

# 55+ Housing

ONLINE MAGAZINE



55+ Housing  
Industry Council

| 2017 FALL ISSUE |

# IN THIS ISSUE

## Feature Stories

### 3 What's Out? What's In? What's Important?

Four 55+ designers in four different markets answer these three questions.

### 6 A New View of "AQ"

As age-qualified and CCRCs compete for the same younger buyers, the lines start to blur.

### 9 Sponsored Story: Easy Entry into an Expanding 55+ Market

Two Kansas builders expand their custom home business, adding a 55+ focus.

### 11 Why Your Facebook Page Matters

Boomers are smart, and so are their phones. Put your message where prospective clients will see it.

### 14 Ask the Expert: Six Keys to Buying the Right Land for Your 55+ Community

An Atlanta builder shares the six questions he asks when evaluating land to buy.

### 18 Sponsored Content: Planning Ahead: Elevators Solve Problems for 55+ Buyers

An elevator can give home owners extra years in the home of their dreams.

## Departments

### 16 Hot Products

Subway tile, improved; a professional-style range, downsized; soft-close hardware for barn doors; and shades for your sliding glass wall.

### 19 Events & Updates

2018 Best of 55+ Housing Awards Finalists; 55+ Bus Tour at the International Builders' Show; 55+ Awards Gala; 55+ Education offerings at the Builders' Show

## On the Cover

### North Coffee Lounge/Wine Bar

Willow Valley Communities, Willow Street, Pa.  
Silver Winner, 2017 Best Indoor Common Area

*Photographer: Nathan Cox*

## Publication Staff

Ann Marie Moriarty  
Writer/Editor  
amoriarty@nahb.org

Don Bery  
Sponsorship &  
Account Manager  
dbery@nahb.org  
800-368-5242 x8208



Trilogy at the Polo Club  
Indio, Calif.  
Bassenian Lagoni, Shea Homes  
Photographer: Rick Young

# What's In? What's Out? What's Important?

It's a given that there is infinite variety when considering home buyers' preferences, architects' design sensibilities and interior designers' approaches to finishes and décor. But if you ask design professionals from different markets what they're seeing in the 55+ sector, there's not only plenty of variety, but there's also a surprising amount of agreement as to what's important to consider for 55+ homes.

We found that out by asking four design professionals to answer questions about what they're seeing in their markets. Donna Mathis, of Haven Design Works, Atlanta, works in the Southeast; Joe Duffus, of Builders Design, works the East and Midwest; John Binder, an architect with Kephart, Denver, works all over the country. And Kimberly Timmons, KT Interiors, Denver, works mainly in the Southwest.

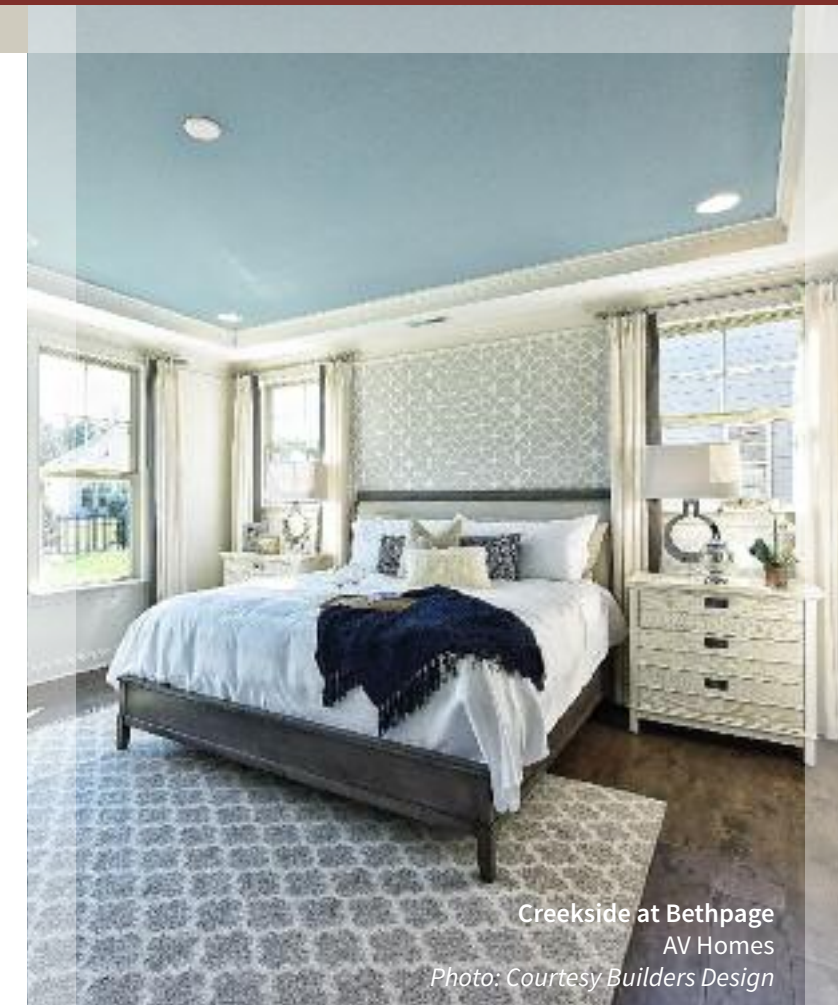
We asked them three questions: What's on the way out, or on the way in? What universal design features are most important (and

most often overlooked)? What makes a smaller space not only seem bigger, but also work bigger?

## Broad Consensus

All four agreed on one approach that's out: The "traditional" look. Say goodbye to formal dining rooms, heavy furniture and dark colors. Boomers are all about light-filled spaces, with fresh, vibrant colors.

What's in? Most answers emphasized buyers' desire for walkable neighborhoods, either urban or suburban, preferably near shopping or other conveniences. Some remarked on the value of outdoor living spaces – three-season rooms and patios that expand the home or community space. And there was general agreement that a ground-floor master bedroom suite – or an elevator to a different level – is a must in a 55+ home.



Creekside at Bethpage  
AV Homes  
Photo: Courtesy Builders Design



Photo: Courtesy Kimberly Timmons Interiors

## What's out?

- Playing bingo (Playing tennis instead)
- Clutter
- Microwaves over the stove -- awkward at best, and often dangerous
- Furniture from the old house that doesn't fit

## What's in?

- Good food and atmosphere, with nearby creative dining venues
- Separate 55+ amenities and activities, even in all-age developments
- Some storage in every room. Even an ottoman can hold an extra blanket
- Smart controls for lights and security system, convenient to the bedroom

## What's important?

- More and better lighting, in walkways, hallways, and under cabinet toe-kicks
- Furniture that is scaled proportionally to fit the rooms
- Few or no steps to negotiate at the entrance or within the house
- A sense of openness, simplicity and clarity

Photos: Courtesy Kimberly Timmons Interiors



## What's out?

- Model homes that show home offices and craft rooms
- Rooms where the floor and walls are the same color
- Fussy draperies
- Being in a community with no younger people

## What's in?

- Creativity and youthfulness
- Openness to more contemporary style, with upscale fittings and finishes
- Décor that reflects lifestyle: travel, adventure, fitness, well-being
- Socializing with different age groups in all-ages planned developments
- Locations with cultural amenities and convenient destinations

## What's important?

- Zero-grade entries
- Curbless showers
- Flex rooms that can be whatever the buyer wants them to be
- Architecturally designed storage: window seats, pantries, knee walls with shallow shelving on both sides, or a dog retreat under the stairs
- Using contrasting flooring colors or materials to define spaces

Photo: Courtesy Builders Design



**Kimberley Timmons** of Kimberly Timmons Interiors, Denver, and her dedicated team of expert designers have won more than 100 awards for interior design, including many for 55+ community amenities and merchandising.



**Joe Duffus** is CEO of Builders Design, headquartered in Maryland. He and the company's team of 30 designers, graphic artists, lifestyle specialists, accessory/art buyers and more serve builders throughout the Mid-Atlantic states and Florida.

## What's out?

- One-level living, due to increasing land costs.
- Traditional five-fixture bathrooms
- Too-small 55+ homes
- Stacked washer and dryer
- Shotgun floor plan

## What's in?

- Walkable urban or suburban locations
- Sophisticated design
- Concierge services
- Side-by-side washer and dryer, on raised pedestals
- Ceilings – 9' or higher
- Smarter floor plans
- Corner windows and views through the whole home
- Three-quarter-height walls to borrow light from adjacent rooms
- Sliding doors or barn-style doors



## What's important?

- Oversized showers
- Large kitchen island, with adequate space around it on all sides
- Fewer rooms, but larger rooms that serve many purposes
- Eliminating the step(s) at the front door

Photos: Courtesy Kephart



**John Binder, AIA**, a principal at Kephart, Denver, has 30 years' experience in residential design, and currently is focused on his passion for creating alternative senior living solutions.

## What's out?

- Cramped spaces
- Single-purpose rooms – living room, dining room
- Too-small laundry rooms

## What's in?

- High ceilings, bright, light spaces
- Double-stacking cabinets in the kitchen or pantry for rarely used items
- Outdoor kitchens
- Relaxed lifestyle
- Upstairs rooms for visiting adult children and grandchildren: *Hotel Grandma!*
- A small multi-functional space: tech center, or entertainment bar

## What's important?

- Using 36" doors and wider hallways
- A no-step shower
- Storage in a loft or room above the garage
- Space for folding in the laundry room
- Open sight lines through the house from the front door, for safety
- Storage for often-used sports equipment, games, lawn chairs

Photos: Courtesy Haven Design Works



**Donna Mathis** is the owner of Haven Design Works, Atlanta, a company that partners with top builders throughout the East Coast to deliver memorable model home experiences.



# A New View of 'AQ'

## Boomers Pave the Way for New Approaches to 55+ Development

by Helen Foster

Ask baby boomers what they think about age-qualified (AQ), age-restricted or “active adult” communities, it’s still the super-sized Sunbelt “senior islands” that come to mind. Amenity-laden and programmed to the hilt, with cookie-cutter homes of limited construction quality – too “plain vanilla” for a new wave of free-spirited consumers who have come to expect anything but.

Even as boomer-and-older consumers continue to view 55+ communities through this lens, the industry has changed dramatically over the past several years.

### What’s Changed?

Boomers are living actively longer, and many will continue to work well beyond traditional retirement age, either by choice or necessity. Empty nesting and changing work schedules yield newfound freedom that intensifies their desire to get out, engage and play. And while many feel inclined to move because their house feels too large and hard to maintain, they still want to be close to friends and family – especially adult children and grandchildren.

Meanwhile, the benefits of “active adult” living remain relevant for boomers today: homes that live well (ground-floor master, right-sized), community vitality and social connections, access to amenities, security, location/destination appeal and age-exclusivity.

Destination communities will continue to appeal to some, but a growing preference for urban and suburban living is creating new opportunities for developers, in myriad 55+ product configurations – for sale and for rent, active adult and service enriched.

### Why Build Age-Qualified Communities?

Developers and planners are launching communities of varying size and scope – in stand-alone communities or expansions, which promote differentiation in a residential mix and expand market reach. More and more municipalities encourage or require planned communities to have an AQ designation because those additional residents don't stress local services: they don't have children in schools, aren't generally daily commuters and aren't likely to start a crime wave.

“In our case, we were encouraged by the county to pursue 55+ development, but we couldn't follow models like The Villages or Sun City with the land constraints we are dealing with in South Orange County,” said Paul Johnson, senior vice president of development at Rancho Mission Viejo in San Juan Capistrano,

Calif. “We did a lot of research and arrived at a new interpretation that’s more urban and intergenerational than other active adult communities.”

With more than 1,050 homes sold to date, Rancho Mission Viejo is ultimately expected to encompass 23,000 acres and 14,000 homes, 6,000 of which are designated for 55+ residents – and the community’s 55+ lifestyle segment is called Gavilán. Now in its second major phase of development, Rancho Mission Viejo is



*Gavilan residents at Rancho Mission Viejo convene regularly for food and beverage events, and outdoor kitchens are a popular amenity.*

pioneering concepts for integrating 55+ neighborhoods into the multi-generational community.

The community offers Gavilán-exclusive amenities and programming, and Gavilán residents also have anytime access to all of the multi-generational amenities on The Ranch. “We take an ‘ageless’ approach to planning amenities and programming – not just for Gavilán, but for the community as a whole,” Johnson said, adding, “The resident experience is really what it is all about. We do a lot of listening and learning – and we have to be agile in our approach to community development, management, and operations.”

Johnson mentioned that Gavilán residents are pragmatic about aging and the possible need for care. “We decided early on to set aside a 60-acre parcel for a continuing care community.” Continuing Life LLC is developing and operating the community, which is called Reata Glen, and the anticipated opening date is April 2019. According to Johnson, “Many of our Gavilán home buyers take comfort in knowing it will be here, if ever needed.”

### **Another Approach: Lifestyle AQ Community... with Services**

“Boomers definitely have different real estate and lifestyle preferences than prior generations, but they are every bit as likely – if not more likely – to plan for the future,” said John Swanson, CEO of Willow Valley Living, which operates Willow Valley Communities in Lancaster, Pa.

Willow Valley is a “service-enriched” community that is unique in that it competes favorably in the active adult space. With more than 2,500 residents coming from 39 states, Willow Valley offers active adult residences as appealing as any in the industry – as well as independent living apartments and a full continuum of care.

“We are also focused on the concept of ageless living,” Swanson said, adding that he’s seeing a shift in the activity and programming preferences of boomers. “Our residents still expect frequent programming and events,” Swanson said, “but we have to balance that with attention to individual experiences that residents can pursue on their own time and schedule.”



*(above) At Willow Valley Communities in Lancaster, PA, a bowling alley is one of several amenities across the campus that promote intergenerational play.*

*(left) At Rancho Mission Viejo's new clubhouse, the Hilltop, doors open wide to connect the club's bar and pavilion to outdoor recreation areas.*

Individualism has an impact on home design as well, as many boomers want their homes to feel like personal retreats. Among the most desirable home design features are ground-floor master living, a feeling of openness, large private master suites, abundant storage, views and natural light, space to host and entertain, private outdoor living areas, choice in finishes and elegant attention to ageless design. There is increasing acceptance for more contemporary architecture. And smart home features also are becoming more appealing, especially if they promote convenience, safety or cost efficiency.

Willow Valley allows for customization, even though it is a LifeCare community and residents do not have equity in their homes. “We offer a choice of quality options in our standard program, but many buyers pursue upgrades,” Swanson adds, “We’ve seen some invest more than \$200,000 in customizations and upgrades, and they absolutely see the value in it.”

### A Scaled-Down Approach

While Rancho Mission Viejo and Willow Valley are large communities, similar dynamics are at play in smaller AQ projects, where development activity is as high as ever.

Well-established 55+ destination developers like Pulte/Del Webb and Shea/Trilogy have launched scaled-down concept communities on smaller land parcels

closer to city amenities. And some of the nation’s best-regarded home builders have created 55+ sub-brands – including Toll Brothers (Regency), David Weekley Homes, and William Lyn Homes (Ovation) – collaborating with master plan developers and other builders in some locations and, in others, building compact communities of their own. On the rental side, the nation’s largest multifamily developer, Greystar, launched its 55+ brand, Overture, in 2015. It now has 28 locations in 10 states.

Small to midsize or “enclave” communities – whether for rent or for sale – typically include anywhere between 50 and 700+ homes or residences, with a mix of amenities scaled to suit the community size. A generally accepted guideline is 20 square feet of conditioned amenity space per residence, but this number can be higher or lower, depending upon proximity to other location assets and competitive considerations.

It’s important that a 55+ community should be perceived as offering a lifestyle in full when marketed for sale – meaning a good mix of amenities should be complete when the community opens, or, at the latest, by the time the first residents move in. It is said that “55+ consumers won’t buy green bananas,” and that is especially true in this post-recession economy, as skepticism is higher. In select markets – where demand is high, competition is light, and local assets are plentiful – communities might survive the delayed delivery of amenities. However,

some potential buyers will be lost and absorption will be slower.

The demographic bulge of free-spirited boomers are extending a lot of freedom to developers in how and where to develop AQ communities. Benchmarks are dynamically evolving, and the growing diversity of AQ product will benefit developers and consumers alike.

It’s an exciting time in the industry. Success lies not in a specific niche – since the lines between active adult communities and CCRCs are blurring, and the niches are moving closer together. But both approaches can share a philosophy: Know consumers and meet them where they are. Recognize that creating community is not about how well we build homes or neighborhoods, but how well we help residents build connections with each other by creating opportunities for enjoyment and happiness.



**Helen Foster** Principal, Foster Strategy. The New Orleans-based company provides concept, marketing and operations guidance to clients across the U.S., many regarded as “best in class” in their industry sectors. Foster has been a speaker, judge, advisor and editorial contributor for industry organizations including the Urban Land Institute, Pacific Coast Builders Conference and NAHB.



One of the newest amenities at Willow Valley Communities -- The Vue -- is a modern rooftop deck and bar that flexibly accommodates programmed events, casual resident get togethers, and passive relaxation.





## Easy Entry into an Expanding 55+ Market

Building a house is not rocket science – many can do it. But creating a business focused on building houses that people want to buy? That’s an entirely different story. Adding a franchise business model to a builder’s existing business offers a turnkey approach to a new sector of residential building and provides systemization, proven floor plans and the ability to tap the expertise of other experienced builders.

### A Case Study

In 2004, Scott Lehner (above, left) merged his insulated concrete forms (ICF) business with that of a talented trim carpenter and project manager, Jason Ronk (above, right), to form Perfection Builders, a home builder in the greater Wichita, Kans. market.

Starting with spec homes, they added custom homes and soon were delivering 30 to 40 ranch-style basement homes every year. But in a competitive market like Wichita, they knew they needed to specialize, and decided to capitalize on a targeted market like baby boomers to continue to grow.

Lehner and Ronk researched ways to expand their product mix for greater appeal to the 55+ demographic, and explored franchising in 2007. The company chose to add Epcon Communities to its existing business model. By using the franchisor’s proven systems and resources, Perfection Builders has grown from a small residential builder to one of the largest in the state. The partners also are expanding into Louisville, Ky., by developing two new Epcon Communities.

### The Right Target Market

Why did the partners look to 55+ baby boomers to grow their company? They knew that the demographic group was increasing. In 2016, there were almost 75 million boomers – a group that accounted for 70% of American disposable income, according to research by Nielsen.

Targeting this specific demographic was the growth opportunity Perfection Builders needed.

Partnering with a franchise like Epcon gave Lehner and Ronk immediate access to a selection of proven floorplans and guidelines for building communities that baby boomers want to live in. The limited number of copyrighted floorplans – with many add-on options – allowed for a higher sales velocity than custom home building, and that let them develop communities on shorter cycles.

### Proven Systems and Credibility

For Lehner and Ronk, the systems, processes and name recognition that the Epcon franchise system provided made entering a new different home building market much easier.

Epcon’s systemization also shaved months off the building process for individual units, allowing the partners to close homes and reinvest gains quickly.

“It would take us many years to develop the package Epcon provides,” Lehner said. “I don’t think most



builders have the resources to develop and implement a system like the one we put in place by following the Epcon way.”

“You can bet Epcon helped us get into a much faster pace of home building,” Lehner said. “We became more of a vertically integrated operation, so now we’re not just home builders – we’re a land development company, a building company and real estate brokers, all in one. Epcon’s sales and support staff helped us get here.”

Working with Epcon has allowed Perfection to grow its business significantly since 2007. The company went from building about 30 homes a year to more than four times that. The company’s original product mix was 80% spec homes and 20% custom homes. Now the partners’ their business is 75% Epcon homes. And most of those are pre-sold.

“We’re as efficient now as we’ve ever been,” Lehner said. “We’re lucky to have the right people, the right product, the right areas and the right systems. It just doesn’t get any better than it is right now. We went from being a small, middle-of-the-road builder to being one of the top builders in the state now, because of Epcon. What’s more, we feel like we’re just getting started.”

Visit [EpconFranchising.com](http://EpconFranchising.com) to learn more.



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# Why Your Facebook Page Matters

## What do smartphones, Facebook and active adults have in common?

Smartphones are the catalyst for more and more active adults being online, not only on Facebook, but also browsing websites and looking for their next home.

Buyers also assume that builders and developers will be online promoting their communities. A 2017 ViaSearch survey of new home buyers in Atlanta reveals that 72% of older buyers think it's important for home builders to use social media. And, of the sites they consider important, Facebook was cited as "very to extremely useful" by 50% of buyers. Google+ was a surprising second, with 45% of buyers saying it is "very to extremely useful." While this might seem strange, think about the fact that when you search a company on Google from your PC, the company's Google Business page shows up in the right sidebar with its map information and reviews – and to have a Google Business page, you must first have a Google+ page.

Recent Pew Research Center data lets us drill down to see that 79% of Americans who go online use Facebook

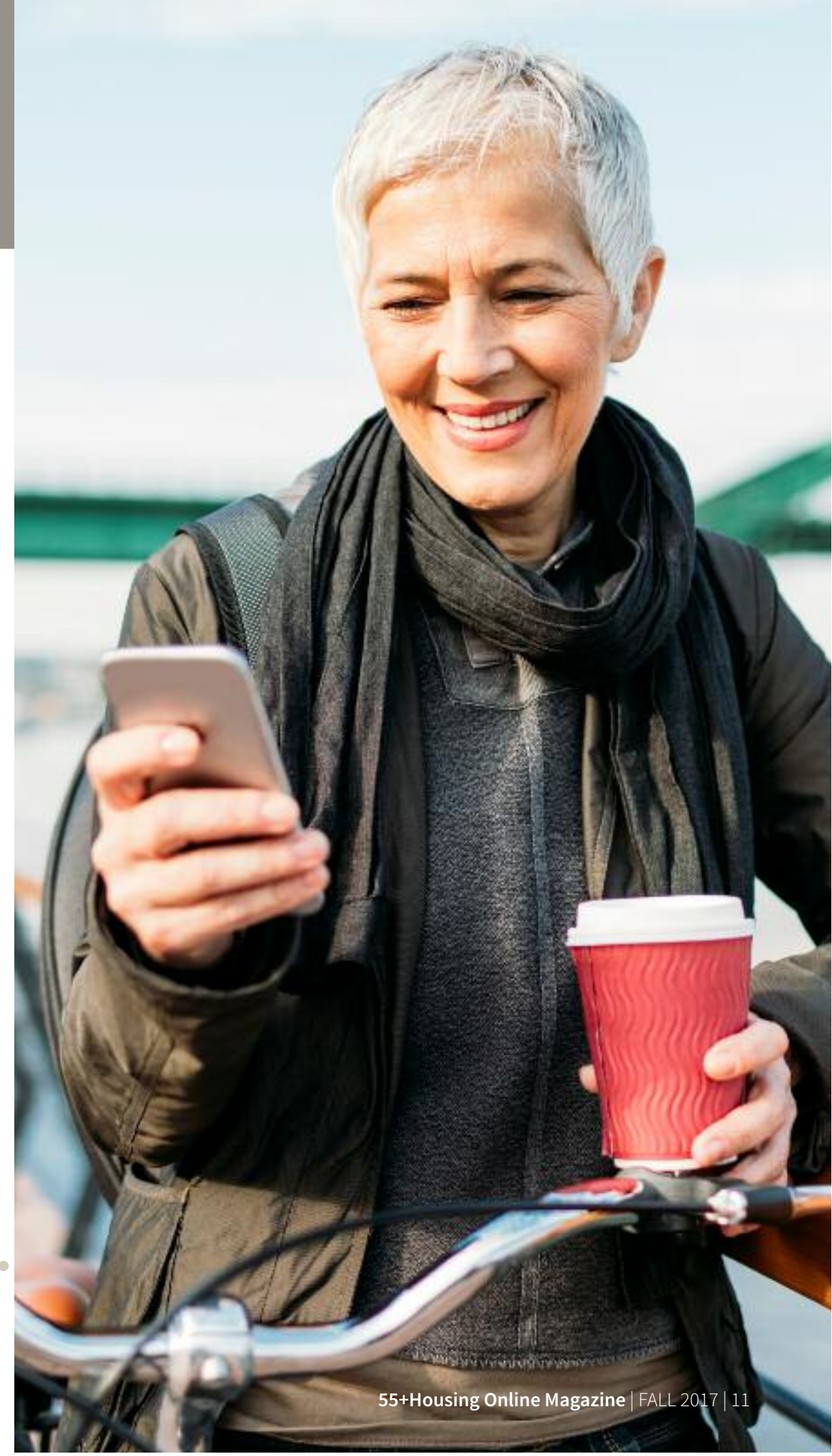
– more than double the share using Twitter (24%), Pinterest (31%), Instagram (32%) or LinkedIn (29%)

Of even more interest to 55+ developers and builders are these two trends: First, 77% of Americans own a smartphone. And the biggest increases in smartphone growth are attributed to lower-income Americans and those over 50 years old. This means that your 55+ buyers absolutely are looking at your homes and communities from their phones.

Because of this, they are likely to contact you from their phones to get more information. Whether that is filling out a contact form, downloading driving directions or clicking to call, builders should make sure potential buyers can complete all of these tasks easily from their phones. It is critical that you have a responsive website, and that buyers can navigate your site without having to pinch and zoom on their smartphones and tablets.

Almost 69% of Americans use social media. We all see and understand the popularity of social media with young adults. Teens and young adults are on their smartphones at restaurants and movies and...well, pretty much everywhere else. They're accessing social

*Make note: Those aged 50 and older make up the fastest-growing group on social media.*



media to stay in touch with friends. In fact, 86% of 18- to 29-year-olds are social media users.

This doesn't mean that older Americans aren't using such sites, because they are. The majority of people aged 30-49 (80%) and 50-64 (64%) use social media. This is really no huge surprise, but it means that most millennials, Generation Xers and baby boomers are online connecting with their families (especially the kids) and their friends. Only about a third (34%) of Americans 65 and older currently use social media, but this figure continues to grow quickly.

So, what does this mean for your Facebook page? First of all, you should have a business page. With two billion Facebook users, this is by far the largest social media network out there, and it provides a unique opportunity to engage your audience. If you are building large master-planned developments, you may want to consider launching a page for each development. It is time-consuming to add content to multiple pages, so think through your strategy thoroughly before launching

community pages. For instance: What will happen to the community page when the community sells out? Will the home owners take it over? Will you take it down, or will it simply stagnate? Often builders and developers choose to build one branded page that includes all their new communities, especially if they are relatively together. The benefit of one comprehensive page is that potential buyers get to see all your communities and options in one place. The benefit to your company is that you have one page with a much larger group of followers to connect and engage with.

Facebook advertising offers the ability to reach and connect with your target audience for a relatively small monthly investment. Because only a small percentage of your page followers ever see your posts, using ads on this site can reap huge rewards in terms of new likes, sharing posts and comments, and even completed website contact forms. This is part of what I call the push and pull of social media. Leveraging advertising and promotions pulls your audience into your pages.

Almost 69% of Americans use social media. We all see and understand the popularity of social media with young adults. Teens and young adults are on their smartphones at restaurants and movies and...well, pretty much everywhere else.



Then, because they are interacting more frequently, they will see your new content when you push it out to them. Make sure to update your page frequently, including photos and video. Changing out your header image, interacting with Facebook users and answering questions promptly on Facebook Messenger will keep your audience coming back for the information they want.

Most buyers think of your website as having complete information on all of your communities and homes. This includes corporate background, driving directions, community information, models, tours, and so on. They see your Facebook page as a destination to find out the latest and greatest news. Don't disappoint them! Add photos of recent buyers, and make sure Facebook visitors can find your latest promotion and newest model home easily on your page. Use Facebook to humanize your brand and put a more approachable face on it. Use Facebook Live to showcase your events and homes. Of course, don't forget albums of homes, videos of the community and any other graphics you can add to catch their attention.

It is possible that they have heard of your community from a friend, find it on Facebook and contact you directly from Facebook for their first appointment. After all, they are already on Facebook. Why should they go to your website?

Today's buyers are mobile and they want information fast. Many of us wake up in the morning and check our phones before we even get out of bed. Smartphones have caused all of us to move faster and exchange data at increasingly fast rates. Now that you know that a growing number of new home shoppers are on their smartphones when they are researching your community and contacting you for the first time, that could change the way you think about following up with them.

So...You have just received a completed contact form. Should you assume that it is from a mobile phone and call them back? In today's quickly moving society, the answer is YES! Chances are if you respond first (before your competitors) you will land the business. This is especially true if the call creates a good experience for the buyer and leaves a positive impression.

You need to be where potential buyers are on social media, and if you don't know for sure where they are, start with Facebook, and back it up with a stellar website presence. A quick response means sales!



**Carol L. Morgan**, MIRM, is the founder and president of Denim Marketing. She creates big-picture marketing strategies that include content development, public relations, advertising, social media, content, reputation management and creative. She will speak at the 2018 NAHB International Builders' Show. And, of course, her company has a Facebook page.

# NAHB 55+ Housing Industry Council

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**NAHB 55+ Housing Industry Council is the only national organization that supports the industry professionals focused on the needs of home buyers over 55 years old.**

Whether you build single-family custom homes, age-restricted life style communities, or supply and provide services to the 55+ industry, we provide access to a wealth of resources and networking opportunities that will keep your business thriving.



55+ Housing Industry Council

Learn more about membership benefits and join at [nahb.org/why55plus](http://nahb.org/why55plus)

# Six Keys to Buying the Right Land for Your 55+ Community

## | ASK THE EXPERT |

by Jim Chapman

**Q:** I've built custom homes on client's lots. But I'm thinking about buying a parcel of land and building nice single-level homes to sell to buyers who'd rather not deal with stairs. What questions should I ask before I buy the land, and what are the right answers?

**A:** "There really is an art to buying the right piece of land for a successful 55+ community," says Jim Chapman, president of Jim Chapman Communities in Atlanta. His questions usually include:

1

### Where is the land and what are the local demographics?

"I look for 20- to 80-acre infill parcels in close-in suburbs. That focus on close-in parcels near an existing, densely populated suburb with restaurants, grocery stores and other shopping is critical. Our buyers are overwhelmingly local. Almost 80% of my buyers live within a 5-to-10 mile radius of their former home," says Chapman.

"We consider the area's median household income level and look for locations in good school districts. That



Sweet Briar Farms by  
Jim Chapman Communities  
Cherokee County, Georgia

Being close to good hospitals, doctors and medical offices is very important for our active-adult home buyers.

might not seem like a relevant factor for a 55+ community, but good school districts attract lots of adult children and grandchildren to the area. They are also where many well-heeled 55+ potential customers have raised their families, and are now looking to downsize to a quality 55+ community not far from their original neighborhood.

“Being close to good hospitals, doctors and medical offices is very important for our active-adult home buyers. However, they are not necessarily looking to buy close to an assisted living or CCRC community – that’s something that’s rarely considered until buyers are in their eighties.”

#### What about topography?

**2** “One of your biggest considerations should be the existing topography,” Chapman said. “Beautiful rolling hills may require costly grading, and moving dirt can get expensive. You should also know what is under the land. A lot of metro Atlanta is covered with rock, which is expensive to grade. Make sure that you do thorough sub-surface exploration. Another consideration should be to include the cost of removing trees – both the cost of taking them out and the possible cost of municipal compensation. Trees are free marketing. Leave them if you can.”

#### Are there blue lines?

**3** Blue lines represent the state’s waters. Georgia mandates a no-build buffer of 75 feet on either side of a stream, measured from mid-stream. This immediately affects the density of the community, which increases the cost per unit. Most states have similar rules – although buffer distances may vary. “‘No blue lines’ is something every developer likes to hear when looking at a parcel,” notes Chapman.

#### What about utilities?

**4** Make sure you know the physical proximity to public sewer, public water and natural gas. Chapman says, “Our 55+ buyers love gas appliances, from fireplaces to cooktops to water heaters. If I’m offering a \$400,000+ home without gas appliances, buyers think twice about buying it.”

#### What should I pay?

**5** “Buying land requires rather simple algebra,” says Chapman. “I look at land purchases backwards. We calculate the finished lot price/home sale price ratio, and we look for the cost of the land plus improvements to be no more than 20-30%.”

#### What is the political climate?

**6** “Ten years ago, municipalities in the greater metropolitan Atlanta area welcomed my active adult communities with open arms, and approved ordinances that allowed five units per acre,” Chapman said.

“Now, residents are very vocal about crowding and increased traffic. So it’s very important to have preliminary meetings with the mayor and other local politicians to understand the political climate and find out how much resistance there might be – or even *will* be – to your new community, even before you start spending money on due diligence.”

Chapman does all his own land acquisition. “I’m it. Atlanta real estate brokers know me, and they know what and where we build. I’m really flattered that new opportunities cross my desk at least once a week. Whether it’s great, good or borderline, I make sure that I call every one of them back to tell them how happy I am that they are thinking of me!”

“That’s how I found the land for Sweet Briar Farms, one of my newest communities. The lots are really large, up to 85 feet wide, and the setting is beautiful. This parcel had not yet been developed because there had been no sewer available. Then a subdivision across the way came in and I could connect to the new system. It was a hidden gem, and the response has been phenomenal.”



**Jim Chapman**, President of Jim Chapman Communities and Jim Chapman Fine Homes, is immediate past chair of NAHB’s 55+ Housing Industry Council and 2017 Second Vice Chair of the Land Development Committee. builds high-quality 55+ communities, most between 80 and 180 homes, throughout metro Atlanta.

# Hot Products

## Subway Tile, All Grown Up

Subway tile is simple, straightforward and attractive, and an all-white bathroom or kitchen is a proven crowd-pleaser. But sometimes the all-white subway tile room just needs a little something extra. Many 55+ buyers prefer a “transitional” approach to decor – not too stark and modern, not too fussy and traditional. This tile – different, without being wild – sits comfortably in that middle ground.

Artistic Tile’s new Alto line adds just the right amount of interest to a white wall. One side of each decorative version of the tile is elevated, with the raised surface slightly thinner at one end to create a wedge shape. That asymmetrical profile is called Deco, and it can be presented in a number of different combinations. Alto’s Deco comes in white or black gloss, as well as white gloss with a tiny line of black outlining the raised shape. Quarter-round molding also is available, as is a flat version of the tile, for mixing things up a bit.



# Hot Products

## Small But Mighty

Commercial-style ranges are impressive, but most 55+ buyers aren’t about to shop for an active-retirement house sized to fit their 36-inch wide stainless steel six-burner-and-a-griddle range. Mature-market buyers who lust after a pro-quality range as they downsize to a smaller home, condo or second home can look to BlueStar’s full-featured 24” RNB series range.

The convection oven accommodates a half-size commercial baking sheet, and it has a recessed 1850°F infrared broiler. One of the two back burners is a gentle 130° simmer burner, and the other produces 15,000 BTUs. Its two front “power burners” each deliver 22,000 BTUs of intense heat. The 24” depth lets that range fit in with standard cabinetry, and it can be installed next to cabinets and a back wall.

The range isn’t just a workhorse – it can also provide a dollop of color. The company offer 750 colors to choose from – and if a bright blue or screaming orange range isn’t what the client has in mind, colorful control knobs can offer a little pop of color to tie the range into the rest of the kitchen/great room décor.





# Hot Products

## Closing the Barn Door...Softly

Barn-style and pocket doors are great for saving floor space and creating a feeling of openness in smaller spaces. But closing a large hanging door can demand a healthy shove...and end in a big bang when it hits the end of the track. **Johnson Hardware** has solved that problem with a soft-close/soft-open option for barn and pocket doors.

These applications make it easy to open or close a pocket or wall-mounted door as heavy as 200 pounds, and the hardware holds the door securely in place. The soft-close hardware is compatible with Johnson's pocket door or wall-mounted door hardware.

The wall-mount option saves space like a pocket door without the need to tear down a wall. The soft-close hardware allows buyers to install doors without installing a track on the floor – a plus in that such tracks can become a tripping hazard.

The products are available in lumberyards, hardware stores and [online](#).



# Hot Products

## The Shady Side

The design community has embraced operable panels of floor-to-ceiling glass that create a “wall” to invite the outdoors in and – in season – invite residents outside to enjoy an outdoor room or balcony. But potential buyers might be forgiven for having concerns about privacy – especially when connecting a bedroom with the outdoors. And while sunlight is great, windows that directly face the morning or evening sun can raise concerns about glare or fading furniture.

**NanaWall**, a pioneer in the glass wall industry, has addressed those issues by developing integrated shades for its panels. Rather than hiding the wall completely, the shades can be lowered from the top, raised from the bottom or rest somewhere in between. The manufacturer describes the shades as easy to install, and they will work with any of the company's 25+ glass wall systems. The buyer can choose a shade that's transparent, semi-transparent, or room-darkening fabric, and choose from four matte finish colors: White Aluminum, Jet Black, Traffic White and Gray Brown.





## Planning Ahead: Elevators Solve Problems for 55+ Buyers

Consider that Americans over the age of 50 who are looking to build their next home actually may be building their last home. Whether it is a brand-new house or a remodel of their current house, it will be a project that they will be carefully planning for their lifestyle in their “golden years.” They may find it difficult to accept that those later years may bring age-related health problems, often resulting in mobility issues that

lead to the dependency of canes, walkers, and/or wheelchairs. Even if there are no mobility problems, it’s good to keep in mind that aging home owners can have challenges – flights of stairs in a home can be more daunting to a 55+ resident than to a 30-year-old first-time home buyer.

Residential elevators are a must-consider for 55+ buyers who are facing that next life stage in the context of their future home. A residential elevator can provide access to all levels of a home, making the idea of giving up an existing home more attractive. It is, in fact, a good choice for many stages of life: 55+ home owners who have a need for easier access now, those considering future needs and those who have no mobility issues but see the value and convenience of a home elevator.

Here at [Waupaca Elevator](#), we feel a responsibility to help builders, designers, and architects to enlighten, inspire and offer the best options available for 55+ clients who want that “forever home.” Planning for a residential elevator is a strategy that we can offer them as they prepare for that important life upgrade.

Are your clients not ready for a home elevator now? Stack a closet on all floors that can be easily converted to an elevator shaft in the future.



## Best of 55+ Awards – Bigger and Better

The 2018 Best of 55+ Housing Awards entries ramped up its marketing this year, and the effort was rewarded with about 40% more entries than the previous year. Kudos to the council and to the NAHB Marketing group for their great work.

Judging ended in October with a [new crop of amazing finalists](#).

The awards will be given out at the International Builders' Show from 5-7 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 9. [Tickets are on sale now](#), and will be mailed to anyone ordering them before Dec. 1. Those ordered later can be picked up at the Special Events Ticket Counter at the IBS Registration area.



### Speaking of Awards...

The NAHB Multifamily Pillars of the Industry Awards this year added a category for Best 55+ Community. The four finalists in that category are:

#### **KENT PLACE RESIDENCES**

Englewood, Colo.

**Kephart community :: planning :: architecture**

#### **THE ASPENS AT WADE PARK**

Frisco, Texas.

**studioSIX5**

#### **THE LANTERNS AT WARREN WOODS**

Ashland, Mass.

**The Green Company**

#### **WATERMERE AT FRISCO**

Frisco, Texas

**ARRIVE Architecture Group**



2017 55+ Community of the Year, Renaissance at Sun Lakes

JAN

## Road Trip

The NAHB International Builders' Show will include a tour of two 55+ communities again this year. Last year's tour was a huge success, with two busloads of people eager to see the newest 55+ communities in the burgeoning Orlando market. Tickets are available on the IBS website at [this link](#).

***Don't delay –  
the first bus is almost  
sold out!***



## Get Smarter

Education sessions of interest to 55+ members at the NAHB International Builders' Show in Orlando take place in classrooms, in the [55+ Central](#) and in other Central headquarters.

Here's the Menu:

- Adapting Existing Plans to Entice Today's Evolving 55+ Buyers
- Adaptive Housing in a Box: How Modular Construction Can Meet Your 55+ Needs
- Fine-Tuning Your 55+ Strategy: Build, Design & Sell to the New Boomer Buyer
- Lifestyle & Amenity Priorities for Small 55+ Communities
- Understand the 55+ Home Buyer's Online Search Process
- Social Media for Active Adults: Myths vs. Realities
- Changing Expectations: Top 10 Trends Driving 55+ New Home Sales
- Design, Fit & Finish and Color Trends: What 55+ Home Buyers Want!
- Make It Personal: A Universal Design "Rethink"
- How to Use Universal Design to Create the Ageless Home
- The Must-See Aging-in-Place & Universal Design Products

For all the details – and to register for the Show – visit the [IBS website](#).

NAHB **IBS**™

**JANUARY 9-11 > ORLANDO**



**NEW 55+ HOUSING  
TRENDS & PRODUCTS**

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