

# 10 Years After Housing Peaked, US is More of a Renter Nation

By **JOSH BOAK**  
Associated Press

MOUNT PLEASANT, South Carolina — It's a troublesome story playing out across America in the 10 years since the housing bubble peaked and then burst in a ruinous crash: As real estate has climbed back, homeowners are thriving while renters are struggling.

For many longtime owners, times are good. They're enjoying the benefits of growing equity and reduced mortgage payments from ultra-low rates.

But for America's growing class of renters, surging costs, stagnant pay and rising home values have made it next to impossible to save enough to buy.

rental in Pittsburgh — made it impossible to save enough to buy a home. With their rent going up again, the couple moved to a cheaper suburb in hopes of repaying their student debt and saving for a starter home.

"The best school district is Mount Pleasant, and we would like to be there," said Fabie, 27. "But if you're lucky you can get some beat-up homes for around \$300,000."

An exclusive analysis by The Associated Press of census data covering over 300 communities found that two major forces are driving a wedge between the fortunes of renters and homeowners:

- Historically low mortgage rates have enabled homeowners to

nities at sharp discounts and rented them out. Many of the new tenants belong to Generation X households — ages 35 to 51 — that began renting after the crash, according to the Harvard University Joint Center for Housing Studies.

Rents have also jumped in areas that absorbed many young college-educated job hunters. These workers have increasingly clustered in areas, including Boston, San Diego and Washington, with abundant jobs but high housing costs. The result is delayed home ownership for a population group that historically had the means to buy.

The AP analysis also found a contrasting belt of stability across the Midwest where the



AP PHOTO/CHUCK BURTON

In this Tuesday, April 19, 2016, photo, Joe Fabie, right, and his wife, Christi, pose for a photo in front of their rental home in Charleston, S.C. The Fabies left Mount Pleasant, S.C., to rent somewhere cheaper. Both have law school debt and are saving to buy a home.

“Half of all renters are now considered cost-burdened, compared with just 24 percent in 1960

The possible consequences are bleak for a nation already grappling with economic inequality: Whatever wealth most Americans possess mainly comes from home equity. An enlarged renter class means fewer Americans can build that same wealth and financial security.

Nearly two-thirds of adults still own homes. And some who rent do so by choice. Yet ownership has become a more distant dream for the many Americans who still regard it as a route to prosperity and pride. The problem has become especially severe in areas that offer the best job prospects as well as those that have been battered by foreclosures.

"It doesn't paint a pretty picture," said Svenja Gudell, chief economist at Zillow, the online real estate database company. "You're really blocking out a group of buyers from owning a home. They're truly living paycheck to paycheck, and that does not put them into a good position to buy."

Joe Fabie and his wife face just such a bind. They moved to Mount Pleasant, just over the bridge from historic Charleston, South Carolina after law school in Pittsburgh. The suburb's pastel-hued harbor vistas, tin-roofed houses and Spanish moss-adorned live oaks were enchanting.

But the rising rent on their one-bedroom apartment — more than for their three-bedroom

refinance and shrink their monthly payments, thereby reducing a major household cost. The median annual mortgage expense for a U.S. homeowner has dropped by \$1,492 since 2006.

- A combination of foreclosures and new college graduates crowding into the strongest job markets has raised demand for rentals. Renters accounted for all the 8 million-plus net households the United States added in the past decade. Home ownership has dipped to 63.5 percent, near a 48-year low.

That demand has driven up rents, which in turn have prevented or delayed people from buying first homes.

The government says if you spend more than 30 percent of your pretax pay on housing, you are "cost-burdened." The total number of renters in that category has jumped more than 30 percent in the past decade, to 21.2 million. Half of all renters are now considered cost-burdened, compared with just 24 percent in 1960.

These trends are reflected in how and where Americans live. Suburban cul-de-sacs built for owners are now tilting toward rentals, especially in such areas as Orlando, Las Vegas and Tampa, where the bubble and crash were especially intense.

After the bust, investors bought distressed houses in these commu-

housing boom and meltdown had little effect on homeownership. Rates of ownership remained relatively stable, for ex-

ample, in Minneapolis, St. Louis and Kansas City, Missouri, where starter homes are comparatively affordable.

But the transformations have been vast in other areas, particularly in smaller suburbs where much of the country lives.

Both before and during the housing boom, farmland around the country was bought cheaply and

developed into houses, schools and shopping plazas — a build-out that ignited homeownership. Now, in a twist, many of those cul-de-sacs are occupied by renters living in homes whose former owners lost them to foreclosure.

To see just how drastically the foreclosure crisis transformed certain neighborhoods from the domain of owners into

blocks of rental properties, consider the Orlando suburbs.

The shift has been vivid over the past five years in the Piedmont Park neighborhood of Apopka, a former agricultural hub now crowded with housing developments. Where one in 10 homes was once a rental, now more than a third are.

Read the rest of this story at  
**TheSkanner.com**

## Portland Harbor Proposed Cleanup Plan and Public Comment Period

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is seeking formal public comment on the Proposed Cleanup Plan for the Portland Harbor Superfund Site in Portland, Oregon from June 9, 2016 until August, 8, 2016.



Photo courtesy of EPA, Region 10

The Portland Harbor Superfund Site is located on the lower Willamette River approximately between the Broadway Bridge and Sauvie Island. This area is contaminated with many hazardous substances, including polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), dioxin, pesticides and polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). EPA has determined that human health and environmental risks posed by the Portland Harbor site are high enough to take action under the Superfund Law. After many years of studying the Site, the EPA is releasing a Proposed Cleanup Plan.

EPA's **Proposed Cleanup Plan for the Portland Harbor Superfund Site** presents EPA's preferred alternative or option to lower risks to people and the environment from contamination in the lower Willamette River and its river banks. Alternative I, EPA's preferred alternative, reduces risks to human health and the environment to acceptable levels by dredging and/or capping 291 acres of contaminated sediments and 19,472 lineal feet of contaminated river bank, followed by 23 years of monitored natural recovery. The preferred alternative also includes disposal of dredged sediment in both an on-site confined disposal facility and upland landfills. This alternative will cost about \$746 million and take 7 years of construction in the river. This alternative will address waste that poses the greatest threat to people and the environment through construction and relies on monitored natural recovery to continue to reduce remaining lower contaminant concentrations to acceptable levels.

Public comment is critical and EPA believes the best cleanup plans are developed and implemented with the support of a well-informed community. The public is encouraged to review and submit comments on the Proposed Cleanup Plan to EPA during the formal 60-day **public comment period beginning on June 9, 2016 and ending on August 8, 2016.**

**EPA will host official Public Meetings to overview the Proposed Plan and take oral and written public comments.**

You are invited to attend the official EPA Public Meetings below to be held in Portland, Oregon:

- **June 24, 2016**, 11:30am to 8pm, City of Portland Building, 1120 SW 5th Ave.
- **June 29, 2016**, 11:30am to 8pm, Portland EXPO Center, 2060 N Marine Dr.
- **July 11, 2016**, 11:30am – 8pm, University Place Conference Center, 310 SW Lincoln St.
- **July 20, 2016**, 11:30am – 8pm, Ambridge Center, 1333 NE Martin Luther King Blvd.

**All locations are easily accessible via MAX trains and bus lines**

**EPA will offer two presentations on the Proposed Plan during each public meeting at the following times:**

- 12noon to 12:30pm
- 6pm to 6:30pm

**Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese interpreters will be available** during the June 24th meeting.

Please notify Laura Knudsen [knudsen.laura@epa.gov](mailto:knudsen.laura@epa.gov) or 503-326-3280, no later than **two weeks prior** to the other public meetings to request language interpretation assistance.

**Throughout the 60 day comment period, written comments may be submitted via:**

- Email: [harborcomments@epa.gov](mailto:harborcomments@epa.gov)
- Online comment box: <https://www.epa.gov/or/forms/comment-epas-proposed-cleanup-plan-portland-harbor-superfund-site>
- Postal mail: ATTN: Harbor Comments, U.S. EPA, 805 SW Broadway, Suite 500, Portland, OR 97205

**The public is encouraged to review the Proposed Plan, Fact Sheet and supporting documents at the following locations:**

- EPA's website <http://go.usa.gov/3Wf2B>
- Multnomah County Central Library, 801 SW 10th Ave., Portland OR
- St. Johns Library, 7510 N Charleston Ave., Portland OR
- Kenton Library, 8226 N Denver Ave., Portland OR

Questions? Contact Alanna Conley at 503-326-6831



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