

Pre-publication draft for submission to third-party artificial intelligence (AI) for facts-evidence-analysis (FEA) check for a developing report on MHPProNews.

## **‘First Step Homes.’ Back of Napkin Calculations for Mainstream Affordable HUD Code Projects to Boost Manufactured Housing Industry Volume. No Manufactured Housing Institute Help Needed. FEA**

Conventional and factory builders have been learning from each other for decades. To oversimplify, there are scattered lot home sales and development or in community sales. In order to do more volume, conventional builders often turn to development/community-based sales. To emphasize, volume builders are routinely found in developments/communities (see# 1 below). Those builders may use only a limited number of floorplans. Development based sales allow conventional 'site builders' to more closely mimic that cost saving methods of HUD Code manufactured home builders. Those communities routinely have some form of HOA. Per [Google's AI overview \(GAIO\)](#): "An HOA, or [Homeowners Association](#), is an organization in a subdivision, planned community, or condominium building that makes and enforces rules for properties and residents. Membership is typically mandatory when purchasing a home, requiring payment of regular fees for maintenance of common areas and adherence to community guidelines (CC&Rs)." Before pivoting to the opportunity for HUD Code manufactured home independents via what has been dubbed the 'First Step Homes' concept, it is useful to understand what volume conventional builders do to achieve scale and thus higher profits.

1) To illustrate the point, [MHPProNews](#) asked [Google's AI overview \(GAIO\)](#) the following.

Which major conventional builders are more focused on development/community sales vs. scattered lot sales?

### AI Overview

Major conventional home builders are overwhelmingly focused on **development and master-planned community (MPC) sales** rather than scattered lot (infill/on-your-lot) sales. The largest, publicly traded builders use community development to maximize land use, create economies of scale, and offer amenity-rich environments, which is currently the dominant model in the US housing market.



Epcon Franchising +2

## Top Builders Focused on Community/Master-Planned Development

These companies focus on large-scale, planned, and often amenity-driven developments:

- **D.R. Horton:** As the largest homebuilder, they concentrate heavily on developing communities in the top 50 major metro areas, prioritizing high-volume, quick-turnaround developments.
- **Lennar:** Known for the "Everything's Included" model and *Next Gen*® home designs, they focus on large-scale, amenitized, and often gated communities, particularly in the Sun Belt.
- **PulteGroup:** Focuses on master-planned communities, frequently offering distinct brands for different life stages (e.g., Del Webb for active adults).
- **Taylor Morrison:** Actively focuses on community growth, with goals to operate hundreds of communities with a strong focus on lifestyle amenities.
- **LGI Homes:** Known for a "land-light" yet community-focused approach, they specialize in self-developing large subdivisions designed for first-time buyers.
- **Toll Brothers:** Focuses on luxury master-planned communities, golf courses, and resort-style living.
- **Meritage Homes:** Focuses on affordable, energy-efficient, and planned communities, aiming for high-volume, 20,000+ unit closings.

Palm Beach  
Daily News

Palm Beach Daily News +5

## Key Differences in Strategies

- **Community/MPC Builders (Above):** These builders focus on controlling a large plot of land, installing infrastructure, and building many homes with similar design, often offering amenities like pools, trails, and clubhouses.
- **Scattered Lot Builders:** These are typically smaller, local, or specialized contractors (infill builders) who purchase isolated, already-developed lots to build a single home or a small handful of homes.



Yahoo +2

## Why Major Builders Focus on Communities

1. **Scale & Efficiency:** Developing communities allows for better, faster production, reducing per-home costs.
2. **Market Appeal:** Modern buyers in many regions demand amenities, trails, and a cohesive "lifestyle" that only master-planned communities can offer.
3. **Controlled Sales Environment:** Builders use model homes and centralized sales teams in these communities to drive faster sales, as opposed to the more difficult marketing of scattered lots.
4. **Density:** Land economic trends favor small-lot subdivisions, which align with the capabilities of major builders.



Instagram +4

## Notable Exceptions/Hybrid Models

While they are rare among the top 10 *public* builders, some firms do both. For example, **Maronda Homes** (a large regional/national builder) has a strong focus on supporting buyer-owned or individual "on-your-lot" scenarios alongside their community developments. **Holiday Builders** also operates in specialized scattered-lot communities in Florida.



Maronda Homes +1

2) In stark contrast, HUD Code manufactured housing producers have for years focused on scattered lot sales while working with what is often called "community channel" or "the REITs" - larger community operators who may have properties that had significant vacancy and those operators begin to buy inventory wholesale for rental and/or in-community manufactured home sales. For those who follow [MHPProNews](#)' earnings call reports, the producers often talk about supplying inventory for REITs/the community channel plus are pursuing relationships with conventional builders.

[caption id="attachment\_228015" align="aligncenter" width="600"]

Tim Larson - Director, President & Chief Executive at Champion Home Builders | Zoominfo

**Champion Homes (SKY) Earnings Call Transcript Unpacked. Champion Q3.2026 on 2.4.2026-Sales Down but ASP Up. Tim Larson-'Increasing Awareness and Demand Is One of Our Strategic Priorities' FEA**

<https://www.manufacturedhomepronews.com/champion-homes-sky-earnings-call-transcript-unpacked-champion-q3-2026-on-2-4-2026-sales-down-but-asp-up-tim-larson-increasing-awareness-and-demand-is-one-of-our-strategic-priorities-fea/> [/caption]

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Legal Risks, Board/CEO? Staff?

Millions More New Homes IF ROAD to Housing Act Amended

**MHI** Of Partnership with HUD Celebrating 50 Years

MACHIAVELLIAN HOUSING INSTITUTE

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION SERVING THE CONSOLIDATORS OF THE MANUFACTURED HOUSING INDUSTRY

CLAYTON 21ST MORTGAGE-CHAMPION HOMES (SKY)-MANUFACTURED HOUSING INSTITUTE (MHI)

**LEADERS-** Attorneys Call to Amend ROAD to Housing Act. FEA

PATRICK WAITE-ELS. BILL BOOR-CAVCO, CODY FIERCE-TRIAD.

<https://www.manufacturedhomepronews.com/patrick-waite-els-bill-boor-cavco-cody->

[pierce-triad-clayton-21st-mortgage-champion-homes-sky-manufactured-housing-institute-mhi-leaders-attorneys-call-to-amend-road-to-housing-act-fea/](#)[caption id="attachment\_228515" align="aligncenter" width="600"]



<https://www.manufacturedhomepronews.com/clayton-champion-cavco-manufactured-housing-institute-joint-reveal-wtas-what-they-are-saying-see-politicos-corp-interest-groups-praise-for-house-passed-housing-for-the-21st-century-act-fea/>[caption id="attachment\_228600" align="aligncenter" width="600"]



<https://www.manufacturedhomepronews.com/are-hud-gses-and-fhfa-putting-elbows-on->

[scales-in-favor-of-clayton-homes-champion-homes-cavco-industries-and-manufactured-housing-institute-hud-evidence-of-monopolization-behavior-fea/\[/caption\]](https://www.manufacturedhomepronews.com/doc-ntl-manufactured-housing-campaign-overcome-placement-barriers-add-1-08-million-potential-homebuyers-could-benefit-more-access-to-manufactured-housing-mhi-clayton/)

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**MHI 2.0**  
Tell Our Story  
Engage Our Members  
Develop Our Team

**GROW THE MARKET**

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**DOC 'NTL MANUFACTURED HOUSING CAMPAIGN.'**  
**'OVERCOME PLACEMENT BARRIERS'**

*'Add 1.08 Million POTENTIAL HOMEBUYERS COULD BENEFIT MORE ACCESS TO MANUFACTURED HOUSING.'*  
**MHI-CLAYTON-CHAMPION-CAVCO FEA**

Lesli Gooch, Ph.D. Chief Executive Officer Manufactured Housing Institute  
Jim Ayotte Executive Director Clayton Homes  
Jennifer Hall Executive Director Champion Homes

[https://www.manufacturedhomepronews.com/doc-ntl-manufactured-housing-campaign-overcome-placement-barriers-add-1-08-million-potential-homebuyers-could-benefit-more-access-to-manufactured-housing-mhi-clayton/\[/caption\]](https://www.manufacturedhomepronews.com/doc-ntl-manufactured-housing-campaign-overcome-placement-barriers-add-1-08-million-potential-homebuyers-could-benefit-more-access-to-manufactured-housing-mhi-clayton/)

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**'EVERYONE SEEMED ON BOARD- THEN SUDDENLY MHI NOT INTERESTED'**  
**ANOTHER TIPSTER DOC DROP ON 'MHI TORPEDOED' GORVING STYLE MHWILLE CAMPAIGN.**

**DOZENS OF MH INDUSTRY PROS REVEAL.**

**RANDY ROWE**  
**CONNECTION? FEA**

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**Part 1**  
**THE SMOKING GUN: MHI & THE THROTTLING OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING**  
MHProNews.com - FACTS-EVIDENCE-ANALYSIS

<https://www.manufacturedhomepronews.com/everyone-seemed-on-board-then->

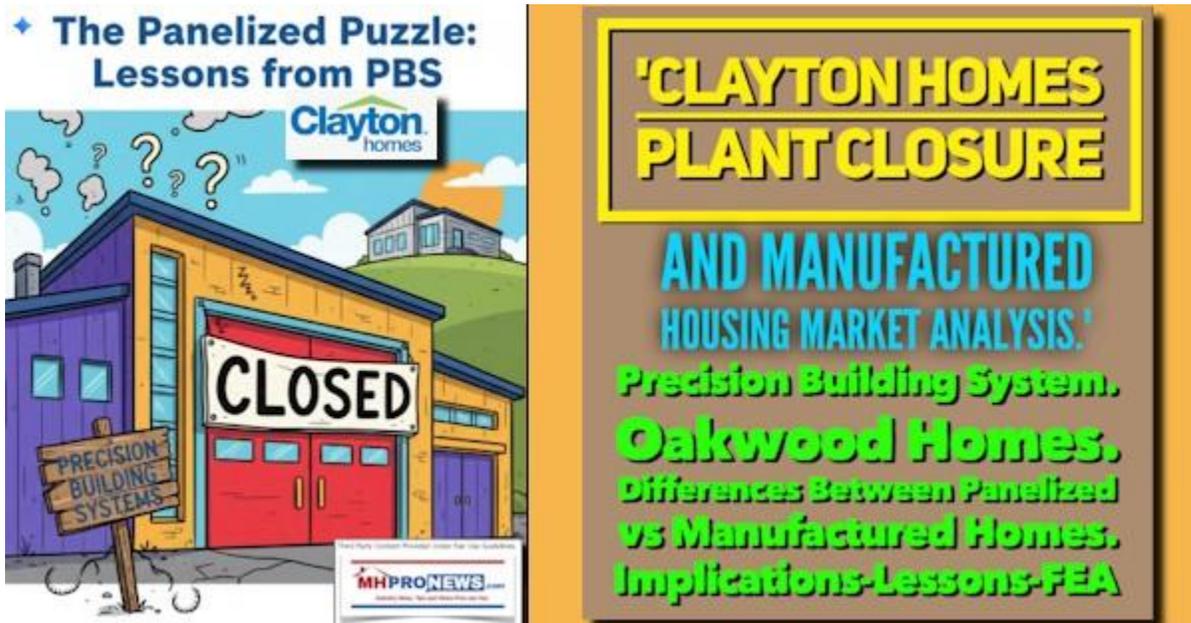
[suddenly-mhi-not-interested-another-tipster-doc-drop-on-mhi-torpedoed-gorving-style-mhville-campaign-dozens-of-mh-industry-pros-reve/](#)[/caption]

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<https://www.manufacturedhomepronews.com/skepticism-to-corroboration-landys-umh-whistleblower-docs-mharr-murex-intersect-cavco-2-trillion-pivot-institutional-investor-risks-mhi-insiders-change-in-bills-or-litigation-trigger-fea/>[/caption]

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<https://www.manufacturedhomepronews.com/clayton-homes-plant-closure-and-manufactured-housing-market-analysis-precision-building-system-oakwood-homes->

[differences-between-panelized-vs-manufactured-homes-implications-lessons-fea/\[/caption\]](#)

3) With the above in mind, *MHProNews* recently had an extended conversation with a central Florida public official. That official *wants* more manufactured housing in their jurisdiction. People are moving to FL and the population is growing, per that official. To paraphrase, many first-time buyers can't afford a new conventional house for over 400k.

To explore those points, per [DF Realty](#) is the following.

"Below is a **January 2026 snapshot** (the most recent month available on many monthly market trackers as of **February 20, 2026**) for some of the most searched and most requested cities we serve across Central Florida.

#### **Central Florida Home Prices by City (Median Sale Price)**

<b>City</b>	<b>Median Sale Price</b>	<b>YoY Change (vs. last year)</b>
Orlando	\$410,000	+1.2%
Winter Garden	\$730,000	+39.1%
Windermere	\$925,000	+59.5%
Winter Park	\$618,750	-13.5%
Clermont	\$430,000	-14.9%
Kissimmee	\$326,000	-1.2%
St. Cloud	\$406,010	+5.5%
Davenport	\$326,950	-1.7%

Data source: Redfin city housing market pages (latest month shown; many indicate **January 2026**).

For context, the **state of Florida** showed a median sale price around **\$412,800 in January 2026**."

4) From the [Moving to Florida Guide](#) website is the following: "Expect to pay upwards of \$250/square foot or more, including going over asking *price* with cash or very few contingencies, to have the chance to be the winning..." [bid]. Also, from that website.

### "Median Prices of Florida Real Estate

Type	Jan 2026	Jan 2025	% Change
Single Family Homes	\$405K	\$410K	- 1.2%
Condos/Townhomes	\$305K	\$313K	- 2.4%
Months of Inventory	5.2	5.1	+ 2.0%

Source: Florida Realtors, February 2026

As Florida was recently recognized as the [#2 growth state of 2025](#) by U-Haul, this continued migration into the state is keeping home prices elevated. The on-going demand for housing has also caused the amount of homes for sale, often referred to as available inventory, to remain minimally low at a **5.2** month supply (a 6 month supply is considered a normal, balanced market). Additionally, as the majority of Florida homeowners have a mortgage rate well under the current rate, many are choosing to remain in their current home with their low monthly payment, versus moving and taking on a higher payment. In today's Florida real estate market, correctly priced homes are continuing to sell fairly quick after hitting the market and for homes in choice neighborhoods with good schools and preferred location, some multiple-offer situations are still occurring, but at a much lesser pace than was during the market peak.

Florida's new home construction market is also experiencing a pullback in consumer demand with the lingering higher rates, but still leads the nation in new home sales for top-selling, master-planned communities. In 2025, **five** of the ["Top 10" best-selling communities](#) in the nation were in Florida alone.

To combat the higher rates, some national home builders are offering buyers, who opt to use their in-house lenders, a more attractive rate as well as credits to buyers to help buy down their rate. In terms of the build time for new Florida homes, wait times are running roughly 9 -12 months, versus the more typical 7 - 9 months build time (from initial contract to close) as construction labor shortages are now causing delays for home builders in various metropolitan markets around the state. While many who are relocating to Florida are eager to escape the cold weather or to start their retirement years as Floridians, and not necessarily wanting to wait this extended length of time for a home to be built, many are

opting for recently-built homes in the resale market and will often pay near full ask price to secure a deal."

5) According to the [Manufactured Housing Association for Regulatory Reform \(MHARR\)](#), these were the [totals for Florida's HUD Code manufactured home shipments](#) in 2024 (7,409) and 2025 (6,804). Google's AI overview (GAIO) said the following as part of a longer response transparently provided [here](#).

While 2024 saw nearly 140,000 single-family homes and 77,000 multifamily units built, 2025 saw a cooling, partly due to high construction costs and interest rates, [this Shimberg Center for Housing Studies report indicates](#).

Shimberg Center +2

Look at those data points again. In 2024, there were more than 10 times the number of multifamily housing units built as there were HUD Code manufactured homes shipped. According to that central FL public official that wants more manufactured housing, apartments can be \$2000 per month. Per the [12.3.2025 Florida Rental Market website](#).

*Median asking rent (all property types, FL statewide, May 2025): ≈ \$2,090. Statewide vacancy rate: about 6.9%, up from 5.8% a year earlier...*

[Hampton REA](#) said this.

Florida's rental market in Q2 2025 paints a mixed picture. Statewide, the *median rent slipped from \$2,125 in March to \$2,090 in May*,

The number of single-family housing units built in FL in 2024 were about 18 new site-built housing units for every 1 new HUD Code manufactured homes. Here is that math, per MHARR's data and GAIO:  $140,000/7,409=18.8959373735$ .

6) Let's note that **this article is NOT meant to be construed as a reason to take the eyes off the twin bottlenecks MHARR has so often stressed**. Meaning, there is a need to pursue routine enforcement of [enhanced preemption](#) made federal law via the [Manufactured Housing Improvement Act of 2000](#). MHARR has been calling on 'the entire industry' to press for [two amendments](#) to pending legislation to make federal [enhanced preemption](#) and the Duty to Serve (DTS) more than just nice-looking words in federal lawbooks. By contrast, [Clayton Homes \(BRK\)](#), [Champion Homes \(SKY\)](#), [Cavco Industries \(CVCO\)](#) and MHI are all on record pushing for the [Housing for the 21st Century Act 'as is.'](#)

That said, MHARR's members and other remaining independents ought to be seeking the path to increasing production under the current constraints while still seeking to get federal laws full and robustly enforced.

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<https://www.manufacturedhomepronews.com/gemini-creates-heartland-rock-to-boost-support-for-american-dream-and-manufactured-housing-mark-weiss-on-why-manufactured-housing-remains-suppressed-mharr-issues-and-perspectives-fea/>

More sales, more profits, and more revenue to MHARR are potential paths to get MHARR's goals - which are good for Americans in general - achieved.

7) With the facts above in mind, it is time to pivot to First Step Homes.

This MHVille [facts-evidence-analysis](#) (FEA) is underway.

# FEA

FACTS-EVIDENCE-  
ANALYSIS

“Analytical journalism is the highest style of journalism.” - Diana Dutsyk

... the personal courage of the journalist is important, he should not be afraid to go against the bosses, should not call white black. He [the analytical journalist] cannot distort the truth.



FACTS



EVIDENCE



ANALYSIS

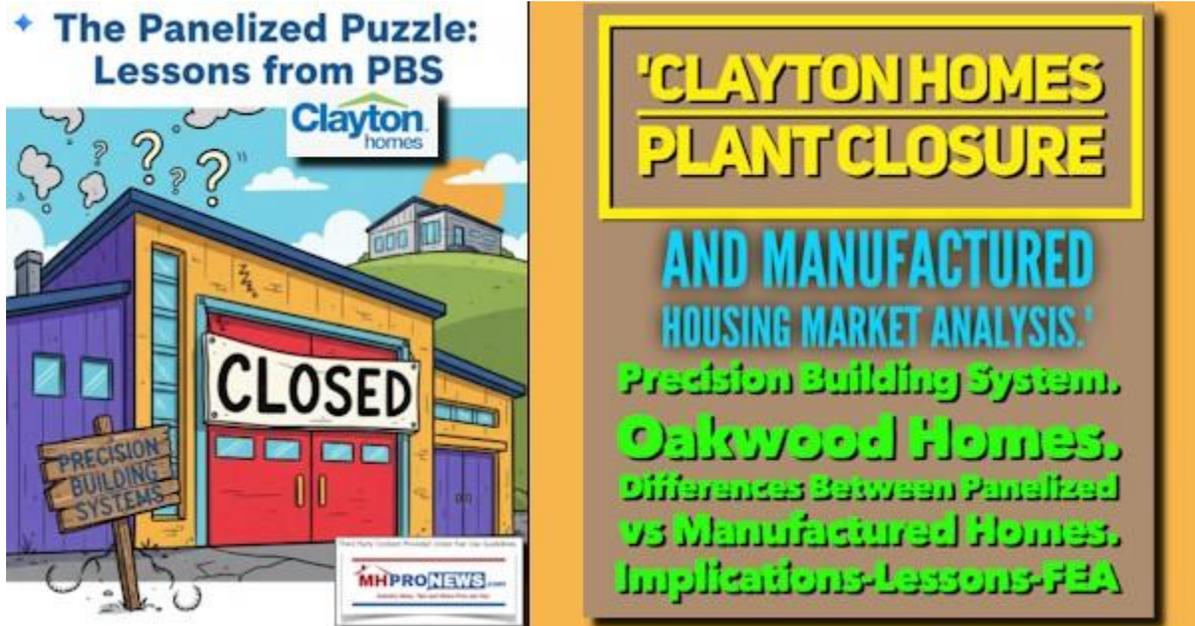


## Part I. 'Back of the Napkin' Insights and Calculations for 'First Step Homes' Projects

1) According to that local official to MHPProNews, every project that comes before their committee gets [NIMBY](#)-style pushback. Single family housing developments get pushback, multi-family housing developments get pushback, business or manufactured housing focused plans get pushback. Public officials in that jurisdiction are 'used to it.' Meaning, despite pushback, there is sufficient support among those making decisions for new developments to get a new development - **potentially including a new manufactured housing development approved** - to make it worth the effort.

Note that official told *MHPProNews* that they reached out to a HUD Code producer known by *MHPProNews* to be a [MHI member firm](#). It would not be surprising if the other two "big three" members were told by that firm that declined interest. That's another story for another time.

[caption id="attachment\_228660" align="center" width="600"]



<https://www.manufacturedhomepronews.com/clayton-homes-plant-closure-and-manufactured-housing-market-analysis-precision-building-system-oakwood-homes-differences-between-panelized-vs-manufactured-homes-implications-lessons-fea/>

2) To tee up the 'back of the napkin' calculations, as part of longer Q&A linked [here](#), GAIO [said](#) the following quoted below. Note that Polk County, FL happens to have a significant number of pre-HUD Code mobile homes and post HUD Code manufactured homes.

Buildable 5 to 10-acre tracts in Polk County, FL, generally cost between **\$150,000 and over \$300,000**, with prices heavily influenced by location, zoning, and available utilities. Recent listings show 5.7 to 5.89-acre lots priced around \$195,000, while prime, ready-to-build, or larger parcels often exceed \$30,000–\$40,000 per acre.

Landwatch.com +2

3) According to the GAIO that cited Polk County government linked [here](#).

**Waivers:** Polk County often waives **50% to 100% of impact fees** for developments meeting specific "Workforce Housing" or "Affordable Housing" income criteria (80%–120% AMI).

Polk County Government (.gov) +4

4) Per that public official, it is about \$200,000 to build a single apartment unit. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's latest data linked [here](#).

United States

	Total <sup>1</sup>	Single	Double
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2025

September	134,600	87,500	169,900
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Also per the U.S. Census Bureau's latest data linked [here](#).

South

Total <sup>1</sup>	Single	Double
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134,300	85,100	169,400
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5) The U.S. average of \$134,600 is being used in this to reflect a potentially modest sized multi-sectional. Per the [GAIO here](#), the range of development costs per unit is **\$48,000 – \$84,000, and the higher figure is used.**

**Summary Table: Land Cost Per Unit**

**Gross Acre Price 8 Units/Usable Acre 10 Units/Usable Acre**

\$29,000	\$5,178	\$4,143
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\$32,500	\$5,803	\$4,643
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\$36,000	\$6,428	5,242
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*Note: If the parcel has significant wetlands (common in Polk County), your efficiency factor could drop to or lower, which would drive the cost per site above.*

**For a high-density manufactured home project, your land cost per site will typically fall between \$4100 and \$6500, assuming a 70% land-use efficiency and standard median land prices.**

6) There are also professional services that are routinely used for such projects. Per GAIO, they would typically be \$3500 to \$7500 per homesite. See the list and details in the document linked [here](#). Using the average of those figures, \$5500, plus \$6500 per unit land cost, there would be \$11,000 per unit plus.

But let's let GAIO do the math for an 'all in' figures.

#### AI Overview

To calculate the "all-in" cost per unit for a **10-acre project** at high density, we will assume an efficiency of **70%** (7 buildable acres). At 8 to 10 units per usable acre, you are looking at a total project size of **56 to 70 units**.

Below is the cost breakdown per unit, assuming you are buying land at the median price of **\$32,500 per acre** (\$325,000 total).

#### All-In Cost Per Unit Breakdown

<b>Expense Category</b>	<b>8 Units/Usable Acre (56 Units)</b>	<b>10 Units/Usable Acre (70 Units)</b>
<b>Land Acquisition</b>	\$5,803	\$4,642
<b>Impact Fees (Polk County)</b>	\$14,000	\$14,000
<b>Civil Infrastructure</b> (Roads, Sewer, Water, Grading)	\$35,000	\$30,000
<b>Soft Costs</b> (Engineering, Planning, Permitting)	\$5,500	\$4,500

<b>Setup &amp; Foundations</b> (Pads, Tie-downs, Hookups)	\$10,000	\$10,000
<b>Contingency (10%)</b>	\$7,030	\$6,314
<b>TOTAL PER UNIT</b>	<b>\$77,333</b>	<b>\$69,456</b>

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### Total Project Capital Requirement

For a 10-acre tract, your total "horizontal" development budget (getting the land ready for homes to be rolled in) would look like this:

- **56-Unit Project:** ~\$4.33 Million
- **70-Unit Project:** ~\$4.86 Million

### Crucial Cost Variables to Watch

- **The "Workforce Housing" Wildcard:** If you can qualify your project for Polk County's affordable housing incentives, you could potentially waive the **\$10,000 school impact fee** per unit. This would drop your all-in cost per unit by **~14%**, bringing the 70-unit scenario down to roughly **\$59,000 per unit**.
- **Utility Proximity:** These numbers assume "stubbed" utilities are at the property line. If you have to run a sewer or water main half a mile to reach the 10 acres, you could easily add **\$150,000–\$300,000** to your soft costs.
- **Infrastructure Scaling:** Note that the "Per Unit" cost for infrastructure (roads/pipes) decreases as density increases because you are spreading the cost of the main entrance and the primary drainage pond over more doors.

### Summary Conclusion

For a high-density manufactured home development in Polk County, you should budget an all-in cost of **\$70,000 to \$77,000 per unit** to get the site ready for occupancy. This

does **not** include the cost of the manufactured home itself, which would be an additional expense if you are providing the units as rentals.

Would you like me to run these numbers again based on a **specific land price** you are looking at, or perhaps focus on the **ROI/Rental yield** required to cover this \$70k/unit investment?

--- MHPProNews notes that the PDF (with screen captures) to document the accuracy of the above is linked [here](#). ---

6) Using the "all in" 77K figure, plus \$134,600 for a modest-sized multi-section manufactured home would yield **\$214,600 sales price. Round that up to \$229,900.**

7) Using the [US Bank \(naming a firm herein is not an endorsement, it is merely an acknowledgement of the source of information\) FHA Title II loan calculator](#) yielded the [following](#).



Your estimated total monthly payment:

**\$1,746**

> Show payment details



Move the sliders or type in a specific number to estimate your monthly mortgage payment.

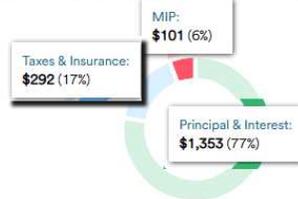
**Breakdown**

Over Time

Amortization

Enable color patterns

Breakdown of the total monthly payment by principal and interest, mortgage insurance premium, and property taxes and homeowners insurance



● Principal & Interest ● Taxes & Insurance ● MIP

Purchase price

Down payment (\$8.05K)

Interest rate

Property tax (yearly)

Homeowners insurance (yearly)

Choose a term length

30-year fixed

15-year fixed

- Sales Price \$229,900
- Down Payment 3.5 percent (About \$8050).
- Monthly payment \$1746. figuring 6 percent 30-year fixed rate mortgage.

8)

**Part II. Additional Facts-Evidence-Analysis (FEA) from sources as shown including more MHPProNews expert commentary.**

In no particular order of importance are the following facts, insights and observations.

1)

2)