

**Study of the Long-Term Viability of Calistoga
Mobilehome Parks as Affordable Housing**

Submitted to

City of Calistoga

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Calistoga initiated this study to assess the long-term viability of the mobilehome parks in the city, (Chateau Calistoga, Chateau Springs and Rancho Calistoga, which are restricted to residents aged 55 years and older, and Fair Way Manor, which is open occupancy). These parks, with 556 spaces, have been an important part of the local housing market, providing an affordable housing alternative for many residents, primarily seniors living at the three senior parks. In 1993, the City adopted the *Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO)* which sets forth the provisions and process for regulating rent in the four mobilehome parks. The Ordinance was adopted to limit unreasonable rent increases and to allow mobilehome park owners to receive a fair and reasonable rate of return. The City's assessment of the RSO is included in Appendix C of this report.

Because there has been limited information available about the residents of the mobilehome parks, this study focused on a survey of residents, gathering descriptive information about them. The survey documented the very low incomes of a significant portion of the residents and the fact that many spend a large percentage of their incomes on housing costs. Many residents have lived in their homes for 15 or more years. As is typical at many senior housing developments, residents have been aging in place. As time passes, some of these residents will likely choose to move to housing that meets their changing needs. Selected findings from the study include the following:

Senior Parks

- Forty-four percent of the seniors participating in the survey were 80 years old and above, and the average age was 76 years old.
- Twenty-three percent have lived in their homes for more than 15 years.
- Sixty percent of the households have very low or extremely low incomes, and 19 percent rely on Social Security benefits as their only source of income.
- For 42 percent of the households, their housing expenses exceed 30 percent of income.

Fair Way Manor

- Residents are younger (an average of 48.4 years old) than those at the senior parks.

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- There are 72 percent of the households in the very low or extremely low income category.
- Twenty-seven percent of the households spend more than 30 percent of income on housing

Strategies and recommendations from the study include the following:

- Set up a private rent subsidy program that could be used to assist homeowners unable to pay increases in space rent.
- Enlist local organizations and agencies to assist in fostering a better climate of cooperation and trust between homeowners and park owners.
- Work with affordable housing developers to develop or rehabilitate affordable housing in Calistoga, especially for seniors.
- Investigate the possibility of working with veterans' organizations and affordable housing developers to develop affordable rental housing for veterans, accessing new funding expected to be available soon. (Thirty percent of the households in the senior parks include a veteran.)
- Encourage seniors to apply for assistance programs for which they are eligible.

INTRODUCTION

The four mobilehome parks in Calistoga, with 556 spaces, have been serving as an important source of housing for seniors, particularly low-income seniors, as well as some families. Residents within Calistoga's mobilehome parks, unlike residents who may rent an apartment or other housing, may have two housing expenses: the expense of the unit or coach as well the space rent at the park. The expense of the unit is normally fixed. The resident either owns the unit outright or has a mortgage, typically a mortgage less than 15 years. However, space or lot rent is not fixed.

Increases in housing costs, medical costs and other living expenses can strain an individual's budget. If these financial stresses limit the homeowner's ability to pay their space rent, the homeowner may be forced to sell their home, remove their home from the mobilehome park or walk away, leaving it to the park owner. This is not the same as leaving an apartment when one can no longer afford to pay the rent. Removal of the home or coach (at a cost of \$8,000 to \$12,000) and finding a new mobilehome park for relocation or finding other housing is often impractical. It means that seniors in this position may lose their homes, and any value that they had, and end up without any financial backing to find a new place to live.¹ Currently, there are no dedicated senior housing options in Calistoga other than the mobilehome parks. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the affordability issues, viability of the mobilehome parks as affordable housing and to recommend strategies to the City.

PLANNING AND FUNDING FOR THE STUDY

This study was funded under a grant to the City of Calistoga from the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), Division of Community Affairs under the State of California's administration of the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program (CDBG Contract #12-8376).

Calistoga Affordable Housing (CAH)², recognizing a number of issues facing residents of the City's senior mobilehome parks, initiated this study by preparing a scope of work and developing the grant application for the City. The City submitted the grant application to HCD in April 2012. In November 2012, HUD selected the City's grant

¹ According to park managers, evictions for nonpayment of space rent are rare.

² CAH is a local nonprofit corporation that advocates for new low and moderate-income housing and operates a senior homeowner repair program in the city.

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application for funding and initiated the funding contract in July 2013. The City selected Vernazza Wolfe Associates, Inc. (VWA) as its subcontractor to carry out the study.

CAH continued to have an important role in the study, including providing background information, training interviewers, publicizing the study to mobilehome park residents, encouraging their participation in the survey, monitoring the interview completions and making substitutions as necessary. In addition to CAH, Pacific Union College (PUC) students were an important part of the project as interviewers. Dr. Monte Butler, director of the PUC Psychology and Social Work Department, conducted a special fall quarter class for the specific training of social work, psychology and nursing students involved in data gathering and interviewing. Dr. Butler participated in the interviewer training session and supervised the 20 students who conducted the interviews with residents.

CALISTOGA'S MOBILEHOME PARKS AND THEIR RESIDENTS

OVERVIEW

The City's four mobilehome parks are an important part of the City's housing supply. The mobile homes on the 556 spaces at the four mobile home parks account for approximately 24 percent of the 2,319 housing units in Calistoga³. Three of the parks, Rancho de Calistoga, Chateau Calistoga and Chateau Springs, are senior parks restricted to residents aged 55 years and older. The fourth park, Fair Way Manor, is open occupancy.

The City adopted its *Rent Stabilization Ordinance* (RSO) in 1993 to address mobilehome park issues, including rent stabilization. Rents can be increased only once every 12 months and there are limitations on the amount of increase. Since 1995, increases have included a \$50 adjustment at Rancho de Calistoga; a \$32 per month increase at Chateau Calistoga, followed by a \$27 per month increase; and a \$60 per month increase at Rancho de Calistoga. During the same period, there were requests for increases denied because 51 percent consent was not received for capital improvement upgrades or denied as part of arbitration. (See discussion of the RSO and a table summarizing resolution of requests for rent increases in a later section of the report and Appendix C.)

One of the most important components of this study is the survey of mobilehome park residents because there is little existing factual data available on individual residents at the parks and their ability to cope with increased space rents. This study focuses on full-time residents and excludes spaces that were vacant at the time of the survey or were occupied by residents who do not live there full time (109 or 19.7%), yielding 443 spaces to be included in the survey sample. There were 94 surveys completed. See Appendix A for more information about the sample and survey procedures. Data tables from the surveys are presented separately in Appendix B for residents of the senior parks and for Fair Way Manor residents. Highlights from the surveys follow.

DESCRIPTION OF SENIOR PARK RESIDENTS

Demographic

Household size – Sixty-five percent of the lots are occupied by one person.

³ California Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit, E-5 City/County, Population and Housing Estimates, 1/1/2013.

Gender of Respondent – Sixty-five percent of the respondents were women.

Age of Respondent – The largest age category was 80 years and above (44 percent). The average age was 76 years old.

Years Living in Home – Twenty-three percent have lived in their homes for more than 15 years, and an additional 24 percent have lived in their homes from 10 to 15 years.

Household Member Disabled - Forty percent reported that either they or a household member is disabled.

Veteran Status – Thirty percent of the homes are occupied by a veteran. An additional 22 percent are widows of veterans. This information may be useful because there are some special housing programs for which veterans qualify.

Income

Household Income Category – Twenty-nine percent of the households are in the extremely low income category. There are 31 percent in the very low category. Overall, 82% of respondents were classified as lower-income. The income ranges that define the income categories for each household size are shown in Table 1 below.

Social Security as Income Source – As expected, most of the residents receive Social Security benefits (88 percent). For 19 percent of the residents, Social Security benefits are their only income source.

Employment Status – Twenty-two percent of the residents reported some income from employment.

Savings or Available Assets for Emergency – Forty-three percent reported savings of \$5,000 or less. Thirty-two percent reported savings of more than \$25,000.

Percent of Income for Housing Expenses – While 37 percent spend 30 percent or less of income on housing expenses, 42 percent are spending more than 30 percent. This means that housing is currently considered unaffordable to 42 percent of the parks' households. Furthermore, 13 percent of these households are spending more than one-half of their incomes on housing.

Household Size	1	2	3	4	5	6
Extremely Low	\$18,100 or less	\$20,700 or less	\$23,300 or less	\$25,850 or less	\$27,950 or less	\$30,000 or less
Very low	\$18,101 - 30,150	\$20,701 - 34,450	\$23,301 - 38,750	\$25,851 - 43,050	\$26,951 - 46,500	\$30,001 - 49,950
Low	\$30,151 - 46,050	\$34,451 - 52,600	\$38,751 - 59,200	\$43,051 - 65,750	\$46,501 - 71,050	\$49,951 - 76,300
Median	\$46,051 - 60,250	\$52,601 - 68,900	\$59,201 - 77,500	\$65,751 - 86,100	\$71,051 - 93,000	\$76,301 - 99,900
Moderate	\$60,251 - 72,300	\$68,901 - 82,650	\$77,501 - 92,950	\$86,101 - 103,300	\$93,001 - 111,550	\$99,901 - 119,850
Above Moderate	More than \$72,300	More than \$82,650	More than \$92,950	More than \$103,300	More than \$111,550	More than \$119,850

Based on 2013 HUD Income Limits (December 11, 2013) that were in effect at the time of the study

Housing Characteristics

Year Home Built – More than half (52 percent) report that their homes were built before 1977. Older mobilehomes in general are less energy-efficient and are likely to need repairs.

Number of Bedrooms – Almost all (92 percent) of the homes have two bedrooms.

Number of Bathrooms – Almost all (92 percent) of the homes have two or more bathrooms. Only 8 percent have one bathroom.

Size of Home – While 19 percent did not know the size of their mobilehomes, 39 percent said that their homes were 1,301 to 1,600 square feet, and 22 percent indicated that their homes were somewhat smaller (1,101 to 1,300) square feet.

Substantial Repairs Needed – Most respondents (63 percent) reported that their homes do not need substantial repairs, while 37 percent reported that their homes need substantial repairs.

Other

Major Expenses During the Past Year – Twenty-eight percent said that they had other major expenses during the past year. Many reported major medical expenses.

Change in Spending Due to Rent Increases – Thirty-nine percent reported that rent increases had caused them to change their spending.

DESCRIPTION OF FAIR WAY MANOR RESIDENTS

Fair Way Manor residents differ from the residents in the senior parks. Household sizes are larger, with some households including children. The residents are younger and more of the residents are employed. Their homes are older, with more than one-half saying that their homes need substantial repairs. Only 27 percent reported spending more than 30 percent of their income for housing, reflecting the park's lower space rents. However, there are similarities with the senior park residents as well. Most families have extremely low or very low incomes and have less than \$5,000 in savings. As with the seniors, many are long-term residents. Highlights are summarized below.

Demographic

Household size – Thirty-six percent of the households have four persons. The average household size is 3.3 persons.

Gender of Respondent – Seventy-three percent of the respondents were female.

Age of Respondent – The average age of respondents is 48.4 years old. Thirty-six percent are below 40 years old, and 36 percent were 60 to 70 years old.

Years Living in Home – More than one-half of the households (54 percent) have lived in their homes for ten or more years. The average is 11 years.

Household Member Disabled – Twenty-seven percent reported that either they or a household member is disabled.

Veteran Status – One household (9 percent) includes a veteran.

Income

Household Income Category – Most of the households are in the extremely low or very low income categories (72%). (See Table 1 for information on income categories.)

Social Security as Income Source – Eighteen percent receive Social Security benefits. None of the households relies solely on this income source.

Employment Status – Thirty-six percent of the households reported income from employment.

Savings or Available Assets for Emergency – Most (82 percent) reported less than \$5,000 in savings.

Percent of Income for Housing Expenses – While 45 percent spend 30 percent or less of income on housing expenses, 27 percent are spending more than 40 percent.

Housing Characteristics

Year Home Built – Seventy-three percent report that their home was built before 1977.

Number of Bedrooms – Most of the homes (64 percent) have two bedrooms. However, 18 percent have only one bedroom. An additional 18 percent have three or four bedrooms.

Number of Bathrooms - Almost all of the homes have only one bathroom. Nine percent have two bathrooms.

Size of Home – While 64 percent did not know the size of their mobilehome, 18 percent said that their homes were 500 to 800 square feet and 9 percent said that they were less than 500 square feet. An additional 9 percent had somewhat larger homes (801 to 1,101 square feet).

Substantial Repairs Needed – More than one-half of the respondents (55 percent) reported that their homes need substantial repairs, while 45 percent reported that their homes do not need substantial repairs.

Other

Major Expenses During the Past Year – Eighteen percent said that they had other major expenses during the past year.

Change in Spending Due to Rent Increases – Twenty-seven percent reported that rent increases have caused them to change their spending.

IMPORTANT FACTORS TO CONSIDER

The discussion below highlights some factors that are important to consider regarding residents of the mobilehome parks and the future of the parks as an affordable housing resource.

RESIDENTS WITH VERY LOW INCOMES

A large percentage of households at the senior parks, as well as at Fair Way Manor, have extremely low incomes (30% AMI or below) or very low incomes (31 to 50% AMI). Table 2 below shows the income distribution of residents at the parks. The income distribution may be attributed to a larger percentage of single or widowed women in the senior parks and larger households at Fair Way Manor, which have higher income cut-offs for each income category. (The income limits for each income category are included in Table 1 above.)

Table 2: Household Income, Calistoga Mobilehome Parks

Household Income Category (1)	Senior Parks	Fair Way Manor
Extremely Low (30% AMI)	29%	45%
Very Low (50% AMI)	31%	27%
Low (80% AMI)	22%	9%
Median	4%	0%
Moderate (120%)	2%	0%
Above Moderate (Above 120% AMI)	5%	0%
Refused /missing	7%	18%
Total	100%	100%

(1) Based on 2013 HUD income limits for Napa County. AMI = Area Median Income.

HOUSING EXPENSES AS A PERCENTAGE OF INCOME

In addition to household income, housing burden, or housing expenses as a percentage of income, is an important measure of a household's ability to afford housing. The general standard is that spending 30 percent or less of income on housing related expenses is reasonable and allows income to be available to pay for other necessary expenses. Households with lower incomes often spend a higher percentage out of necessity.

As part of the survey, interviewers asked residents the amount of their household incomes as well as the amount of their monthly payment to the mobilehome park owner, which generally includes the amount for space rent as well as the resident's portion of utility expenses. This information was used to calculate monthly housing expenses. The survey also included a question asking the amount of personal property or license fee paid each year on the mobilehome. While this expense is a housing expense, it was not included in the analysis because many of the residents did not know the amount or provided inconsistent information. Adding this additional expense to the calculation would increase the percentage of income spent for housing expenses. Because less than 5 percent of the households reported that they had a mortgage, and only one-half provided the amount, this expense was not included in the housing expense calculation as well.

Based on the interviews, 37 percent of the residents at the senior parks spend no more than 30 percent of income on housing expenses, and 16 percent are spending 31 to 40 percent. There are 26 percent spending more than 40 percent (13 percent spend 41 to 50 percent and another 13 percent, 51 percent or more).

At Fair Way Manor, 45 percent spend 25 percent or less of income. However, 27 percent of the residents are spending more than 40 percent.⁴ The fact that many of the Fair Way Manor residents spend a lower percentage of their incomes on housing expenses is due in part to the fact their monthly housing expenses are generally lower than senior park residents. At Fair Way Manor, residents' payments for space rent and utilities average \$511 compared to \$689 for the senior park residents.

Residents that currently spend more than 40 percent of their incomes on housing-related expenses can be expected to have added financial stress paying anticipated increases in space rents because such a large percentage of their income is already devoted to housing, leaving less available for other necessary expenses.

AGING OF SENIOR PARK RESIDENTS

As noted in the survey results, 44 percent of the respondents at the senior parks are 80 years or older. An additional 23 percent are 70 to 79 years old. It is likely that in the relatively near future a number of these residents may not be able to continue to live in their mobilehomes because of physical limitations or the need for additional services. Where will they live? Because there are almost no opportunities for these residents to relocate in Calistoga, they will have to look elsewhere for replacement housing. This could be a hardship, especially for residents who have lived in the parks for many years.

⁴ Note that housing burden information is unavailable for 20 percent of the senior interviews and 27 percent of the Fair Way Manor interviews because of missing income or housing expense data.

Twenty-three percent have lived in their homes for more than 15 years and another 24 percent have lived in their homes 10 to 15 years.

These relocating residents may be able to sell their mobilehomes to new residents or to park management. This turnover in occupancy will change the parks somewhat, likely bringing in younger residents as well as new residents who were not involved in past controversies in the parks.

RELIANCE ON SOCIAL SECURITY INCOME

The survey found that 88 percent of the households in the senior parks receive Social Security benefits and that 19 percent indicated that this was their only source of income. This is consistent with data for California seniors. Statistics compiled by AARP indicate that in 2007-2009, 19.1 percent of Californians age 65 or older rely on Social Security for 90 percent or more of family income.⁵ Only 18 percent of Fair Way Manor households receive Social Security benefits, and none of the households relies on Social Security as its only income.

It is not known how much Social Security benefits contribute to the total income of each household that has income sources in addition to Social Security. However, we can assume that Social Security benefits are an important component of household income as it is for most seniors. Most Social Security recipients pay close attention to annual changes in Social Security benefits, especially when the increases are minimal or non-existent.

The Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) for Social Security is computed each year and that determines how much benefits are increased for the next year.⁶ Over the past five years, COLAs have ranged from 0 percent to 3.6 percent. Table 3 below shows the COLA adjustments for the past ten years.

With these minimal increases, many seniors, not just those in the senior parks, have insufficient funds to cover cost increases in various necessities. In addition, seniors in the mobilehome parks are subject to increases in the amount they pay for space rent.

⁵ AARP Public Policy Institute, *Social Security is a Critical Income Source for Older Americans: State – Level Estimates, 2007-2009*, Fact Sheet 236, September 2011

⁶ The COLA for the current year is equal to the percentage increase (if any) in the average Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) for the third quarter of the current year over the average for the third quarter of the last year. The COLA is based on national CPI data rather than the CPI for the San Francisco-Oakland Area.

Table 3: Social Security Cost-of-Living Adjustments

Year	COLA
2007	3.3%
2008	2.3%
2009	5.8%
2010	0.0%
2011	0.0%
2012	3.6%
2013	1.7%
2014	1.5%

From <http://socialsecurity.gov/cola/automatic-cola.htm>

IMPACT OF INCREASES IN SPACE RENT ON OTHER SPENDING

Residents with fixed incomes (with limited annual increases), such as Social Security and pensions based on changes in CPI, can find it difficult to afford to pay increases in space rent, especially when the rent increases exceed the Social Security COLAs or change in CPI. Thirty-nine percent of the senior park residents responded that increases in space rent caused them to change their spending. At Fair Way Manor, the percentage was lower, 27 percent. Senior residents' comments about the changes they have made in spending included the following:

- *Cut down on spending on food.*
- *Used up all of my savings.*
- *Less money for food, cancelled television because I cannot afford it.*
- *Having more difficulty paying other bills.*
- *Left with less than \$300 a month, really have to budget.*
- *Cannot make repairs to home that I would like to.*
- *How I shop. Now discount stores. Gave up meat, eat more vegetables.*
- *Buying less clothes, doing less recreational activities, food budget*
- *Very strict budget.*
- *Unable to do recreational activities.*
- *Every way you can think of.*

As these responses indicate, increases in space rent affect some park residents' lives and force them to make difficult adjustments in their spending.

AFFORDING RENT AND RENT SUBSIDY PROGRAMS

To offset increases in space rent, some homeowners are adjusting their spending or are subsidizing their rent by other means. Below are various methods homeowners use to pay or subsidize the increasing rents.

Saving Accounts and Personal Assets

One possibility is using savings, although that can be a limited resource. Most of the residents said that they have less than \$5,000 in savings or readily available assets that they could use in an emergency.

Section 8 Voucher Program

All of the residents in the extremely low and very low income groups would qualify for the Section 8 Voucher Program administered by the Housing Authority of the City of Napa. Under this program, participants pay no more than 30 percent of their income for their housing expenses while the Housing Authority pays the balance, up to \$520 for a mobilehome. According to the Housing Authority, currently 13 park residents are receiving assistance under the program, representing three of the mobilehome parks. This is less than 5 percent of the residents who would likely qualify for the program. However, at this time there is little chance of additional residents participating. No applications are being taken, as the Housing Authority closed the waiting list in March 2013. It will likely take five or six years for households already on the waiting list to be accepted into the program. Information is not available on how many, if any, mobilehome park households are currently on the Housing Authority's waiting list.

Chateau Calistoga and Rancho de Calistoga Rent Credit Program

Similar to the Section 8 program, the Chateau Calistoga and Rancho de Calistoga park owners have a rent credit program. Under the rent credit program, qualifying tenants may obtain a rent credit for all or portions of their rental obligation that exceed 30 percent of the monthly income of all the persons residing at the space.

The rent credit program in Chateau Calistoga is contained within the Mediation Agreement entered into on June 6, 2011, between the park owner and "the Settling Tenants" (approximately 184 spaces of the 196 spaces within the park). In addition to the rent credit program, the Mediation Agreement set the annual rent increases through June 1, 2019. The rent credit program at Rancho de Calistoga is being offered voluntarily by the Rancho de Calistoga park owner. Between the two parks, 20 tenants

are receiving the assistance from the park owner. Calistoga Springs and Fair Way Manor mobilehome parks do not currently offer a rent credit program.

Local Organizations

Several local organizations that work with seniors and families may be able to assist them when they have difficulties paying their housing expenses. For example, the Family Center has an emergency fund that it uses to provide temporary financial assistance to seniors. In the past, the fund has provided one-time assistance for seniors unable to pay their space rent. While Calistoga Affordable Housing does not have funds to provide emergency assistance for space rent payments, it does work with seniors in the mobilehome parks. Its homeowner repair program assists seniors with needed health and safety repairs that they have been unable to afford on their own. Fair Housing Napa Valley works with mobilehome residents and park owners in the county and at times has been able to negotiate modifications in rent payments for residents unable to pay.

CITY'S INVOLVEMENT WITH THE MOBILEHOME PARKS

The City recognizes the importance of the mobilehome parks as a major source of affordable housing in the city. However, the mobilehome parks are not conventional subsidized housing regulated by covenants that restrict eligibility and the amount of rent charged. This limits the tools the City has to ensure continued affordability at the parks. The City has worked with residents of the parks and mobilehome park owners to address issues at the mobilehome parks. As discussed below, the City's Rent Stabilization Ordinance is the primary mechanism for addressing mobilehome park rent increases and rental disputes.

In addition, the City has classified all of the parks in the Mobile Home Park Zoning District and inspects one of the parks each year for compliance with health and safety codes. The inspection of Fair Way Manor this year required an extensive outreach effort and translation services due to the park's primarily Hispanic population. The City also supported Calistoga Affordable Housing in developing the application to HCD for this study and by administering the grant.

RENT STABILIZATION ORDINANCE (RSO)

The City adopted the Rent Stabilization Ordinance (Ordinance 644) in 1993 and it was amended in 2007. According to the ordinance, the purposes of the RSO includes the following:

- *Prevent exploitation of the shortage of vacant mobile home park spaces;*
- *Prevent excessive and unreasonable mobile home park space rent increases;*
- *Rectify the disparity of bargaining power that exists between mobile home park homeowners and mobile home park owners;*
- *Provide mobile home park owners with a rate of annual space rent increase that reflects the impact of inflation and/or increases in their expenses;*
- *Provide a process for insuring mobile home park owners a fair, just, and reasonable rate of return on their parks in cases where the annual space rent increase provided by this chapter proves insufficient;*
- *Provide continued rent stabilization on the sale or transfer of a mobile home on-site to prevent unnecessary and unreasonable rent increases to new mobile home homeowners.*

In short, this ordinance has been developed to provide two basic outcomes: 1) to limit unreasonable rent increases and 2) to allow mobile home park owners to receive a fair

and reasonable rate of return. The Calistoga Planning and Building Director or other designee appointed by the City Manager administers the ordinance.

Key Provisions

Provisions for increasing space rent include the following:

- A permissible annual rent increase in the amount of either 100 percent of the change in the CPI or 6 percent of the base rent, whichever is less.
- An increase based on information from park owners showing how costs such as operation, maintenance, capital improvement or substantial rehabilitation that were not “reasonably foreseeable at the time of the last increase justify a further increase. This process requires mediation and if mediation fails, homeowners may seek arbitration.
- An increase exceeding the permissible annual rent increase limits, but less than 300% of the percent change in the CPI. This process requires mediation and if mediation fails, homeowners may seek arbitration.
- A rent increase equal or greater than 300% of the percent change in the CPI. This process requires mediation, and if mediation fails, arbitration is automatic.
- An adjustment to an initial base rent where the park owner can clearly establish that circumstances exist that require an adjustment to assure that the park owner is receiving a fair and reasonable return. This process triggers mediation and possibly arbitration.
- An increase in base rent for a space whenever a lawful vacancy occurs. (Space rent cannot be increased if a mobilehome is sold and remains upon the space or if an owner replaces his/her home with a new home.) In the case of an alleged violation of vacancy control rules, automatic arbitration is triggered.

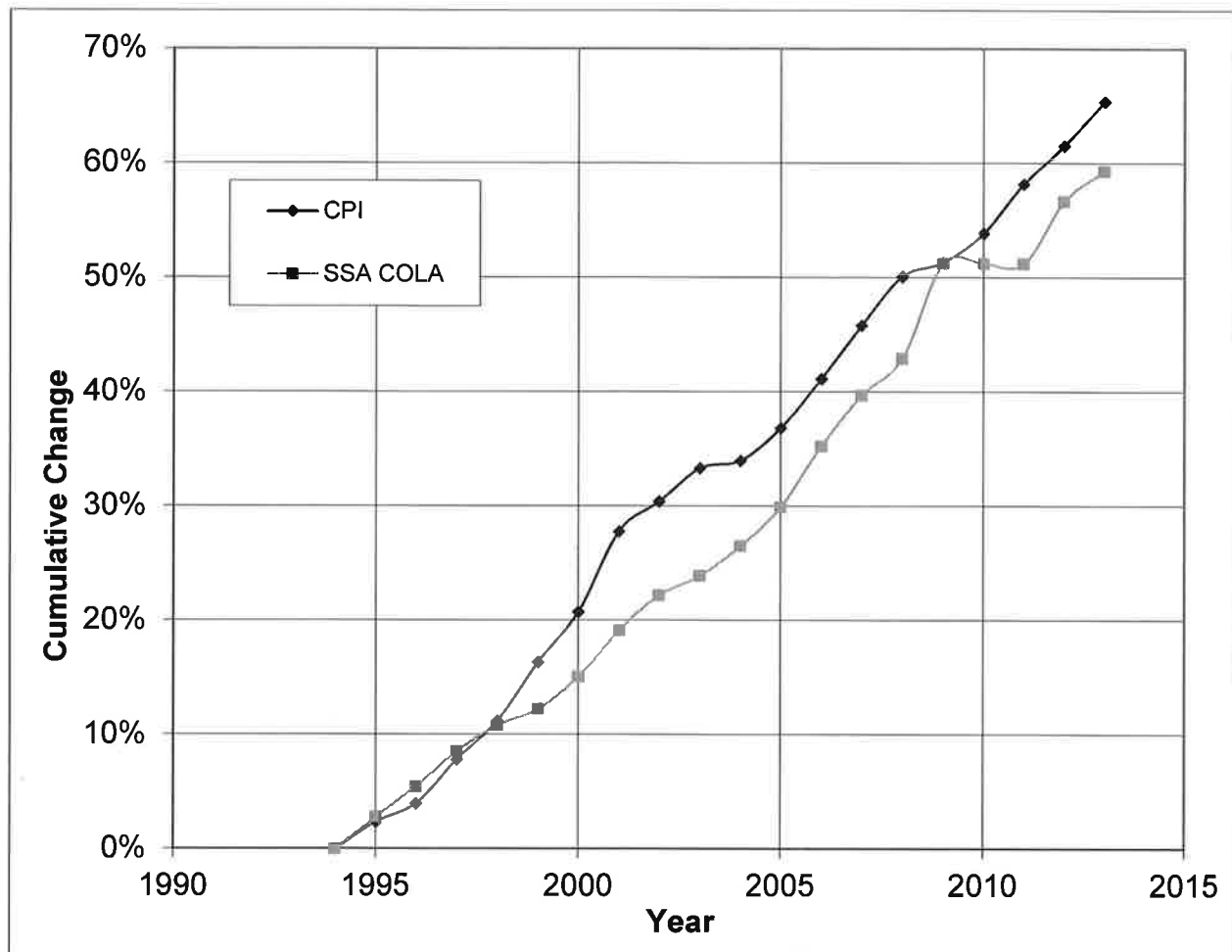
Table 4 below shows annual changes in the San Francisco-Oakland Area Consumer Price Index, which are the basis for permissible annual rent increases. As noted, since 1994, the percentage change in CPI has ranged from 0.5 percent to 5.8 percent, which has resulted in a wide range of permissible rent increases. For example, a resident with a space rent of \$500 could have experienced a rent increase of \$2.50 to \$29 per month. The graph in Figure 1 compares the cumulative percentage increases in the CPI to the increases in Social Security benefits from 1994 through 2013. As shown on the graph, during this period the cumulative percentage increases in the CPI (65.3 percent) exceeded the cumulative Social Security increases (59.3 percent). One of the primary

reasons that the Social Security COLA differs from the CPI is that the COLA is based on national rather than local area data. The CPI used for the RSO is for the San Francisco-Oakland Area, one of the highest-cost areas in the country.

Table 4: Annual Changes in CPI

Year	CPI	Change	Year	CPI	Change
1993	146.8		2004	198.3	0.5%
1994	148.0	0.8%	2005	202.5	2.1%
1995	151.5	2.4%	2006	208.9	3.2%
1996	153.9	1.6%	2007	215.8	3.3%
1997	159.6	3.7%	2008	222.1	2.9%
1998	164.6	3.1%	2009	223.9	0.8%
1999	172.2	4.6%	2010	227.7	1.7%
2000	178.7	3.8%	2011	234.1	2.8%
2001	189.1	5.8%	2012	239.0	2.1%
2002	193.0	2.1%	2013	244.7	2.4%
2003	197.3	2.2%			

Figure 1: Cumulative Change of CPI and SSA COLA



Rent Stabilization Ordinance Effectiveness Review

In October 2013, the Planning and Building Department prepared the Rent Stabilization Ordinance Effectiveness Report for the City Council. (A copy of the report is included in Appendix C.) The Report concludes:

“.... that the RSO has achieved its purpose and is effective. The RSO has balanced the interests of homeowners and the park owners. Although the parties may not be satisfied with any one particular outcome, the RSO has provided a process by which the parties can mediate differences or have a hearing officer settle the dispute by preponderance of the evidence. As such, there is no need for a full-scale review.”

A table in the RSO report (p.4) summarizes the proposed rent increases that have been addressed pursuant to the RSO.

EXPERIENCES OF OTHER JURISDICTIONS WITH MOBILEHOME PARK ISSUES

Many cities and counties have addressed affordability problems and rent stabilization at mobilehome parks within their jurisdictions. According to the Golden State Manufactured Home League (GSMOL), over 130 cities and counties have rent stabilization ordinances. GSMOL's summary is included in Appendix D. Many of the ordinances tie an automatic increase to the change in the CPI, such as 75 percent or 100 percent of the change in the CPI. Many have caps (5 percent to 9 percent). GSMOL's summary does not contain information on provisions for increases above the automatic increase.

EXAMPLES FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS

City of Napa

The City of Napa does not have a Rent Stabilization Ordinance. Instead, there is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Napa, the City of Napa Mobilehome Owners Association and the City's Mobilehome Park Owners Association, originally signed in 1995. The MOU is a voluntary agreement, worked out after extensive negotiations between the parties. Fair Housing Napa Valley (FHNV) is the administrator of the MOU. Key provisions include the following:

- Annual increases in space rent are limited to the change in the San Francisco Bay Area CPI plus one percent, with a base increase of three percent and a cap of seven percent.
- The MOU includes a program to assist residents in need through a private rent subsidy program.
- FHNV is to convene annual meetings twice annually of the parties (May and November) to discuss issues and provide counseling and conciliation when disputes need to be resolved.

According to FHNV, this voluntary agreement has worked well for both homeowners and park owners. Rent increases have generally followed the guideline of change in the CPI plus one percent. FHNV works to foster cooperation with the park owners.

City of American Canyon

In American Canyon, there are five parks with 850 spaces, most of which are family rather than senior only. Six hundred of the spaces are covered by the ordinance. According to the administrator of the ordinance, the CPI increases (100 percent) have worked out. Because the CPI has increased slowly, there have not been big increases in space rent.

Between 2009 and 2011, the City conducted an extensive revision process. The ordinance was revised in September 2011. The updated ordinance now allows a \$25 increase in the base rent when a home is sold. The park owners like that provision, and there have been no requests for extraordinary increases.

The City publishes a detailed User's Guide for the ordinance. This appears easier to follow than the actual ordinance. The mediation process is paid for by the City. Cost of an arbitrator is paid in advance by the park owner.

County of Sonoma and Cities of Cotati, Healdsburg, Petaluma, Sebastopol and Town of Windsor

The Sonoma County Community Development Commission administers the rent stabilization ordinance for the unincorporated areas of Sonoma County and is under contract with the cities of Cotati, Healdsburg, Petaluma, Sebastopol, and the Town of Windsor to provide arbitration services for space rent disputes. All of these jurisdictions have similar ordinances.

According to the County's Mobilehome Park Space Rent Stabilization ordinance, space rent can be increased annually by 100 percent of the percentage change in the CPI or 6 percent, whichever may be less. The provisions for consideration of special increases above and below 300 percent of CPI are similar to those in the Calistoga ordinance.

The County's ordinance was adopted in the 1980's and amendments were made in early 1990's. A least one of the parks (in Windsor) was sold to a nonprofit group, Resident Owned Parks, Inc.

City of Cloverdale

The City's ordinance establishes a mobilehome rent review board to review and settle rent disputes as necessary. According to the ordinance, the ultimate objective of the board in its determinations on hearing is the establishment of rents which are fair, just and equitable in light of the owner or operator's right to receive a fair economic return

and in light of tenants' needs for space rentals which are reasonably commensurate with open market rentals for comparable space, and proportionate to the reasonable values of the services and amenities received.

In making its determination about rents, the board is to consider a number of guides, among the following:

- Changes in the CPI that best applies to the Cloverdale area;
- The elapsed time since the last rental adjustment;
- Increase or decrease of property taxes, assessments or other taxes or government fees or charges relating to the park;
- Need and cost of repairs caused by other than ordinary wear and tear; and
- Rental and lease payments lawfully charged for comparable mobilehome spaces in Sonoma County.

The sale of a mobilehome does not justify an increase in rental for the affected space, whether or not the mobilehome remains or is removed. However, the park owner may make a one-time service charge not exceeding ten percent of the monthly rent payable by the purchaser.

City of Concord

In December 2012, the City of Concord reviewed its existing Rent Stabilization Ordinance and made a number of changes, including the following:

- Automatic annual allowed increases increased from 60 percent of change in the CPI to 89 percent, subject to a 5 percent limit.
- There was previously no vacancy decontrol. The revised ordinance allows base rent to be increased by 10 percent of the base existing rent.
- The process for review and determination of special rent increases was changed from review by the City-appointed Mobilehome Rent Review Board with appeals to the City Council to review by a neutral hearing officer selected from a panel with experience with rent control law. The decision cannot be appealed to the City Council.

Initiative Petition in City of Lakeport and Lake County

Both the City of Lakeport and Lake County have not had ordinances covering mobilehome park rents. However, during the past year, seniors in the City and County developed an initiative to roll back rental rates at senior parks to January 1, 2012, requiring that future rent increases be based on the percentage increase in Social Security benefits. This is in contrast to most ordinances that tie increases to changes in

the Consumer Price Index and appears to be a new approach not tried before. There have been concerns about the legality of this approach. According to the senior who started the campaign, *"...since most of us are on fixed income, I thought it would be fair if we tie any rent increase to our Social Security benefits. I think it is a win-win. It works for both sides."*

Save Our Seniors (S.O.S) organized a drive to gather signatures to put the initiative on the ballot in the City and the County. S.O.S obtained sufficient signatures to qualify the initiatives for the respective ballots. However, on March 14, 2014 a Lake County Superior County judge ruled that the initiatives are unconstitutional and must be removed from the ballots. The judge found that the initiatives were not consistent with state law and lacked an administrative mechanism for a rent control board to which residents or owners could appeal on issues related to fair rents. According to S.O.S, it will look into the appeal process and if that fails, develop another initiative.

FUTURE OPERATION OF MOBILEHOME PARKS IN CALISTOGA

It is difficult to predict the future of the City's four mobilehome parks. Much is dependent on the actions of the owners of the parks. However, the City should be aware of changes that could occur, especially since the parks account for approximately 24 percent of the housing units in the City, are a major source of affordable housing and are currently the City's only housing reserved for seniors. While there are no plans to do so, closure of one of the senior parks, even the smallest with 143 spaces, could have a significant impact on the City's housing supply.

It would be extremely difficult for that many residents to find relocation housing in Calistoga. Many would likely move outside the city. Likewise, converting park rental spaces to resident ownership as condominium spaces would be a significant change. State regulations provide protections for residents should this occur (see SB 510 below). However, the probability of a conversion is low due to economic and political forces. A more likely scenario is forced relocation of a number of mobilehome residents whose incomes lag increases in their living expenses.

LEGISLATION AFFECTING MOBILEHOME PARKS

Some recent relevant legislation affecting mobilehome parks and their residents is discussed below.

SB 510 Land Use: Subdivisions: Rental Mobilehome Park Conversion

This bill, which was signed by the Governor on September 26, 2013, authorizes a local government to disapprove the conversion of a mobilehome park to resident ownership if the required survey of park residents does not show that a majority of them support the conversion⁷. It authorizes the local government to implement the requirement that a subdivider wishing to convert a mobilehome part to resident ownership conduct a survey of support for the proposed conversion and that a local agency may disapprove the map if the survey does not demonstrate support among homeowners. This clarifies existing law, which includes the following provisions:

- A subdivider shall offer each existing tenant an option either to purchase his or her subdivided unit, which is created by the conversion, or to continue residency as a tenant.
- The subdivider shall file a report on the impact of the conversion upon residents.

⁷ Government Code Section 66427.5

- The subdivider shall make a copy of the report available to each resident at least 15 days prior to a hearing on the map.
- The subdivider shall conduct a survey of support in accordance with an agreement between the subdivider and the resident homeowners' association, if any.
- Rent increases for non-purchasing, low income residents are limited by an amount equal to the average monthly increase in rent in the four years immediately preceding the conversion , except that in no case shall the increase be greater than the increase in the Consumer Price Index.

AB 692 Mobilehome Park Purchase Fund

In 1984, the state legislature created the Mobilehome Park Purchase Fund to provide low-interest loans to finance the conversion of mobilehome parks to resident ownership and ensure that low-income residents' housing costs remained at an affordable level after conversion. The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) administers the fund under its Mobilehome Park Resident Ownership Program (MPROP). To qualify for a loan, at least 30 percent of the converting park's spaces must be for homes owned by low-income residents. In addition, HCD must verify that at least two-thirds of a mobilehome park's households support the conversion to resident ownership, that any displacement of residents will be mitigated, that the conversion is consistent with state and local law, and that the conversion is financially viable. MPROP has seen little activity in recent years, with only a handful of loans made since 2007. HCD points to the increasing cost and complexity of park conversions as two of the primary reasons for the reduction in the number of successful applications.

AB 692, which is currently in the Senate Appropriations Committee, would:

- Permit HCD to make loans to the owner of a mobilehome park for rehabilitating the park's infrastructure including, but not limited to, water, sewage and electrical systems without converting the parks to resident ownership,
- Restrict loans to not more than 30 years and an interest rate of 3 percent, unless HCD finds that a lower interest rate is necessary, and
- Allow HCD to establish flexible repayment terms if needed to reduce the monthly housing costs for low -income residents to an affordable level.

STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the needs of seniors and to protect the mobilehome parks as a type of affordable housing, potential actions to consider include the following:

- **Rent subsidy program** - Set up a private rent subsidy program that could be used to pay space rent for homeowners who are threatened with eviction or who are unable to pay increases in space rent. The program could also cover relocation costs, as appropriate. While there may not be state or federal grant funds that would support this, there may be foundations focusing on seniors that would be a source of funds. Local organizations and agencies could assist homeowners with finding available rent subsidies such as the rent credit program, where available.
- **Improve cooperation and trust between homeowners and park owners** - Enlist local organizations and agencies to assist in fostering a better climate of cooperation and trust between the homeowners and park owners.
- **Work with nonprofit developers** - Work with nonprofit organizations, such as Napa Valley Community Housing, Calistoga Affordable Housing, Burbank Housing, BRIDGE Housing or other affordable housing developers to assist in developing or rehabilitating rental housing for seniors in Calistoga. First, this would provide housing for seniors looking for housing in Calistoga, where the only designated senior housing is in the mobilehome parks. In addition, new affordable housing could provide an alternative for seniors no longer able to afford to live in their mobilehomes. These developments would potentially provide restricted affordable housing units for seniors in Calistoga where currently there are none. This could be similar to affordable family housing, such as La Pradera Apartments (new construction) or Lakewood Apartments (rehabilitation of existing project) in Calistoga, Jefferson Street Senior Apartments in Napa, or Woodbridge Village Apartments in St. Helena. Senior housing could be developed with funding sources such as the HUD Section 202 program, the Low Income Tax Credit program and the Rural Community Assistance Corporation.
- **Work with veterans' organizations to access housing funds for veterans** - With so many of the residents of the senior parks being veterans, take advantage of new resources to fund housing for veterans. Proposition 41, the Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention Bond Act of 2014, authorized \$600 million of general bonds to provide multifamily housing for veterans and their families. The program requirements and parameters, which have not been established yet, will

be developed by the three agencies working on the program, the California Housing Finance Agency, the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Department of Veterans Affairs. To access funds in this program, the City would work with veterans' organizations in addition to nonprofit housing developers.

- **Encourage and assist seniors to apply for all assistance programs for which they are eligible** - Receiving other assistance, such as CalFresh (food stamps) or MediCal, would make some room in seniors' budgets for additional housing expenses. The Area Agency on Aging, Napa County's Comprehensive Services for Older Adults and the UpValley Family Center have been working together to make services and resources accessible to seniors. A County eligibility worker visits the Calistoga office of the UpValley Family Center on a weekly basis and is available on a drop-in basis to help seniors determine if they are eligible for various programs and to help with the required paperwork. The City should coordinate with these agencies, suggest how best to reach Calistoga seniors and help publicize this program to seniors.

APPENDIX A – INFORMATION ON THE SURVEY

The purpose of the survey of mobilehome park residents was to gather information on the characteristics of full-time residents of the parks to help in recommending policy options to the City. There are four mobilehome parks in Calistoga, with 556 spaces. Of these 556 spaces, as of September 2013, some were vacant and some were occupied on a part-time basis. The universe for the survey was the full-time residents. Table A-1 below provides information on the total number of mobilehome lots at each park, the number of lots that are occupied full time and the number of lots to be included in the survey.

Table A-1: Mobilehome Parks, City of Calistoga

Park Name	Total Home Lots	Home Lots Occupied Full Time	Number of Surveys*
Rancho de Calistoga	185	133	27
Château Calistoga	192	165	33
Calistoga Springs	143	113	23
Fair Way Manor	32	32	6
Totals	556	443	89

*20% sample

The lots to be included in the survey were selected based on a systematic sample. This sampling technique selects sample members from a larger population according to a random starting point and a fixed, periodic interval. Typically, every "nth" member is selected from the total population for inclusion in the sample population. Systematic sampling is still thought of as being random, as long as the periodic interval is determined beforehand and the starting point is random.

A common way of selecting members for a sample population using systematic sampling is to divide the total number of units in the general population by the desired number of units for the sample population. The result of the division serves as the marker for selecting sample units from within the general population. The Calistoga Study’s goal was to complete between 75 and 100 surveys. Selecting one out of every five lots provides a sample size that is approximately at the mid-point (between 75 and 100). With this amount, we are confident that the selected sample represents the universe of residents at the four parks. Starting with the list of home lots occupied full time at each park (sorted by lot number) and beginning with the first lot number at each park, every fifth lot was selected. In the event that a resident refused to be interviewed or if the resident was not found at home, a substitution was made of the next lot number

on the list (extracted from the consecutively ordered list). After the initial sampling plan was created, we decided to sample more units at Fair Way Manor so that there would be enough responses for this small park to present data on this park by itself because residents differed from those at the senior parks. There were 94 surveys completed in all, 83 at the 3 senior parks and 11 at Fair Way Manor. This represents a 20 percent sample of the full-time occupied lots at the senior parks and a 34 percent sample at Fair Way Manor (See Table A-2).

Table A-2: Completed Surveys

Mobile Home Park	Completed Surveys
Rancho de Calistoga	27
Chateau Calistoga	32
Chateau Springs	24
Subtotal	83
Fair Way Manor	11
Total	94

The research team took a number of steps to encourage residents' participation in the survey, including the following:

- Providing information about the study and survey for mobilehome parks homeowner association newsletters and making announcements at mobile home park association meetings.
- Providing press releases for publication in the Calistoga Tribune and Weekly Calistogan.
- Delivering letters to residents selected to be interviewed.

The VWA research team arranged with Pacific Union College to have students in social work, psychology and nursing classes to conduct the interviews. Interviewer training was held on October 4, 2013 at PUC for the student interviewers, who undertook the survey work under the direction of Monte Butler, Ph.D., MSW, Chair of the PUC Psychology and Social Work Department. There were 20 interviewers. They generally conducted the interviews in pairs. The surveys, approximately 15 to 20 minutes in length, included questions on residents' socioeconomic characteristics and questions about their homes. The interviews took place in the afternoon and early evening of October 11, October 18 and October 25, 2013. In addition, there were a few phone interviews with residents who requested that method of contact. For some of the interviews at Fair Way Manor, bilingual interviewers contacted the residents. In addition, there was assistance from a CAH staff member who speaks Spanish.

APPENDIX B – DATA TABLES

DATA TABLES FOR SENIOR PARK RESIDENTS

The tables below present the responses of the senior park residents. The data are based on responses of the 83 households that participated in the survey.

Household Size	
1 person	65%
2 persons	33%
3 persons	2%
Average Household Size	1.4 persons
Gender of Respondent	
Female	65%
Male	35%
Age of Respondent	
Below 60	5%
60-69	28%
70 – 79	23%
80 and above	44%
Average Age	76 years
Years Living in Home	
More than 15 years	23%
10 to 15 years	24%
5 to 10 years	32%
1 to 5 years	13%
Less than one year	7%
Average Length of Time	11.1 years
Household Member Disabled	
Disabled	40%
Not Disabled	60%
Veteran Status	
Veteran	30%
Widow of Veteran	22%

Study of the Long-Term Viability of Calistoga Mobilehome Parks as Affordable Housing

Household Income Category <i>See Table 1 for income categories.</i>	
Extremely Low	29%
Very Low	31%
Low	22%
Median	4%
Moderate	2%
Above Moderate	5%
Refused/missing	7%
Social Security Recipient	
Yes	88%
No	12%
Social Security Only Income	19%
Employment Status	
Employed	22%
Not employed	78%
Savings or Available Assets for Emergency	
Less than \$5,000	43%
\$5,001-\$10,000	6%
\$10,001-\$25,000	7%
\$25,001-\$50,000	14%
More than \$50,000	18%
Refused/missing	11%
Percent of Income for Housing Expenses	
25% and below	29%
25%-30%	8%
31%-40%	16%
41%-50%	13%
51% or more	13%
Refused/missing	20%

Study of the Long-Term Viability of Calistoga Mobilehome Parks as Affordable Housing

Year Home Built	
Built 1950-1976	52%
Built 1977-1986	19%
Built 1987-1996	4%
Built 1997-2006	18%
Built 2007-2013	2%
Don't Know	5%
Size of Home (Square Feet)	
Less than 500	1%
500-800	6%
801-1,100	2%
1,101-1,300	22%
1,301-1,600	39%
1,601 or more	11%
Don't know	19%
Number of Bedrooms	
One	5%
Two	92%
Three	4%
Average number of bedrooms	2.2
Number of Bathrooms	
One	8%
Two or more	92%
Average number of bathrooms	1.9
Substantial Repairs Needed	
Need repairs	37%
Repairs not needed	63%
Major Expenses During the Past Year	
Yes	28%
No	72%
Increase in Rent Caused Spending Change	
Yes	39%
No	61%

DATA TABLES FOR FAIR WAY MANOR RESIDENTS

The tables below present the responses of Fair Way Manor residents. The data are based on responses of the 11 households that participated in the survey.

Household Size	
1 person	9%
2 persons	18%
3 persons	27%
4 persons	36%
5 persons	0%
6 persons	9%
Average Household Size	3.3 persons
Gender of Respondent	
Female	73%
Male	27%
Age of Respondent	
Below 40	36%
40 to 49	9%
50 to 59	18%
60 to 70	36%
Average Age	48.4 years
Years Living in Home	
More than 15 years	27%
10 to 15 years	27%
5 to 10 years	36%
1 to 5 years	9%
Less than one year	0%
Average Length of Time	11.0 years
Household Member Disabled	
Disabled	27%
Not Disabled	73%
Veteran Status	
Veteran	9%
No Veteran	82%

Study of the Long-Term Viability of Calistoga Mobilehome Parks as Affordable Housing

Household Income Category	
<i>See Table 1 above for income categories.</i>	
Extremely Low	45%
Very Low	27%
Low	9%
Median	0%
Moderate	0%
Above Moderate	0%
Refused /missing	18%
Social Security as Income Source	
Yes	18%
No	73%
Missing	9%
Social Security Only Income	0%
Employment Status	
Employed	36%
Not employed	55%
Missing	9%
Savings or Available Assets for Emergency	
Less than \$5,000	82%
\$5,001-\$10,000	9%
\$10,001-\$25,000	9%
More than \$25,000	0%
Percent of Income for Housing Expenses	
25% and below	45%
25%-30%	0%
31%-40%	0%
41%-50%	9%
51% or more	18%
Refused/missing	27%

Study of the Long-Term Viability of Calistoga Mobilehome Parks as Affordable Housing

Year Home Built	
Built 1950-1976	73%
Built 1977-1986	9%
Built 1987-1996	9%
Built 1997-2013	0%
Don't Know	9%
Size of Home (Square Feet)	
Less than 500	9%
500-800	18%
801-1100	9%
Don't know	64%
Number of Bedrooms	
One	18%
Two	64%
Three	9%
Four	9%
Number of Bathrooms	
One	91%
Two	9%
Substantial Repairs Needed	
Need repairs	55%
Repairs not needed	45%
Major Expenses During the Past Year	
Yes	18%
No	73%
NA	9%
Increase in Rent Caused Spending Change	
Yes	27%
No	64%
NA	9%

**APPENDIX C - RENT STABILIZATION ORDINANCE
EFFECTIVENESS REPORT**

APPENDIX D – SUMMARY OF OTHER JURISDICTIONS WITH RENT STABILIZATION ORDINANCES

According to a representative of the Golden State Manufactured-Home Owners League (GSMOL), approximately 130 cities and counties in California have adopted rent stabilization ordinances. GSMOL compiled the attached table, which presents information on most but not all of the jurisdictions.