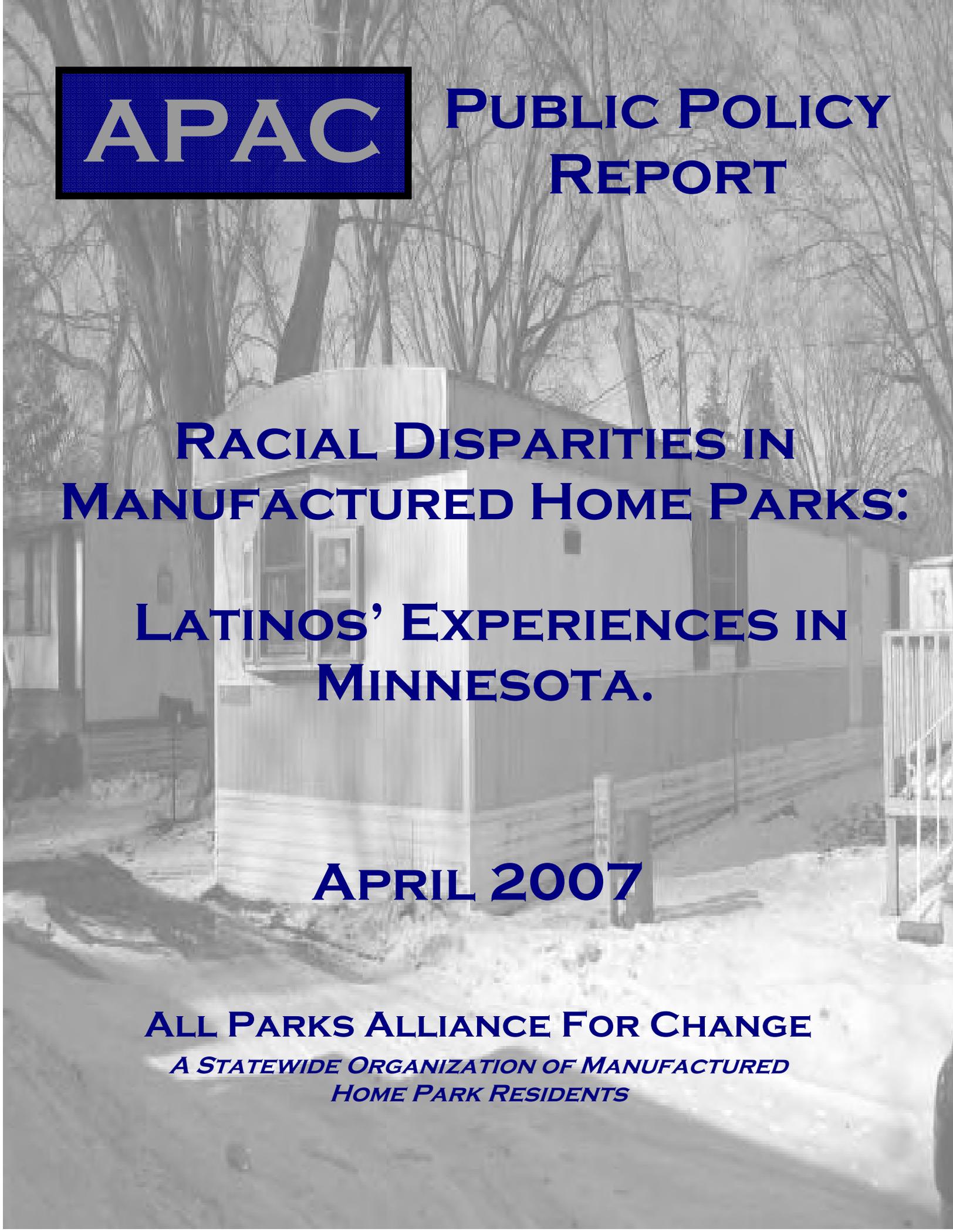


The logo for APAC (All Parks Alliance for Change) is a blue rectangle with a black border containing the letters 'APAC' in white, bold, sans-serif font.

APAC

PUBLIC POLICY REPORT

A grayscale photograph of a manufactured home in a park setting during winter. The home has a corrugated metal roof and a small porch. The ground is covered in snow, and bare trees are visible in the background.

**RACIAL DISPARITIES IN
MANUFACTURED HOME PARKS:
LATINOS' EXPERIENCES IN
MINNESOTA.**

APRIL 2007

ALL PARKS ALLIANCE FOR CHANGE

*A STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION OF MANUFACTURED
HOME PARK RESIDENTS*

All Parks Alliance for Change
Public Policy Report

*Racial Disparities in Manufactured Home Parks:
Latinos' Experiences in Minnesota*

April 2007

Prepared By:

Julia Wells

APAC Advocacy Research Intern

Reviewed By:

Phil Sandro
Higher Education Consortium
of Urban Affairs
(HECUA)

Edited By:

Dave Anderson
APAC Executive Director

Margaret Kaplan
APAC Staff Attorney

Celeste Finn
APAC Staff

All Parks Alliance for Change
970 Raymond Avenue, Suite 105
St. Paul, MN 55114
Phone: 651-644-5525 or 866-361-2722
Fax: 651-523-0173
Email: info@allparksallianceforchange.org
www.allparksallianceforchange.org

Table of Contents

I. Executive Summary.....1

II. Introduction.....2

 A. Background on Manufactured Home Parks.....2

 B. The Latino Population.....3

III. Disparities Arising From Race.....5

IV. Methodologies.....6

V. City of Bloomington.....7

VI. City and Township of Shakopee.....12

VII. City of Melrose.....17

VIII. Concluding Remarks and Recommendations.....20

The author would like to acknowledge HECUA for supporting the work of this report.

I. Executive Summary

This report explores various disparities based on race that exist in the lives of residents in manufactured (mobile) home parks within the State of Minnesota. Through several case studies, numerous inequalities were found between parks with predominately Latino residents and parks with non-Latino residents. Specifically, it was found that although Latino residents pay approximately the same in lot rent as non-Latino residents, the quality of parks with predominately Latino residents is drastically lower. In addition, Latino residents are more likely to experience unsatisfactory management practices and received less support from city officials. This report is a call for action to allow manufactured home parks to be communities free of these documented disparities.

II. Introduction

Section A of the introduction in this report focuses on the nature of manufactured home parks in general. It is well accepted that these parks provide the largest source of affordable housing in Minnesota, and are a viable option for home ownership for low-income individuals. These issues will be further discussed in the next section of this report. Section B presents information on the overall Latino population. Although statewide, the Latino and Hispanic identification rates are lower than that for the United States, the numbers show that these individuals are nonetheless a vital part of our communities. Section III introduces some general disparities that the Latino population has faced and summarizes the case studies analyzed in the rest of the report. The fourth section discusses the various sources and research methodologies utilized. Sections V-VII of this report will consider the case studies separately. The first of which involves manufactured home parks in the city of Bloomington. The second incorporates information on four parks that are located in either the township or city of Shakopee. The last of these case studies focuses on a city outside of the 7-county metro area: the city of Melrose. All of the parks presented in these case studies are quite polarized in terms of their racial makeup; parks are typically predominately Latino or predominately non-Latino. It is thought that this pattern may be fairly representative of the parks statewide. The concluding remarks and recommendations of this report will be presented in Section VIII, the final section.

A. Background on Manufactured Home Parks

Manufactured home parks are a valuable source of affordable housing for many people throughout the state of Minnesota. There are approximately 906 parks within the state that provide space for 48,499 units, which are the homes for about 180,000 individuals.¹ These parks exist in 81 of the 87 counties in Minnesota.² Within the resident population of these parks nearly 80 percent of people are considered low- to very-low income.³ The national files of the American Housing Survey state that

¹ State and County Department of Health Data compiled by Housing Preservation Project (HPP).

² Figures based on state, county, and city health office licensing records.

³ According to Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines, which define low-income as 50% of median area income and very low-income as 30% of median area income.

“manufactured housing appears to be providing many lower income families with a relatively low-cost, high-quality, alternative living environment.”⁴ Manufactured homes are not only a viable option for low-income individuals to attain homeownership, but in many cases, the only option. The average monthly lot rent in a manufactured home park in Minnesota is \$367, much lower than rates for apartments or traditional stick-built homes. Fair market rents for existing housing in Minneapolis and Saint Paul average \$912 for a two-bedroom apartment.⁵ The fair market rent outside the metropolitan area taken from five counties in central Minnesota is on average \$471.⁶ These positive qualities of manufactured home parks have created a stable housing solution, as shown by the fact that 42 percent of residents have occupied their home for at least ten years.⁷ Research shows that “ownership of manufactured housing... [is] associated with neighborhood stability, and...a decreasing likelihood to move over time.”⁸ This low turnover in residency results in a stronger sense of commitment to the community.

Although 87% of residents own their manufactured homes, the park owner owns the underlying land.⁹ This creates an unusual situation for both parties. Although Minnesota Statute 327C, helps to define the boundaries and legal rights for residents and park owners, the law is vague and many issues are overlooked.

B. The Latino Population

Currently within the state of Minnesota, 2.9% of the population identifies itself as Hispanic or Latino.¹⁰ Although this is significantly lower than the comparable rate for the United States, which is 12.5%,¹¹ the Latino population that exists is substantial and is an integral part of the state of Minnesota. Another major trend is that the number of Latinos has increased dramatically. In 1990, there were 53,884 Hispanic or Latino individuals living in the State of Minnesota, while in 2000 that number nearly tripled

⁴ Taken from 2004 HUD report: *Is Manufactured Housing a Good Alternative for Low-Income Families?*

⁵ 2003 HUD fair market rents.

⁶ 2003 HUD fair market rents; average of rates of two-bedroom apartments in Kandiyohi, Meeker, Pope, Todd, and Morrison counties.

⁷ 2000 U.S. census data.

⁸ 2004 HUD report: *Is Manufactured Housing a Good Alternative for Low-Income Families?*

⁹ 2000 U.S. census data.

¹⁰ 2000 U.S. census data.

¹¹ 2000 U.S. census data.

reaching 143,382.¹² It is thought that this trend will continue, and according to census data, “Minnesota’s nonwhite and Latino populations are projected to grow substantially faster than the white population.”¹³

The Latino population living in manufactured home parks is both substantial and increasing. According to a report by Centro Campesino and the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), 31% of migrant workers live in a manufactured home.¹⁴ Currently, within the 7-county metro, five percent of those who own their manufactured home are Hispanic or Latino.¹⁵ Latinos have a significant presence in Minnesota as a whole, as well as within manufactured home parks specifically.

¹² 1990 and 2000 census data.

¹³ A report by the Minnesota State Demographic Center, entitled *Minnesota Population Projections by Race and Hispanic Origin (2000-2030)*.

¹⁴ *Migrant Worker Housing: Survey Results from South Central Minnesota*.

¹⁵ 2000 U.S. census data compiled by HPP.

V. Disparities Arising From Race

In the following three sections of this report, three case studies will be analyzed. The first focuses on five parks in the city of Bloomington, located in Hennepin County. These include Lyndale Lodge, Collins Park, Shady Lane Court, Krestwood Mobile Home Park, and Southgate Mobile Village. Of these parks, only Krestwood and Southgate have not been closed. It is important to consider the city's trend of park closings, the attitudes of city officials towards parks, and the driving force behind the changes in these trends. Lyndale Lodge closed in 1986, and Collins Park closed in 1994 due to redevelopment for a car dealership and a Wal-Mart respectively. Shady Lane Court was shut down as of April 1, 2006 due to the redevelopment of the land into condominiums. This will lead to a more profitable use of the land, but it comes at the cost of an affordable source of housing. Krestwood Mobile Home Park and Southgate Mobile Village are both owned and operated by the same management company and are of relevance due to the racial composition of the parks. Southgate has just over 30% Latino households. Krestwood Mobile Home Park's households are approximately 3% Latino. City staff members have suggested that they have issues with Southgate that put it at risk of closing, but that Krestwood has a stable future.

The second of the three case studies will focus on parks in the communities surrounding the city and township of Shakopee in Scott County. Four parks are considered here: Bonnevista Terrace, Jackson Heights Trailer Park, Mobile Manor Park, and Valley Haven LLP. These parks are of interest due to their racial composition and the fact that only one park (Valley Haven LLP) falls within the city boundaries of Shakopee and therefore is the only park in this community to be covered by a park closing ordinance. This park closing ordinance guarantees relocation compensation in the event of a closure. The remaining three parks are specifically excluded from this ordinance, even if the city were to expand its boundaries.

The final case study of this report is the city of Melrose located in Stearns County. There are two parks within the city limits: Melrose Mobile Home Park and Rose Park. This case study is unique due to the rural location of the city. The strongly divided racial composition that exists between these two parks allows for a well-matched comparison of various disparities present in this community.

It is also important to note that statewide 10% of park residents are people of color.¹⁶ Taking this fact into consideration, it is disturbing to learn that 54% of the residents displaced due to park closings are people of color.¹⁷ It raises the question of why people of color are being displaced at a disproportionate rate.

¹⁶ Based on 2000 U.S census data.

¹⁷ Data collected from a survey by All Parks Alliance for Change (APAC) of seven parks.

IV. Methodologies

Various approaches were used to collect the information presented in this report. The following data were obtained through the use of property tax information: taxpayer's name, taxpayer's address, address of the property, tax value of the home, year, make and model of the home. Information on Shady Lane Court was gained from APAC files, much of which came directly from park residents through surveys or discussions. It is important to note that the number of Latino families stated is most likely an underestimation of the true number. Since the information was collected from property tax records, it is based only on those who own the homes, and not those who are renters. Also of relevance is that the numbers are based on families, not the number of individuals in each home. It is more common for Latinos to live with a larger number of family members, and for non-Latinos to live alone or with just a spouse. This trend contributes to an underestimation of the true Latino population within manufactured home parks. Maps of the parks (included in Appendix A) were obtained either from park management or online GIS systems primarily through county websites.

V. City of Bloomington

There has been an ongoing trend of park closings within the city of Bloomington located in Hennepin County. Currently, there are two manufactured home parks operating, although in recent years there have been as many as five parks. Krestwood Mobile Home Park and Southgate Mobile Village still exist, although Southgate is considered to be at risk of closing. Most recently, Shady Lane Court closed, displacing over fifty families. Other past closures include Lyndale Lodge and Collins Mobile Home Park. Even though Bloomington has a steady history of park closings, the city has been extremely inconsistent in how it approaches the closures.

The first park to close was Lyndale Lodge in 1986. Development pressures stemming from economic and financial opportunities resulted in the opening of a car dealership in the same location. Many park residents suffered financial losses because they were all displaced by the closure. The average homeowner had purchased her or his manufactured home for \$13,064,¹⁸ but experienced a 57% loss during the process of selling the home.¹⁹ The financial impact on residents was so distressing that it caused the Minnesota Legislature to pass a bill protecting park residents' rights in the event of a closure.²⁰ This bill became Minnesota Statute 327C.095, which ensures that residents are notified of a park closure at least nine months before closing, informed of the expected costs of moving, and given a list of parks within a 25-mile radius for possible relocation. Subdivision 4 under the current statute 327C.095 allows the municipality in which the park is located to require financial compensation to the residents. The city of Bloomington took advantage of this opportunity, and in 1989, a park closing ordinance was passed. Bloomington was the first city in the state to pass this type of ordinance. Clearly the closing of Lyndale Lodge gained the attention of the public as well as state and city officials, and as a result of their concern this legislation was passed in order to ensure that no community members would suffer the way these park residents had.

In 1994, Collins Mobile Home Park was sold and subsequently closed for redevelopment of the land. In the end, the park became the new location for the retailer Wal-Mart. This became the first opportunity for residents living in the city to exercise

¹⁸ Valued in 2005 dollars.

¹⁹ Hennepin County District Court File No: 94-15054.

²⁰ Minnesota Statute 327C.095 (1987) taken from Hennepin County District Court File No: 94-15054.

their rights gained as a result of the 1989 park closing ordinance. The court subsequently upheld the residents' ability to receive relocation compensation upon closure. It was because of the city that the park owners, Wal-Mart, and the developer (Arcadia Development Corporation) were held accountable for their decisions. Once again, the city gave support and recognition for the struggles of park residents, which resulted in a tangible, positive outcome for these community members.

The third park in this trend is Shady Lane Court, which closed on April 1, 2006. The circumstances surrounding this park closure were similar to the previous two, except in one major way: city officials frustrated rather than supported residents' efforts. This manufactured home park, unlike Lyndale Lodge and Collins Park, was overwhelmingly people of color (74%) and predominantly Latino (56%).²¹ There were many ways in which the city ignored the residents' concerns throughout this closure and redevelopment process. Shady Lane was being sold to a developer in hopes of creating mid- to high-priced condominiums. Residents attempted to keep their homes by working with a nonprofit organization in order to purchase the land. On June 1, 2005, closure notices were given to the park residents. These notices were distributed only in English, despite the fact that just 40% of people in the park were native English speakers.²² The city's support of the development project was demonstrated through its efforts to keep the closing process moving as quickly as possible. On June 27, 2005, Bloomington sent out notices for a public hearing, even though the law did not require that the hearing be held before the month of December. These notices were also in English only, despite the fact that the city was fully aware of the racial composition of Shady Lane. Officials did not initially provide an interpreter; this was done only after housing advocates brought the issue to the city's attention. Problems still arose, however, since in some cases, translations were only provided from Spanish into English for questions residents raised. The public hearing was held on July 14, and due to the lack of interpreting, many Latino park residents became frustrated and left. This insensitivity and lack of support from the city continued throughout the closing process as residents fought to save the park. On November 16, 2005, the mayor himself said that the fight to prevent the park closure was

²¹ According to surveys conducted by APAC staff.

²² APAC records.

the “most noble and just of causes,” but also said that, “I am not your champion.”²³ The mayor stated that the work people were doing was important, but that it was not something that he would concern himself with. At this same meeting, the mayor stated that “it’s time for a reality check; maybe some people can’t afford to live in Bloomington.”

The city continued to demonstrate its lack of support in another aspect of the situation. According to Minnesota legislation 327C.95 subdivision 6, residents have the ability to exercise what is called the right of first refusal. This states that within 45 days of receiving written notice of the purchaser’s intent to buy the land at a given price, residents have the opportunity to match the purchaser’s offer in order to buy the land themselves. In the case of Shady Lane, the residents, along with the help of Community Housing Development Corporation (a nonprofit affordable housing developer), were able to obtain the \$2 million purchase price of the land, but ended up short on the approximate \$500,000 needed for repairs within the park. The Minnesota Housing Finance Agency was contacted in an attempt to secure the remaining money, but when the city’s opinion on the matter was requested, officials replied that they did not support the potential funding. As a result of the above proceedings, over 50 families were displaced and forced to face a volatile future. It appears that in the minds of the city officials, something about Shady Lane was different from the other two parks; something about Shady Lane was not worth saving.

The city of Bloomington has also discussed the possibility of closing Southgate Mobile Village (30% Latino). City staff has stated on several occasions that as soon as Shady Lane has been “taken care of,” the goal is to “take care of” Southgate.²⁴ The last park in the city, Krestwood Mobile Home Park, is thought to have a secure and stable future.

Krestwood Mobile Home Park (3% Latino) is located on Lyndale Avenue in a quiet residential neighborhood. There are several entrances to the park, one from Lyndale Avenue and two from the backside of the park. Although there are no driveways, there is plenty of room on the wide streets for parking, and some homes have

²³ Taken from a meeting held for park residents, advocates, and the city of Bloomington.

²⁴ Taken from conversations between city staff and APAC staff.

reserved parking places. Near the main entrance to the park, there is a nice, white sign stating the name of the park. Behind this sign, is the office, which is a large house equipped with a garage. In the center of the neighborhood is a grassy area surrounding a quaint water fountain landscape. Not too far behind this, patio furniture and a picnic bench can be found. Many of the homes are arranged to create cul-de-sacs instead of straight rows, which greatly contributes to the neighborhood feel of the community. For the convenience of residents, there are several locations within the park for recycling and garbage drop-off, all of which are in enclosed structures for aesthetic purposes. Lawns and yards are well kept, and it appears that management does a nice job of maintaining the park overall.

Southgate Mobile Village differs from Krestwood in many ways. Southgate is also located on Lyndale Avenue, just two miles away, but is in a commercial district, and subsequently feels very out of place. The park is surrounded by an industrial neighborhood, which includes a large service and parts distribution center. A management office is located near the front entrance, but is not clearly marked. There is no sign displaying the name of the park. In the back, there is a large, unsightly dumpster in plain view. Old, broken fencing surrounds the park, and there are piles of tires and a junkyard nearby. Power lines run the length of the park, creating an unappealing look. The streets within the park are not well maintained and the speed bumps are worn with the yellow paint fading. Lot sizes appear to be smaller than Krestwood, and in general, there is a lot of clutter around the park.

Many similarities also exist between these two manufactured home parks. In Krestwood 98% of the residents own their home. The average home was built in 1974, and currently is valued at \$12, 245. Lot rent is \$360, with a \$25 application fee. Only 3.44% of the households are Latino. Southgate has a homeownership rate of 97.83%, nearly the same as Krestwood. The average year each home was built is also 1974, and the average value of these homes is \$8,278. Lot rent is \$325 for a singlewide home or \$360 for a doublewide. There is also an application fee of \$25. In Southgate, 30.4% of the families are Latino.

Table 1. Bloomington's Manufactured Home Parks

	Krestwood MHP	Southgate Mobile Village
Lot Rent	\$360	\$325 singlewide; \$360 doublewide
Homeownership Rate	98%	97.8%
Average Home Age	Built in 1974	Built in 1974
Average Home Value	\$12,245	\$8,278

In this situation, it is difficult to justify the disparities between the two parks for several reasons. These two parks reside on the same road and in the same city, so the location cannot explain the differences. Lot rent is nearly the same, as well as the year the home was built, so resident incomes are unlikely to be a factor. Another unique quality of this case study is that both parks have the same management. By driving through the parks, it is clear that the management disperses extremely unequal amounts of time and energy between the two parks. It is interesting to consider why one management company appears to implement varying management practices to similar parks, and why the city has chosen to target Southgate, and not Krestwood.

VI. City and Township of Shakopee

In Scott County, there are six parks currently open and operating. Four of these parks are within the limits of either the township or city of Shakopee. The parks of interest are Bonnevista Terrace, Jackson Heights Trailer Park, Mobile Manor Park, and Valley Haven LLP. These parks reside in a similar community, and are, in fact, all located within five miles of each other. In Bonnevista Terrace, only 9% of the households are Latino. For comparison, the households in Jackson Heights are 82% Latino. Clearly, there is a strong sense of racial polarization between these two manufactured home parks. It is beneficial to compare these two parks since the lot rent is only a twenty-dollar difference. The lot rent in Jackson Heights is \$375 with no application fee, and by comparison, Bonnevista charges \$395 a month with an application fee of \$25, the legal maximum a park can charge. Due to the relatively minor difference in lot rents, the subsequent disparities found cannot be the result of lower incomes buying a lower quality of life.

Bonnevista Terrace is located in a predominately residential area, and it has the positive qualities of residing in a somewhat isolated neighborhood. The park is set back from the highway, which reduces the levels of traffic noise. The back half of the park has a nice view overlooking the town. Upon entering the park, the first thing that visitors see is the large, nicely painted sign proudly displaying the name of the park. A large management office is located at the entrance of the park, fully equipped with locked mailboxes inside, as well as a beverage machine outside for the convenience of the residents. Continuing down the road, it is clear that each street within the park is well marked to ease navigation of the 200-lot park. Each home resides on a generously sized lot, so that residents are able to have a decent sized yard, a luxury that is often missing from manufactured home parks. Every lot also has a large, paved driveway with enough room for two cars. These yards are very well maintained, from the perfect lawns to the relatively common porches. Other amenities include a storm shelter, a playground fully equipped with swings and a small basketball court, and guest parking that is available on every street. The roads appear to have been newly paved, with speed bumps intact and well marked. All of these factors help to create a welcoming neighborhood atmosphere to the community.

In comparison, Jackson Heights (82% Latino, lot rent \$375) is a much different neighborhood in which to live. Located just two miles away from Bonnevista Terrace, the greater community is the same; however, within the parks many differences present themselves. Jackson Heights is relatively close to Highway 169, especially in comparison to Bonnevista. There is a sign stating the name of the park that is visible from the highway, but the entrance is not well marked. Since the front entrance is blocked off, access to the park must be obtained through a road that winds into the back. Jackson Heights sits among the busy highway, a truck station, a series of train tracks, and other businesses creating an industrial, not a residential neighborhood. Within the park, the roads are rundown in places; there are many potholes to avoid, and the speed bumps have lost their paint, making it difficult to see them. Mailboxes with key access are kept near the management office, which is a manufactured home. The signs and notices posted here are quite old, rendering many of them illegible. The dimensions of each lot are smaller than those in Bonnevista. The lots in general are not as well maintained, and if there is a driveway available, it is more than likely just large enough for one car, consisting of a combination of pavement and gravel. Although there is a small play area for children, it is extremely old and run down. The two swings and teeter-totter are aged, and the basketball hoops are broken with no nets.

Within Jackson Heights, there is a homeownership rate of 43%, the lowest of all parks included in this study. The fact that many homes are being rented may contribute to a low average home value of \$6,816. The average year these homes were built is 1974. In Bonnevista Terrace, 92% of residents own their own homes, and the value of the average home is \$22,080. Most homes in this park were built in 1986.

On April 28, 2006 a meeting was held for residents of Jackson Heights and Mobile Manor in order to discuss their concerns about the parks.²⁵ In the case of residents living in Jackson Heights, it became clear that the management of the park is not adhering to appropriate practices. None of the people who attended the meeting had a lease stating the rules within the park. These people were not aware of any other residents having leases. Despite the absences of these necessary legal documents, management continues to enforce various park rules. People in this park are unsure of

²⁵ Meeting held for residents by APAC staff.

their rights as manufactured home park residents. It is not clear as to why residents in Jackson Heights pay nearly the same in lot rent as Bonnevista residents (\$375 compared to \$395), when clearly they are not receiving the same amenities or beneficial management services.

The striking disparities found between these two parks simply cannot be the result of a twenty-dollar difference in lot rent. It has been argued that the disparities may be the result of the communities in which the parks are located, but this is not supported here since the two parks are only two miles apart in the same township.

This is not an isolated situation within the Shakopee area. A similar example can be found in the other two parks as well. Valley Haven LLP has a Latino population of 18%, whereas Mobile Manor's households are 65% Latino. Although, this is not as strongly divided as the previous case, it is evident that racial divisions are occurring. These two parks are also appropriate to compare due to similar lot rents and locations. Valley Haven's rent is \$290 a month with an application fee of \$25, and Mobile Manor has a lot rent of \$270, also with a \$25 fee to apply. The parks are located just over four miles from one another.

Valley Haven resides in a nice business district, directly in the city of Shakopee. In the surrounding area there are several upscale restaurants, a car dealership, a hotel, and other similar businesses. At the entrance of the park, there is a sign clearly stating that the property is Valley Haven LLP. Mailboxes with key access are located towards the front of the park, near the storm shelter and laundry facilities. Parking is available in the center of the park for apparently either residents or guests, which is convenient in order to compensate for the lack of driveways. The streets are relatively well kept and wide, creating a sense of space in the park. The speed bumps are in decent shape as well. Although the lots are not extremely large, they are kept up nicely with healthy lawns.

Mobile Manor, on the other hand, is located immediately off of Highway 169, making it difficult on occasion to turn into the park due to traffic. The sign for the park is quite old, and the name has completely faded away on one side. A series of high voltage transmission lines travel directly through the middle of the park, resulting in a potentially dangerous situation. There is a power substation right across the street from this manufactured home park, obviously creating a very unappealing view. The view from

the other side of the park includes an old wire fence with “keep out” postings, and a junkyard behind the fence. This is clearly not a residential neighborhood. The management office is located at the front of the park, and is the most valuable building on the property. The residents’ mailboxes are located near the entrance, and no key is necessary for access. The only storm shelter available is located in the basement of the management’s office or the “culvert in ditch,” according to the posting at the park entrance. There are many signs in the park prohibiting the following: guns, alcohol in the children’s playground, glass in playground, dogs, motorcycles, snowmobiles, soliciting, nonresident parking in many areas, as well as signs for towing notices, and one stating that the park is private property. These numerous warning signs are not found in other parks in the area. Not far from the location of many of these signs is the visitor parking area: a grassy section to the side of the road. Although there is a play area to one side of the park including a volleyball net, tire swings, and two basketball hoops, these amenities are not of high quality and are in much need of repair. When traveling through the park, it is impossible not to notice the cramped and enclosed feeling that results from the park being condensed into a small space. The roads are extremely narrow, and the speed bumps that do exist are not marked well. A road within the park is not paved, and the rest are quite dilapidated, with much gravel throughout. The individual lots are quite undersized, and consequently, homes sometimes reside within feet of one another. Lots are not well kept and grass is typically a rarity within the park. The small space that could be considered a yard is often used for resident parking, since no clear driveways are in existence.

In Mobile Manor, 92% of residents own their homes. The homeownership rate in Valley Haven is slightly lower at 84%. The average home value within Mobile Manor is \$10,460, with the average home being built in 1978. Valley Haven, in comparison, has an average home value of \$8,266, and these homes were built on average in 1973.

Once again, these salient disparities simply would not exist on the basis of a twenty-dollar difference in lot rent. It is often argued that these poor living conditions exist as a result of individuals lacking the money to afford to live in nicer neighborhoods. In this context, it must now be questioned as to why individuals living in the same community and paying nearly the same in rent are experiencing such inequalities.

In summary, within the city and township of Shakopee, the average rent in parks that are predominantly Latino is \$323, just under the average for non-Latino parks at \$343. The average home age for Latino parks is slightly lower than that of non-Latino parks: 1976 in comparison to 1980. The most extreme difference within the community of Shakopee is found when looking at the rates of home ownership in the manufactured home parks. The average rate for non-Latino residents is 91%, whereas, for Latinos, only 66% own their homes. This information is summarized in the following table.

Table 2. Community of Shakopee

	Latino Residents	Non-Latino Residents
Average Lot Rent	\$323	\$343
Average Home Age	Built in 1976	Built in 1980
Average Home Value	\$8,638	\$15,173
Homeownership Rate	66%	91%

An interesting item worth mentioning here is that of city park closing ordinances. City ordinances such as the one adopted by the city of Shakopee in 1999 (sec. 4.61) allow for relocation compensation for residents in the event of a park closure. Valley Haven LLP is the only park in this community that is directly within the city limits of Shakopee; the other three all reside within the township of Shakopee, and subsequently these residents are not protected by this ordinance in the case of a park closure. Two out of the three parks lacking protection are those that are predominantly Latino, which places the majority of Latino residents in a precarious living situation. Subdivision 12 of Shakopee’s ordinance, entitled *Applicability*, states that “this section applies only to the closing of manufactured home parks that are existing in the city as of the effective date of this section.” This amendment prevents these three parks from being included under this ordinance, even if the city were to expand its boundaries beyond the parks’ locations.

VII. City of Melrose

As previously stated, there are two manufactured home parks within the city of Melrose, located in Stearns County; these are Melrose Mobile Home Park and Rose Park. Melrose Mobile Home Park consists of 58 lots, and Rose Park has approximately 69 lots. Currently, there is no city ordinance for park closings. Despite these similarities, which create a good basis for comparison, many disparities are present between the two parks. Melrose Mobile Home Park is less than 6% Latino. The homeownership rate is 91%, slightly above the statewide average of 87%. The homes in Melrose Mobile Home Park were built, on average, in 1985, with the average home value just under \$17,000. Lot rent within this park is \$140 a month, and has no application fee.

In comparison, Rose Park has a resident population of 86% Latino according to property tax records, but in reality the park is closer to 95% Latino.²⁶ Only 67% of residents own their own home, which is 20% below the average for manufactured homes statewide. The average home was built in 1976, and the average home value is a little over \$7,000. Currently, the lot rent at Rose Park ranges from \$265 to \$285 a month, with no application fee.

Table 3. City of Melrose

	Melrose Mobile Home Park (6% Latino families)	Rose Park (86-95% Latino families)
Average Lot Rent	\$140	\$265-\$285
Average Home Age	1985	1976
Average home Value	\$17,000	\$7,000
Homeownership Rate	91%	67%

The values presented above do not fairly represent just how pervasive and detrimental the disparities truly are. Although Rose Park’s rent is around 100% higher

²⁶ The 95% statistic is based on personal contact with the park residents; the 86% is an underestimation due to the fact that it is derived from the homeowner population within the park, and subsequently excludes the 33% of the park that rents the homes.

than Melrose Mobile Home Park, the standard of living has deteriorated due to management's complete disregard for the residents' well being.

Rose Park is located relatively close to Interstate 94 near a truck repair center and other industrial centers. Roads within the park are not well maintained, with some having major holes in them, subsequently making it difficult to navigate the roads while driving. In the front of the park there are signs stating the private property status of the park, as well as prohibiting loud music, public drinking, loitering etc. There is no sign displaying the name of the park. The manager's office is located in the back of the park, near the mailboxes, which can be accessed with keys. Although there is much open space surrounding the park, no playground is available for the children. Drainage is a major problem within the park. Rain or melting snow creates ponds sometimes as large as entire yards. Residents within the park are troubled by frequent rent increases (nearly 100% in the past year), oftentimes without notice, unreliable and often nonexistent management services, inconsistent rules and regulations, and steadily declining conditions to coincide with the rent increases. Residents are paying more and more in rent, but it appears that little, if any, is being reinvested back into their neighborhood. It has been observed by residents that the park owner convinces children as young as six years old to pick up trash (sometimes including glass) in the park.

The families who rent their homes, as well as the lots, from management are suffering the most. According to people attending a park meeting on April 26, 2006, the conditions within these homes are appalling. Residents shared their experiences of management's indifference to common problems with cockroaches, mold, and other unwelcoming conditions that may be contributing to the unusual illnesses children in the park have experienced. Families are being forced to compromise their health and dignity as a result of the management's simple disregard for these human beings.

On the other hand, Melrose Mobile Home Park is a beautiful neighborhood, located in a residential area. They also experience the convenience of residing next to the community's schools. Open farmland surrounds the area, which contributes to the luxurious and spacious feeling. Within the park, everything is well kept and nicely run. Each home has a small lamp at the end of the driveway, creating a quaint atmosphere. Driveways and roads are nicely paved and are maintained well. There are relatively large

yards and room for storage within the park. A basketball court is conveniently located centrally to all homes. Some families even have garages. The management's office is located in a stick-built home behind the park.

Clearly, there are some extreme disparities between these two parks. The communities in which the parks reside are quite similar, since they are located approximately two miles away from each other. The most striking difference found between these parks is the racial composition. It is disturbing to question why residents in Rose Park have to pay twice as much as to live in hazardous conditions.

VIII. Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

Clearly, manufactured home park residents are facing many disparities as a consequence of their race. These disparities span a variety of types, from specific policy practices as in the city of Shakopee, to wavering degrees of support as demonstrated by Bloomington city officials, to appalling management practices in Melrose. Subsequently, each study highlights an alternate aspect of these disparities.

In order to reduce the inexcusable disparities found in parks, some simple steps must be taken. In the instance of Bloomington, adjustments need to be made within the city itself. Officials must review how practices have changed from the time of Lyndale Lodge and Collins Mobile Home Park to Shady Lane Court. The city should revert back to its supportive practices, and cease its unsupportive actions directed toward park residents. Also, legal action can be pursued to ensure the protection of the residents' human rights.

Another major change in Bloomington that must be implemented is improvement of management practices within parks. These employees need to question why there are rampant disparities between their two parks. It is essential that management companies conduct business in a professional manner that does not oppress certain groups of individuals. Residents of Southgate should understand where their rent money is going, and what they can demand in terms of standards of living.

The city of Shakopee has one major responsibility that it should attend to: change the existing ordinance to allow for the inclusion of all park residents if the city were to extend its borders. If the city were to extend its borders, there is simply no reason these residents should be excluded from the city ordinance. The city and township must also be aware of the conditions within the parks. When the living standards of people are reduced to such minimal levels, elected officials need to step in to prevent harm.

In the case of Melrose, the city should work with the owners to either drastically change the behaviors of management in Rose Park, or threaten to withdraw the license if practices are in conflict with state law. It is unacceptable to allow a group of residents to be taken advantage of in such an extreme manner, purely as the result of race and lack of familiarity with the English language. It is time that park owners are held accountable for their actions.

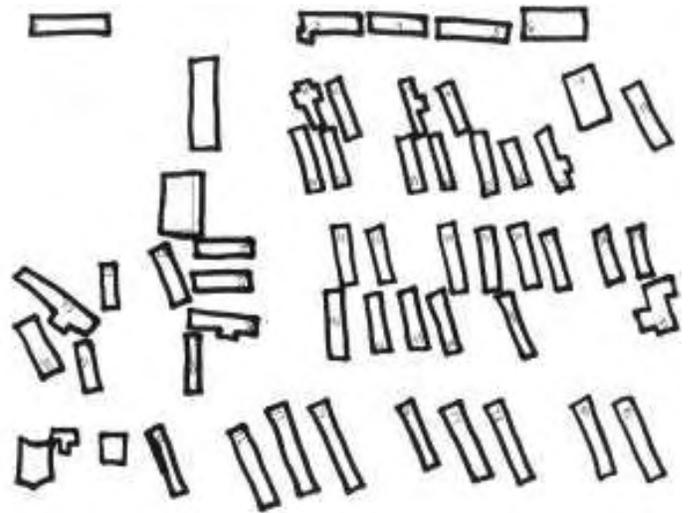
Racism is not simply a matter in intentional actions by individual actors. In examining the above case studies, a more subtle form of racial injustice is revealed. Although there may not be intentional discrimination on the part of government or private parties, the end result is stark segregation along racial lines. Not only are parks segregated, but also the quality of life in the parks is evidence of a discriminatory impact. While it is more difficult to pinpoint the solutions when it is not possible to identify individual bad acts, this is no excuse for what is obvious: living conditions are worse for Latino manufactured home park residents than for non-Latino manufactured home park residents. Correcting the issues presented above is the first step toward bringing justice to low-income people of color residing in manufactured home parks. It is the first step in a long process that must be undertaken in order to reverse these widespread disparities.

Appendix A



City of Bloomington: Maps of Manufactured Home Parks

Shady Lane Court



Krestwood Mobile Home



Southgate Mobile





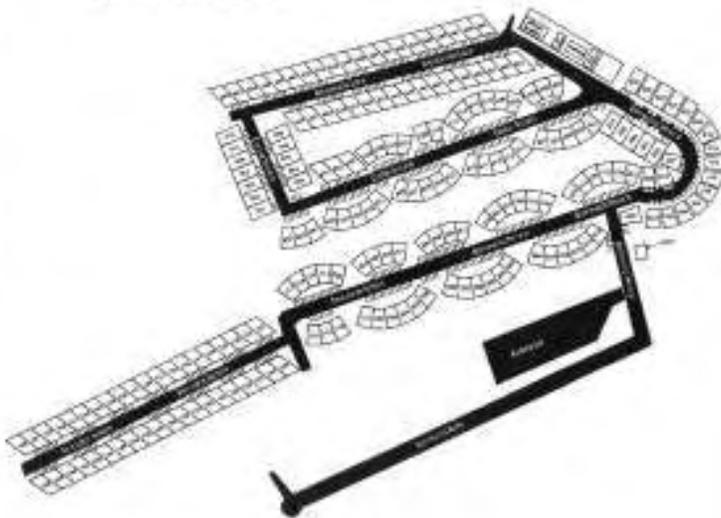
City and Township of Shakopee: Maps of Manufactured Home Parks

Jackson Heights Park



Bonnevista Terrace

Bonnevista Terrace Community





City of Melrose: Maps of Manufactured Home Parks

Melrose Mobile Home Park



Rose Park

