

Buena Vista Mobile Home Park Fact Sheet

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If the 88-year old Buena Vista Mobile Home Park closes, it may result in the single greatest displacement of adults and children in our town's history. Of the 129 Buena Vista children, 104 are PAUSD students. We insist on a solution that includes Buena Vista residents continuing to live here with their children in our schools.



Goals of Buena Vista Residents and Supporters:

- Ensure residents have the option to remain in Palo Alto.
- Ensure students will be able to finish their education in Palo Alto.
- Preserve or replace the 117 units of Buena Vista affordable housing.
- Guarantee fair treatment for residents, and rights upheld.

Current Situation:

- Most residents own homes, renting a space from the property owner.
- In 2012, Buena Vista's owner filed with the City to close and "relocate" residents. He has the right to do so but must comply with state and city laws.
- This "closure process" will continue well into 2015, or beyond.
- Most residents will lose everything if forced out - homes, jobs, friends, a safe community, good schools, medical and elder services. Many children will lose extended family members (grandparents, aunts and uncles) with whom they have always lived and depended on.
- Legally required "relocation payments" from the owner to residents will not be adequate to afford Bay Area market rents, and area mobile home parks have few empty spaces, so residents will have to move out of the region.
- Redevelopment will happen on the 4 Buena Vista acres – unless we find a resident friendly solution.

Why Residents live at Buena Vista:

- For the same reason many of us live in Palo Alto - so their children get a good education while living in a safe community with good services.
- A Palo Alto education is their family's way out of poverty – a golden door to a better life.
- It enables one-quarter of residents to live with extended families, owning separate homes while providing mutual support for their children and elders.
- It's affordable. The city terms it to be an important source of affordable housing.

Demographics:

- Nearly 400 people live at Buena Vista, many for decades.
- 67 households are families with children.
- 104 of the 129 children are students, mostly at Barron Park Elementary, Terman Middle School and Gunn High, including 2 autistic kids in high quality programs.
- About 12% of Barron Park Elementary students live at Buena Vista.
- BV students don't drop out; they graduate, many being the first in their family to go to college.
- Affordable housing allows young adults to afford tuition to attend college.
- Elders make up 21 households, some of whom are disabled.
- 95% of adults work. Fifty-five in Palo Alto or Stanford, cleaning schools and homes, and working in our markets, restaurants, and offices. Some own small businesses. -
- Most are termed the "working poor". One makes sandwiches at Driftwood

Market, one is in charge of Mollie Stones bakery and deli, one is manager of Whole Foods produce, and one is a janitor at Gunn High.

PAUSD Recognizes Student Diversity as a “Fundamental Principle”:

- PAUSD policy states, “...diversity of the student population and staff enriches the learning experience for all students”.
- Most of Buena Vista households are Latino, and others are European, Tongan, and Chinese-American.
- Buena Vista is the single greatest source of Palo Alto’s ethnic and economic diversity.
- Most households are low or very low-income as defined by federal standards.

Children Should Not Become the Collateral Damage of Palo Alto Redevelopment:

- Studies repeatedly show the quality of a child's educational experience is a principal determinant of that child's life course as an adult, including both socioeconomic wellbeing and health status. Losing the opportunity provided by Palo Alto schools could irreversibly alter the trajectory of these children's entire lives. (*Amado Padilla, former PAUSD school board member & Prof. of Education, Stanford*)
- Buena Vista students are 100% in graduating from high school and most aspire to college.
- PAUSD must keep its commitment to diversity and its Buena Vista students by working to ensure children finish their education *here*.

The City must mitigate loss of “Essential” Affordable Housing:

- BV is the single greatest unsubsidized resource of affordable housing in town.
- City policy states: *To the extent feasible, the City will seek appropriate local, state and federal funding to assist in the preservation and maintenance of the existing units in the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park.*
- Likely in early 2015, the City Council will hold a public hearing on whether the relocation plan is adequate to actually allow residents to relocate to a comparable community.

A Solution Must be Found:

- A way to buy all or part of the property with city, public, and private funds may be possible. A singular solution is needed for this unique situation.
- The owner has a right to sell his property, but also has a responsibility to the residents he will displace, as does any developer.

Community Support for Buena Vista Residents is Strong:

- Palo Alto Forward (PAF)
- Palo Altans for Sensible Zoning (PASZ)
- Palo Alto School Board: *Statement of Support* for Buena Vista families and students.
- PTA Council (PTAC) Resolution: ratified by all 17 PTAC representatives
- City of Palo Alto Human Relations Commission: *Resolution of Support*
- Nine Palo Alto churches, justice committees, and Congregation Beth Am
- Peninsula Interfaith Action (PIA)
- The League of Women Voters of Palo Alto
- The Peninsula Peace and Justice Center
- Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom
- Friends of Buena Vista
- Buena Vista Mobile Home Park Association

*For more information or to support residents, email: dellwinter@gmail.com
See our website: fobv.org*