

Location Affordability Portal Vignettes

<http://locationaffordability.info/vignettes.aspx>



Note: These fictional narratives illustrate how families and organizations can use the Location Affordability Portal to make more informed decisions about where to live, work, and invest.



The Simons: Retiring Close to Home

When Mary and Fred Simon moved to Fountain - a suburb of Colorado Springs - 25 years ago, they were recently married, had small children and thought they would live in Fountain for the rest of their lives. As their kids grew up and moved away, Mary and Fred began to notice that the town was changing, the population was diminishing. Tired of long, snowy winters, the couples with whom she and Fred had car-pooled, had weekend barbecues, and celebrated birthdays and graduations with were flocking to Arizona and New Mexico to retire and live in a place with warmer more predictable year-round weather.

As Mary and Fred begin to consider a move to Phoenix, they get some great news. Their son Tom has been hired by the Denver Fire Department and he and his wife are moving back to Colorado. The birth the following year for their first grandchild, Luke, gives them enough reason to stay, despite the long commute between Denver and Fountain. To save time and money, Mary and Fred begin to seriously consider moving to Denver.

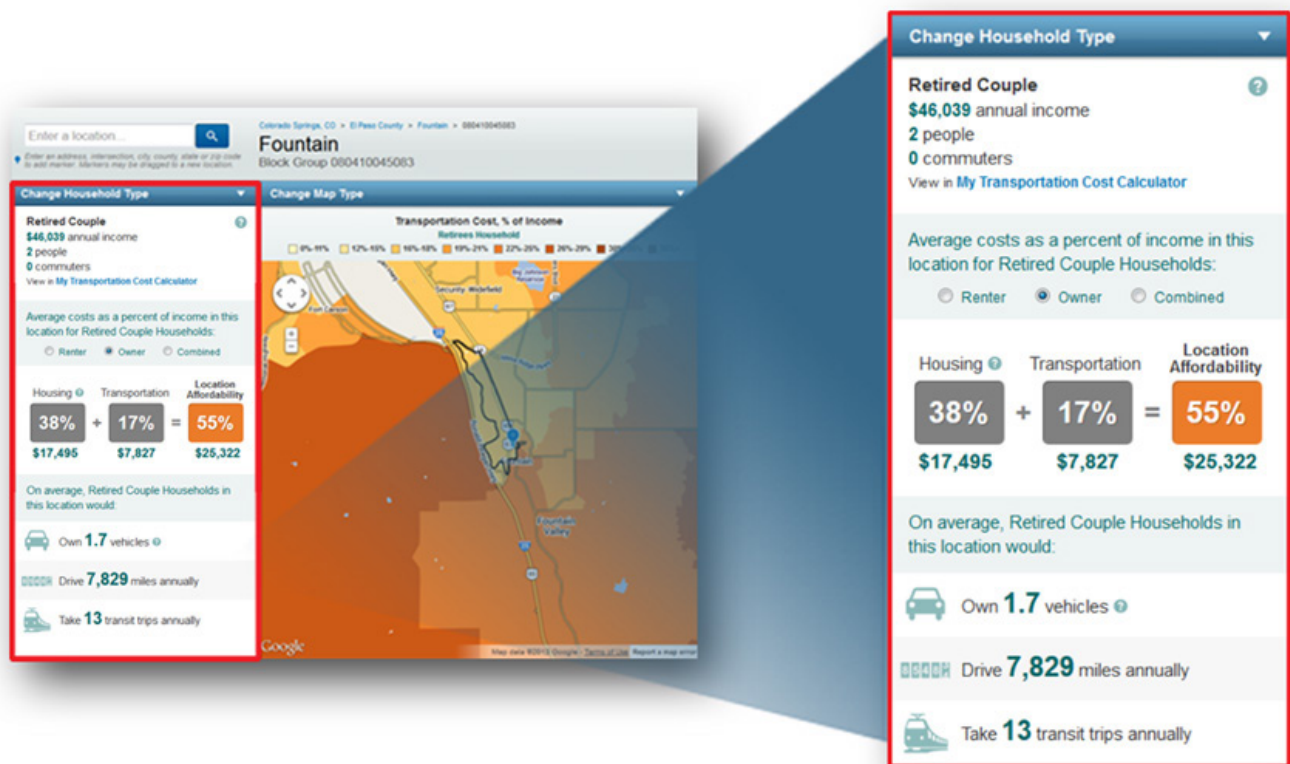
As they walk their grandson in the park one day, they run into their old friends, Bruce and Candace. Candace tries to convince Fred and Mary to move to Denver, swearing it's the best thing they ever did. "Living in the Stapleton Redevelopment is great. We can walk to the grocery, we go to concerts at the Stapleton Pavilion, and it's easy to get around town on the bus or light rail. And no more yard work!" Fred is skeptical. "I don't think we could afford it on our fixed income." "That's what we thought," says Bruce, "before we did some research."



Bruce shares information about the My Transportation Cost Calculator (MTCC) tool with Fred and describes how to use it to estimate their combined transportation and housing costs in Fountain. They knew they filled up their tank fairly often, but they didn't realize quite how much they were paying when they factored in all of the fuel, wear and tear, and maintenance costs. Fred and Mary enter "Denver" into the Location Affordability Index and zoom in on the Stapleton area. The Stapleton Redevelopment may be out of their price range, but there's plenty nearby that looks affordable and they've gotten familiar with the area after spending so much time walking and driving around the Park Hill neighborhood where Tom and Maggie live.

Mary moves the marker over to some bungalows they saw off Central Park Boulevard. The housing costs are higher, but the transportation costs are substantially lower than what they're paying now. "If we moved to Denver," muses Mary, "we could spend more time with the kids. And I wouldn't mind getting out to a concert now and then either..."

Two years later, Mary and Fred live near Luke's favorite park and are feeling better than they have in years. Walking to stores and the library, taking Luke to the zoo, and taking the new baby for long walks has caused them both to lose some extra weight they had been carrying and lowered Fred's blood pressure so much that the doctor has taken him off medication.



Lifestyle Changes Have Major Impacts on Transportation Costs

