

HOW TO DESIGN AFFORDABLE HOUSING: COMMON AMENITIES

NDSU

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ABSTRACT



This content analysis investigated affordable housing websites across the Midwest in order to determine the best and most efficient ways to design affordable housing in a way that is most cost-effective while providing the residents with the elements that they need to prosper. Categories shown in this study include the requirements needed to be eligible for this type of housing, the income needed, the types of housing units, and the amenities of the units, surrounding community, and neighborhood amenities.

METHODS



In order to better understand the process of securing affordable housing, a content analysis consisting of nine Housing Authorities in cities and counties throughout the Midwest that are of comparable size to Fargo was completed. The Housing Authorities reviewed in the content analysis include Fargo, ND; Chicago, IL; Minneapolis, MN; Saint Paul, MN; Olmsted County- Rochester, MN; Sioux Falls, SD; Billings, MT; Burleigh County-Bismarck, ND; and Springfield, MO.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE



"Studies show that when children live in stable, affordable homes located in neighborhoods with high performing schools, safe outdoor spaces, and access to transportation and jobs, they are better able to thrive and become healthier adults" (Bovell-Ammon, Yentel, Koprowski, Wilkinson, & Sandel, 2021, p. 20).

"According to Ross et al. (2010), access to green public space is one of the key issues of a healthy and comfortable living environment with many beneficial effects on health and well-being which is often neglected in affordable housing programs (Dempsey et al., 2012)" (Gan, Zuo, Wu, Wang, Chang, & Wen, 2017, p. 429).

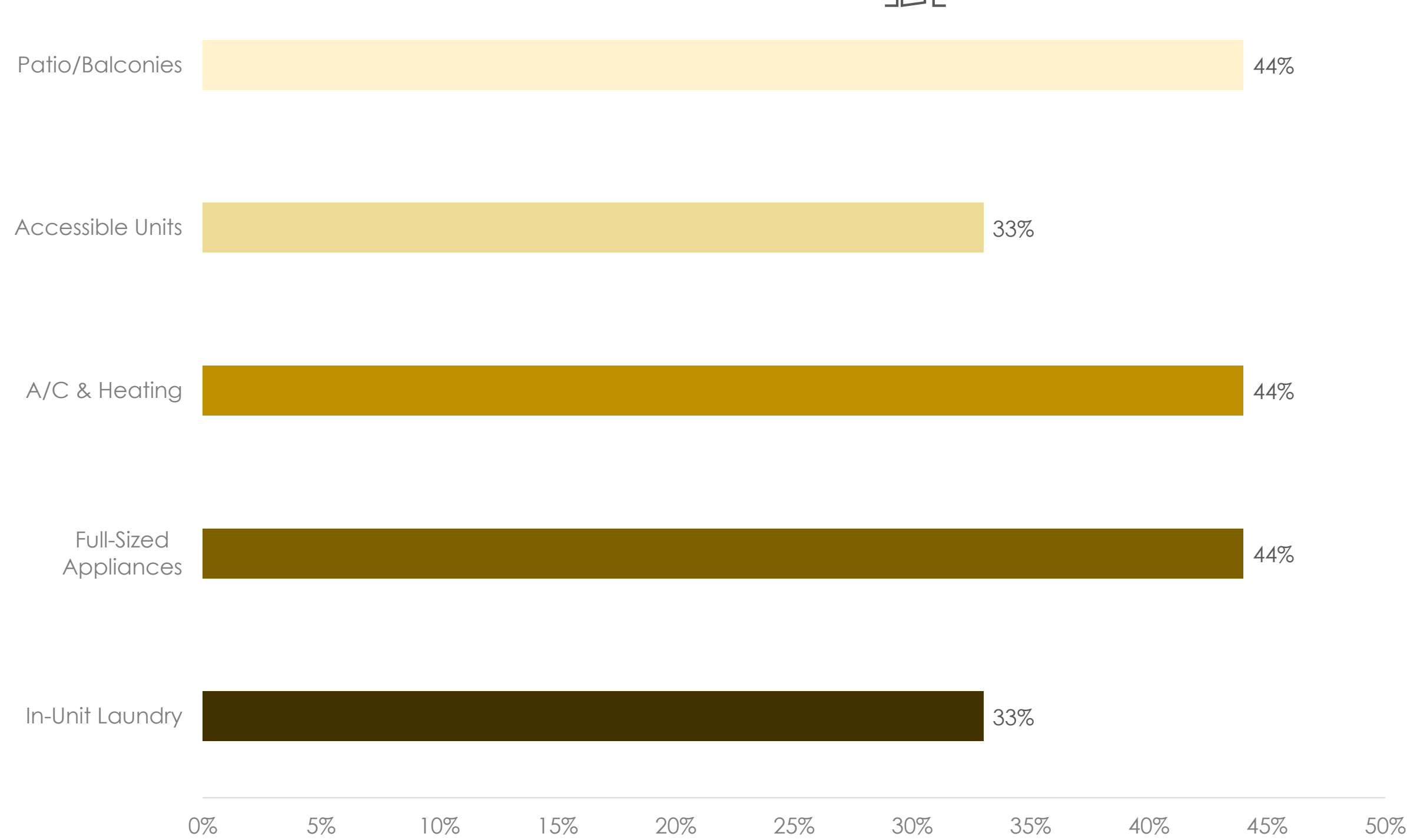
"Mental problems stemming from poor quality housing and financially burdensome housing can be significant for residents." (Mueller & Tighe, 2007, p. 380).

DISCUSSION

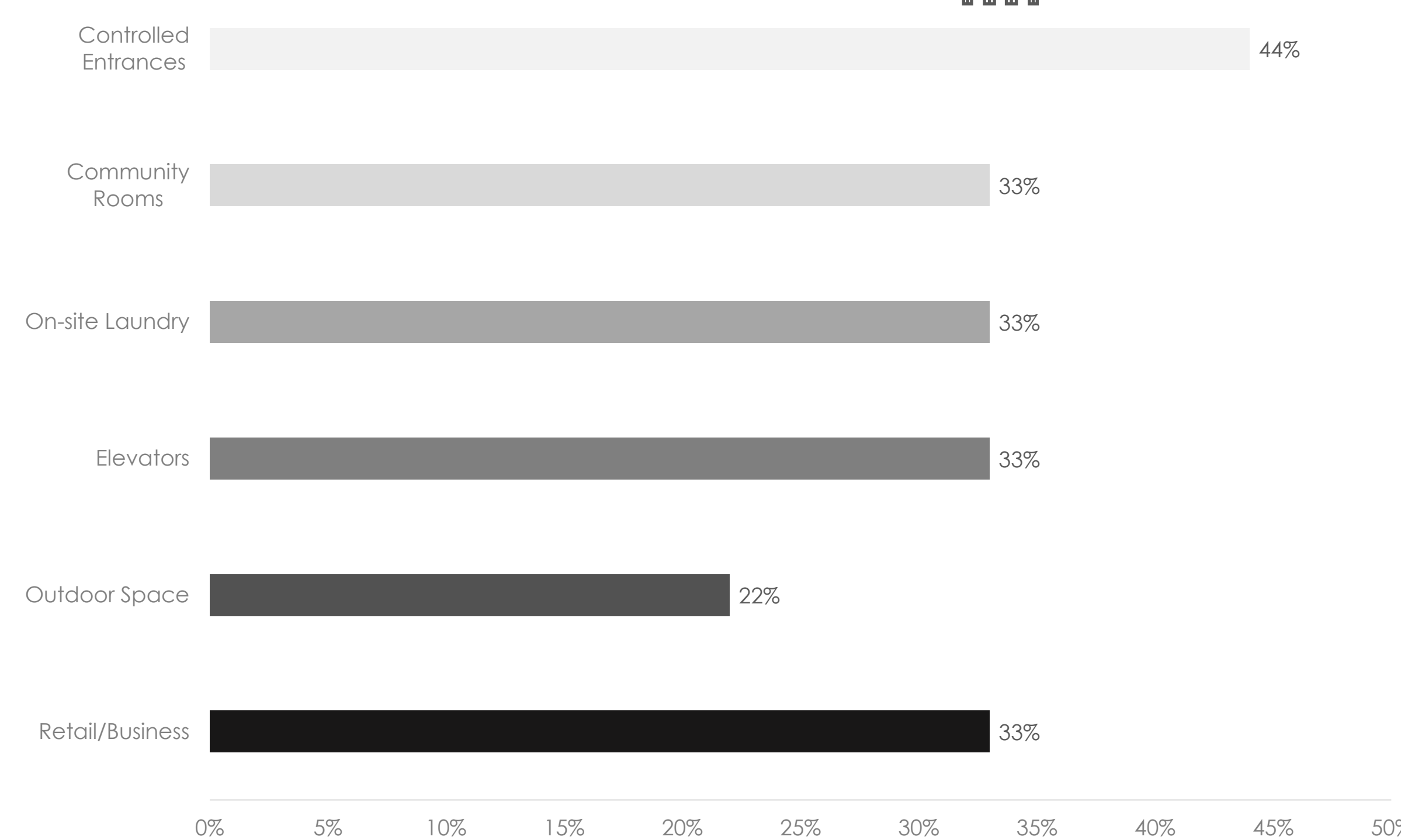
With the cost of living constantly rising it is important for individuals who may be looking at affordable housing websites to have easy access to the requirements needed to qualify, and the amenities available to them. Low-income individuals that are new to navigating this information may find it intimidating to ask for assistance. In this study, we looked at how easily accessible this information is on a variety of websites so that individuals who may feel intimidated have what they need available to them. The research procedure that was conducted in this study was a compilation of qualitative data in the form of a content analysis through surveying Affordable Housing Authority websites across the upper Midwest. The results collected conclude that across each Housing Authority website, there were common in-unit, community and neighborhood amenities that are most desirable for residents. The most popular in-unit amenities include access to patios or balconies, having air-conditioning and heating controls, and full-sized appliances (44%). For community amenities, 44% of the websites noted secure, controlled entrances to their buildings. Additionally, 33% of the websites include community rooms, on-site laundry, elevator access, and retail businesses on site, as they are among the most desired community amenities. Lastly, the most common neighborhood amenities included being near restaurants (77%); parks and outdoor areas (66%); grocery stores (55%); and transportation (33%). Each of these in-unit, community, and neighborhood amenities are important to consider when developing affordable housing to ensure the prosperity and quality of life of each of the residents.

RESULTS

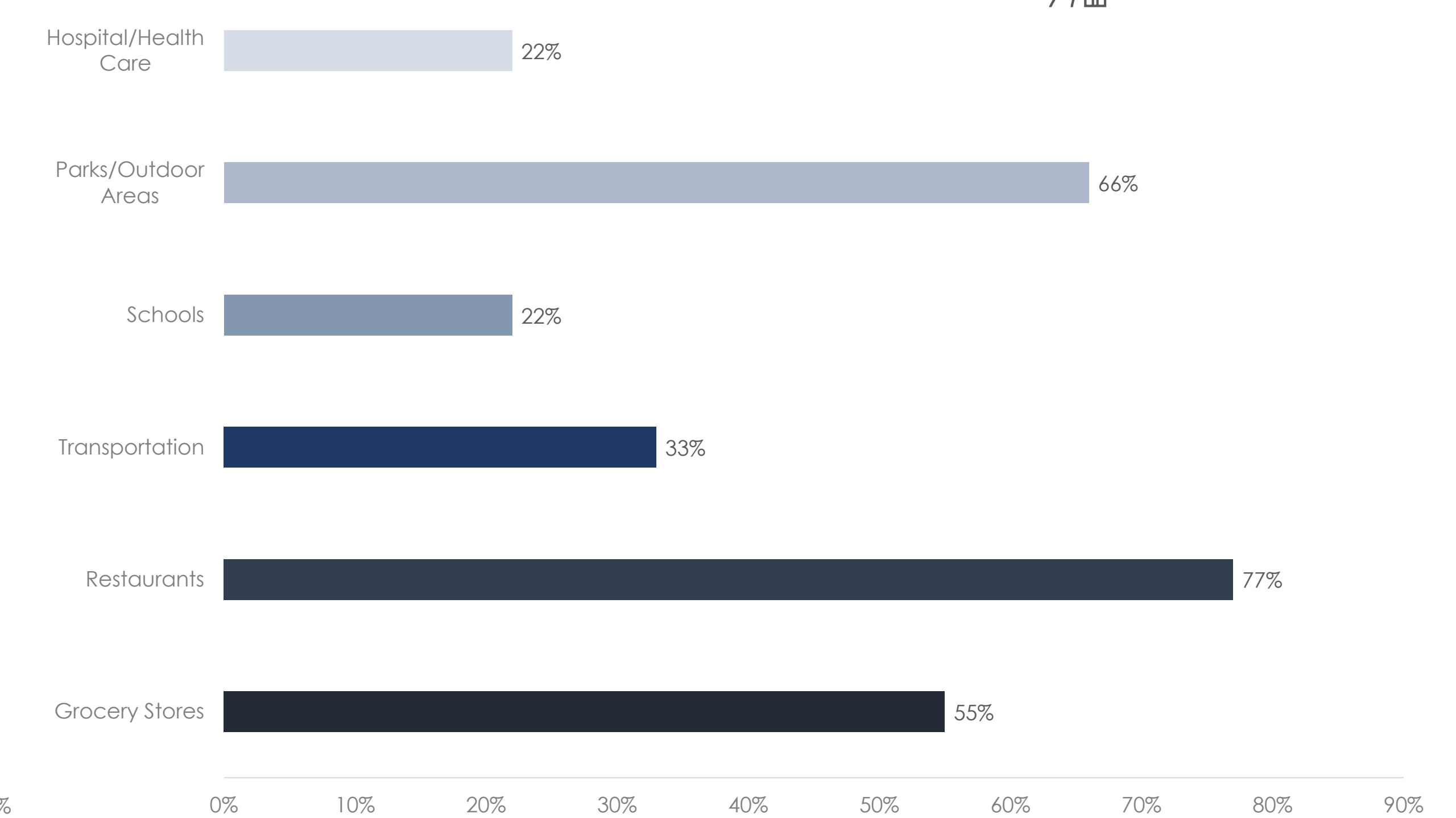
Unit Amenities



Community Amenities



Neighborhood Amenities



CONCLUSION

Although this study was limited in relation to accessible information found on each website, the results were consistent and indicated that all affordable housing should be located within proximity of neighborhood amenities, while the housing itself should offer standard in-unit and community amenities. The information gathered from nine websites clearly indicate unit, community, and neighborhood amenities that should be available to affordable housing developments. The results yielded above show which amenities are most common while providing comfort, community, and a sense of security for the residents who live there. It would be beneficial in future research to expand the regional areas surveyed in order to gather more data.

REFERENCES:

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Gan, X., Zuo, J., Wu, P., Wang, P., Chang, R., & Wen, T. (2017). How affordable housing becomes more sustainable? A stakeholder study. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 162, 427-437. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2017.06.048>.
Mueller, E.J., & Tighe, J.R. (2007). Making the case for affordable housing: Connecting housing with health and education outcomes. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 21(4), 372-385. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0885412207299653>.