



## ABSTRACT

Community centers bring community members together and provide a flexible space for people of all genders, races, cultural backgrounds, and physical abilities to enjoy together (Brooks, 2017). This study discovers what the general public expects out of their community center and what they wish to see more of. Goals of this study were to determine what the current perception of social sustainability is among the public, the physical and abstract features people want in their community center, and the best features that promote socialization within community centers.

Conclusions from this research will provide ideas and guidance for a socially sustainable community center design and future research for urban community centers.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

Can the Interior Design of a Local Urban Community Center Support Social Sustainability?

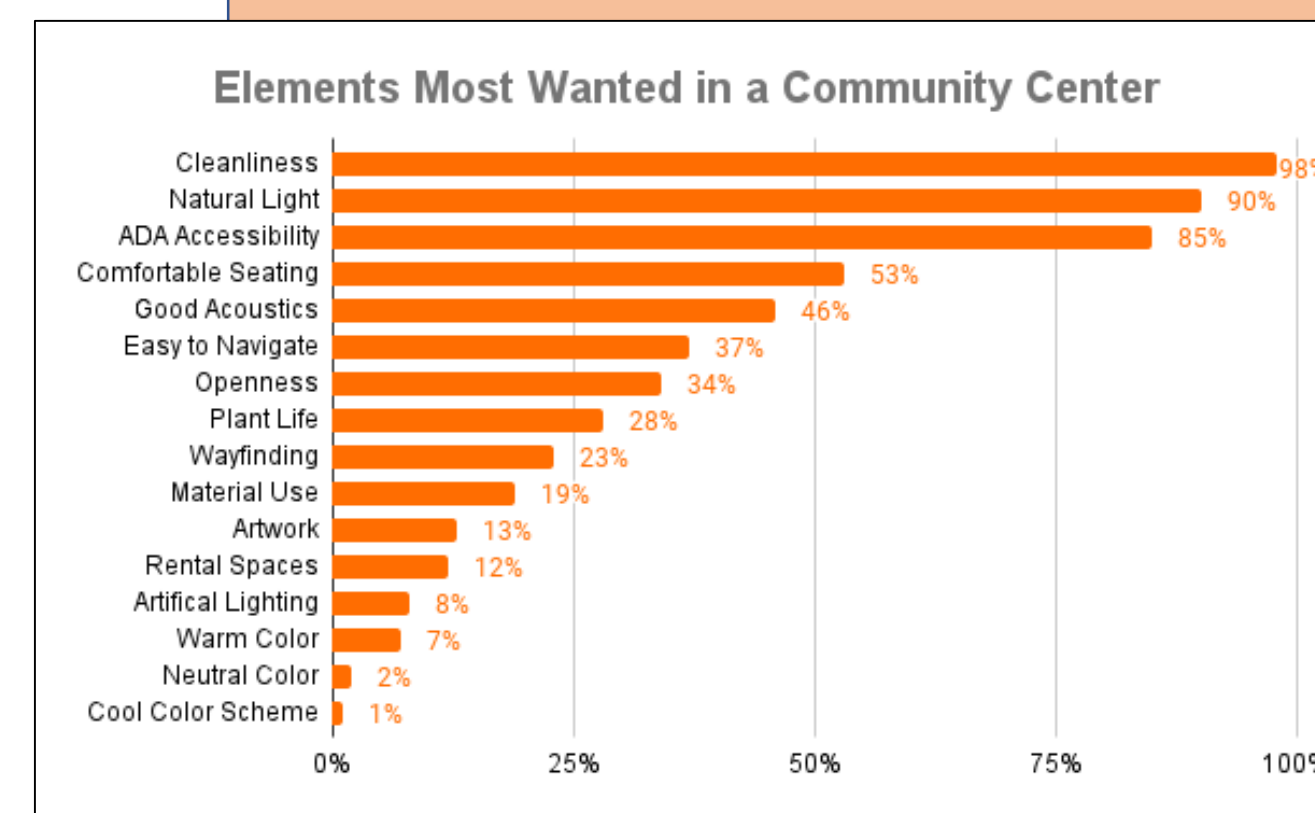
## SURVEY METHODOLOGY

To gain a clear understanding of the public view towards social sustainability, an online survey was created. The participants were required to be 18 years of age or older. The survey was promoted across the North Dakota State University faculty and student listserv and social media for those with the link to be able to participate. Fourteen closed and open-ended questions and Likert scale questions were made available to participants for the duration between November 22nd through December 7th, 2021. Responses were anonymously recorded. Variables in this study recorded demographic information (age, gender, the state where respondents lived) the amount of experience with community centers.

## RESULTS

This research study's goal is to learn and discover what matters most to community center users when it comes to socialization with their peers. Social sustainability is becoming more prevalent as people become divided in their own neighborhoods (Medved, 2016).

Participants were to rank amenities and features a community center design could potentially include.

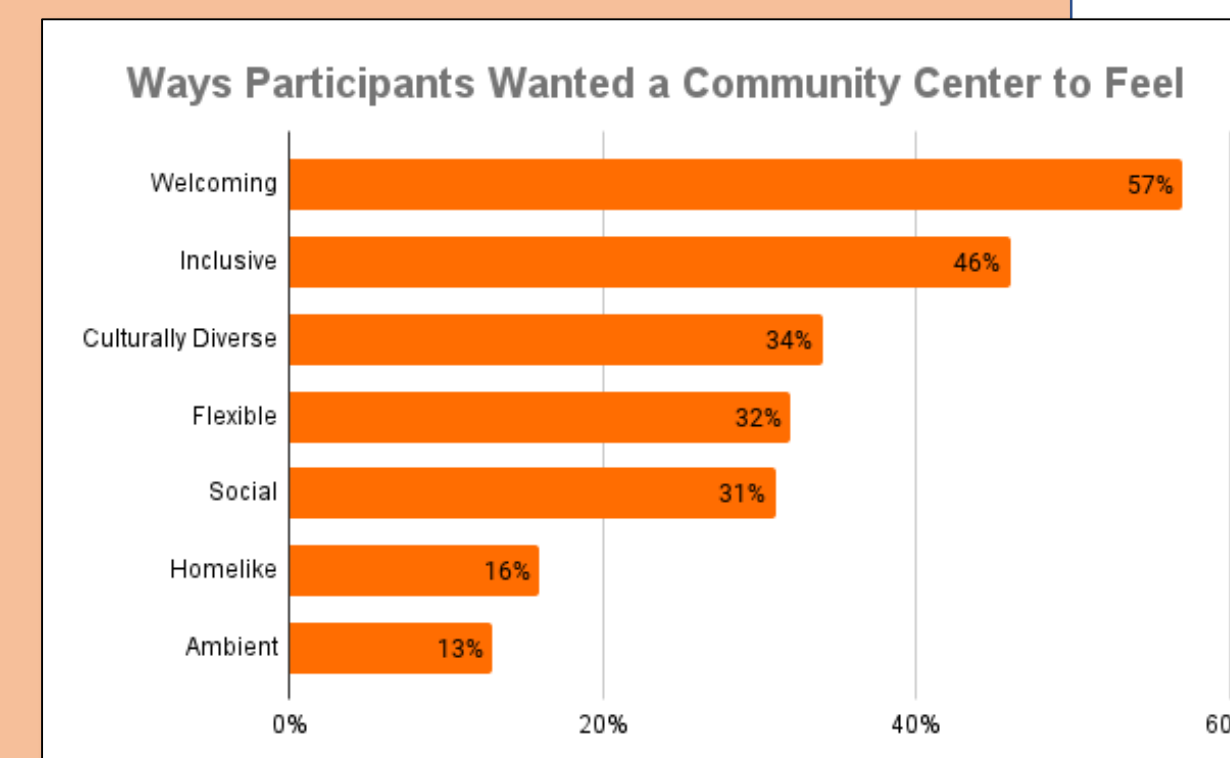


### Elements Most Wanted from a Community Center

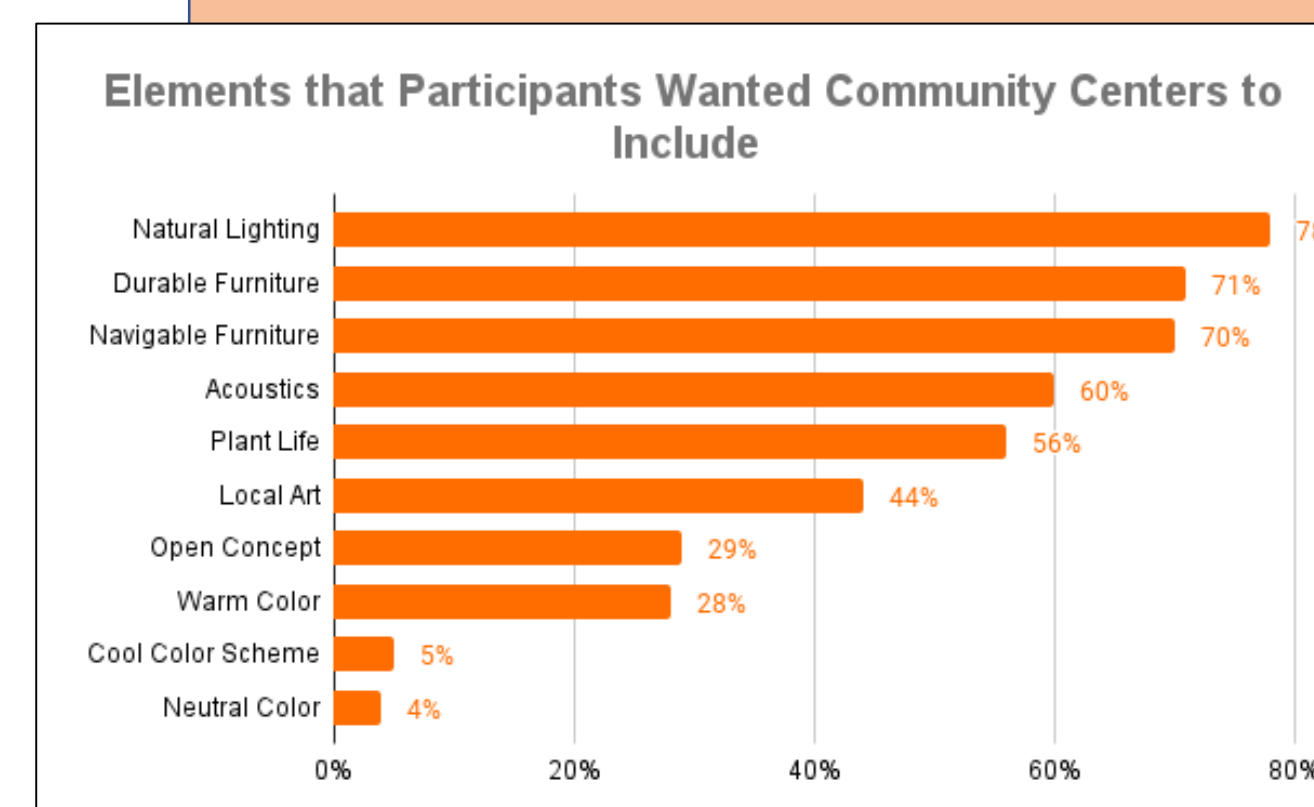
Cleanliness  
 Natural Lighting  
 ADA Accessibility

### Ways Participants Wanted a Community Center to Feel

Welcoming  
 Inclusive  
 Culturally Diverse



The next part of the survey wished to gain information on the amenities that should be included in a community center (Thamrin, Wardani, Sitindjak, & Natadजा, 2018). This will be helpful information as it is a clear idea of what is important to include in the design for community centers.



### Elements Most Wanted to Include in a Community Center

Natural Lighting  
 Durable Furniture  
 Navigable Furniture Layout

An open-ended question was asked to participants, asking what social and environmental sustainability meant to them.  
 “Recycled” | “Long Lasting” | “Welcoming”

## CONCLUSION

When considering the public's perception of social sustainability, it seems that participants had several ideas regarding what “sustainability” meant to them. Some participants identified sustainability as actions that benefit both the present and the future. Other responses defined sustainability as something that is “reusable” and “long lasting”. However, most of the responses focused on environmental sustainability rather than social sustainability. While both are important in creating a welcoming space for a community, it is important that people are educated about the benefits of both.

The physical and abstract design strategies that the survey found was to have a clean design, focus on natural lighting, include comfortable seating, and have a good level of acoustical control. The abstract design ideas include having a welcoming feel, a high level of inclusiveness, and cultural diversity. This was helpful information for the design process for a community center. The most effort will be put towards designing for the amenities and features listed from the survey results, thus giving a well-rounded research-based community center design.

## REFERENCES

- Brooks, R. (2017). Developing inclusive community gathering places through socially driven design strategies. [Doctoral dissertation/Master's thesis, Virginia Tech]. VTechWorks Home.
- Medved, P. (2016). The essence of neighbourhood community centers. *Urban Design International*, 22(2), 150-167. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41289-016-0037-1>
- Thamrin, D., Wardani, L.K., Sitindjak, R.H.I., & Natadजा, L (2018). Participatory approach in the design of creative community spaces in Surabaya. *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Education*, 4(2), 25-33. <http://repository.petra.ac.id/18449/>