

THE INTEGRATION OF A LIFESTYLE: 55+ COMMUNITIES

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How important are amenities, accessibility, and inclusion?

Mature communities and the emphasis on aging in place has become more apparent as the majority of the population shifts into a senior status. This study explores the model of aging in place and what that phrase and lifestyle means to those 55 and better. The study includes questions to explore the targeted 55+ demographic and how the aspects within a community might help them to understand and consider a maturing community as they continue on in their better years. The research provided gives data and feedback from the participants of the study in order to find the most desirable amenities and accessibility features for those who would be living in these communities.



WHAT IS AGING IN PLACE?

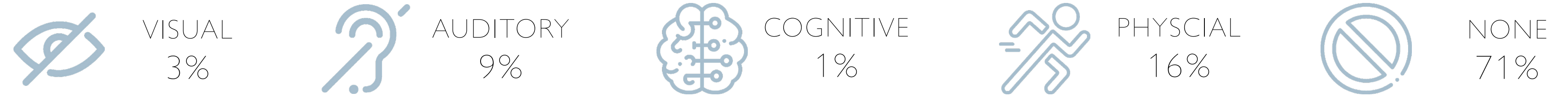
Aging in place is the idea that you do not have to leave your home as you age due to changing physical, social, and emotional needs. "Flexibility and creating adaptable products and spaces are critical aspects of design" (Atlay, 2017, p. 204). As we age it becomes crucial to have a supportive community and a stable home base that can allow for the proper adjustments and accommodations should one need it in the future.

METHODS

- Qualtrix survey approved through the North Dakota State University Institutional Review Board (IRB)
- Survey sent out through email correspondence of the North Dakota State University faculty list and various social media accounts
- Survey exclusively targeted people at or over the age of 55
- Questions on the survey analyzed how older adults perceive retirement communities and what that lifestyle entails
- Survey responses were voluntary and all participant responses were kept anonymous

PARTICIPANT LIMITATIONS

The first section of the survey included a question on limitations. The participant was able to chose from four different (generalized) options and the fifth option of selecting none, or no limitations, as well. The majority of the participants did not report any major limitations.



CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH NEEDS

The study was able to give insight to what people begin to prioritize as they age and as their need for additional accommodations begin to surface. It was concluded in earlier research that seniors wanted an amenity rich community that they would use often (Molaro, 2017/2018). As for outdoor areas, the results of this study reaffirmed previous points made in the literature review such as, "spatial variety in the indoor and outdoor areas will provide intimately scaled places for quiet reflection and public spaces for socializing (Tracy, 2018, p.19).

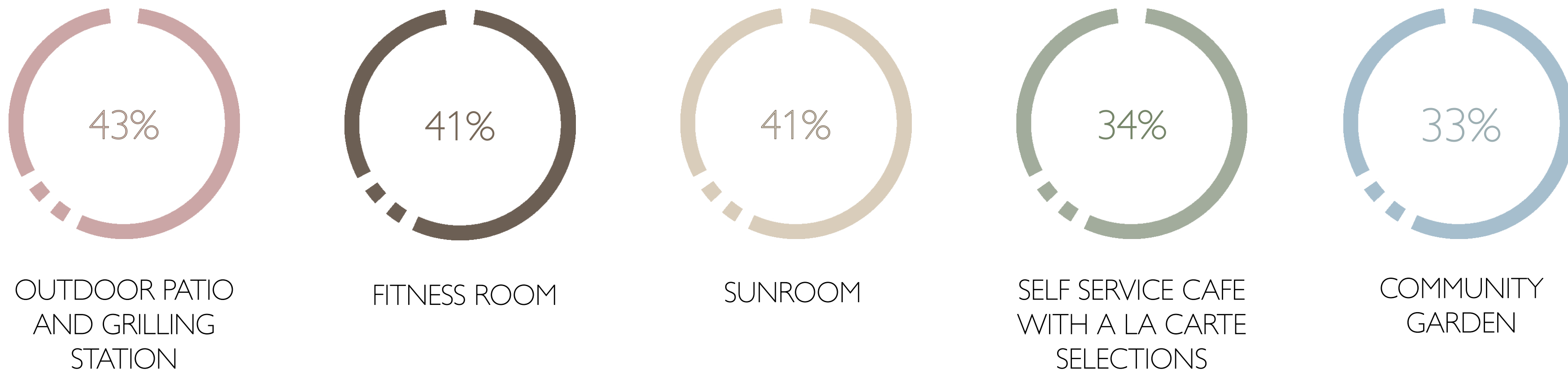
Moving forward with future research, there should be a greater emphasis put on the analysis of what participants want and need out of a 55+ community. Initiating more qualitative research, with further exploration and interviews with people of a mature age and including more individuals in the study.

REFERENCES:

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TOP FIVE PROPOSED AMENITIES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

Proposed amenities that were included in the survey to understand the importance participants would place on each of them by rating how they would be used.. Below are the top five amenities that were ranked on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Never using the amenity to Always using the amenity. The five listed below ranked the highest on the Very Often spectrum.



TOP FIVE ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES

There were key accessibility features that were included in the survey to understand the importance participants would put on each adjustment. Below are the top five accessibility additions that were ranked on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Not Important to Very Important. The five listed below ranked the highest on the Most Important spectrum.



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