



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 17, 2022

New Report Finds Santa Fe's Housing Crisis Contributing to Climate Change

Report finds nearly 2 in every 5 Santa Fe jobs held by people who live outside county; building more affordable housing on vacant parcels within city critical to reaching climate goals

Santa Fe, NM — A new report released today from Homewise, a New Mexico social enterprise that has been increasing access to homeownership for nearly 30 years, finds that Santa Fe's increasingly urgent housing crisis is contributing to climate change as more and more workers are forced to take long commutes from more affordable communities outside the city. The report found that nearly 2 in 5 Santa Fe jobs were held by people who don't live in Santa Fe County, and 78 percent of workers who commute into the city travel alone by car.

"Governor Lujan-Grisham and the City of Santa Fe have set ambitious climate goals to dramatically reduce harmful carbon emissions that contribute to climate change, and we know that passenger vehicles are the largest single source of emissions in the transportation sector. And yet too many people are forced to take long commutes from outside Santa Fe because they simply cannot afford to live here," said **Homewise CEO Mike Loftin**. "Making it possible for more people to live in close proximity to their workplaces is key to reducing automobile dependence and meeting our climate goals. And many low- and moderate-income workers, who are disproportionately people of color, bear the costs of living far away from the workplace. Housing justice and climate justice are inextricably linked, and equity demands that manageable commutes be available to all workers, not just those that can afford to live near downtown Santa Fe."

To read the full report, click [here](#).

The report, "Housing Justice = Climate Justice", examines the link between Santa Fe's ongoing housing crisis and climate change, and illustrates that increasing density within the city by building more affordable housing on vacant parcels would significantly dial back the number of miles New Mexicans drive each day. This remains a critical piece in reducing carbon emissions and combating climate change in New Mexico. According to a December 2021 finding from Zillow, the median value of a single-family home in Santa Fe hit \$628,000, more than double the \$301,000 median price in Albuquerque. Commuting between the two cities costs the typical solo commuter over \$10,000 a year in vehicle-related expenses alone, but this is still less than the premium they would pay to own a mid-priced Santa Fe home.

According to the 2019 US Census, 62,537 people were employed in Santa Fe County, and more than one-third (37 percent) of these workers commuted from surrounding counties, mostly by car. Nearly eight in 10 traveled alone by car. Each year, commuters travel more than 1.1



billion miles to and from jobs in Santa Fe. The more than one-third of workers who commute from surrounding counties account for more than 90 percent of these miles or roughly one billion vehicle miles annually.

“Generations of state employees and other Santa Fe workers have accepted hours-long daily commutes as the price of homeownership. However, as fires, floods, and declining instream flows have made abundantly clear, the costs borne by commuters are only a fraction of the price we are all paying for our over-dependence on cars,” writes **Kelly O’Donnell, PhD and author of the report**. “Santa Fe has established ambitious climate goals that cannot be met without increasing the profound under-supply of workforce housing and prioritizing infill development. Greenfield development – building on previously undisturbed land outside municipal boundaries – will take us in the wrong direction by increasing our toxic over-dependence on cars.”

###

Since 1986, Homewise has been helping people achieve their homeownership goals. We do this by focusing on our customers and placing their long-term financial wellbeing as the highest priority. We share in our customers’ challenges and successes, using those experiences to build a better way to buy a home. We believe that strong homeowners help build healthy, vibrant communities. And with the right tools and support, people can be empowered to change their lives.