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About this research
This research was designed to illuminate the current, emerging and future housing issues for the Boomer population. Specifically, this research examines the Boomer population’s opinions, attitudes, and experiences in the areas of retirement migration, aging in place, and home planning and decision-making. This 20-minute national random digit dial (RDD) telephone survey of 2,260 adults ages 45-65, covered areas such as: length of time in current residence, recent/planned moving; difficulty getting around in home, mobility modifications/add-ons, members of household, expectation of use of home equity, etc. All reported statistics are weighted based on Census data (race, ethnicity, gender and age group). The research was conducted by Woelfel Research, Inc. from October 15 to November 17, 2011.

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Boomers love their community. For the majority, the location of their current home was a chief reason for selecting it and they would like their community to get better as they grow older. However, there are gaps in what their community currently offers and what Boomers view as important for the future. These gaps help us explore how communities can improve to ensure a better quality of life for Boomers as they age.

Boomers are attracted to communities that resemble the past – Many say they like the idea of easily accessible services, shops, entertainment and walking trails and that easy access to these amenities becomes more important as they grow older. This is most likely a multigenerational desire – Boomers and the younger generation really would like to have a community that resembles those of the past – with shops, homes, schools, etc. that are within walking distance.

Boomers’ homes are a nice fit now and modifications will enhance life in later years – Boomers especially say their homes fit them – for today. They are also beginning to recognize that there are features that might enhance how they will live later in life. Just as with their communities, there are gaps between current home features and important home features that will ensure they have their dream home of the future.

Boomers are healthy, agile and active, thus planning for later years has been delayed. Boomers know they are going to live longer so the issue of planning for later years is not currently top-of-mind. So when asked about planning for home, community and services needed in later life, one-third or less has given this a great deal of thought.
Trend: Boomers Love Their Community

Though respondents indicate they would like to remain in their community throughout their lives, there are considerable gaps between importance and availability of amenities in some communities.

There are a number of community features in which respondents indicated will be important as they age; however, many communities do not currently have that feature. This analysis enumerates what amenities will make the community they love even better as they age in place.

Community features that have the biggest gap between level of importance and availability in the community.

Despite these gaps...

- 84% agree with the statement: “I want to stay in my home because I like what my community has to offer me.”
- 74% give their community a high rating on variety of stores close to home
- 64% give their community a high overall rating (8 or more out of 10)

Source: 2011 Boomer Housing Survey
Trend: Boomers Are Attracted To Communities That Resemble The Past

Boomers like the idea of easily accessible services, shops, entertainment and recreational opportunities.

Boomers indicate that basic community features are important to them as they choose where to live. When defining “community” as a 6 to 10 block radius, access to medical facilities, shops and places to worship were cited as important most often. These features become important to a higher proportion of Boomers when thinking about their later years.

Features most often mentioned as important to Boomers who moved for retirement or plan to purchase a new home.

- A doctors’ office: 63%
- A grocery store within half a mile of your home: 62%
- A hospital: 61%
- A place where you can worship: 60%
- A drug store within half a mile of your home: 53%

When looking at the importance of these features later in life, even higher proportions say they will be important.

- doctor’s office, 83% (+20%)
- grocery store, 80% (+18%)
- hospital, 83% (+22%)
- place to worship, 76% (+16%)
- drug store, 81% (+28%)

Source: 2011 Boomer Housing Survey
Trend: Boomers’ Homes Nice Fit Now, Modifications Will Enhance Life Later

Boomers recognize their homes might need modifications to enhance their home’s functionality in later years.

Boomers were asked about the importance of certain home features when buying a home for retirement as well as the importance of home features in their later years of life. The results suggest that while some Boomers think these home features are important, higher proportions recognize that these features will become important in their later years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Importance When Buying Home for Retirement</th>
<th>Importance in Later Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A bedroom on the main level</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-slip floor surfaces</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical switches positioned slightly lower</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical outlets positioned slightly higher</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lever-handled door knobs</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easily usable climate controls (thermostat)</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2011 Boomer Housing Survey
Trend: To Plan Or Not To Plan?

Boomers are aware that they will live longer than their parents did. In turn, this allows them delay planning for their golden years.

Boomers are healthy, agile, and active. Four in ten expect they will always be this way and over one-third believe they will always be able to drive. These factors may contribute to the low percentage of Boomers who have given a great deal of thought to the type of housing, community and services they may need later in life.

Factors that might contribute to low number of planners:

- 31% do not expect someone will have difficulty getting around their home for another 20+ years
- 41% expect they will always be in good health
- 35% expect they will always be able to drive

Source: 2011 Boomer Housing Survey
2011 Boomer Housing Survey

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