

# HOUSING CHOICE AND ACCESS IN THE EASTERN COACHELLA VALLEY:

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF HOUSING  
AMONG LOW-WAGE WORKERS

A COMPREHENSIVE PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE  
DEGREE OF MASTER IN URBAN AND REGIONAL  
PLANNING

BY

CHRISTIAN MENDEZ

CLIENT: KOUNKUEY DESIGN INITIATIVE  
ADVISOR: VINIT MUKHIJA



Disclaimer: This report was prepared in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master in Urban and Regional Planning degree in the Department of Urban Planning at the University of California, Los Angeles. It was prepared at the direction of the Department and of Kounkuey Design Initiative as a planning client. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Department, the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs, UCLA as a whole, or the client.

Acknowledgment: I'd like to thank my client Kounkuey Design Initiative (Chelina & Paola) and my advisor Vinit Mukhija for all the support on this journey. For believing in my vision for this project and allowing me to create a project that represents my community. I would like to thank all fellow POC students in the program for the constant support and encouragement in this journey. I would also like to thank everyone from the ECV who has supported me, all the companer@s!

Esto es para mi familia y para toda la gente del Valle Este de Coachella. Estamos aquí!

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	7
CHAPTER 2	INTRODUCTION	11
CHAPTER 3	LOCAL CONTEXT	14
	SPATIAL CONTEXT: EASTERN COACHELLA VALLEY	15
	HOUSING OF LOW-WAGE WORKERS IN THE ECV	15
	FARMWORKER HOUSING POLICY	18
	SOCIAL CONTEXT	19
	ACCESS	20
CHAPTER 4	HOUSING TYPOLOGIES	22
	DEFINING HOUSING TYPOLOGIES	23
	MOBILE HOMES	23
	APARTMENTS	24
	ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT	25
	STICK BUILT HOME	25
CHAPTER 5	RESEARCH DESIGN	27
	CASE STUDIES	28
	SURVEYS	28
CHAPTER 6	CASE STUDIES	29
	SALVADOR	30
	DIANA	34
	DONA JUANA	38
	LETICIA	42
CHAPTER 7	ANALYSIS	46
CHAPTER 8	RECOMMENDATIONS	53
CHAPTER 9	CONCLUSION	55
CHAPTER 10	APPENDIX	57



This page intentionally left  
blank.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Eastern Coachella Valley is one of the major agricultural areas of Southern California. Agricultural workers represent the area's main labor force but their work is characterized by low wages. In addition, they are impacted by difficult social and physical conditions which have made living an everyday struggle. The overwhelming majority of residents of the region are people of color, and most of them are low-income with limited housing choices. As residents navigate the housing landscape, many of their experiences are indicative of their larger social experiences in the Eastern Coachella Valley. There are over 200 individual mobile home parks in the Coachella Valley, and this housing typology has become a characteristic of the area. However, a variety of housing typologies exist in this community.

The focus of this project is to more holistically understand housing typologies and choices in the Eastern Coachella Valley by looking beyond availability data and rent price to the social, economic, and physical considerations that drive some to live in "unexpected" places or conditions. This is an ethnographic analysis of rural, low-wage workers and their housing choices in the Eastern Coachella Valley, CA (Thermal, Oasis, Mecca, and North Shore), and I seek to debunk commonly held perceptions and humanize the discussion around housing choice.

In this research, I examine various existing housing typologies, including accessory dwelling units (ADUs), mobile homes, stick-built homes, and apartments. I analyze the experiences of residents living in these typologies and seeks to understand the process by which they select their housing. Presently, there is a gap in the research exploring the dynamics and experiences of residents in the Eastern Coachella Valley as it pertains to housing and choice.

I utilize case studies as a source of qualitative data to understand the process that residents used to inform their housing choice. The case studies indicate that for residents of the Eastern Coachella Valley, housing choice is dramatically influenced by economic access and opportunity. What was most surprising is that, for some of the residents, their choice in housing was not due to affordability alone, but rather due to the financial flexibility that low-cost housing provided them. For the residents not able to access housing through program initiatives, their choices appeared to be more sensitive to fleeting opportunities, like a specific apartment opening or the sale of a mobile home.

My recommendations call for a set of initiatives that seek to improve housing quality for residents whose choices are limited by the various forms of access explored through this research. While it is the hope and dream of most residents to live in a stick-built home, the inability of all residents to afford this typology or to independently navigate these programs, limits access for a large array of residents. My recommendation includes the reinstatement of housing improvement programs that work with residents from mobile homes and ADUs, the expansion of mutual self-help housing programs, the exploration of rent-to-own apartments, incorporation of policies responsive to undocumented residents, and finally an increase in the minimum wage of low-wage workers.





Figure 1: Children from mobile home park seen playing, 2017

This page intentionally left  
blank.

# INTRODUCTION





# INTRODUCTION

The Eastern Coachella Valley is a region of hope and dreams, reflective of its residents' experiences and histories. A community whose history is interwoven with organizing efforts dating back to the 1973 United Farm Workers (UFW) Grape Boycotts and more recent efforts in environmental justice campaigns advocating for the rehabilitation of the Salton Sea. Buried in this landscape are some of the most complex set of issues, "environmental challenges in air quality, water quality, health challenges, lack of transportation and abysmal living and working conditions" (Jacobs and Minnehan, 2014).

The Eastern Coachella Valley is a predominantly agricultural region made up of four low-density communities that mainly house farm-working residents (See Figure 2). These communities are formed primarily around isolated mobile home parks that provide housing for low-income residents yet often lack infrastructure. The issues of housing in these communities are complex because poor housing conditions are exacerbated by a lack of alternative housing options. For many of the residents, their choices in housing are constrained by a multitude of factors. The purpose of this project is to uncover the housing landscape for low-wage workers in rural communities and explore how access informs the choice of housing. The following questions will be addressed in the research:

***How do farmworkers and other low-wage workers choose between different housing options?***

***How do economic, physical, and social access inform their decision?***

This study utilizes a qualitative research design, with a focus on case study interviews conducted with residents of the Eastern Coachella Valley. The

idea to focus on the case study interviews came from a literature review of the existing housing research focused on low-income workers in rural communities. This review revealed that there was a lack of community voices in the research. In order to fill in this gap, I focused on local experiences by interviewing residents and gathering oral histories. I began by creating specific geographic boundaries for the Eastern Coachella Valley. In order to more clearly define the often blurred confines for each of the different communities. The second step in this project was analyzing the various typologies that exist in the Eastern Coachella Valley and selecting the principal typologies to examine. To further document the home variations, a photo catalog of the various typologies was developed. Finally, I gathered supplemental surveys from residents living in the identified typologies to further inform the findings from the case studies. Three different forms of access are explored in the case studies, social, physical, and economic access. The three forms of access are used as a framework to understand the process and choice of housing for the various residents.

There is an unmet housing need for residents seeking to access safe and affordable housing. What the case studies suggest is that, for most residents, their choice in housing is influenced by a combination of the three forms of access utilized in this study. For all the participants, their choice in housing is as a result of the housing supply in the Eastern Coachella Valley. The dynamic between availability and access is key, as the current housing landscape suggests that most residents are currently living in mobile homes due to limited housing options.

My recommendations call for a set of housing initiatives to improve housing quality for residents whose choices are limited by the various forms of

access explored through this research. While it is the hope and dream of most residents to live in a stick-built home, the inability for all residents to afford this typology independently, or to navigate these programs, limits access for the majority. I recommend that the County of Riverside focuses on developing a program that works with residents to improving housing conditions of mobile homes and ADUs. To achieve this, the County would need to reinstate the mobile home rehabilitation program and the implement policy that protects residents against park closures. To further improve the housing experience of residents, there must be an increased effort in providing appropriate housing programs for undocumented residents of the Eastern Coachella Valley. For most residents, their ability to navigate housing programs tethers on their inability to engage in programs that require citizenship and credit records. Additionally, my recommendations include the expansion of mutual self-help housing programs, the exploration of rent to own apartments, and finally the increase of minimum wage among low-wage workers.

My report first provides context for the Eastern Coachella Valley and its housing landscape. I then explore the concepts of access and the varying definitions and roles that these have in housing choice. I proceed to define and conceptualize the existing housing typologies of the Eastern Coachella Valley, providing context, history, and characteristics. With context for the varying housing typologies, I proceed to the case studies and analysis. My report ends with recommendations for policies and programs in the Eastern Coachella Valley.



Figure 2. Map of Coachella Valley



# LOCAL CONTEXT





## Spatial Context: Eastern Coachella Valley

The Eastern Coachella Valley is a set of four unincorporated communities in Riverside County: Mecca, Thermal, Oasis, and North Shore (see Figure 3). Combined, these communities encompass 47 square miles and have a total population of 22,000, according to U.S. Census Data (U.S. Census Bureau). Nearly 65 percent of all residents live at or below the 200% poverty line (Jacobs and Minnehan, 2014). To further understand conditions, it is imperative to understand the history of this community and understand how it came to be what it is now. These rural communities historically formed around the presence of agriculture employment opportunities for newly migrated residents. The communities first began to form as braceros, Mexican laborers allowed into the US for a limited time as seasonal agricultural workers, arrived in the Coachella Valley between the years of 1942 and 1964 (Paiz, 2016). During this period, braceros began to establish roots and seek housing, and many landed in informal settlements made up of mobile homes surrounding agricultural land.

By 1990, Riverside County published a consolidated plan showing that 19 percent of the county's existing housing stock was composed of mobile home parks, representing 74,561 units ("Coachella Valley Agricultural Housing"). After the passing of the 1992 bill AB 3526, commonly known as the Polanco Bill, there was an increase in the development of mobile home parks meant to serve farmworkers (Coachella Valley Agricultural Housing). This bill allowed the formation of mobile home parks (MHPs) under the qualification that there be no more than twelve units and made these as exempt from business taxes, local registration fees, and conditional use permits ("Coachella Valley Agricultural Housing"). As Mukhija and Mason describe, Polanco parks began to populate the Eastern Coachella Valley due to their affordability

and the lack of oversight which allowed many of the undocumented residents in the community to access them for housing (2015).



Figure 3. Map of Eastern Coachella Valley

## Housing of Low-wage workers in the Eastern Coachella Valley

The housing experience of low-wage workers is of specific interest. A study conducted by Vallejo on farmworker housing conditions in North Carolina demonstrated a trend of substandard conditions and lack of housing standards enforcement (Vallejos, et al., 2011). This lacking enforcement has led to many cases in which poor housing conditions are cited for closure of specific mobile home parks (Jacobs and Minnehan, 2014). Though, as Mclean describes, this lack of enforcement reflects the view of these marginalized groups, illustrating that "migrant workers have extremely limited rights; as non-citizens, they are permanent outsiders" (2014, p. 10). This provides a new viewpoint to understand the housing conditions of farmworkers in the Eastern Coachella Valley, one in which we must consider the social constructs attached to migrant farmworkers. As Benson explains, this population is excluded from rights and protections, leading to squalid living conditions (Benson, 2008).

As Arcury further explains, farmworker housing is not only an issue of housing, but issues of environmental health and justice that are heightened by limited access to housing (Arcury, Jacobs, and Ruiz, 2015). In the Eastern Coachella Valley, these issues are complicated, as the communities are predominantly zoned for agricultural use. For these residents, MHPs become their sole option when a supply of alternative housing is not available.

As a result, many families and individuals have created their own supply of housing and built Polanco parks (Mukhija and Mason, 2015). These Polanco parks are created in the years after 1992 from the same policy that had allowed farmers to build housing for their laborers. As Mukhija explains, small groups of farmworkers used the bill to develop “informal mobile home communities” (2015, p.8) (see figure 4). These informal communities ranged in scale, growing in an un-monitored form. Many of the Polancos that formed around this time based around families who had pooled their money and purchased a property for the whole family, including siblings, cousins, and parents. One such example explored by Mukhija is Rancho Don Antonio, where siblings had joined together to build a MHP that would house their whole family (Mukhija and Mason, 2015).



Figure 4. Highlighted in yellow are cluster of Polanco Parks in Oasis

These forms of MHPs are prominent in the Eastern Coachella Valley and come to be known as simply by the last name of the family; Los Duartes, Los Castros,

Gutierrez Ranch, Galarza Ranch, amongst many others.

While these family-oriented MHPs represent one of the types that exist, there are others that have grown at a much faster scale. One such example is Duroville, a mobile home park which required federal intervention to address poor living conditions. At the time of its closure, it housed 4,000 people, most of whom were Purépechan, an indigenous group from Michoacan in Mexico (Maranyeli, 2018). Conditions cited at this MHP stemmed from lacking infrastructure, such as failing wastewater, inaccessible dirt roads, and poor utility services. Interior conditions were also terrible with many homes lacking proper temperature control, exposing residents to lead paint and showing overall dilapidation as most mobile homes dated to the 1970s (see figure 5).



Figure 5. Photo showing Duroville mobile home  
Source: Press Enterprise

Many of these residents either had purchased a mobile home and would pay rent for the space or would pay additionally for the unit. When the MHP closed in 2009 as a result of the federal ruling, evictions spurred the development of another mobile home park, Mountain View Estates. Mountain View Estates boasted all new units, in essence providing residents with a brand new neighborhood and amenities unseen through the rest of the community (see figure 6). Each resident displaced by the closure of Duroville received a new mobile home in Mountain View Estates. The Duroville MHP focused national attention on housing conditions in the Eastern Coachella Valley and brought a specific spotlight



to other MHPs in the area. At this point, Riverside County began specific efforts focused on the issue of farmworker housing, which can be thought of as a result of the national spotlight on Duroville.



Figure 6. Mobile home unit from Mountain View Estates.

## Role of Self-Help Housing and Low-Income Apartments

Self-help housing programs have a history dating back to the 1930s, with contemporary self-help housing for farm workers dating back to the 1960s in Goshen, California (HAC, 2004). "Self-help housing means homes built wholly or in part by their purchasers. In the mutual self-help model, families organize, or are organized, to work together and collectively build each other's homes sometimes called sweat equity, making purchasing a home affordable for a family with a very low income, because the purchaser's labor reduces the cost of the house" (Housing Assistance Council, 2004, p.9).

In the Eastern Coachella Valley, self-help housing is of significance due to the role that these programs have played in the creation of accessible housing developments. For low-income workers in the Eastern Coachella Valley seeking access into homeownership, self-help programs tend to be the best available path (Mukjia and Railton, 2013). Though, as Mukjia and Railton explore, these programs have a flaw as their housing designs and cost have come to exceed the financial constraint of low income residents (2013).

As Mukjia mentions in his article examining affordable housing development, "developers of mutual self-help housing are facing challenges in targeting their programs to their originally intended beneficiaries: modest-income farmworkers" (pg. 12, 2014). There are many challenges facing the development of affordable housing, if the development process cannot address issues associated with increased construction costs there will be continued inaccessibility for low-income workers.



Figure 7. Highlighted in yellow are cluster of Apartments in Mecca

Redevelopment Agencies (RDAs) in California are of specific interest to examine housing in the Eastern Coachella Valley, RDAs were established with the purpose of providing local governments the power to declare neighborhoods as blighted. This would lead to state investment, including a provision by which 20% of all funds needed to create low-income housing (Blount et al., 2014). Jacobs and Minnehan (2014) share that with the loss of the California Redevelopment Program in 2012, there was a major loss of funding for affordable housing.

The housing landscape reacted with a decreased interest in the development of new affordable housing projects. Importantly, most low-income housing projects in the Coachella Valley have been primarily developed by one developer, Coachella Valley Housing Coalition (CVHC, 2019). CVHC's interest in developing low-income apartment housing has resulted in the development of more than 1,700 units



in 26 developments, with around 300 units in the Eastern Coachella Valley. Importantly many of these units in the Eastern Coachella Valley have restrictive policies that prioritize farmworker residents.



Figure 8. Highlighted in yellow are cluster of Stick built homes in Mecca

While this is one of the social groups that is most marginalized, these policies end up leaving the kids of these farmworkers ineligible for the same housing. With a change in generation, most of these children are not continuing to be employed in farm labor, yet they still face similar challenges when it comes to accessing housing.

Currently, some housing advocates in the Coachella Valley focus on the creation of housing projects through grant funding while others focus on the improvement of housing conditions for residents living in mobile home parks. This creates tension as a result of the portrayal of mobile home parks as slums from housing developers.

## Farmworker Housing Policy

A mobile home park is defined as “any area or tract of land where two or more mobile home lots are rented or leased” (Permit Requirements for Mobile Home Parks, 2006, p.1). In the Eastern Coachella Valley, there are over 2000 mobile homes, representing the largest supply of housing in the Eastern Coachella Valley (Jacobs and Minnehan, 2014). There is an element of

informality with mobile homes; while it may be the largest supply of housing, most mobile home parks have never been permitted (Consolidated Plan for Riverside County, 2018 p. 70). The County has tried to address this issue by assigning staff and creating commissions that focus on the issue of unpermitted mobile home parks (Consolidated Plan for Riverside County, 2018 p. 69). While there have been some parks that have been able to address permitting issues they have only been a small subset.

AB 3526 (Polanco Bill) is the legal basis for the development of most mobile home parks in the Eastern Coachella Valley. Through the establishment of this policy, workers in the Eastern Coachella Valley were able to access housing by building their own MHPs, helping to increase the supply of available housing in the process. The intersection between housing policy and its residents continues to be dependent on the relationship that exists between residents and official policies. As reported in the City of Salinas, “workers were frequently victims of the current policies in effect at all levels of government” (“Farmworker Housing Study and Action Plan for Salinas Valley and Pajaro Valley”, 2018, p.7). This relationship is key in the way we think of the policies that are created with this community in mind. Through advocacy, some efforts from The California Endowment identified potential funding sources and solutions through *Improving Housing Conditions in the Eastern Coachella Valley*, a housing report in which focused on the conditions of MHPs. Bill funding included SB 391, the California Homes and Jobs Act (a permanent source of funding for affordable housing), and SB 1 (Sustainable Communities Investment Authority) (Jacobs and Minnehan, 2014).

One specific recommendation made by the California Institute for Rural Studies (CIRS) notes that the housing gap present is not only dependent on local capacity to build, but also on the conditions that restrict the development of affordable housing (“Farmworker Housing Study and Action Plan for Salinas Valley and Pajaro Valley”, 2018). Riverside

County identified recommendations to implement a policy that would facilitate the process for the County to work with MHP owners in providing technical assistance for permitting through the Mobile Home Tenant Loan Assistance Program, which is no longer operating ("Coachella Valley Agricultural Housing"). Specific farmworker housing policy has, for the most part, been eliminated or reduced; much of the funding utilized to fund programs stemmed from the now-defunct California Redevelopment Agency (LoPresti, 2012).

As a farmworker housing assessment for Napa County notes, "it is likely that some of the available subsidized permanent housing, where federally subsidized, including affordable housing units designated for farmworker households, is not available to many farmworkers, as about 50 percent of the farmworker survey respondents indicated they are undocumented workers" ("Final Report: 2012 Napa County Farmworker Housing Needs Assessment", 2013, p.61). The documented status is of importance as a majority of programs require citizenship documentation, making these programs inaccessible to this population.

## Social Context

The social context of the Eastern Coachella Valley must be situated to best understand the housing policy that has allowed for the undersupply of affordable housing for the residents of this community. *Inequality and health among foreign-born Latinos in rural borderland communities* provides an analysis of inequalities and a understanding of the relationship between socio-cultural and social systems (Cheney, Newkirk, Rodriguez, and Montez, 2018). It is in this relationship that we begin to think of the way social life develops at the cusp of this interaction between systems. A reflection of housing leads us to think of housing not only as a physical structure but as a result of multiple interactions and intersectional issues that are translated into the use and definition of this physical structure.

To fully understand the form and type of housing that people are prioritizing, social researchers must understand the relationship that is present between housing and migration. Community building and placemaking are two specific things that are developed as a direct result of the people that inhabit these communities; the communities have changed as a response to the residents that have made the Eastern Coachella Valley their home. Garcia notes, "as immigrants enter communities—and especially new destination communities—they are agents in reshaping the social, cultural, economic, and physical landscapes of the places that they inhabit" (Garcia and Schamalzbauer, 2017, p.17). Embedded in this creation of space is the role that migrants play in the development of communities that reflect their needs (Cheney, Newkirk, Rodriguez, and Montez, 2018).

Flores and Lastra explore the role of the "Paisanos", a term referring to migrants who are from the same town, region, or even country (Flores-Yeffal and Aysa-Lastra, 2011). Flore and Lastra explore the importance of the "Paisanos" not only in helping to create communities but in providing access. The role of the Paisanos in many of these communities becomes not only to serve as a landing space for newly immigrated community members, but also to help these residents assimilate and provide access to services. As new residents come to the Eastern Coachella Valley Paisanos become a support for new residents as they seek housing by providing temporary housing as well as information for housing opportunities. Paisanos are responsible for the creation of social support networks influencing the housing choices of individuals in the Eastern Coachella Valley. Places of origin and relationships that are established not only provide a support network for migrants, but also access to social capital (Flores-Yeffal and Aysa-Lastra, 2011).

As explored in previous literature, social capital is the access point into a community through relationships that already exist, resulting in cohesion and solidarity. A strong sense of community ultimately shapes

whether a resident feels that there is enough of a support system to allow them to think of their new community as a home. An added dimension that helps us understand migration is the role of family and personal networks in determining trajectories and patterns. Boyd explores the role of these networks in increased migration patterns from specific countries (Boyd, 1989). Boyd notes that “personal networks in migration reveal the social relations in migratory behavior. It provides insight to composition, direction and persistence of migration flows” (Boyd, 1989, p.25).

In the context of Chicago, Carrillo, Pattillo, Hardy, and Acevedo-Garcia list specific constraints that are factors in choosing housing (2016). These included financial constraints, unplanned moves, limited transportation, and immigrant or undocumented status. While social networks are not unique to low-income Hispanic or immigrant households, they are a core to this research because of the relation between social networks and housing. Social networks appear to be determinants of housing choice among immigrants, influencing decisions that immigrant might make (Carrillo, Pattillo, Hardy, and Acevedo-Garcia, 2016). Homogeneous and geographically bound social networks are also examined. These are of interest, as they can begin to explain spatial patterns that exist amongst residents and the locations in which they chose to live.

Homogenous bounded social networks are something that must be understood when thinking of the patterns that continue to remain long after a specific wave of immigrants has passed.

While home ownership can also be a result of a level of access to resources, access to social networks and support systems can also allow for the ownership of homes by Latino community members (Flores-Yeffal and Aysa-Lastra, 2011). Social capital is made up of the links between individuals and shared information; it is through this information sharing that social capital is created. As individuals form these connections with other members of their community, there is an increase in their ability to solve

problems. “The relationship between friends and family members and have either ignored the role of Paisanos as providers of social capital or have used them in the analysis as an existent but not significant potential source of social capital” (Flores-Yeffal and Aysa-Lastra, 2011, p.2). Social capital among residents and Paisanos creates a system that allows residents to access housing, by creating collective knowledge and communities. The knowledge that is developed among Paisanos allows unexperienced residents with this social capital to gain access into the process of homeownership.

## Defining Access

For this project, the definition of access is, a characteristic that determines the housing options that residents can choose from. The definition of access is essential as it provides a framework to understand how access or lack thereof may heavily influence resident’s housing choices. As residents navigate among housing options economic, social, and physical access inhibit complete freedom in choice. As residents choose among their options they are faced with The topic of access is increasingly important and a determinant of housing choice among residents.

Housing choice is the decision residents make given the options and various forms of access. For residents, their housing selection is less of a result of them choosing among different options, but rather a choice made while understanding constraints. As Ledesma notes, “farmworkers earn below the poverty guidelines of the federal government, resulting in the inability of most this population to afford decent housing” (Ledesma, 2005 p. 1). For residents, their inability to afford decent housing illustrates how access becomes a determinant of choice. Three different types of access are considered in this project—economic access, social access, and physical access.

Economic access can be thought of in two distinct



ways, the first being the resident's ability to financially access housing due to the cost, and the second pertaining to the relation between housing cost and disposable income. For some residents, their choice in housing is a direct result of their ability to pay rent. For the second set of residents, their housing choice is not only influenced by cost but also by their choice in maintaining financial flexibility. Economic access can determine the quality of housing; as income increases, the quality of housing that becomes available to residents improves. Economic access is the main determinant of where individuals will live, and for families in the Eastern Coachella Valley, it can be a determinant of the specific community in which they reside (Nelson, 2007).

Social access denotes the ability of the resident to engage and be part of social relationships with a community. McLean shares that it is imperative that migrant worker housing support community building (McLean, 2014). Social networks are key when we begin to think of the relationship between residents and a community. Particularly, when thinking of the Eastern Coachella Valley, migrant social networks become of interest in understanding the connections and social capital that are present amongst residents. The article by Eileen Diaz and Enrico Marcelli, *Buying into the American Dream? Mexican Immigrants, Legal Status, and Homeownership in Los Angeles County* explains the concept of social capital and assimilation (McConnell and Marcelli, 2007, p. 204). According to the theory examined by the authors, social capital reflects on the "non-material assets" and social networks built among immigrants. These social networks are of interest as we explore the relationship between social networks and housing choice. Through these relationships we can understand that people that more likely to move to a community in which they have a social networks.

Physical access is defined as what residents can access

via the modes of transportation available to them. Physical access denotes geographical space in which homes are located, resulting from the relationship between employment hubs in the Eastern Coachella Valley and housing communities that have spurred from housing needs (Sanoff, 2000). Communities like Ave 70 MHP and Ave 76 MHP, two mobile home parks in the community of Oasis, are a direct result of the agricultural employment opportunities that exist in Oasis. With ability for housing creation through the Polanco Bill, there has been a spur of mobile home parks developed around specific agricultural plots. Physical access must also consider the limitations placed on residents because of the location of their home. As previously explored, housing in the Eastern Coachella Valley is characterized by sporadic patterns of scattered housing through the region. For many residents, this has resulted in living in communities isolated from most services. Communities like North Shore and Oasis are on the edge of the Coachella Valley, spatially isolating residents from centralized resources and existing infrastructure. Physical access both creates opportunities and limitations that result because of the geographic location of the various typologies.

## Summary

To understand the topic of housing in the Eastern Coachella Valley, it is imperative to understand social conditions as well as the history of the community and the housing policy landscape. The history reveals the trajectory of residents, from the point of them coming to the Eastern Coachella Valley to the point when families become established. Through this process, families have engaged in the housing landscape and navigated residency and homeownership. In this context, housing represents not only a physical structure but an element that has created community among the many residents that have come to call the Eastern Coachella Valley their home.

# HOUSING TYPOLOGIES



## Defining Housing Typologies

Housing can be roughly defined as the physical buildings in which people live, though this definition presents a one-dimensional view that lacks physical attributes exploring quality, scale, and type. In order to fully understand analysis, there is a need to better understand the variations that exist among housing typologies in the Eastern Coachella Valley. Exploring typologies allows us to best analyze and conceptualize the use of housing within the communities of the Eastern Coachella Valley. Typologies are completely distinct models of housing, and while each at its core fulfills the definition of housing it is in the variations of use and access that distinction are best seen. The topic of typologies bridges both the social use of space as well as the built form that distinctly separates each model of housing as its own.

### Mobile Homes

Mobile homes are prefabricated structures, attached to a raised mobile base; mobile homes are often referred to as trailers due to their movable feature. The range of mobile homes includes newly manufactured units, but over 50 percent of all units date back to the 1980s (Jacobs and Minnehan, 2014). The physical conditions of these units tend to show decay, as most were not made to be used and maintained for over 20 years. Decaying conditions include failures in proper ceiling infrastructure, deteriorating floors, and general structural issues that make living conditions continually worse. "Mobile homes, because of different materials and construction technology, have in the past not been as durable as traditional stick-built homes. Repairs may be more difficult for the same reasons" (Consolidated Plan for Riverside County, 2018 p. 70). Most mobile homes have been passed around families and continually upgraded as they age. Overall, mobile homes have provided an accessible form of housing for most residents of the Eastern Coachella Valley due to their financial accessibility and minimum requirements for rental and ownership.

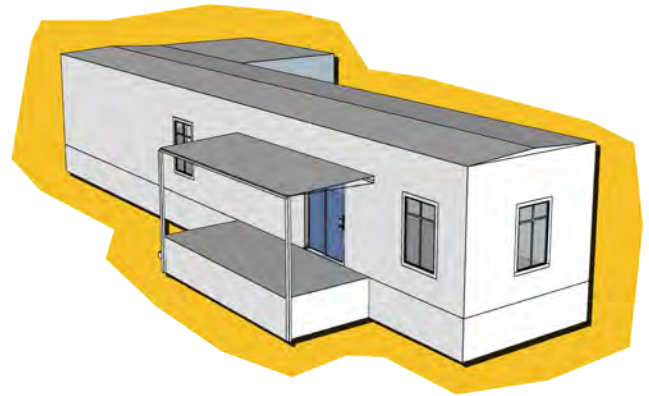


Figure 9. Model of Mobile Home

There are many variations of Polanco parks, ranging in housing quality, investment, permitting status. One of the most critical factors that differentiates Polanco parks is whether they connect to water and sewer infrastructure. Many Polancos in the Eastern Coachella Valley face issues around inadequate infrastructure given how these parks formed, with many of these forming without forethought for significant infrastructure. As the parks have grown, these shortcomings have become more significant issues that impact the quality of life of residents.



Figure 10. Mobile Home located in family ranch in Oasis

The layout of mobile homes varies, and whether the Polanco is family-owned or owned for-profit generally dictates the layout of units within a property. Family-owned Polanco parks are often characterized by more spacious distribution of homes throughout the parcel; the resulting open spaces allow owners to create shade structures, gardens, and storage units, among other things (Mukhija and Mason, 2014). In



contrast, Polancos built for-profit are organized with efficiency as the principal consideration for the space. These units will sit next to each other with minimal space between them, which can lead to various issues, including the quick spread of fire between units.

It is important to identify a separate variation of mobile home parks that developed in the area as part of a plan to increase the stock of affordable housing for residents of the Eastern Coachella Valley. Due to their low cost of manufacturing and development CVHC has invested in the creation of mobile home parks (“Coachella Valley Housing Coalition History”). These mobile home parks differ from Polancos because the projects are developed with infrastructure seen in most housing developments, including services from municipal systems and paving. The development of these mobile home parks has resulted in 250 individual mobile homes. One of these parks is Paseo De Los Heroes II, located in the community of Mecca, which was financed through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program. Though, as many residents describe, these homes are still just mobile homes whose rental offers no future security for their families.

## Apartments

All apartments in the Eastern Coachella Valley are in the communities that have the most significant growth—Mecca and Thermal. Both communities have structured development that has centered around a specific, relatively dense area.

Population density in these two communities has created the conditions necessary for the development of affordable apartments for low-income residents by the Coachella Valley Housing Coalition (“Coachella Valley Housing Coalition History”).

Geographically, these apartment complexes have been constructed in the perimeter of the densest areas of these communities, clustering among similar types of development.



Figure 11. Model of Apartment Building

There are over ten low-income apartment complexes throughout the community of Mecca. These complexes have an average of 80 units per site distributed among multiple buildings (see figure 9). (“Affordable Housing Directory for the Coachella Valley”, 2018). Mecca is the community in the Eastern Coachella Valley with the highest number of apartments in general; this is the result of the ease of developing in a neighborhood with plenty of vacant parcels that are already connected to major infrastructure. The last decade has seen increased interest in the development of housing projects in Mecca, and the majority have taken the form of apartment complexes (“Coachella Valley Housing Coalition History”).



Figure 12. Apartment Complex in Mecca

From the perspective of residents, the major question surrounding apartments is what these developments offer residents that are seeking ownership and stability. For most residents, apartments fail to address these concerns, creating a stigma by which

apartments are seen as form of transitional housing. Without the ability to control rents, residents are particularly vulnerable to sudden hikes.

## Accessory Dwelling Unit

An ADU is a secondary dwelling unit within a residential parcel. There are generally three forms of ADUs, detached, attached, and repurposed existing spaces. There is a gap in research in the conditions of most ADUs in the Eastern Coachella Valley, and the number of total units that exist is currently unknown.

**Detached:** The unit is separated from the primary structure (see figure 13)

**Attached:** The unit is attached to the primary structure

**Repurposed Existing Space:** Space within the primary residence (e.g., garage, master bedroom) is converted into an independent living unit

(California Department of Housing and Community Development, 2019)

ADUs are characterized not by the type of construction, but rather by the relationship to other units within the site. Most ADUs in the Eastern Coachella Valley are detached (as opposed to the other two forms). In the context of the Eastern Coachella Valley, these exist for various purposes, from those that have are built with the interest of renting them out, to units built for the purpose of housing family members. The physical form varies, with many of the units being newly constructed.

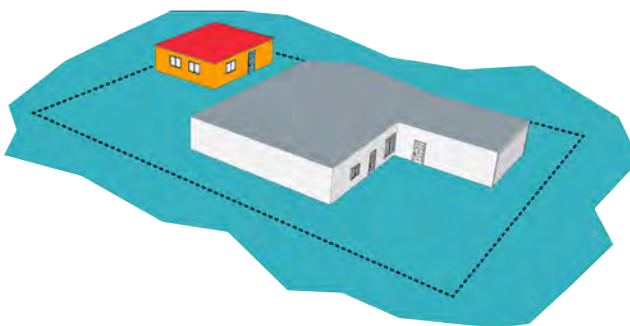


Figure 13. Model of ADU

Another variation of ADUs present use small mobile homes as secondary units within a parcel. In many cases, as many as four mobile home units are placed within a backyard. These small mobile homes are often rented to farmworkers that are in the area for the short term, or to single occupants that have come to settle in the Eastern Coachella Valley.



Figure 14. Photo of ADU in Mecca

Another physical variation of ADUs seen in the Eastern Coachella Valley are units built on foundations with wood framing. These ADUs are primarily constructed without permitting and built in secrecy in the backyard of a main unit. Geographically, these ADUs are mostly seen in the communities of Mecca and Thermal. The primary challenge that affects ADUs is their inability to meet housing codes due to the construction methods for most units.

## Stick Built Home (Traditional framed home)

Stick built homes are units that are constructed atop a foundation with a stick-built frame (see figure 13). This typology of home has commonly gained the general term of "house" and come to represent the majority of single-family units ("Consolidated Plan for Riverside County ", 2018). There are a few variations of this typology that exist in the Eastern Coachella Valley, with some units in the communities of Mecca and Thermal being several decades old. These homes can be thought of as the first wave of formal housing developments in these communities. Specifically, in the community of Mecca, most stick-built homes were

owned by Filipino families and eventually came to be owned by Bracero families (Paiz, 2016). Similarly, in Thermal, some of the older housing stock was built by the first Mexican families that came to inhabit the community, and many of these homes remain.

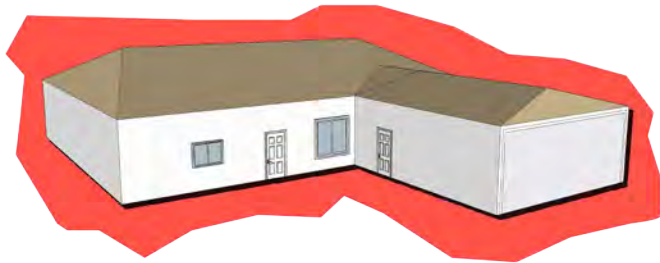


Figure 15. Model of Stick Built Home

The second development phase of stick-built housing began with the development of low-income housing programs like those operated by CVHC (“Coachella Valley Housing Coalition History”). While these programs have provided many residents with long term housing, they have not been entirely accessible, as demand has exceeded their supply. For many of the residents, their desire to be part of this program has been affected by the extended waitlist, which can last from 6 months to multiple years.



Figure 16. Stick Built Home in Thermal

## Conclusion

These housing typologies in the Eastern Coachella Valley allow us to understand the housing landscape in the region better. While there is a specific focus on the process by which residents choose their housing, it becomes as essential to understanding the relationship that exists between the various typologies and residents. With a limited stock of housing available in this region, changes in availability within one specific typology will affect the other typologies. As residents choose among the various typologies, their choices are many times informed by the economic access and long-term stability offered by each of the studied typologies.



# RESEARCH DESIGN



# RESEARCH DESIGN

The methodology is built around of qualitative data gathered from residents of the Eastern Coachella Valley. Highlighting narratives from residents. I divide the methodology into two different components that function conjunctively with each other—case study interviews and surveys. Data collection was staggered in order to use the responses from the case study interviews to inform the survey. Identification of participants occurred with the support of two local organization, Kounkuey Design Initiative and PUCDC. The collected data is analyzed to identify similarities and differences among the responses of participants representing the same typologies in terms of challenges, motivations, and access. Through this analysis, I clarify an understanding of how access has intersected with housing choice. This analysis seeks to go beyond economic access to understand how other elements, such as social and physical access, intersect to result in the specific decisions made by individuals.

## Research Questions

*How do farmworkers and other low-wage workers in the Eastern Coachella Valley choose between different housing options?*

*How do economic, physical, and social access inform or constrain their decision?*

## Case Studies

The first portion of the methodology consists of interviews with four individuals, each representing a single typology. Participating residents shared a narrative history of their housing background as well as influences in their decision making. The interview primarily focuses on collecting a narrative history of the participant's housing background and decision making. The structure of these interviews allows for follow-up questions to uncover information that would put the responses in context. Participants' names have been changed to protect their privacy.

Eastern Coachella Valley Housing: An Ethnographic Study of Experience

## Survey

The second portion of the methodology consists of follow-up surveys with residents from the different typologies. Forty residents were surveyed with the purpose of highlighting patterns in the data gathered through the case studies. Sampling occurred across multiple generations to highlight multi-generational use of housing by older residents as well as younger families and individuals. Data collected during this phase of the research allows for the examination of themes and findings from the case studies across a larger (yet still unrepresentative) sample of residents.

## Limitations and Biases

My positionality as a resident of the Eastern Coachella Valley has a significant influence on my perspective in the issue of housing. My positive childhood experience while living in a mobile home gives me a perspective that may differ from others researching housing in the Eastern Coachella Valley. Further, my job as a community organizer in efforts around housing and planning-related topics in the Eastern Coachella Valley has allowed me to connect with residents and gain a level of understanding beyond that of a typical researcher. Understanding my positionality and perspective can help contextualize this project.

Beyond this, there are limitations to my project, particularly in the generalizability of my analysis due to the breadth of research I was able to accumulate. Specifically, it was challenging to gather surveys from residents living in ADUs. Many ADU residents were hesitant to engage in any study due to fear of the study leading to enforcement related to the informal nature of their housing. It is also vital to know that since my research design prioritizes case study interviews, my findings might not represent the experiences of all residents, but rather provide an anecdotal glimpse into the lives of the four selected case studies.



# CASE STUDIES





# CASE STUDIES

The case studies included in this project provide a narrative of the differences in access and housing choice. The selected individuals provide contextual information that helps create a narrative that not only speaks to their choice, and also humanizes the discussion.

## Typology 1: Mobile Home

### Salvador

When Salvador came to the US from Torreón, Coahuila, he was coming with the hope of seeking a better life for this family. Salvador had been born and raised in the city of Torreón, in the interior of Mexico. While enrolled in his university coursework, one of his brothers had begun to migrate to the US to work in the agriculture fields of the Coachella Valley. While still enrolled in his program, he was provided an opportunity to pursue, as he described, a little

side money to support himself while finishing up his education. It was during these summer trips that Salvador first came to know the Coachella Valley.

Salvador graduated with a degree in Mathematics and went on to become an elementary school teacher in Torreón. After graduating, Salvador practiced as a teacher, but he eventually came to believe that he would be able to provide a better life for his family in the Coachella Valley. When he saw an opportunity that would allow him to move and seek new economic opportunities, he decided to take it and begin a new life in the Eastern Coachella Valley. Since coming to the US, Salvador has worked in a variety of agriculture jobs but for the last 10 years he has worked alongside his wife at a date packing plant. As Salvador shared, “my home is here, in America and the Coachella Valley, I’m used to it, and I like it here.” This sentiment reflects the feelings of many other residents that have created a home in the Eastern Coachella Valley and chosen to raise their families in these communities.



Figure 17. Salvador sharing how he plans to finish his shade, eventually wanting to cover it with Bougainvilleas. 2019

For Salvador, the decision to live in a mobile home was primarily influenced by two factors; affordability and ease of access. While other factors played into the choice, the principal reasons are summarized below.

## Choice

When Salvador first lived in the Eastern Coachella Valley, he did not have a place of his own; he rented a room in Mecca and lived there with his wife. He knew he wanted to have a place he could call his own, regardless of the condition and location. The possibility of owning his own home and gaining stability meant that his family could become more established and have better lives. Though, as he described, when he bought his mobile home in Oasis, it was in “terrible” condition, and many things needed to get fixed to make it habitable. At one moment, his wife, Blanca, even fell through the rotten floors while cooking in the kitchen. He had to remodel most of the home, and little by little he worked to make

it more habitable. Despite having to confront these challenges, Salvador was quickly able to purchase the home. Salvador’s brother had mentioned to him that there was a mobile home for sale, and, as he described, for most transactions, “there is no more than just to come with money. It’s faster to buy a trailer.” There is a general understanding that anyone can purchase a mobile home, generally avoiding bureaucratic procedures, creating an opportunity for residents both documented and undocumented to own their homes. For many, this is the characteristic that makes mobile homes attractive.

## Affordability

For Salvador, one of the reasons that mobile homes became an appealing option was because of the financial flexibility they provided. Affordability not only meant a lower housing cost, but more importantly the ability to save money and support his daughters, Olivia and Maria, while they attended school. As he described, “if I go somewhere else,



Figure 18. Salvador with his nopales. 2019



maybe I cannot help her, and here I can help her whenever she needs it." For him, affordability provides his family with the flexibility to help his children move forward in life. As his daughters pursued a college education, he understood that they needed his financial support, whether it was for rent or school supplies. For both Salvador and his wife, their priority has always been to be able to help their kids pursue their dreams and seek the "American dream."

## Living Environment

The concept of home was an important topic to cover in trying to understand the other reasons why, for Salvador, the typology of a mobile home presented the best choice of housing. One of these reasons was the adaptability of the physical form. For Salvador, there are some benefits to living where he lives, including the freedom from the city. This not only provides an improved sense of security, but also, a sense of "calmness." The freedom that he describes is something that many other people reference in

their choice of housing. For many, mobile homes allow them to adapt their living spaces and create environments that foster a sense of home. Specifically, for Salvador, the creation of this environment has been through gardening and building onto his mobile home. For residents like Salvador who have the skills to build, mobile homes can represent a blank canvas that can be adapted to fit their needs.

## Summary

Housing cost and flexibility play a significant role in the selection of mobile homes. For many residents, despite the challenges associated with poor housing conditions, it is critical to have low housing costs to support their family in other ways. Further highlighted was the importance of ease of transaction in both gaining access to a home and making modifications according to need.



Figure 19. Salvador is seen hugging his grandson, one of the new members of his family. 2019





Figure 20. Salvador's mobile home park can be seen in the distance, fields can be seen bordering. 2019



Figure 21. Salvador sharing how he has at least 3 varieties of nopales in his garden. 2019



## Typology 2: Apartment

### Diana

The Eastern Coachella Valley has long been known as a community to which families migrated, and from these migrations, new generations of residents are now coming of age. “My whole tias and tios (aunts and uncles) and my dad, they came over here and started working in the fields. They lived in Mexicali for a while. Then they crossed over here and started working here.” Diana is part of a new generation of residents of the Eastern Coachella Valley—she was born and raised in Mecca. “We lived in the apartments here in Mecca. We lived in the Johnson Apartments. We were there for most of my childhood.”

As Diana described, her family has never had housing stability, and even at times had to face homelessness. “We lost that apartment, my Tia, she actually loaned us money to get a trailer in Lakes. That’s where we got the trailer.” Diana’s housing journey is like that

of many residents of the Eastern Coachella Valley, constantly facing insecurities. “We stayed with my Tia for a couple months. That’s when I found out I was pregnant. She has her own house. She has two studios in the back, but we weren’t staying at the studios because, at the time, they were occupied. All six of us, or five, six of us, were living inside a room for a while, until we found a small studio in the back of someone’s house right here on Third Street [in Mecca].” Diana eventually moved to the ADU owned by her Tia, and would live there for the next few months, but she was later forced to seek new housing because the rest of her family needed to live in that space. “My sister and my brother came to live with me at the studio, at my Tia’s house.” It was then that Diana began to apply for apartments.



Figure 22. Diana sitting with her family outside of her apartment in a makeshift patio. 2019

## Process

"I was very, very, very persistent. It took me, I want to say, six, seven months to get an apartment." During this time, Diana built a routine of calling each apartment. "Sometimes they'd just be like, 'You know what? I'll call you.' I'm just like, 'I'm going to call again.' Sometimes they would tell me, 'Call again three weeks. We're moving on our application list pretty fast.'" As Diana explained, apartment availability seemed to be correlated with the *corrida*, a migration of workers in early summer following the grape harvest. During this time, many families leave the area and go to the Central Valley for months. Diana believed she was able to get her apartment because of her constant insistence. After a few months of constant calls, Diana was able to move into an apartment in the community of Mecca. After a few months of living in her apartment, she found out about the possibility of getting a bigger unit, and she was able to move into a three-bedroom apartment. "I have a big family. I needed to fit everyone in the family, since my sister

moved in with me. She was a teenager, she needed to have her own space. I was thinking of all these little things like Coraline [my daughter] is going to be six. She needs to have her own space too."

## Affordability

One of the recurring topics with Diana was the affordability of housing in the Eastern Coachella Valley, in part thinking of the limited options that exist for residents who are seeking housing that matches their income. "All the apartment units, they're crazy expensive. If you want something comfortable right now, you're looking at \$800 and \$900 plus bills." Diana mentioned that there are housing options for low-income residents, but many of these are limited to farmworkers. Even then, there have been many changes in the housing landscape in communities like Mecca, as Diana shared. "They decided, 'hey, we need to be a little bit more competitive too to people in Coachella or the other side of Mecca,' so they increased this rent to 800... Yes, as soon as they



Figure 23. Diana and her partner relaxing in their apartment kitchen alongside their daughter. 2019



increased the rent, a lot of people moved out.” With increased prices, rent becomes much harder to deal with for residents like Diana. “The price range, it plays a really big role. Now that I’m unemployed and I’m trying to find another place that fits my budget, it’s so hard. I feel like I’m relearning all that again.”

## Stability

Stability and housing security are an important topic among residents of the Eastern Coachella Valley. Diana’s stability has long been dependent on her employment opportunities as well as on ever-changing family dynamics. “We’re hitting a point where we’re not that financially stable.” There was a month gap between Diana’s two interviews. While discussing stability, during the second interview, she reflected on her previous feelings. “I felt really secure, like, I’m going to be here for a while, and now, I’m not.” This sudden change in stability came as a result of the increased rents and unstable sources of income, as she had recently given birth to her

second daughter. Diana’s dream would be to be rent her own house, and, as she said “I’m thinking future-wise” understanding that this is a goal that will not be achieved quickly or easily.

## Summary

The case study highlights some of the challenges that come from living in apartments, including vulnerability to hikes in rents and lack of stability. As Diana highlighted, “I don’t think housing has ever been something secure for a lot of people, at least in the Coachella Valley. I feel like that is a very—it’s spoken. It’s not something secret. There is not enough housing out here, affordable housing for young people, for old people.”



Figure 24. Diana’s family portrait, 2019



Figure 25. Diana enters the kitchen holding her daughter. 2019



Figure 26. Moments before the family portrait. 2019



## Typology 3: Stick Built Home

### Doña Juana

Doña Juana is known throughout the community of North Shore; many know her for her friendliness and upbeat personality. The title “Doña” is given by Spanish speakers to older women seen as matriarchs in a community, a further sign of the respect Doña Juana is afforded by her neighbors. Doña Juana is largely known because of her involvement in local organizing movements. As she described, “I started going to meetings, for me I saw that it was productive. I felt better and because I feel comfortable asking for improvements for the community”. The community of North Shore has been involved in a series of organizing efforts advocating for improved public transit, the community’s first park, and restoration of the Salton Sea. There are many organizing efforts occurring at the same time, and it is in these spaces that Doña Juana has made a name for herself as a vocal resident.

For Juana, economic access provided through the self-help housing program for low income residents was the primary reason for her housing choice.

### Choice

Doña Juana first moved to the Coachella Valley after her husband had migrated to the City of La Quinta. They lived with her husband’s cousin for a few years, until they decided to rent on their own. It was not too long after that her husband applied for a housing program, the CVHC Mutual Self-Help Program. For Juana, her decision to live in a stick-built home was as result of her family’s acceptance into this, which provided them with a home in the community of North Shore. The program has three qualifications—good credit status, low income, and the ability and willingness to complete labor requirements. Housing programs like the CVHC program allow residents to affordably access homeownership. “We have the right to housing, to be owners, to be renting is not satisfactory, to be paying an income without having the right to one day be the owner” as Juana said.



Figure 27. View of Doña Juana’s front garden. 2019



## Home Build

When Juana and her husband applied for the CVHC program, they were not given the option to choose the location of their future home, and would need to move to the community that was assigned to them. Their home would be built in the community of North Shore; over the span of 6 months, Juana, with the help of friends and family, would work to build the home. One stipulation of this program is that the homeowner must commit to participate in the building process by dedicating about 1,500 hours of labor. These can include the hours of other family members and friends that support the building of their home and adjacent homes being built at the same time. As Juana recounted, "It gave me satisfaction because I was putting my grain of sand." Juana's role included helping to build the roof and painting along with some of the other homeowners in the neighborhood. "Every day, we did not have problems with the group because we all were participating, my cousins all came and those who had

family members brought relatives to help, and we moved forward because we all worked."

## Living Environment

For Doña Juana, her experience living in this home has been both a blessing and a challenge. She has always sought what she had in Mexico—the ability to grow her own produce and raise her own animals. While it might be uncommon in other communities, for many residents of the Eastern Coachella Valley, having the ability to farm and have animals is a way of life. "I like to be in the jungle with my animals, I need animals, I have my hen, but it is not enough for me, I would like to have my donkey, my pig, my horse" shared Juana. The desire for a life that is more in touch with traditions from Mexico always been a struggle that not many have been able to overcome.

Anyone visiting Doña Juana's home will notice that she has many plants, and if visited at the right time of the year, you could leave her home with a bag full



Figure 28. Doña Juana watering her garden, a normal part of her routine. 2019

of fruit. Doña Juana has still been able to create a home that reflects her cultural roots. Gardening not only provides her with a green space, but with free produce. “I do not buy chilis, I do not buy lemons, I do not buy oranges.” Doña Juana does not just grow things for herself—many of the items that she ends up harvesting from her trees eventually make their way throughout North Shore, being given away as gifts.

## Social Ties

Since the construction of her home, Doña Juana has created a sense of community by being a stable, long-term resident. Through the years, her sense of belonging and confidence has increased through her involvement in local advocacy as vocal leader of the community. As she described, when she first moved to North Shore, there was no one; there were few houses spread across the desert. With the building of new homes, the landscape has changed. What was once a desert with few homes has now become a vibrant community full of healthy relationships. Adjunctly

## Summary

Stability was a focus of this case study; this came from a sense of ownership and long-term stability coming from the program where you build your home. Long term residency also appears to provide a sense of safety through community belonging and relationship building.



Figure 29. Doña Juana's family portrait. 2019





Figure 30. Doña Juana watering her plants before being interviewed. 2019



Figure 31. A glimpse into Doña Juana's garden. 2019



## Typology 4: ADU

### Leticia

The first impression of Leticia and her family screams of their love for one another. Leticia's family consists of herself; her partner, Javier; their older son, Marcos; their younger son, Josue; and their newly expected baby, due to be born in the month of July. The Garcias, as they referred to themselves, are a young family, with both Leticia and Javier being under the age of 30. Both are employed full time, Leticia works at a medical clinic while Javier works at a local gym. There are many things that catch your attention upon meeting them, one being their love for culture and art. For a long time, both were known for organizing many local music shows, and were instrumental in the growth of the local music scene in the Eastern Coachella Valley. Prior to starting a family, Leticia and Javier both used to live at their respective parents' house. As the two started a family, they began to develop a sense of what it meant to make a home and to define what home could be like. As part of a new generation of

adults in the Eastern Coachella Valley, this young family has had to confront the challenge of housing. As Leticia described, their casita (little house) has been a result of their experience and the experience of those around them, who have come to face the challenge of housing and the uncertainties that come with having a place to live as an adult. For Leticia and her family, an ADU represented the best option for housing among the other options that might have been available.

### Family

After starting the conversation with Leticia, their love for one another was evident; the theme of family kept reoccurring. As the conversation continued, this theme was further fleshed out as something that had been a driver for her choice in housing. As she described, "We just always had that sense of having family around." This sense of family and the focus on a support system is what Leticia continually referred to, not only as a resource for herself, but also for her children and family. Prior to living in the ADU, Leticia



Figure 32. Leticia's family hanging out the kitchen table, their son Josue came over to get his hair fixed. 2019

and Javier had lived in a different location; when her second child was born, the grandparents did not have daily interactions with him. Now that Leticia and her family have moved into the ADU at her parents' home, the grandparents are thrilled with the idea of being there for all the baby moments with the newest member of the Garcias family. "For us it's been such a great support system, and having them grow up in a healthy environment, and also be able to see their grandparents, and interact with them on a daily basis." For her, family has been crucial in the choice to live in an ADU, though it must be understood that this choice is heavily influenced by her family's ownership of the primary residence. The relationship that exists allows her to live in comfort, while having her parents provide additional support as her children grow.

## Access

As the topic of the ADU was further explored, Leticia shared that the reason that the reason her parents built the ADU was to provide a home for their children. By building this ADU at their home, their

children would not need to be troubled with looking for housing when they came of age. "For my dad, well not just my dad, but my mom, my parents' wishes have always been like, 'Oh, well, there's no reason for you guys to leave.' Even while Leticia lived outside of her parent's house, the ADU that had been built by her parents was always available for her. Four years ago, Leticia and her family finally decided to move into the ADU that her dad had built. Ever since, Leticia and Javier have lived happily in what they call their casita or little house. Leticia shared that once they moved back in, her dad began to make more modifications to the ADU to improve their stay and comfort.

## Choice

As this young family was choosing housing options, they began to think of the alternatives that existed and of the experiences of those around them. As Leticia and her family choose the house they would call home, they understood the various dynamics that existed for other young couples. "We have a couple



Figure 33. Leticia and Javier stand in front of their wedding photo and some souvenirs from Mexico. 2019



of friends that either live with parents, or they have a casita as well. And sometimes the relationship isn't as great, either with the parents, or they either went off to get an apartment and then they decide, 'What did we do? This is probably not the best decision for us.' The decision to live anywhere is not just a simple choice. It ultimately affects other parts of life, either by placing financial constraints due to high rents or pressure due to lacking social support.

For Leticia and Javier, one of the most important reasons in their choice to live in their ADU came from the values that they wished to instill in their family. "It's just our lifestyle, is so much different. We don't focus so much on actual materials, like owning a big house it's... Versus making good memories out of what we can and try and invest in good things rather than just materials or a house." For this family, they have re-defined the "American Dream," which for them is not about owning "a big house". As Leticia described, their focus has been re-directed to other goals rather than a continued search for housing or homeownership. "We have noticed that other friends or relatives, that does go into trying to get a house, and they do obtain a house, a lot of the times they're

living really paycheck-to-paycheck, or they end up just having, not miserable lives but they end up having such a harder life of stress because of bills, and rent." In Leticia's view, the idea of home ownership is a wonderful thing, but it remains to be something that comes with attached strings. An ADU does not represent a bad home, but rather an opportunity; "this works because we're also able to help our parents pay off their home". Understanding the choices that exist, Leticia and Javier made a decision in which they understood that an ADU represented the best place for their family.

## Summary

The response from the ADU case study challenged the original idea that farmworkers are the residents of ADUs. For this family, ADU housing allows for flexibility while also strengthening social support. This case study highlighted the notion of home creation regardless of the size or type. However, not everyone has access to this since not everyone has parents with a spare ADU.



Figure 34. Leticia and Javier stand at the entrance to their home, embroidered textile adorns their door. 2019





Figure 35. Leticia fixing her sons hair while sharing about his progress in school. 2019



Figure 36. A view from outside Leticia's home and Javier reminiscing of their past. 2019



# ANALYSIS



## Survey Findings

The following figures are key findings from the surveys conducted with residents from the Eastern Coachella Valley. The survey provided an opportunity to examine some of the themes that rose up within the case studies. The survey presented three principal findings that were of interest. The first findings is related to the residents' creation of community by becoming long term residents of the Eastern Coachella Valley. As explored in the literature, the Eastern Coachella Valley formerly served as a migrant community, but as the survey reveals, 86% mentioned having lived in the community for more than ten years. The reason this is especially important is that as people become long term residents, in part establishing roots, their housing aspirations change. Transitory housing becomes less of a desire; this manifests itself as a desire for housing like stick-built homes and even mobile homes that may provide a sense of stability.

The second finding was the employment status of residents, with 78% of residents having full-time employment. What this finding provides is a better understanding of the challenges that exist with economic access. Even with 78% of residents employed full-time, many continue to experience poverty. What can be inferred from this finding is that residents are not being paid enough, causing financial stress. Among those surveyed, 59% had a household income under \$25k (the 2019 federal poverty line is \$25k for a family of 4). This is important as the income of residents significantly impacts housing choice.

The third finding further supports the importance of economic access, with 76% of residents citing cost as a significant influence in housing choice. As residents navigate the housing landscape of the Eastern Coachella Valley, they are having to make

decisions that are being driven by cost.

Overall, these survey findings allowed for the further examination of housing patterns among residents. From these three key findings, it can be understood that most residents' housing choices are a result of broader systemic issues present in the Eastern Coachella Valley that create conditions of marginalization.

The following section identifies findings for survey respondents, highlighting data points of interest.



**Table 1** provides a breakdown of the participants in the survey, noting the percentage of residents that engaged from each typology. Residents from mobile homes and stick built homes were the most surveyed. ADUs were the least surveyed. As discussed in the limitations section, these residents were more hesitant to engage because of fear to enforcement due to the nature of their housing situation.

**Table 2** shows the number of years residents have lived in the Eastern Coachella Valley. A majority of residents surveyed across all typologies have lived in the Eastern Coachella Valley longer than 10 years.

**Table 3** shows the primary reasons people live in the Eastern Coachella Valley, notably 78% of apartment tenants and 60% of MH residents made their housing decision because of work available in the region.

**Table 4** shows the physical characteristics valued by residents, of each typology. The two characteristics that were most valued were the number rooms available and open space. Number of rooms available can be thought as a response to families space needs. Open space can be interpreted as the desire to have room for things such as gardens.

**Table 5** illustrates the social components identified as the most important. The two social components that were most important were family living nearby (38%) and close knit community (28%). The first addresses the influence of social support networks among residents. The second speaks more to the relationships that exist and the way that residents have created a positive community.

**Table 6** shares the primary reasons for housing satisfaction. In a follow up question residents were asked to rate their housing satisfaction, and 80% responded with a 3 out 4, with 4 representing extremely happy. While this can be thought of as a contradictory to previously explored conditions, it can be explained by the positive outlook of respondents. For most residents, their satisfaction is not just driven by the physical characteristics of the home, but by their social relationships and affordability.

**Table 7** is a summary of the various key findings found from the survey. One interesting finding highlighted in this table is the influence of work in the location of housing. Many resident use their work-home commute as a way to choose among housing options. These choices can be observed through the development patterns of mobile home parks as these tend to be near agricultural fields.

## Survey Findings: Table Summaries

Survey Participation		
Value	Frequency	Percent
ADU	6	15%
Mobile Home	15	38%
Stick Built	10	25%
Apartment	9	23%
Total	40	

Table 1

How long have you lived in the Eastern Coachella Valley?					
Length of Stay by Typology	≥ 10 Years	10-5 years	5-2 years	2-1 years	1-0 years
ADU	67%	17%	0%	0%	17%
Mobile Home	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Stick Built	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Apartment	56%	33%	11%	0%	0%

Table 2

Table 3

What is the primary reason you live in the Eastern Coachella Valley?			
Reason	Type of Work	Housing Cost	Family/Friends
ADU	33%	17%	33%
Mobile Home	60%	20%	20%
Stick Built	50%	50%	0%
Apartment	78%	22%	0%

Table 4

What is the physical characteristic of your home that you value the most?					
Reason	Open Space	Adaptability	Size of lot	Size of home	Number of rooms
ADU	0%	17%	0%	17%	17%
Mobile Home	33%	13%	20%	7%	7%
Stick Built	10%	10%	30%	20%	10%
Apartment	11%	11%	0%	11%	33%

Table 5

What are the social components of housing that matter most to you?				
Reason	Family living near	Close Knit Community	Neighbors/Friends from same region	Spanish Speakers
ADU	67%	0%	0%	17%
Mobile Home	53%	13%	13%	20%
Stick Built	10%	60%	0%	30%
Apartment	22%	33%	22%	22%

Table 6

What is the primary reason for your housing satisfaction?						
Reason	Location	Neighborhood	Affordability	Housing Type	Sense of Safety	Sense of Community
ADU	0%	0%	33%	17%	17%	0%
Mobile Home	7%	13%	33%	0%	27%	7%
Stick Built	0%	0%	60%	20%	10%	10%
Apartment	0%	0%	78%	22%	0%	0%

Table 7

Summary Findings			
86% have been in the ECV longer than 10 years			
41% of those surveyed were between the ages of 65 and 75			
76% surveyed employed full time			
38% of surveyed lived in mobile homes			
56% cited location of work as major influence to the location of housing			
76% cited cost as a influence for choice of housing			
70% cited family living near a close knit community as a primary social influence in choice			

# Findings

## Choice

For the residents that participated in the case study, I concluded that housing choice was less a matter of choosing among multiple appealing options, and more about the options people even had available to them. With a limited selection, residents' decision became informed by the three forms of access explored, (1) economic (affordability or access to programs), (2) social (family and social networks), and (3) physical (location and physical desires).

## Economic Access

Among the four case studies, economic access played the most significant role in determining housing choice. Economic constraints influenced choice in two ways, the first being financial flexibility. For the case studies with ADUs and mobile homes, residents selected to live in these housing typologies because they offered financial flexibility. The choice in these cases signified the relationship between low housing cost and financial stability. In both cases, low-cost housing provided financial flexibility by allowing residents to utilize their incomes to address other financial needs, including supporting their children.

The second way in which economic access influenced choice was as a direct financial constraint. For the residents of the apartment and stick-built home, economic barriers limited their choices. For these case studies, their selection of housing appeared to be less of an open choice and more a result of financial constraints. In the case of the stick-built home typology, the resident's housing decision was reflective of the housing program's limitations and rules, which both established specific limitations on income and the location of their home.

Further, when respondents were asked to cite the reason for their housing satisfaction, 55% of respondents associated housing satisfaction with cost. Economic access could be thought of the primary influencer of housing choice among residents in the Eastern Coachella Valley.

## Physical Access

The physical location of housing influenced housing choice in all the case studies. For the case studies of mobile homes and apartments, location offered residents specific benefits. For mobile homes, physical access manifested as the resident's ability to live near their job; this meant the typology would always be in a specific spatial relationship with agriculture fields. For apartments, physical access manifested as residents being able to use social services built into their communities. These include medical services, groceries, and green spaces. Of the four communities in the Eastern Coachella Valley, Mecca most resembles a town with a variety of services being centrally located near apartment homes.

Physical preferences also translated to desires for specific housing characteristics. In the case of Salvador, this means living away from the city in a place that was more in touch with nature. For Doña Juana, it was having enough space for her garden and livestock.



## Social Access

For all the residents interviewed, the social factor associated with their housing choice played a crucial role in how they ended up selecting where and in what type of housing they would be living. While economic constraints most limit the ability to have a choice between housing typologies, there is still a significant value placed on social relationships that influences location and typology choice.

Data gathered from both surveys and case studies shows the level of importance that people place on social access and social communities when choosing their home, with 68% of residents citing family living nearby as an influence. For Leticia, her decision in housing was principally driven by the relationship that her children would be able to have with her parents. Social priorities represented something that was far more important than the physical characteristics of the typology in which they lived. Life in an ADU allowed their family to remain closer as their parents lived in the primary home, providing their children with access to their family. For them, this was far more important than living in a large house, since their value of the social support far exceeded other desires.

Social priorities highlighted in the mobile home case study included social interactions that occurred as a direct result of the typology in which he lived. For this family, their home allowed for large gatherings as well as flexible use of space. While a mobile home did not represent their dream home, it did represent the best possible choice among the options that were accessible for their family. Understanding their limitations, they came to realize that living in a mobile home park would allow them to utilize this space for social bonding and relationship nurturing.

## Ownership

While all the housing variations studied have well-defined histories, all have come to function in a system. An analysis of the various typologies shows us that the studied typologies will remain present through the community until a responsive housing policy can be implemented addressing housing concerns for all the residents of the Eastern Coachella Valley. As a result, mobile homes have become the most prominent form of housing because of the desire for long term stability and ownership, which is currently best accessible via MHPs. Though it is important to note that people would prefer to have the same long-term stability and ownership in stick-built homes if they were similarly economically and physically accessible.

This page intentionally left  
blank.



# RECOMMENDATIONS



# RECOMMENDATIONS

First, I recommend that the County of Riverside focus on the reinstatement of housing programs that work with residents in improving housing conditions of mobile homes and ADUs. To achieve this, the County would need to reinstate the Mobile Home Tenant Loan Assistance Program and implement policy that protects residents against park closures. Without the proper assurance of support from the County, many parks could remain hidden due fear of closures. The implementation of this program would allow residents to gain financial support as they improve their housing conditions, while also creating a sense of security from County action against their mobile home parks and ADUs.

My second recommendation calls for an expansion of Mutual Self-Help housing programs. This would require the exploration of low-cost construction methods that better provide residents with the ability to build durable homes that remain affordable and accessible. This could also be eased by the passage of AB-1783, the Farmworker Housing Act of 2019. This bill seeks to streamline the process to build farmworker housing on agricultural land. By decreasing regulatory oversight as it pertains to building code, there can be an increase in housing supply by Riverside County and other housing developers, addressing the shortage of quality housing in the Eastern Coachella Valley. A decrease in oversight could exempt these developments from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

My third recommendation is for Riverside County and nonprofit housing agencies to explore the retro-active implementation of rent-to-own housing policies for apartment buildings. Rent-to-own apartments could provide long-term residents the opportunity to gain ownership and secure future

housing. By providing residents with the ability to gain ownership of their homes, there could be an increase in housing stability for residents, as well as an easier process towards homeownership.

The fourth recommendation is for Riverside County to incorporate housing policies that are sensitive to residents' experiences and social conditions. These policies would need to incorporate housing programs and initiatives that are more responsive to the undocumented residents of the Eastern Coachella Valley. For most residents, the ability to navigate housing programs is restricted by their citizenship status. If housing programs do not account for these residents, who tend to be those most impacted by housing issues, they will continue to be marginalized and suffer from poor housing conditions and long-term instability.

My final recommendation calls for an increase in the minimum wage among low-wage workers in the Eastern Coachella Valley. An increase in wages could represent an opportunity to access improved housing conditions via improved economic conditions of residents. By increasing wages, residents could gain financial stability as well the ability to engage in homeownership. Resident wages could also be improved via programming that provides job training and skillbuilding opportunities as a form to create access to more high-wage jobs.



# CONCLUSION



# CONCLUSION

Residents of the Eastern Coachella Valley have long been impacted by issues relating to housing choice and access. As explored in this research, housing represents not only a physical structure but a manifestation of barriers that residents navigate. The purpose of this research was to illustrate how and why people live where they live, humanizing the question of housing in rural migrant communities like the Eastern Coachella Valley.

I found that if most people were given the opportunity to own their own stick-built home, they would choose this over most other options, but for many this is unachievable, whether due to financial constraints or limited amount of accessible stick-built housing. This report recommends policy to be enacted by Riverside County to address housing conditions for residents whose housing access is limited as well as to expand access to affordable housing that allows for long-term stability. The implementation of such policy could help mitigate poor housing conditions and address concerns that lie around specific housing typologies in the Eastern Coachella Valley.

For residents of the Eastern Coachella Valley housing is one of many challenges that residents consistently face. It is my hope that through this ethnographic study I can humanize the discussion around housing choice, specifically by providing a different perspective that centers residents' experiences in this discussion.



Figure 37. Mobile home park in the community of Oasis. 2019



# APPENDIX



# WORKS CITED

- Affordable Housing Options for Farmers in Ventura County. (2013). Retrieved May 25, 2019, from [https://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr\\_edge\\_inpractice\\_050313.html](https://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr_edge_inpractice_050313.html)
- Arcury, T. A., Jacobs, I. J., & Ruiz, V. (2015). Farmworker Housing Quality and Health. *NEW SOLUTIONS: A Journal of Environmental and Occupational Health Policy*, 25(3), 256–262. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1048291115604426>
- Benson, P. (2008). El Campo: Faciality and Structural Violence in Farm Labor Camps. *Cultural Anthropology*, 23(4), 589–629. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20484521>
- Coachella Valley Housing Coalition History. (n.d.). Retrieved May 25, 2019, from <http://cvhc.org/about/history>
- Consolidated Plan for Riverside County. (2018). Retrieved May 25, 2019, from <https://www.harivco.org/Resources/ConsolidatedPlanforRiversideCounty/tabid/114/Default.aspx>
- Coachella Valley Agricultural Housing. (n.d.). Retrieved May 25, 2019, from <https://countyofriverside.us/Portals/0/GrandJury/0mobile.pdf>
- BHC Fact Sheet (Rep.). (2011, November). Retrieved May 26, 2019, from UCLA Center for Health Policy Research website: [https://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/chis/bhc/Documents/BHC\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_Coachella.pdf](https://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/chis/bhc/Documents/BHC_Fact_Sheet_Coachella.pdf)
- Blount, Casey and Ip, Wendy and Nakano, Ikuo and Ng, Elaine, Redevelopment Agencies in California: History, Benefits, Excesses, and Closure (January 2014). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2445536> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2445536>
- Boyd, M. (1989). Family and Personal Networks in International Migration: Recent Developments and New Agendas. *International Migration Review*, 23(3), 638. doi:10.2307/2546433
- California Department of Housing and Community Development - HCD, & California Department of Housing and Community Development. (2019). Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). Retrieved from <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/policy-research/AccessoryDwellingUnits.shtml>
- Carrillo, L., Pattillo, M., Hardy, E., & Acevedo-Garcia, D. (2016). Housing Decisions Among Low-Income Hispanic Households in Chicago. *Cityscape*, 18(2), 109–150. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26328259>
- Cheney, A. M., Newkirk, C., Rodriguez, K., & Montez, A. (2018). Inequality and health among foreign-born Latinos in rural borderland communities. *Social Science & Medicine*, 215, 115–122. doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2018.09.011
- Estrada, Maranyeli (2018) "Saving the Resistance: The Purépechan People of Northern Mexico," *McNair Research Journal SJSU*: Vol.14, Article 6. Available at: <http://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/mcnair/vol14/iss1/6>
- Farmworker Housing Study and Action Plan for Salinas Valley and Pajaro Valley (Rep.). (2018, April). Retrieved May 27, 2019, from California Institute For Rural Studies website: <https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/home/showdocument?id=63729>
- Final Report: 2012 Napa County Farmworker Housing Needs Assessment (Rep.). (2013, March). Retrieved May 27, 2019, from Bae Urban Economics website: [http://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/building-blocks/housing-needs/farmworkers/docs/napa\\_county\\_farmworker032913.pdf](http://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/building-blocks/housing-needs/farmworkers/docs/napa_county_farmworker032913.pdf)
- Flores-Yeffal, N. Y., & Aysa-Lastra, M. (2011). Place of Origin, Types of Ties, and Support Networks in Mexico-U.S. Migration\*. *Rural Sociology*, 76(4), 481–510. doi:10.1111/j.1549-0831.2011.00060.x
- García, A. S., & Schmalzbauer, L. (2017). Placing Assimilation Theory: Mexican Immigrants in Urban and Rural America. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 672(1), 64–82. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716217708565>



HCD California Housing and Community Development. (2019). Farmworkers. Retrieved May 27, 2019, from <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/building-blocks/housing-needs/farmworkers.shtml>

Housing Assistance Council. (2012). A brief history of rural mutual self-help housing in the United States. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from [http://www.ruralhome.org/storage/documents/msh\\_history.pdf](http://www.ruralhome.org/storage/documents/msh_history.pdf)

Jacobs, L., & Minnehan, C. (2014, April). Improving Housing Conditions in the eastern Coachella Valley (Rep.). Retrieved December, 2018, from Building Healthy Communities website: <https://s26107.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/Improving-Housing-Conditions-in-the-Eastern-Coachella-Valley-print-2.pdf>

Ledesma, S. (2005). The relationship between health and housing and its impact on the farmworkers of California's Coachella valley (Order No. 3168536). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses A&I; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (305384616). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/305384616?accountid=14512>

London, J., Greenfield, T., & Zagofsky, T. (2013, June). Revealing the Invisible Valley (Rep.). Retrieved May 25, 2019, from [https://humanecology.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk161/files/inline-files/limited\\_dist\\_14\\_revealing\\_invisible\\_coachella\\_valley.pdf](https://humanecology.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk161/files/inline-files/limited_dist_14_revealing_invisible_coachella_valley.pdf)

LoPresti, T. (2012). 28th Smith-Babcock-Williams Student Writing Competition Winner: Reclaiming the Authentic Future: The Role of Redevelopment in Unincorporated California. *The Urban Lawyer*, 44(1), 135-183. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41638070>

McConnell, E., & Marcelli, E. (2007). Buying into the American Dream? Mexican Immigrants, Legal Status, and Homeownership in Los Angeles County. *Social Science Quarterly*, 88(1), 199-221.

McConnell, E., & Akresh, I. (2013). Home Equity of New Legal Immigrants in the United States: An Evaluation of Three Key Theoretical Perspectives. *The International Migration Review*, 47(3), 686-729. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24542780>

McLean, K. (2014). New home: Creating a new typology for migrant worker housing (Order No. 1573707). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses A&I; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1654171707). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1654171707?accountid=14512>

Mukhija, V. (2014). The value of incremental development and design in affordable housing. *Cityscape*, 16(2), 11-20.

Mukhija, V., & Mason, D. R. (2014). Resident-Owned, Informal Mobile Home Communities in Rural California: The Case of Rancho Don Antonio, Coachella Valley. *Housing Policy Debate*, 25(1), 179-194. doi:10.1080/10511482.2014.921220

Mukhija, V., & Scott-Railton, J. (2013). The Importance of Design in Affordable Housing: Lessons From Mutual Self-Help Housing in California. *Housing Policy Debate*, 23(4), 765-780. doi:10.1080/10511482.2013.835332

Nelson, L. (2007). Farmworker Housing and Spaces of Belonging in Woodburn, Oregon. *Geographical Review*, 97(4), 520-541. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30034198>

Olson, D. (2013, June 28). DUROVILLE: Slum mobile home park finally closes. Retrieved November 20, 2017, from <https://www.pe.com/2013/06/28/duroville-slum-mobile-homepark-finally-closes-3/>

Paiz, C. (2016). To hold up the sky: Coachella valley freedom dreams during the united farm worker movement (Order No. 10801174). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses A&I; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2069008925). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/2069008925?accountid=14512>

Permit Requirements for Mobile Home Parks. (2006, March). Retrieved from <https://www.rivcoeh.org/Portals/0/documents/guidance/mobilehomes/34-06-DES Permit Requirements for Mobile Home Park.pdf>

U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: UNITED STATES. (n.d.). Retrieved December 2018, from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/>

Vallejos, Q. M., Quandt, S. A., Grzywacz, J. G., Isom, S., Chen, H., Galván, L., . . . Arcury, T. A. (2011). Migrant farmworkers' housing conditions across an agricultural season in North Carolina. *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, 54(7), 5 33-544. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/ajim.20945>

# PHOTO CATALOG

## Mobile Home Park



Polanco mobile home in Mecca, flooding can be observed surrounding the home

Family owned Polanco mobile home park in Oasis



Mobile home in Thermal, small garden can be observed in the front of the house

New mobile homes part of the expansion of Mountain View Estates in Oasis



## Mobile Home Park



Mobile home in Mountain View Estates



A new mobile home in a new Polanco park in Oasis



Mobile home in Paseo De los Heroes II



Mobile home in Ave 70 MHP, empty space used to house other units



## Apartment



Apartment complex in Mecca



Entrance to two units in Mecca, each have their own space divided by an imaginary line



Single story apartment complex in Thermal



Entrance to apartment complex in Mecca, sign can be seen indicating the building number

## ADU



Mobile home ADU attachment in Mecca



ADU can be seen in the backyard of this home in Mecca



Multiple entrance can be seen at this property usually meaning that there are separated units within the home



Backyard mobile home can be seen at this property in Thermal



## Stick built home



Stick built home in North Shore

A new home part of phase of self help housing in North Shore



Self-help home in community of Mecca

Stick built home in Thermal

# Survey Questions

## Housing Survey: Eastern Coachella Valley

1. Today's Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_
2. What Age group are you in? \_\_\_\_18-25\_\_\_\_26-35\_\_\_\_36-45\_\_\_\_46-55\_\_\_\_66-75\_\_\_\_75+
3. Which of the following best describes your gender?  
\_\_\_\_Male                      \_\_\_\_Female  
\_\_\_\_Other
5. Which of the following best describes your employment situation most of the time during the past 6 months?
  - a. Retired
  - b. On disability
  - c. Not employed, looking for work
  - d. Not employed, but not looking for work
  - e. Full time paid job (>35 hours/week)
  - f. Part-time paid job
  - g. Day labor or "odd jobs"
  - i. Student
6. Household annual income av  
\_\_\_\_\$0-\$10,000                      \_\_\_\_\$10,001-\$15,000                      \_\_\_\_\$15,001-\$25,000  
\_\_\_\_\$25,001-\$35,000                      \_\_\_\_\$35,001-\$50,000                      \_\_\_\_\$50,001 or more
7. How many adults live in your home?      \_\_\_\_Number of Adults
8. How many children live in your home under the age of 18?      \_\_\_\_Number of Children
9. What is the primary language spoken at home?  
\_\_\_\_English                      \_\_\_\_Spanish  
\_\_\_\_Purepecha                      Other\_\_\_\_
10. What country where you born? \_\_\_\_\_
11. How long have you lived in the Eastern Coachella Valley?  
\_\_\_\_Less than 1 year                      \_\_\_\_1 year -2 years  
\_\_\_\_2 years - 5 years                      \_\_\_\_5 years - 10 years  
\_\_\_\_10 + years
12. What is the primary reason you live in the Eastern Coachella Valley  
\_\_\_\_Type of Work Available                      \_\_\_\_Families/Friends live here  
\_\_\_\_Housing Cost                      Other\_\_\_\_
13. Do you feel that the Eastern Coachella Valley is your home?  
\_\_\_\_Yes                      \_\_\_\_No



## Survey Questions Continued

### Housing Typologies

14. How do you describe your home?  
☐ ADU ☐ Stick built home  
☐ Mobile Home ☐ Apartment
15. What are the social components of housing that matter most to you?  
☐ Family living near ☐ Neighbors/Friends from same region in Mexico  
☐ Close knit community ☐ Living in community of Spanish speakers
16. Do you have family and friend that live near your home?  
☐ Yes ☐ No
17. How important is it that your family/friends live near your home?  
☐ Not Important ☐ Very Important
18. Do you feel like you have a positive community where you live?  
☐ Yes ☐ No
19. What are the characteristics of your neighborhood?  
☐ Close/Connected ☐ Individualistic
20. What is the physical characteristic of your home that you value the most?  
☐ Open Space ☐ Size  
☐ Adaptability ☐ Number of Rooms  
☐ Size of Lot ☐ Other
21. What influenced your choice of housing?  
☐ Location ☐ Family  
☐ Access ☐ Cost
22. What influenced your decision of where you live?  
☐ Work ☐ Family  
☐ Friends ☐ Accessibility  
☐ Community ☐ Other
23. Using a score of 1-4, how would you rate your happiness with your home?  
☐ 1 Not Happy ☐ 2 Kinda Happy  
☐ 3 Relatively Happy ☐ 4 Extremely Happy
24. What is the primary reason for your score?  
☐ Location ☐ Housing Type  
☐ Neighborhood ☐ Sense of Safety  
☐ Affordability ☐ Sense of Community
25. General Comments regarding your housing
- 
- 
-

# Survey Results

Q2 (Age)

Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
1	18-25	0	0%
2	26-35	3	8%
3	36-45	12	30%
4	46-55	7	18%
5	66-75	18	45%
6	75+	0	0%
		40	

Q3 (Gender)

Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
1	Male	25	63%
2	Female	15	38%
3	Other	0	
		40	

Q5 (Employment)

Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
1	Retired	5	13%
2	On Disability	2	5%
3	Employed	0	0%
4	Not Employed		
5	not looking	2	5%
6	Full Time	30	75%
7	Part time	0	0%
8	Day Labor	0	0%
9	Student	1	3%
		40	

Q6 (Household Income)

Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
1	0-10k	7	18%
2	10-15k	3	8%
3	15-25k	13	33%
4	25-35k	9	23%
5	35-50k	7	18%
6	50k or more	1	3%
		40	

Q7 (Number of Adults)

Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
1	1	0	0%
2	2	10	25%
3	3	14	35%
4	4	11	28%
5	5	1	3%
6	6	4	10%
		40	

Q8 (Number of children)

Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
1	1	8	35%
2	2	4	17%
3	3	7	30%
4	4	3	13%
5	5	1	4%
		23	

Q9 (Primary Language)

Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
1	English	6	15%
2	Spanish	30	77%
3	Purepecha	3	8%
4	Other	0	0%
		39	

Q10 (Country of Origin)

Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
1	Mexico	31	79%
2	Usa	8	21%
		39	

Q11 (Years in ECV)

Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
1	Less than 1	1	3%
2	1-2	0	0%
3	2-5	1	3%
4	5-10	4	10%
5	10+	34	85%
		40	

Q12 (Primary reason to live in ECV)

Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
1	Type of work	23	59%
2	Housing cost	11	28%
3	Family/friends	5	13%
4	Other	0	0%
		39	

Q13 Do you feel that the Eastern Coachella Valley is your home? If not where do you feel is home

Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	37	93%
2	No	3	8%
		40	

Q14 (How do you describe your home?)

Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
1	ADU	6	15%
2	Mobile Home	15	38%
3	Stick Built	10	25%
4	Apartment	9	23%
		40	

Q15 (Social Components) What are the social components of housing that matter most

Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
1	Family living near	15	38%
2	Close knit community	11	28%
3	Neighbors/friends from same region	4	10%
4	Living in community of Spanish Speakers	9	23%
		39	100%

Q16 (Do you have family and friend that live near your home?)

Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	34	85%
2	No	6	15%
		40	0%

Q17 (How important is it that your family/friends live near your home?)

Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Important	14	35%
2	Important	26	65%
		40	

Q18 (Do you feel like you have a positive community where you live?)

Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	35	88%
2	No	5	13%
		40	

Q19 (What are the characteristics of your neighborhood?)

Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	30	75%
2	No	10	25%
		40	

Q20 (What is the physical characteristic of your home that you value the most?)

Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
1	Open Space	7	20%
2	Adaptability	5	14%
3	Size Lot	6	17%
4	Size	4	11%
5	Number of Rooms	6	17%
6	Other	7	20%
		35	

Q21 (Primary influence of housing)

Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
1	Location	3	8%
2	Access	1	3%
3	Family	4	11%
4	Cost	28	78%
		36	

Q22 (Influence of where)

Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
1	Work	22	59%
2	Friends	1	3%
3	Community	2	5%
4	Family	8	22%
5	Accessibility	4	11%
6	Other	0	0%
		37	

Q23 (Using a score of 1-4, how would you rate your happiness with your home?)

Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Happy	1	3%
2	Kinda Happy	7	18%
3	Releatively Happy	16	40%
4	Extremely Happy	16	40%
		40	

Q24 (Primary reason for score)

Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
1	Location	1	3%
2	Neighborhood	2	6%
3	Affordability	20	56%
4	Housing Type	5	14%
5	Sense of Safety	6	17%
6	Sense of Community	2	6%
		36	







