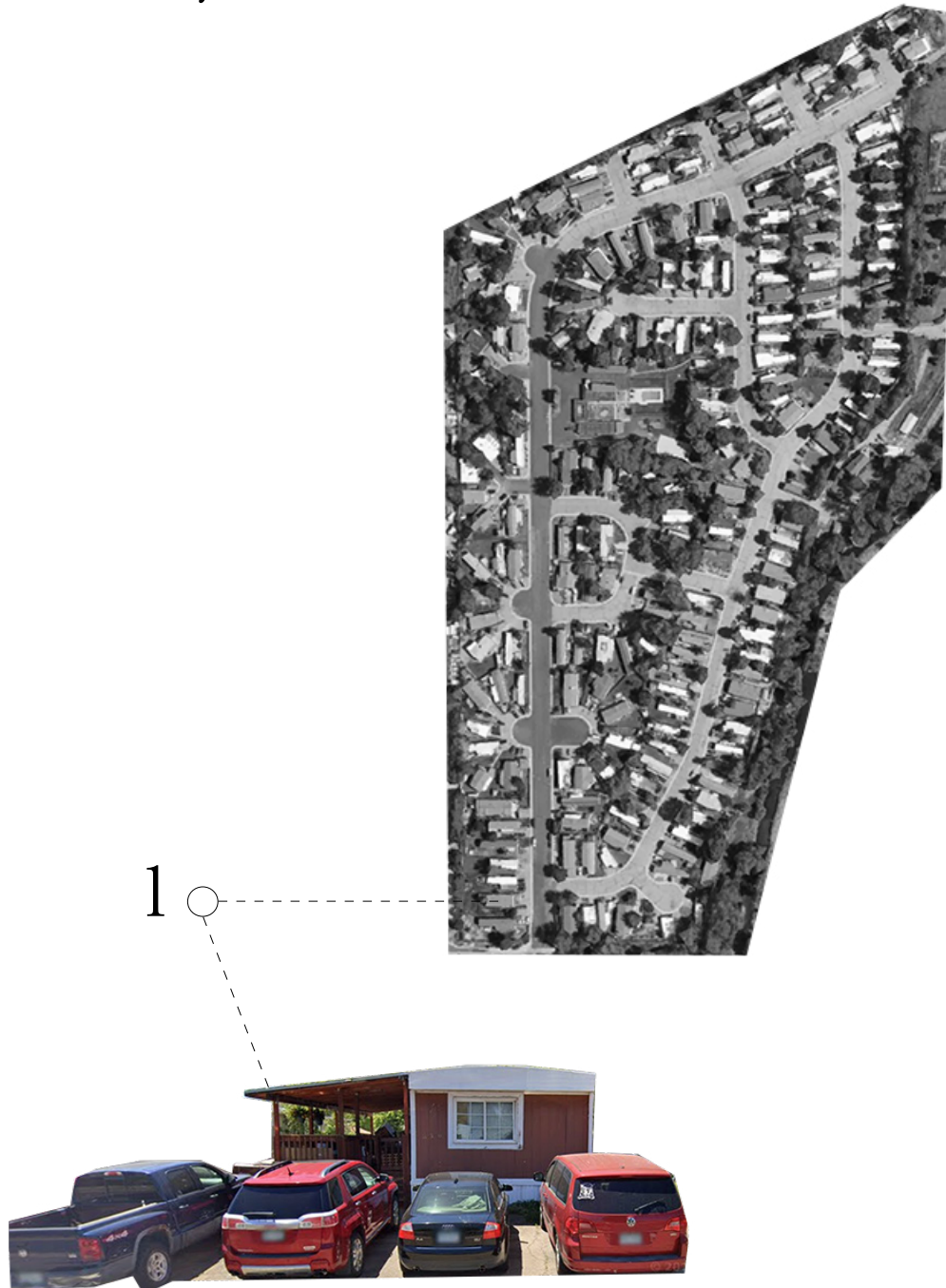Figure 6.1 Case Studies in San Lazaro

case study #1

1

Figure 6.2 Case Study #1 in San Lazaro   34

Bathroom

The bathroom is compact, featuring a pedestal sink, toilet, and a small shower area enclosed by a curtain. The wooden wall paneling adds a warm aesthetic, but the overall space is tight.

Constraints Observed:
Limited maneuverability – The narrow layout restricts movement, making it difficult for multiple users or accessibility modifications.

Lack of storage – Not many built-in cabinets or vanity, forcing residents to store essentials in small baskets or external shelving.

Outdated materials – The wooden paneling and small fixtures suggest aging infrastructure, potentially leading to moisture damage or limited ventilation.

Figure 6.3 Bathroom from Case Study #1 in San Lazaro

Bedroom

The bedroom has a full sized bed positioned near a sliding glass door, with a dresser and bookshelf in the background. The curtains provide privacy, while the glass doors open to an outdoor area, offering natural light. This is the main bedroom.

Constraints Observed:
Limited floor space – The bed takes up most of the available area, leaving little room for additional furniture or movement.

Storage limitations – The dresser and bookshelf provide some organization, but there is no built-in storage, which forces reliance on freestanding units.

Privacy concerns – Sliding glass doors provide light but reduce insulation and security, a common issue in mobile homes with thin wall structures and minimal soundproofing.

Figure 6.4 Bedroom from Case Study #1 in San Lazaro

Living Room

The living room is an open-concept space with a sectional sofa, a ceiling fan, and a partition dividing the area from another section of the home. The large windows allow for natural light, but the furniture arrangement suggests limited layout options.

Constraints Observed:
Low ceiling height – The mobile home's ceiling is relatively low compared to traditional housing, which can make the space feel smaller and restrict airflow.

Lack of defined space – The open floor plan combines multiple functions in one area, reducing dedicated space for entertainment, dining, or relaxation.

Clutter and workspace integration – The partition suggests an attempt to separate work or storage areas, but it encroaches on the main living space, leading to potential overcrowding.
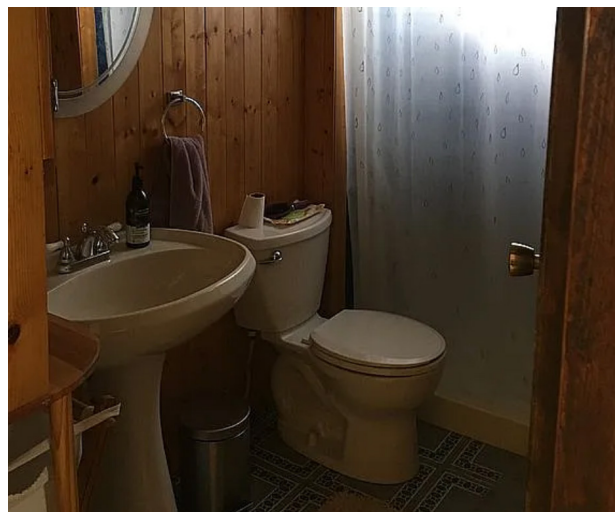

Figure 6.5 Living Room from Case Study #1 in San Lazaro

35

case study #2

2

Figure 6.6 Case Study #2 in San Lazaro 36

Bathroom

Modern bathroom with a walk-in shower, tiled walls, single vanity with wooden countertops, and wall-mounted shelves.

Constraints Observed:
Limited maneuverability – The narrow layout still restricts movement.

Storage limitations reduced – Shelving and counter space provide better organization.

Ventilation concerns – No visible exhaust fan or window.

Higher quality materials – Tile and wood finishes improve durability.

Figure 6.7 Bathroom from Case Study #2 in San Lazaro

Bedroom

A queen-sized bed, a dresser, a sliding barn-style closet door, and wall-mounted shelving.

Constraints Observed:
More open layout – Improved space compared to older mobile homesMore spacious than traditional mobile home bedrooms, but space remains limited for additional furniture or storage solutions.

Storage limitations persist – No built-in storage, requiring the use of dressers and shelves, which take up floor space.

Higher ceilings – Ceilings improve the sense of openness compared to older mobile homes, where ceilings are typically lower.

Limited sound insulation – Privacy concerns due to thin walls and minimal sound insulation, a common issue in mobile home construction.

Figure 6.8 Bedroom from Case Study #2 in San Lazaro

Kitchen/Living Room

An L-shaped kitchen layout with dark cabinetry, modern appliances, and a connected dining/living area.

Constraints Observed:
Better kitchen design – More functional than traditional galley-style kitchens.

Space-sharing issues – Kitchen and living area remain combined.

Upgraded flooring and lighting – Vinyl floors and recessed lighting improve functionality.

Limited counter space – No island or additional prep area for larger families.

Figure 6.9 Kitchen/Living Room from Case Study #2 in San Lazaro
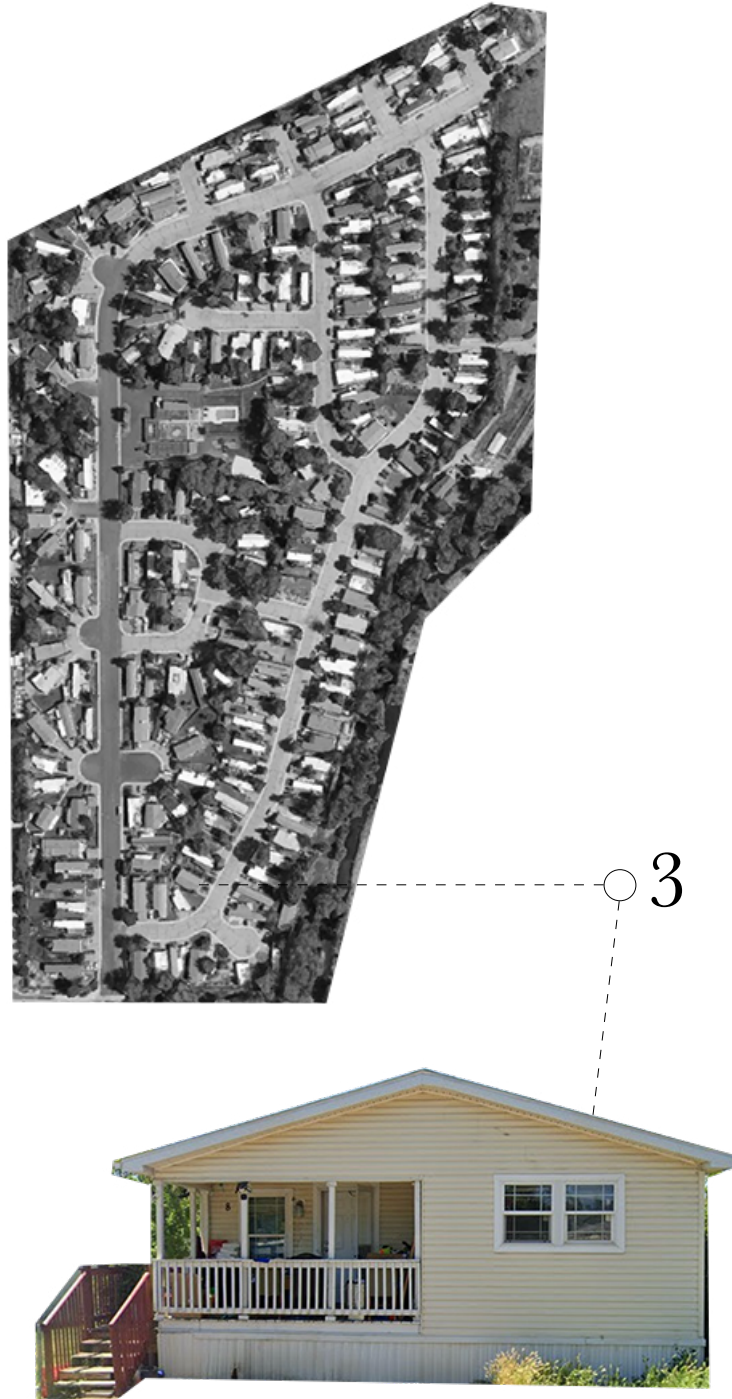
case study #3

3

Figure 6.10 Case Study #3 in San Lazaro   38

Bathroom

A small bathroom with a single vanity, a toilet, and a narrow window for natural light. The white walls and simple decor create a functional yet minimalistic design.

Constraints Observed:
Compact and restrictive layout – The small floor area limits movement, making it difficult for multiple users at once.

Insufficient storage space – The single vanity provides minimal counter space, making organization difficult.

Accessibility limitations – Narrow door clearance and lack of grab bars make the space less adaptable for individuals with mobility needs.

Limited ventilation and moisture control – The absence of an exhaust fan could lead to humidity buildup, potentially causing mold or structural deterioration

Figure 6.11 Bathroom from Case Study #3 in San Lazaro

Bedroom

A moderate-sized bedroom featuring a full-size bed, a dresser, and a small vanity area. The closet space is partially visible in the corner, while the neutral walls contribute to a simple aesthetic.

Constraints Observed:
Low ceiling height – The ceiling is lower than in site-built homes, making the space feel enclosed and restricting airflow.

Limited built-in storage – No built-in shelving or closet organizers, requiring freestanding furniture that reduces available living space.

Lack of privacy and noise insulation – Thin walls contribute to sound leakage, reducing privacy between rooms.

Minimal natural lighting – Only a single window, forcing reliance on artificial lighting and affecting energy efficiency.

Figure 6.12 Bedroom from Case Study #3 in San Lazaro

Living Room

A cozy living space with a sectional couch, wooden furniture, a ceiling fan, and large windows. The room is decorated with personal items and soft furnishings, creating a warm atmosphere.

Constraints Observed:
Blended living and entry areas – The open-concept layout lacks clear distinctions between the entrance and main living area, making it difficult to define functional zones.

Low ceiling and air circulation limitations – The ceiling remains relatively low, affecting airflow and the feeling of openness.

Limited furniture arrangement flexibility – The size and layout of the room restrict how furniture can be positioned, leaving fewer options for reorganizing the space.

Flooring durability concerns – The flooring material appears to be lightweight, making it more prone to wear, warping, or damage over time.

Figure 6.13 Living Room from Case Study #3 in San Lazaro

39

LIMITED SPACE

STORAGE LIMITATIONS

LOW CEILING

LIGHTING CONSTRAINTS

THIN WALLS

SMALL LAYOUT

RESTRICTED MOVEMENT

OPEN-CONCEPT CONSTRAINTS

FURNITURE PLACEMENT

MINIMAL COUNTER SPACE

NARROW DOOR CLEARANCE

MINIMAL PRIVACY

LACK OF INSULATION

AIR CIRCULATION ISSUES

LACK OF BUILT-IN STORAGE

SOUNDPROOFING ISSUES

VENTILATION CONCERNS

STRUCTURAL LIMITATIONS

DURABILITY CONCERNS

ACCESSIBILITY CHALLENGES

Figure 6.14 Diagram of Takeaways from Case Studies   40

LIGHTING CONSTRAINTS — — — — — —
1. Larger or additional windows
2. Skylights in mobile home designs
3. Incentives for energy-efficient lighting upgrades

LIMITED SPACE — — — — — —
1. Modular and multi-functional furniture
2. Built-in storage solutions

STORAGE LIMITATIONS — — — — — —
1. Vertical storage integration
2. Mobile home zoning codes allowing small expansions

LOW CEILINGS — — — — — —
1. Revising HUD height restrictions
2. Adaptive design principles

THIN WALLS — — — — — —
1. Incentives for mobile homes retrofitting
2. HUD requiring better insulation and soundproofing

RESTRICTED MOVEMENT — — — — — —
1. Universal Design standards for mobile homes
2. Accessibility focused modifications

LACK OF INSULATION — — — — — —
1. HUD energy efficiency mandates
2. Federal and state weatherization assistance programs

MINIMAL COUNTER SPACE — — — — — —
1. Expandable counter solutions
2. Revised floor plan optimization

STRUCTURAL LIMITATIONS — — — — — —
1. Stronger HUD Code regulations
2. More durable materials mandates

DURABILITY CONCERNS — — — — — —
1. Encourage composite and weather resistant materials
2. Federal tax credits for upgrades

OPEN CONCEPT CONSTRAINTS — — — — — —
1. Sliding or folding partition walls
2. Layouts with adaptable room configurations

AIR CIRCULATION & VENTILATION ISSUES — — — — — —
1. Required ceiling fans and better ventilation in mobile homes
2. Community assistance program for retrofitting

Figure 6.15 Diagram of Potential Solutions from Takeaways

potential solutions

Problem	Solutions
Thin Walls	Incentives for mobile homes retrofitting HUD requiring better insulation and soundproofing
Restricted Movement	Universal Design standards for mobile homes Accessibility focused modifications
Lack of Insulation	HUD energy efficiency mandates Federal and state weatherization assistance programs
Minimal Counter Space	Expandable counter solutions Revised floor plan optimization

Figure 6.16 Diagram of Potential Solutions
from Takeaways

Stronger HUD Code regulations

More durable material mandates

- - - - - - - - - - - - -

| Structural Limitations |

Encourage composite and weather resistant materials

Federal tax credits for upgrades

- - - - - - - - - - - - -

| Durability Concerns |

Sliding or folding partition walls

Layouts with adaptable room configurations

- - - - - - - - - - - - -

| Open Concept Constraints |

Required ceiling fans and better ventilation in mobile homes

Community assistance program for retroftting

- - - - - - - - - - - - -

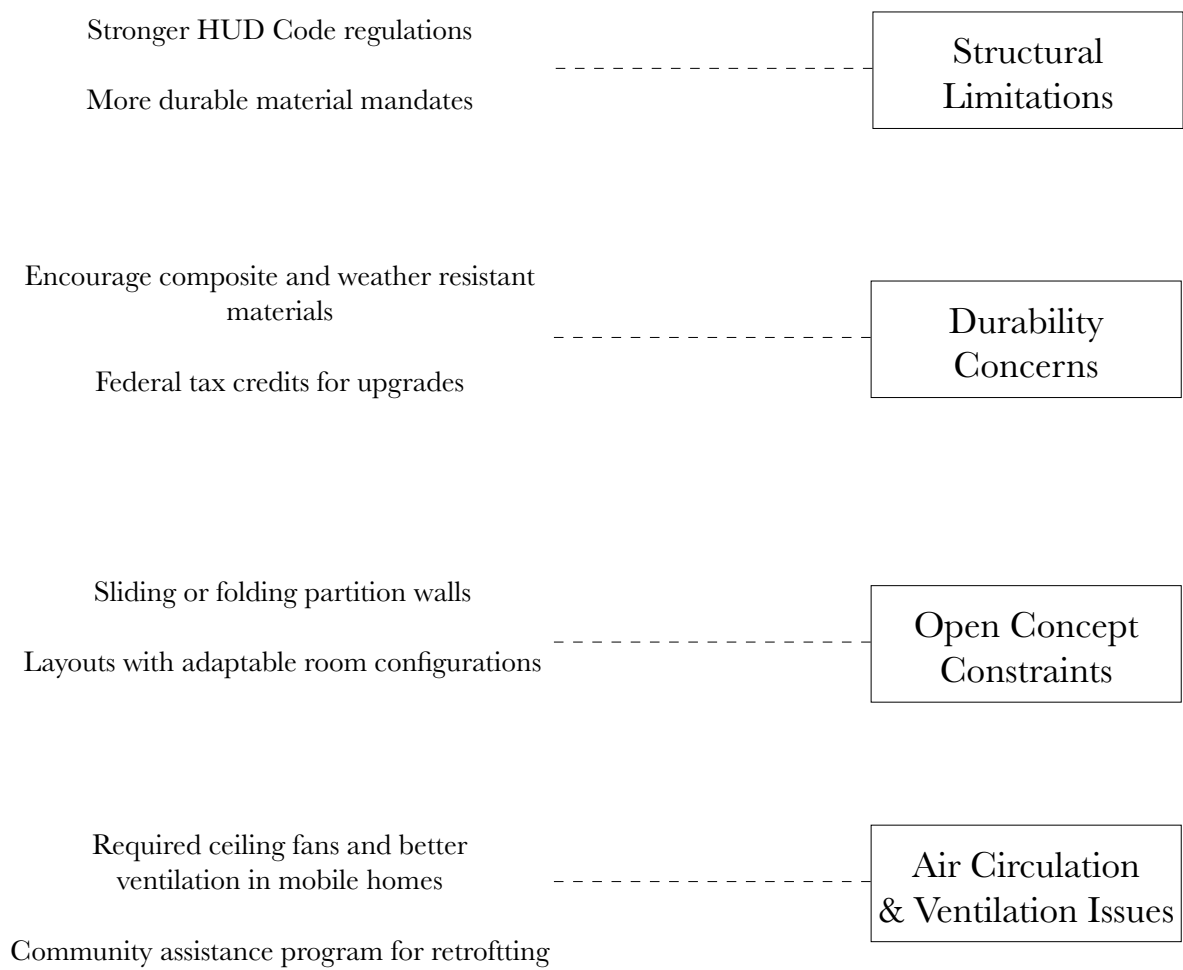| Air Circulation & Ventilation Issues |

Figure 6.17 Diagram of Potential Solutions from Takeaways

7. INTERVIEW RESULTS

Interview Structure and Categorization

The interviews conducted with the residents of San Lazaro Mobile Home Park provided extensive insight into the spatial, structural, and social challenges faced by those living in these environments.

1. Daily Experience & Family Routines – How the physical and social environment of mobile homes impacts residents' day-to-day lives.

2. Spatial Constraints & Accessibility – Issues related to room sizes, shared spaces, storage limitations, and general accessibility concerns.

3. Privacy & Household Dynamics – How mobile home layouts affect privacy, family interactions, and the ability to create personal space.

4. Structural & Environmental Challenges –
Problems with insulation, temperature regulation, noise control, and overall structural integrity.

5. Safety, Health, and Well-Being – Concerns regarding mold, ventilation, and other environmental risks that affect physical and mental health.

6. Potential Improvements & Redesign Considerations –
Resident perspectives on what changes would enhance their quality of life and make mobile homes more sustainable.

Daily Experience & Family Routines

The interviews revealed that mobile home residents navigate a daily routine defined by spatial compromises, overlapping schedules, and limited privacy. For many, the home is more than just a living space, it is a multi-functional environment where sleeping, working, studying, and caregiving all take place within close quarters. Residents described their homes as constantly in motion, with household members adjusting their schedules around shared spaces. Those living in multi-generational or extended family settings expressed frustration with the lack of room for individual routines.

"There's no such thing as alone time. Someone is always coming or going, cooking in the kitchen, using the bathroom, or needing space for something."
– Estefani

For those sleeping in non-designated sleeping spaces, such as the living room, the challenge is even greater. Brian, who sleeps in the common area of his home, described waking up several times a night due to noise, lights, and movement from family members passing through.

"It feels like I'm constantly waking up. Someone turns on the kitchen light early in the morning, or my mom is getting ready for work, and I can hear everything. It's like the house doesn't sleep." – Brian

45

Spatial Constraints & Accessibility

A significant barrier to comfort and livability in mobile homes is the rigid and compact layout. Many residents reported feeling restricted by the lack of adaptable spaces, which makes it difficult to adjust the home to changing needs.

Spatial issues include:

•Shared bedrooms limiting individual space –
Adult children frequently share rooms with siblings or parents due to lack of alternatives.

•Lack of designated storage –
Many items end up stacked or placed in areas not intended for storage.

•Tight hallways and small bathrooms –
Restricted movement, particularly for families with young children.

"There's barely enough space to move around in the bathroom, and forget about getting ready if someone else needs to use it. The counter space is tiny, and storage is non-existent." – Paola

For families with children, storage is a daily challenge. Dulce, described constantly reorganizing her small bedroom to accommodate both her belongings and her infant son's essentials.

"The crib takes up half the room, so everything else has to go in the closet or under the bed. There's just no space to put things where they belong." – Dulce

Privacy & Household Dynamics

Privacy was one of the most frequently cited issues across all interviews, especially for those in shared bedrooms or communal sleeping spaces. Many residents described a lack of physical and auditory separation, which led to difficulties in finding personal time, completing schoolwork, or simply unwinding at the end of the day.

"You hear every little sound. If someone is watching TV, you hear it through the walls. If someone is on the phone, you hear their entire conversation." – Javier

Residents also mentioned the emotional toll of constantly negotiating space with family members, particularly among siblings of different ages.

"I moved out because I couldn't keep sharing a room with my sister. It felt like we had no boundaries, and I needed my own space." – Jade

Structural & Environmental
Challenges

The design and construction quality of mobile homes was a central point of discussion in the interviews. Nearly all residents identified poor insulation, temperature regulation issues, and noise transfer as major drawbacks of mobile home living.
Temperature control was a persistent concern, with homes becoming extremely cold in the winter and unbearably hot in the summer. Several residents rely on space heaters and fans, which increase energy costs and fail to maintain a comfortable temperature throughout the home.

"In the summer, it's like an oven inside. No matter how many fans you have, it's still stuffy." – Charlene

Mold and ventilation issues were another common complaint, particularly in bathrooms and kitchens where moisture buildup occurs. Several residents reported recurring mold growth and difficulty maintaining air circulation.

Safety, Health, and Well-Being
Challenges

Many interviewees expressed concern about the long-term impact of their living conditions on both physical and mental well-being. Poor ventilation and mold exposure raised concerns about respiratory health, while persistent noise and overcrowding led to feelings of stress and exhaustion.

(Translated from Spanish)
"It's draining. You never feel fully rested because there's always something going on. The space just isn't built for long-term living." – Eduardo

For parents like Rocio and Paola, concern over the safety of their children was a primary issue. With limited space, it is difficult to create safe play areas, and many reported that their homes were not designed with young children in mind.

Potential Improvements & Redesign
Considerations

Despite the challenges, residents had
clear ideas for improvements that would
make mobile home living more functional:

1. Modular storage solutions –
Built-in storage and multi-purpose
furniture to reduce clutter.

2. Better insulation and ventilation –
To improve temperature control
and air quality.

3. Reconfigurable layouts –
More adaptable room designs
for growing families.

4. Soundproofing improvements –
To increase privacy between rooms.

5. Additional built-in shelving
and closet space –
To maximize vertical storage.

"If they designed these homes with more
insulation and better layouts, it would
make such a difference. It's not about
making them bigger, it's about making
them work better." – Martha

8

8. DISCUSSION

This project set out to explore how the design and spatial arrangements of mobile homes contribute to systemic disadvantages and racial stigmas for marginalized communities. Through a combination of case studies, resident interviews, spatial analyses, and policy research, the study has provided a multifaceted perspective on the lived experiences of mobile home residents and the broader structural issues affecting mobile home communities.

One of the most striking takeaways from the research was the recurrent themes of limited space, lack of privacy, poor insulation, and constrained adaptability within mobile homes. Residents from San Lazaro Mobile Home Park and other study locations consistently reported difficulties in organizing their living spaces, discomfort due to inadequate climate control, and a general feeling of instability due to the impermanence of their housing structures. These findings align with existing literature on housing inequality, reinforcing the connection between mobile home conditions and broader patterns of economic and social marginalization.

The project also examined the historical context of mobile home stigmatization, illustrating how discriminatory housing policies, zoning laws, and economic pressures have positioned mobile home parks as isolated, under-regulated, and vulnerable to exploitation. While mobile homes were originally introduced as a flexible, affordable housing alternative, they have increasingly become symbols of economic hardship rather than viable long-term housing solutions.

Through resident testimony and qualitative data collection, this research has revealed the daily realities of mobile home living, including the strategies families use to cope with spatial constraints, high energy costs, and structural limitations. While some residents have found ways to adapt, others face ongoing challenges that fundamentally affect their quality of life, financial security, and sense of community stability.

The data collected from this study suggests that mobile home residents are often caught between affordability and inadequate housing conditions. While mobile homes provide lower-cost alternatives to site-built housing, their design limitations and structural deficiencies create ongoing challenges that disproportionately affect low-income and minority families.

1. Spatial Constraints and Privacy Issues

-Many multi-generational families in mobile home parks struggle with overcrowding and lack of privacy due to limited bedroom space and open-concept living areas.

-Thin walls, lack of sound insulation, and shared spaces make it difficult for residents to have personal space or uninterrupted rest.

2. Poor Insulation and Energy Inefficiency

-Residents frequently reported high energy bills due to poor insulation, thin walls, and ineffective HVAC systems.

-Many older mobile homes fail to meet energy efficiency standards, leading to extreme discomfort in both summer and winter months.

3. Storage Limitations and Organizational Challenges

-Built-in storage solutions are minimal, forcing families to rely on freestanding furniture, which reduces available living space.

-Lack of modular design options makes it difficult for residents to rearrange or optimize their homes to fit changing family needs.

4. Structural Vulnerabilities and Safety Concerns

-Older mobile homes often suffer from structural deterioration, including sagging floors, water damage, and compromised roofing.

-Many residents expressed concerns about mold, ventilation issues, and exposure to environmental hazards, particularly in homes that have not been adequately maintained.

5. Legal and Regulatory Disadvantages

-Zoning laws and park ownership structures leave many residents vulnerable to eviction, rent increases, and unstable living conditions.

-HUD regulations provide some protections but remain limited in their ability to enforce quality control across older mobile home units.

These findings illustrate that the challenges faced by mobile home residents are not simply individual or financial burdens, they are structural and policy-driven barriers that require systemic solutions.

One of the most significant areas for potential improvement in mobile home communities lies in policy reform and regulatory advancements. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) oversees the Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards (commonly known as the HUD Code), which establishes baseline requirements for mobile home safety, durability, and design.

While the HUD Code has helped standardize manufacturing processes for mobile homes since 1976, this study suggests that several critical gaps remain in HUD's approach to mobile home regulations. The research findings indicate that some HUD guidelines could be revised or expanded to address the specific concerns raised by mobile home residents, particularly in the areas of insulation, storage, privacy, and long-term sustainability.

Potential HUD Policy Reform

1.Stronger Insulation and Energy Efficiency Standards

-HUD currently requires mobile homes to meet minimum insulation (R-value) standards, but these regulations have not kept pace with advances in energy-efficient housing.

-New policies could require improved insulation materials, double-pane windows, and better HVAC integration to reduce high energy costs for residents.

2.More Flexible and Modular Housing Design Requirements

-HUD could introduce guidelines for adaptable layouts that allow for customizable floor plans, built-in storage options, and partitioned spaces to improve privacy in shared households.

-Encouraging modular and expandable units could help mobile homes evolve with family needs rather than remain static and inflexible.

3. Stronger Park Resident Protections and Legal Frameworks

-Many mobile home residents do not own the land their homes sit on, leaving them vulnerable to predatory rent hikes and forced displacement.

-HUD could work with state and federal agencies to introduce stronger legal protections for mobile home park residents, ensuring more stability in leasing agreements.

4.Incentivizing Sustainable Materials and Green Retrofitting Programs

-Federal funding or tax incentives could be provided to manufacturers that prioritize sustainable materials in mobile home production.

-Retrofitting programs could assist low-income residents in upgrading their homes to meet modern safety and energy standards.

5.Mandating More Durable Construction Practices

-Older mobile homes often experience rapid deterioration due to substandard flooring, roofing, and wall materials.

-HUD could require stronger material durability tests and inspections before allowing mobile homes to be sold or placed in long-term residential use.

These changes would not only improve living conditions for mobile home residents but also redefine mobile homes as viable, long-term housing solutions rather than temporary or inferior alternatives.

9

conclusion

9. CONCLUSION

Reflections on the Study

This research has critically examined how spatial arrangements, design limitations, and the structural realities of mobile homes contribute to systemic disadvantages and reinforce racial stigmas for marginalized communities. Through an in-depth analysis of interviews, case studies, and spatial assessments, this project has revealed the profound impact that inadequate mobile home design has on residents' daily lives. Issues of limited adaptability, poor insulation, lack of privacy, and restrictive layouts emerged as recurring themes, highlighting the urgent need for more equitable and human-centered housing solutions.

The findings of this research directly reinforce the central research question:

How do spatial arrangements and the interior design of mobile homes contribute to systemic disadvantages and racial stigmas experienced by marginalized communities, and how could redesigning these spaces promote more equitable living conditions?

Through lived experiences, the study demonstrates that mobile home design is not just an issue of affordability but also a structural barrier that influences quality of life, mobility, and social perception.

Residents from San Lazaro Mobile Home Park and other case study locations consistently expressed frustration with cramped living conditions, lack of storage, inefficient climate control, and the challenge of maintaining a sense of privacy in overcrowded spaces. The precarious nature of mobile home ownership and the economic burdens placed on these communities have only exacerbated these issues, reinforcing cycles of financial and social instability.

A particularly notable aspect of this study is its intersectional approach to housing justice, exploring how race, class, and infrastructure intersect to shape the lived experiences of mobile home residents. The disproportionate number of Latinx and low-income families living in substandard mobile homes speaks to larger systemic issues, including historical housing discrimination, redlining, and economic marginalization. This research builds upon existing literature on racialized housing disparities, drawing clear connections between past discriminatory practices and present-day inequalities in mobile home communities.

Despite these challenges, residents have demonstrated resilience and adaptability, using creative storage solutions, rearranging their spaces, and advocating for improvements. However, these individual efforts are not enough to overcome the deeper systemic issues at play.

The question that emerges from this study is not merely how to make mobile homes more functional, but how to re-imagine them as sustainable, dignified, and livable spaces that do not perpetuate cycles of disadvantage.

Impact of This Study and Its Broader Implications

The impact of this research extends beyond just documenting the struggles of mobile home residents. It serves as a call to action for architects, urban planners, policymakers, and designers to rethink mobile home design from an equity-focused lens. The study challenges the long-standing assumption that mobile homes are an inherently inferior housing model and instead positions them as an opportunity for innovation in affordable housing.

1. Highlighting Spatial Inequities

-This study amplifies the voices of residents who experience firsthand the limitations of mobile home design and how it shapes their lives.

-Case studies of families navigating multi-generational living arrangements in cramped spaces illustrate the urgent need for more adaptable housing solutions.

2. Shifting the Narrative on Mobile Home Stigma

-The research challenges the perception that mobile homes are only temporary, substandard, or disposable housing options, instead arguing that with proper investment and design, they can be long-term, livable solutions.

-Historically, mobile homes were once seen as affordable alternatives for middle-class families but have since become a stigmatized form of low-income housing. This study calls for a reassessment of mobile home communities as valuable components of the housing landscape.

3. Bridging the Gap Between Design and Policy

-The findings reinforce the importance of housing policies that account for structural improvements, zoning protec-tions, and resident rights within mobile home parks.

-Many mobile home residents, especially those in land-lease communities, lack control over property improvements and face economic precarity due to rising lot rents.

-Advocating for tenant protections within mobile home communities is a crucial policy outcome of this study.

4. Advocating for Design Reform

-The study proposes that modular storage, better insulation, reconfigurable layouts, and improved soundproofing could significantly improve the well-being of mobile home residents.

-Sustainable and energy-efficient materials can be integrated into mobile home design to reduce long-term costs and improve habitability.

Ultimately, this research reaffirms the importance of housing as a social determinant of health, economic stability, and overall well-being. It underscores that the physical structure of a home is not just about shelter, it is about opportunity, dignity, and long-term security.

Looking Forward: The Next Steps in Mobile Home Research and Design

While this study provides a critical foundation for understanding the inequities of mobile home living, it also raises important questions about the future of mobile home design and policy reform. Addressing the structural and social issues identified in this research requires a forward-looking approach that integrates resident needs, sustainable practices, and economic feasibility.

Future Directions and Key Areas for Innovation

1. Flexible and Modular Housing Design

-How can future mobile home models incorporate adaptable layouts that grow and change with families?

-Can modular expansions or adjustable partitions be integrated to improve privacy and personal space?

2. Sustainable and Energy-Efficient Mobile Homes

-What low-cost, high-efficiency materials can be used to improve insulation and reduce energy costs?

-How can mobile homes be redesigned to be more climate-responsive, particularly in extreme heat or cold conditions?

3. Community-Led Housing Solutions

-How can resident-led design initiatives be incorporated into future housing policies?

-What role do cooperative housing models play in giving residents more control over their living conditions?

4. Policy and Advocacy for
Housing Equity

-What regulatory changes need to
happen to ensure better protections for
mobile home residents from predatory
landlords or park closures?

-How can government incentives
encourage the development of
higher-quality manufactured homes?

5. Reframing Mobile Home Perception
in Society

- How can architectural design, urban
planning, and media representation
work together to dismantle the stigma
surrounding mobile home parks?

-What would it take to reposition
mobile homes as an attractive and
respected housing alternative rather
than a symbol of economic hardship?

This research has laid the groundwork for a critical re-evaluation of mobile home design, policy, and social perception. The lived experiences shared by mobile home residents make it clear that these spaces need to evolve to meet the needs of modern, diverse households. By recognizing that mobile homes are not just financial assets but human-centered living environments, we can begin to design and advocate for solutions that prioritize dignity, adaptability, and long-term viability.

The path forward requires collaboration between designers, policymakers, and residents themselves. Through innovative design, policy reform, and community-driven advocacy, mobile homes have the potential to transform from overlooked spaces of disadvantage to models of sustainable and equitable housing.

This study does not mark an endpoint, but rather a starting point for deeper engagement, advocacy, and research. Looking forward, the question is not whether mobile homes can be improved, it is how we choose to prioritize them as a critical part of our housing landscape.

This research challenges us to think beyond immediate fixes and incremental improvements. It asks us to reimagine what housing justice looks like for mobile home residents and how design can be a tool for equity. By integrating resident voices, sustainable solutions, and bold policy changes, the future of mobile homes can be one of inclusion, dignity, and long-term sustainability.

10

10. APPENDIX

Interview Transcripts

Martha #3 (Translated from Spanish)

How would you describe your daily experience living in this mobile home?

"Every day is a struggle to find balance. The space is small, and with so many people in the house, it feels chaotic. I share a room with Estefani, and Brian sleeps in the living room, which I know is hard for him. There's always someone moving around, talking, cooking, there's never a moment of quiet. After a long shift at work, I just want to relax, but there's no real place to do that."

Are there any spaces in your home that you feel are particularly difficult to access or use?

"The kitchen is the worst. There's barely any counter space, and if more than two people are in there, it feels crowded. The bathroom is another issue. We have two bathrooms, but it still feels like we're constantly waiting in line, especially in the mornings before work and school."

How does the layout of your home impact your family's routines, especially in terms of privacy and personal space?

"Privacy doesn't exist here. Every room is shared. We hear everything each other says and does, and there's nowhere to go if someone wants to be alone. It's hardest for Brian since the living room is also his bedroom. When someone wakes up early for work, he wakes up too. If people stay up late, he can't sleep. Even for me, sharing a room with Estefani means I have no space of my own."

What improvements or changes would make your home more comfortable or accessible for you and your family?

"We need better storage, more privacy for Brian, and better insulation to make the home more comfortable in the summer and winter. If the kitchen had more space, it would help too."

Have you encountered any issues with temperature control, insulation, or noise within your home?

"Yes. The summers are unbearable, and in the winter, the house feels like a freezer. We use extra blankets and space heaters to stay warm. Noise is a huge issue too, there's no insulation, so we hear everything from room to room."

On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the comfort of your living space?

2/5

How often do you encounter issues with storage or organization due to limited space?

"Daily"

Do you feel that your home layout affects your family's privacy? (Yes/No) If Yes, please explain.

"Yes, There's no real privacy for anyone, especially Brian, since he sleeps in the living room."

How much would improvements to insulation or temperature control improve your quality of life?

5/5

Have you ever felt unsafe or unwell due to environmental factors like mold, noise, or poor ventilation in your home?

"Yes, we've had mold near the windows, and the ventilation is poor. The air feels stuffy and heavy, especially in the summer."

Estefani #3

How would you describe your daily experience living in this mobile home?

"It's really difficult to juggle work, school, and home life when there's nowhere quiet to study. I share a room with my mom, so I can't stay up late working without bothering her. I also feel bad using the kitchen table for school because it's a shared space."

Are there any spaces in your home that you feel are particularly difficult to access or use?

"I struggle to find a good study space. The kitchen table is the only option, but it's always being used. There's no real desk or designated quiet spot."

How does the layout of your home impact your family's routines, especially in terms of privacy and personal space?

"There's no way to separate personal time from shared space. Everyone hears everything, and you can never be alone."

What improvements or changes would make your home more comfortable or accessible for you and your family?

"More storage, a designated study area, and a way to give Brian some privacy."

Have you encountered any issues with temperature control, insulation, or noise within your home?

"Yes, the winters are cold, the summers are unbearable, and it's never quiet."

On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the comfort of your living space?

2/5

How often do you encounter issues with storage or organization due to limited space?

"Every day. There's not enough closet space, so I have to keep a lot of my things in bins under the bed or in shared areas. It feels cluttered no matter how much I try to organize."

Do you feel that your home layout affects your family's privacy? (Yes/No) If Yes, please explain.

"Yeah, I share a room with my mom, which means I don't have a space to myself at all. It's especially hard when I need to study or just have quiet time. Since Brian sleeps in the living room, he has zero privacy, and I know that affects him to."

How much would improvements to insulation or temperature control improve your quality of life?

"5/5. It would make a huge difference. In the summer, it's impossible to focus on homework because it's so hot, and in the winter, I wake up freezing. A more stable temperature would make the house feel like a home rather than just a place we survive in."

Have you ever felt unsafe or unwell due to environmental factors like mold, noise, or poor ventilation in your home?

"Yes. The house gets really stuffy in the summer, and sometimes it feels hard to breathe. I've also noticed mold building up around the windows during the winter, which makes me worried about air quality."

Brian #3

How would you describe your daily experience living in this mobile home?

"I feel like I don't have a home. My 'room' is the living room, so I wake up when the first person wakes up, and I go to sleep when the last person does. I have no storage, no privacy, and nowhere to go when I just want to relax."

Are there any spaces in your home that you feel are particularly difficult to access or use?

"Since I sleep in the living room, I don't really have access to anything. Everything is shared, and I don't have a space of my own."

How does the layout of your home impact your family's routines, especially in terms of privacy and personal space?

"I don't have personal space at all. Everyone walks through my 'room' constantly."

What improvements or changes would make your home more comfortable or accessible for you and your family?

"If I had even a small partitioned space, it would help. Also, better insulation so I'm not freezing or overheating all the time."

On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the comfort of your living space?

1/5

How often do you encounter issues with storage or organization due to limited space?

"All the time. Since I don't have a bedroom, I don't have a closet or drawers for my clothes. I keep everything in a few bins, and it feels messy no matter what. I hate feeling like my stuff is always out in the open."

Do you feel that your home layout affects your family's privacy? (Yes/No) If Yes, please explain.

"Yes. I have no privacy at all. The living room is my bedroom, but also the space where everyone hangs out, watches TV, and walks through. I never feel like I have a place of my own. Even when I try to sleep, I hear everything going on in the house."

How much would improvements to insulation or temperature control improve your quality of life?

"5/5. I sleep in the living room, so I feel the temperature changes the most. When it's cold, I sleep under extra blankets, and when it's hot, I barely sleep at all. If the house could hold heat in the winter and stay cooler in the summer, it would be a game changer."

Have you ever felt unsafe or unwell due to environmental factors like mold, noise, or poor ventilation in your home?

"Yes, mostly because of noise and poor ventilation. Since I sleep in the living room, I hear everything; people talking, moving, cooking. It makes it hard to rest. Also, when it gets really humid in the summer, the air feels thick, and it's uncomfortable to breathe."

Dulce #3

How would you describe your daily experience living in this mobile home?

"Taking care of a baby in this house is really hard. He wakes up crying, and I feel bad for waking everyone else up. There's no quiet space for him to sleep."

Are there any spaces in your home that you feel are particularly difficult to access or use?

"I don't have enough storage for baby supplies, and the lack of space makes everything feel disorganized."

How does the layout of your home impact your family's routines, especially in terms of privacy and personal space?

"Even though I have my own room, I still hear everything, and they hear everything from my room. Privacy is limited."

What improvements or changes would make your home more comfortable or accessible for you and your family?

"More storage, better insulation, and something to help with soundproofing so my baby doesn't disturb everyone."

On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the comfort of your living space?

2/5

How often do you encounter issues with storage or organization due to limited space?

"Every single day. Having a baby means needing a lot of things; diapers, clothes, bottles, a crib. But there's barely enough space for me, let alone everything he needs. I have to keep some of his stuff in other parts of the house, which is frustrating."

Do you feel that your home layout affects your family's privacy? (Yes/No) If Yes, please explain.

"Yes, Even though I have my own room, I can still hear everything in the rest of the house, and they can hear everything from my room. When my baby wakes up crying at night, I know it disturbs everyone. I also don't feel like I have a real sense of personal space because we're all so close together."

How much would improvements to insulation or temperature control improve your quality of life?

"5/5 – My baby's comfort is my biggest concern. If the temperature in the house was better controlled, it would help him sleep more soundly and keep him from getting too cold or too hot. Right now, I'm constantly worried about how the temperature is affecting him."

Have you ever felt unsafe or unwell due to environmental factors like mold, noise, or poor ventilation in your home?

"Yes. The air feels stale, especially in my room. I've also noticed mold around the windows, which worries me because I don't want my baby breathing that in. The noise is also a huge issue, whenever my baby is trying to sleep, I have to deal with sounds from the rest of the house, and it makes it hard for him to stay asleep."

Jade #1

How would you describe your daily experience living in this mobile home?

"Growing up here was tough. Sharing a room with Charlene meant I never had personal space, and the single bathroom was always an issue in the mornings. Now that I've moved out, I feel less cramped, but I still visit all the time, and the space still feels tight when we're all home."

Are there any spaces in your home that you feel are particularly difficult to access or use?

"The bathroom, definitely. In a house of five people, having one bathroom meant a lot of waiting and rushing. Also, the kitchen is small, and when more than one person is in there, it becomes difficult to cook."

How does the layout of your home impact your family's routines, especially in terms of privacy and personal space?

"Privacy was always an issue when I lived here. Sharing a room meant I couldn't study or have time alone, and even now, when I visit, the walls are so thin that I can hear everything."

What improvements or changes would make your home more comfortable or accessible for you and your family?

"A second bathroom would make a huge difference, and more storage options so that things don't feel cluttered. Insulation also needs improvement, it's either too hot or too cold in the house."

Have you encountered any issues with temperature control, insulation, or noise within your home?

"Yes, the house does not hold heat well, and in the summer, it feels like an oven. The noise is another big issue, thin walls make it impossible to have a quiet space."

On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the comfort of your living space?

2.5/5

How often do you encounter issues with storage or organization due to limited space?

"Almost every time I visit. Even when I lived here, it was a constant struggle to keep things organized."

Do you feel that your home layout affects your family's privacy? (Yes/No) If Yes, please explain.

"Yes, There's barely any personal space. Sharing rooms meant no privacy, and you can hear everything through the walls."

How much would improvements to insulation or temperature control improve your quality of life?

5/5

Have you ever felt unsafe or unwell due to environmental factors like mold, noise, or poor ventilation in your home?

"Yes, especially in the winter when condensation builds up, leading to mold in the corners of windows and walls."

Charlene #1

How would you describe your daily experience living in this mobile home?

"I've never had a space of my own. Jade and I shared a room for so long that I got used to it, but now that she's moved out, I feel like I have a little more room. Still, the house is small, and it feels like we're always in each other's way."

Are there any spaces in your home that you feel are particularly difficult to access or use?

"The bathroom, for sure. There are always people waiting to use it, and in the mornings, it's chaotic. Also, storage is a problem, and I don't really have space for my things."

How does the layout of your home impact your family's routines, especially in terms of privacy and personal space?

"There's no real privacy, but I've gotten used to it. My parents have their own room, and Javier does too, but I always had to share with Jade. Now that she's moved out, I have a little more space, but it still doesn't feel like I have my own personal area."

What improvements or changes would make your home more comfortable or accessible for you and your family?

"More storage, better organization in the kitchen, and a second bathroom would make life easier."

Have you encountered any issues with temperature control, insulation, or noise within your home?

"Yes. The walls do nothing to keep the house warm in the winter, and in the summer, it's unbearable. Noise is also a problem, I hear everything from my parents' and Javier's rooms."

On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the comfort of your living space?

3/5

How often do you encounter issues with storage or organization due to limited space?

"All the time, especially in the closet and bathroom."

Do you feel that your home layout affects your family's privacy? (Yes/No) If Yes, please explain.

"Yes. the house is too small for five people. Even though I have my own room now, I still don't feel like I have privacy because the walls are thin."

How much would improvements to insulation or temperature control improve your quality of life?

4/5

Have you ever felt unsafe or unwell due to environmental factors like mold, noise, or poor ventilation in your home?

"Yes, mostly because of noise and poor air circulation. The house feels stuffy in the summer, and mold sometimes builds up around the windows."

Javier #1

How would you describe your daily experience living in this mobile home?

"It's crowded, but I try to keep to myself in my room. Since I'm the only one with my own space, I know I have it better than my sisters did."

Are there any spaces in your home that you feel are particularly difficult to access or use?

The bathroom is the biggest issue. We all have to share one, and it causes a lot of problems in the morning when we're all getting ready for work or school."

How does the layout of your home impact your family's routines, especially in terms of privacy and personal space?

"I'm lucky to have my own room, but even then, I can still hear everything happening in the house because the walls are thin."

What improvements or changes would make your home more comfortable or accessible for you and your family?

"A second bathroom would help a lot. Also, insulation needs to be better because the house doesn't hold temperature well."

Have you encountered any issues with temperature control, insulation, or noise within your home?

"Yes, especially in the winter. The house gets really cold, and the heater barely helps. Noise is also an issue."

On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the comfort of your living space?

3.5/5

How often do you encounter issues with storage or organization due to limited space?

"Sometimes, but I have more storage than my sisters did."

Do you feel that your home layout affects your family's privacy? (Yes/No) If Yes, please explain.

"Yeah, even with my own room, I can hear everything. The walls don't provide real separation."

How much would improvements to insulation or temperature control improve your quality of life?

5/5

Have you ever felt unsafe or unwell due to environmental factors like mold, noise, or poor ventilation in your home?

"Yeah the ventilation is bad."

Rocio #1 (Translated from Spanish)

How would you describe your daily experience living in this mobile home?

"It's stressful because there's never enough space. I wake up early for work, and it feels like I have to maneuver around people just to get ready. The mornings are especially hard because we all need to use the same bathroom. The house is always full, and even though Jade moved out, she still visits a lot, so it still feels crowded."

Are there any spaces in your home that you feel are particularly difficult to access or use?

"The bathroom is always in demand, and the kitchen is too small when more than one person is in there. Storage is another issue, there's never enough space for everything, so things are always cluttered."

How does the layout of your home impact your family's routines, especially in terms of privacy and personal space?

"We've learned to adapt, but privacy is rare. The kids always had to share rooms, and even now, when one person needs quiet, it's nearly impossible to find. You can hear everything happening in the house because the walls are so thin."

What improvements or changes would make your home more comfortable or accessible for you and your family?

"A second bathroom would change everything. More storage, better insulation, and soundproofing would help a lot too."

Have you encountered any issues with temperature control, insulation, or noise within your home?

"Absolutely. The house doesn't keep heat in the winter, and in the summer, it's unbearably hot. The walls are thin, so we hear everything from one room to another."

On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the comfort of your living space?

2.5/5

How often do you encounter issues with storage or organization due to limited space?

"Every day. We're constantly trying to reorganize to make room for things."

Do you feel that your home layout affects your family's privacy? (Yes/No) If Yes, please explain.

"Yes, everyone hears everything. If someone gets up early or stays up late, it affects the whole house."

How much would improvements to insulation or temperature control improve your quality of life?

5/5

Have you ever felt unsafe or unwell due to environmental factors like mold, noise, or poor ventilation in your home?

"Yes. The air inside feels stuffy, and I've noticed mold around the windows when it gets really humid."

Eduardo #1 (Translated from Spanish)

How would you describe your daily experience living in this mobile home?

"It's tight, but we manage. The house has always felt too small for our family, but we do our best to work around it. Mornings are a hassle with everyone needing the bathroom, and the lack of storage makes it feel like we're always moving things around."

Are there any spaces in your home that you feel are particularly difficult to access or use?

"The bathroom is always occupied, and the kitchen gets crowded fast. There's also not enough space for everyone's things, so we have to get creative with storage."

How does the layout of your home impact your family's routines, especially in terms of privacy and personal space?

"There's no escaping the noise. Even when you're in your room, you can hear everything. The house isn't built for privacy."

What improvements or changes would make your home more comfortable or accessible for you and your family?

"A second bathroom, more storage, and thicker walls so we don't hear everything."

Have you encountered any issues with temperature control, insulation, or noise within your home?

"Yes. The house is too hot in the summer and too cold in the winter. Noise is also a problem because the walls are thin."

On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the comfort of your living space?

3/5

How often do you encounter issues with storage or organization due to limited space?

"Every day. There's never enough space for all of us."

Do you feel that your home layout affects your family's privacy? (Yes/No) If Yes, please explain.

"Yes, we're all too close together. Even in separate rooms, we hear everything"

How much would improvements to insulation or temperature control improve your quality of life?

5/5

Have you ever felt unsafe or unwell due to environmental factors like mold, noise, or poor ventilation in your home?

"Yes. We've seen mold around the windows, and the air inside always feels stale."

Paola #2

How would you describe your daily experience living in this mobile home?

"It's difficult because we don't have complete control over the space since we are renting. Having a 2-year-old means there's always a mess, and it's hard to keep things organized in such a small area. I try to make it work, but sometimes it feels like we're just trying to fit into someone else's home."

Are there any spaces in your home that you feel are particularly difficult to access or use?

"The bathroom is always a challenge because we share it with the owner of the trailer. Sometimes I have to wait longer than I'd like, especially when my son needs to use it. The kitchen also feels cramped, and I have to be mindful of when I cook so that I'm not in the way."

How does the layout of your home impact your family's routines, especially in terms of privacy and personal space?

"We don't have as much privacy as I'd like. Since we're renting, I feel like we always have to be considerate of the owner's space and routines. I wish we had more room just for our family, but I know that's not possible right now."

What improvements or changes would make your home more comfortable or accessible for you and your family?

"More storage and more privacy. If there were a better way to separate our space from the owner's space, it would feel more like home. Also, a second bathroom would make things easier, but that's not an option in this mobile home."

Have you encountered any issues with temperature control, insulation, or noise within your home?

"Yes, absolutely. In the summer, the house gets too hot, and in the winter, it's hard to keep warm. The insulation is poor, and I have to use extra blankets or fans depending on the season. The noise is also something we have to be mindful of, especially since my son sleeps early, but the owner of the home might still be awake."

On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the comfort of your living space?

2.5/5 – It's manageable, but it doesn't feel like our own home.

How often do you encounter issues with storage or organization due to limited space?

"Every day. There's just not enough storage for all of my son's things, and I always feel like I have to move things around to make space."

Do you feel that your home layout affects your family's privacy? (Yes/No) If Yes, please explain.

"Yes, we're constantly aware that we're renting from someone else, so we try to be extra careful with noise and space. It doesn't always feel like we have a place of our own."

How much would improvements to insulation or temperature control improve your quality of life?

 "5/5 – It would be a big difference, especially for my son. I worry about him being too cold in the winter or overheating in the summer."

Have you ever felt unsafe or unwell due to environmental factors like mold, noise, or poor ventilation in your home?

"Yes, there's been mold near the bathroom, and I worry about the air quality, especially for my child. The ventilation isn't great, and it sometimes feels stuffy inside."

Humberto #2 (Translated from Spanish)

How would you describe your daily experience living in this mobile home?

"It's not ideal, but we make it work. Since we're renting, I always feel like we have to be extra careful to respect the owner's space. There's not much room, and with a toddler, it can feel like there's not enough space to move around."

Are there any spaces in your home that you feel are particularly difficult to access or use?

"The bathroom is the biggest issue because we share it. The kitchen also feels tight when multiple people are trying to use it."

How does the layout of your home impact your family's routines, especially in terms of privacy and personal space?

"We don't have a lot of privacy. Since we rent from someone who lives with us, we have to be mindful of how much noise we make and how we use common areas. I wish we had a place that was just for our family."

What improvements or changes would make your home more comfortable or accessible for you and your family?

"A way to divide the space better, so it feels more like our own. Also, better insulation so that the house stays at a comfortable temperature."

Have you encountered any issues with temperature control, insulation, or noise within your home?

"Yes. The house gets too cold in the winter, and it's way too hot in the summer. The walls are thin, so we hear everything from the other rooms."

On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the comfort of your living space?

3/5

How often do you encounter issues with storage or organization due to limited space?

"Almost every day. There's not enough space for everything, and having a toddler means there are always toys and baby things everywhere."

Do you feel that your home layout affects your family's privacy? (Yes/No) If Yes, please explain.

"Yes. It's hard to feel like we have our own space when we share the home with someone else. Even though we have a bedroom, the common areas are shared, and that affects how we live day to day."

How much would improvements to insulation or temperature control improve your quality of life?

"5/5, It would help a lot. Right now, we're always adjusting with fans or heaters, and it's never really comfortable."

Have you ever felt unsafe or unwell due to environmental factors like mold, noise, or poor ventilation in your home?

"Yes, the ventilation isn't great, and I've noticed mold in the bathroom. It's not the worst, but I do worry about it sometimes."

11

bibliography

11. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Beamish, J. O., Goss, R. C., & Emmel, J. (2001). Manufactured housing: Resident satisfaction and mobility. Housing and Society.

Drehobl, A., & Ross, L. (2016). Lifting the high energy burden in America's largest cities: How energy efficiency can improve low-income and underserved communities. American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE). Retrieved from https://www.aceee.org/research-report/u1602

Denver Post. (2021, September 5). How Mobile Home University and RV Horizons impact communities. The Denver Post. https://www.denverpost.com/2021/09/05/mobile-home-university-rv-horizons-impact-communities-frank-rolfe-dave-reynolds/

Graham, Lindsay T. Gosling, Samuel D. Travis, Christopher K. (2015). The Psychology of Home Environments: A Call for Research on Residential Space. Perspectives on Psychological Science, May 2015. MEDLINE

Griffin, Waylon D. Sturdivant, Frederick D. (1973). Discrimination and Middle Class Minority Consumers. Journal of Marketing, July 1973. Complementary Index.

Gutierrez, Sonia. Sandoval, Julio. (2022) Colorado's Mobile Home Parks Are Becoming a Lucrative Business, But Not for Residents. Rocky Mountain PBS, 20 July 2022. https://www.rmpbs.org/

Hart, John Fraser. Rhodes Michelle J. Morgan, John T. (2002). The Unknown World of the Mobile Home. Creating the North American Landscape. EBook Collection (EBSCOhost).

Home Nation. Ten Best Small Mobile Homes. Home Nation. Retrieved from https://www.homenation.com

Ibrahim, Maha. (2019). The Integration of Interior Design and Neuroscience: Towards a Methodology to Apply Neuroscience in Interior Spaces. Journal of Architecture, Art & Humanistic Science, 2019. Directory of Open Access Journals.

Inspire Communities. (2021). Mobile Home Sizes and Dimensions: How Big Are They? Inspire Communities, 31 Aug. 2021. Retrieved from https://www.inspirecommunities.com

Miller, Steven. Evko, Beverly. (1985). An Ethnographic Study of the Influence of a Mobile Home Community on Suburban High School Students. Human Relations, July 1985. Business Source Complete.

MHVillage. Mobile Home Definitions: Key Terms to Know. MHVillage. https://www.mhvillage.com

National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). (2022). Characteristics of new single-family homes. https://www.nahb.org

NPR. (2016, December 27). When residents take ownership, a mobile home community thrives. NPR. https://www.npr.org/2016/12/27/503052538/when-residents-take-ownership-a-mobile-home-community-thrives

North Country Public Radio. (2023, October 26). Hochul signs three new laws to benefit people who live in manufactured homes. https://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/story/48689/20231026/hochul-signs-three-new-laws-to-benefit-people-who-live-in-manufactured-homes

Patel, Archna A. Wheeler, Philip H. Wi, Chung-Il. Derauf, Chris. (2020). Mobile Home Residence as a Risk Factor for Adverse Events among Children in a Mixed Rural Urban Community: A Case for Geospatial Analysis. Journal of Clinical & Translational Science, October 2020. Complementary Index.

Rahtz, Emmylou. Bell, Sarah L. Nurse, Alexander. Wheeler, Benedict W. Guell, Cornelia. Elliott, Lewis R. Thompson, Catharine Ward. McDougall, Craig W. Lovell, Rebecca. (2023). What is Known About What Works in Community Involved Decision Making Relating to Urban Green and Blue Spaces? A Realist Review Protocol. Systematic Reviews, 12. Article 169.

Rolfe, Steve. Garnham, Lisa. Godwin, Jon. Anderson Isobel. Seaman, Pete. Donaldson, Cam. (2020). Housing as a Social Determinant of Health and Wellbeing: Developing an Empirically-Informed Realist Theoretical Framework. BMC Public Health, 20 July 2020.

Tawil, Nour. Sztuka, Isabela Maria. Pohlmann, Kira. Sudimac, Sonja. Kuhn, Simone. (2021). The Living Space: Psychological Well-Being and Mental Health in Response to Interiors Presented in Virtual Reality. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. Lise Meitner Group for Environmental Neuroscience, Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin, Germany; Clinic and Polyclinic for Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, University Medical Center HamburgEppendorf, Hamburg, Germany.

Wholesale Manufactured Homes. New Mobile Home Floor Plans Search. Wholesale Manufactured Homes. Retrieved from https://www.wholesalemobilehomes.com

Young, Barbara. (2022). Building Cultural Competence in Interior Design: When Good Intentions Go Awry. International Journal of Designs for Learning.