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At Worcester Police Department headquarters, Sgt. Elise B. Miranda stands near a mop bucket collecting water under a leak in the third-floor hallway outside the Bureau of Professional Standards. PHOTOS BY ALLAN JUNG/TELEGRAM & GAZETTE

Seniors struggle with housing, caregiving

Many are 'one emergency away' from homelessness

Sandra Amrhein
Sarasota Herald-Tribune
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

SARASOTA, FL - Hurricane Milton had blown off the carport roof, damaged the lanai and broken several windows of his home in Sarasota, Florida. But that October 2024, L. Paul Laramie was reeling from an even greater shock.

After months of troubling behavior - including an uncharacteristic suspiciousness - his beloved wife, Marie, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease.

For Paul, much of the next year passed in a blur. But one thing stayed constant for the 83-year-old: the need to keep working.

Before the diagnosis, Paul had already had taken a part-time job to stay on top of rising housing costs. As storm bills mounted, so did pressure on how best to care for Marie - his partner of 64 years.

Unable to afford home health care or qualify for Medicaid, Paul's only solution was to leave Marie home alone while he went to work, struggling to maintain a roof over their heads.

"It bothers me that I can't be there to help her," Paul said. "But we have to live because Social Security doesn't take care of much anymore. Money coming in is not keeping pace with money going out."

With little warning, Paul had found himself at the juncture of two phenomena that are sinking millions of older Americans: housing and caregiving.

"The housing crisis and the caregiving crisis are not parallel problems," said Maricela Morado, president and CEO of the Area Agency on Aging for Southwest Florida.

"They are the same problem," Morado said, "and older Americans are bearing the weight of both."

Within the next decade, older adults will outnumber children for the first time in U.S. history, according to the Urban Institute.

As seniors' numbers are exploding, housing and caregiving are failing to keep up, experts say.

Affordable housing options and

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Police case with holes

Water leaks, aging take toll on Worcester HQ

Craig S. Semon
Worcester Telegram & Gazette
USA TODAY NETWORK

WORCESTER - Less than 48 years after the Lincoln Square police headquarters opened amid much fanfare, City Manager Eric D. Batista has authorized \$5 million in the city's capital funds to fix up the police station.

"Even if we were to build a brand-new station or look to find another site for that station for the department, it's years out," Batista said. "And in the meantime, we still need to provide some maintenance to that property."

When the Worcester Police Department moved into its Lincoln Square headquarters back in 1978, it was hoped the building would meet the department's needs well into the 21st century.

The old headquarters on Waldo Street had been home to the Police Department for more than 60 years, but when that building became dysfunctional for modern-day police needs, the city ponied up \$6.5 million in the mid-1970s to build a new headquarters at Lincoln Square.

But the four-story, concrete building that was hailed as a major leap forward for the Police Department is also showing its share of wear and tear from New England weather and faulty water pipes.

Back in January 2005, future mayor



The Worcester Police Department headquarters building is in Lincoln Square.

Joseph M. Petty was serving the city as councilor-at-large and chairman of the City Council Public Safety Committee.

"The building definitely has its issues," Petty was quoted as saying in a Jan. 30, 2005, article of the Telegram & Gazette. "It's not the most efficient building, and it isn't very customer-friendly either. Parts of the building have also become antiquated for police operations."

And that was more than 20 years ago. In fact, finding a new home for the police department was a common topic of conversation back in 2005, but finding a location better than where it

stands now overlooking Lincoln Square isn't an easy one.

"For many, many, many years, there have always been conversations," Batista said. "Even previous administrations talked about the idea of turning that into a development site, because it's a pretty prime location, and the building also needed significant repairs as well."

Batista said the city has analyzed the need of a new police station as well, but right now there are bigger priority projects, including a new

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