Manufactured housing currently makes up a small but important share of the housing stock in the Denver metro area. Given the plans laid out by Metro Vision 2035, the longer-range plan for growth and development drafted by the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), there is an even greater potential for manufactured homes to fill some of the critical housing needs facing families in the area as its population grows in the coming years. As of August 2015, the DRCOG is in the process of updating Metro Vision to include a greater emphasis on housing density, workforce housing and reducing housing cost burden.

The region’s forecasted 50% population growth between 2010 and 2035, coupled with a 21% increase in residents of color since 2000 and an exploding senior population, has major implications for residents’ housing and transportation needs. Consequently, part of the regional long-range plan focuses on increasing development density, the share of housing in urban centers and housing that meets the needs of an aging population.

Manufactured homes tend to be smaller-footprint homes that could easily support a high-density living environment. The affordability of manufactured housing offers potential for substantial cost savings that could make infill development more feasible in urban areas where developers must cope with higher land costs. Manufactured homes also provide an affordable alternative for low- and moderate-income households, many of whom are households of color: the median monthly costs to manufactured homeowners is $680, compared to $1,540 for all homeowners. Manufactured housing communities—where 40% of the region’s manufactured homes are located—have been touted as “naturally occurring retirement communities,” or NORCs: neighborhoods that are not originally designed for older adults, but where adults have aged in place because certain elements exist that promote independence, convenience and physical security. In the Denver metro area, preserving manufactured home communities (through resident ownership, nonprofit ownership or community land trusts) could help meet the aging-in-place needs of Denver residents.

Another series of priorities in the long-term plan focuses on minimizing environmental pollution and public health risks by reducing fossil fuel consumption, greenhouse gas and other emissions. The use of high-quality, energy efficient manufactured homes in high-density urban development could minimize long commutes and cut down on the energy usage and emissions of homes within the metro area.

While working with manufactured housing requires some nuanced understandings of policy, housing development and community issues, its affordability, energy efficiency and small footprint make it well-positioned to serve several critical housing needs in the area. Denver area leaders could increase low-income families’ access to affordable housing and opportunity by leveraging the value of manufactured housing.

For many low- and moderate-income households, manufactured housing is more affordable than other types of housing.

Note: This Data Snapshot is designed to assess the role of manufactured housing in local markets and the extent to which manufactured housing contributes to a set of solutions for affordable housing needs in the Denver metro area. The geographic area referred to as the Denver metro area encompasses seven counties—Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas and Jefferson—from two metropolitan statistical areas (Boulder and Denver-Aurora-Broomfield MSAs). Although other regional definitions are used in different instances, this one includes the core population of the region, as well as the primary service area of the region’s transit agency, the Regional Transportation District (RTD).
WHO LIVES IN MANUFACTURED HOMES?

Residents of manufactured homes in the Denver metro area differ in some key ways from their neighbors in other types of housing. Owners of manufactured homes are also more likely to be low-income and work in low-wage service occupations. Since 2010, the share of manufactured homeowners who are Hispanic or Latino has grown from 31% to 40%. Presumably, as more than one in five of these homeowners are over the age of 65, many of them are also retired with fixed incomes. Though the Denver metro area is one of the most educated regions in the nation, the area’s owners of manufactured homes are less likely to have completed post-secondary education than residents of all other types of housing. All of these characteristics make this population of homeowners more vulnerable to the perils of unaffordable housing and highlight the need to focus attention and resources that expand access to opportunity in the communities where these homes are located.

HOMEOWNERSHIP
Manufactured home residents are more likely to own their homes than residents of other types of housing.

HOME FINANCING
Owners of manufactured homes are less likely to have a mortgage and, presumably, more likely to have a personal property loan. Why does this matter? Personal property loans tend to have higher interest rates, shorter repayment periods, and fewer protections for owners. Plus, homes financed with personal property loans tend to be titled as personal property, like cars, which depreciate. This makes it much harder for homeowners to build wealth through homeownership.

Note: We expect that the American Community Survey (ACS) data at our disposal most likely misrepresents the share of manufactured homes with mortgages. Because the ACS defines mortgages as “all forms of debt where the property is pledged as security for repayment of the debt,” owners of manufactured homes who are asked whether they have a mortgage may respond affirmatively knowing that they are repaying a loan of some sort, even if that may be a personal property loan. As a result, we expect that the ACS estimate for the share of manufactured home owners with a mortgage is inaccurate, so it has been omitted here.

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Manufactured Homeowners</th>
<th>All Homeowners</th>
<th>All Renters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$37,139</td>
<td></td>
<td>$83,161</td>
<td>$35,963</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EDUCATION
Owners of manufactured homes are much less likely to have completed high school or post-secondary education than both other homeowners and renters, which has negative implications for their access to employment given the growing necessity of higher education for well-paying jobs.

JOBS
Owners of manufactured homes often work in lower-wage occupations compared to all homeowners.
SNAP BENEFITS
Even though median incomes of manufactured housing householders are slightly higher than those of renters, these homeowners are more likely to receive SNAP benefits.

AGE
Owners of manufactured homes are slightly younger than all homeowners, but much older than renters.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION
Compared to renters, owners of manufactured homes are more likely to be headed by married couples and less likely to be comprised of non-families. However, owners of manufactured homes—are twice as likely as all homeowners to be headed by single parents.

RACE/ETHNICITY
Since 2010, the share of manufactured homeowners who are Hispanic or Latino has increased by 30%, while the share of white homeowners has fallen more than 10%.

LANGUAGE
Owners of manufactured homes are more likely to speak Spanish at home than residents in all other types of housing.

Note: The income and demographic data presented on pages 2 and 3 come from the 2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.
WHERE ARE MOST MANUFACTURED HOMES LOCATED?

8,454 of the manufactured homes in the Denver metro area
or
40% are located in
218 manufactured home communities

LEGEND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Light Rail</th>
<th>Bus Routes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total MH Units by Census Tract</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - 30</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>31 - 150</td>
<td></td>
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<td>151 - 400</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>401 - 750</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>751 - 1875</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Alternative estimate calculated by CFED from the American Community Survey, American Housing Survey, and public data sources (2010).

IN WHAT CONDITION ARE MOST MANUFACTURED HOMES?

Almost half of the manufactured homes in the Denver metro area were built before 1980. Why does this matter? Before HUD began regulating the construction of these homes in 1976, there were no consistent building standards for manufactured homes, so older units are more likely to be in need of repair or replacement.

I'M HOME Innovations in Manufactured Homes

Innovations in Manufactured Homes (I’M HOME) is a national initiative managed by CFED which seeks to ensure that owners of manufactured homes have the opportunity to build wealth through homeownership by improving the quality of new and replacement development, enhancing homeowners’ ability to enjoy long-term land security, expanding access to safe home financing and encouraging a supportive policy environment.