Healthy Living & Aging in Co-housing

Silia Sequeira

Dr. Carmen Steggell, and
Dr. Elif Tural

School of Design & Human Environment
Oregon State University
The Decline of Physical Activity

- 46% of US adults ages 65-75 do not engage in any leisure physical activity
- This goes up to 59% for those 75 and over (Frank et al, 2003)

As we age, walking becomes an increasingly important way to avoid this decline in physical activity

- It is a low-impact exercise
- Can be easily incorporated into everyday life
- If the surrounding environment supports walking behaviors
- For older adults this makes residential environments crucial, since we tend to stay closer to home as we age.
What else can encourage physical activity in older adults?

- Social health
- Social trust
- Sense of belonging
- Community participation

Social capital is associated with positive physical health outcomes.

Within the overlapping contexts of physical activity, residential environments, and social capital, **Cohousing** warrants a closer look:

- How does cohousing support social well-being in conjunction with physical activity?
What is Cohousing?

Intentional communities where residents share many indoor and outdoor facilities, while maintaining private residences.

- Participatory design process
- Social contact design
- Common facilities
- Resident-managed
- Non-hierarchical in organization
- No shared economy

Our case study community: CoHo EcoVillage and surrounding neighborhood in Southern Corvallis
First Steps

- Literature review
- Testing of the evaluation tools for assessing the physical environment surrounding the CoHo EcoVillage

PEDS and the Irvine Minnesota for Observation of the Physical Environment were used as initial assessment tools. We wanted to not only perform initial assessments of how pedestrian friendly the environment is, but to explore how robust and user-friendly these tools are.

Above: The neighborhood surrounding the Coho has residential, industrial, commercial, and recreational uses. 15 individual segments were assessed by 3 evaluators.
Snapshots of the CoHo surrounding environment: what affects walking behaviors?
Next Steps

- Further data collection: how does the cohousing environment support or hinder physically active aging?
- Coho resident interviews
- Coho resident survey questionnaires and PhotoVOICE technique
Thank You!!!

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