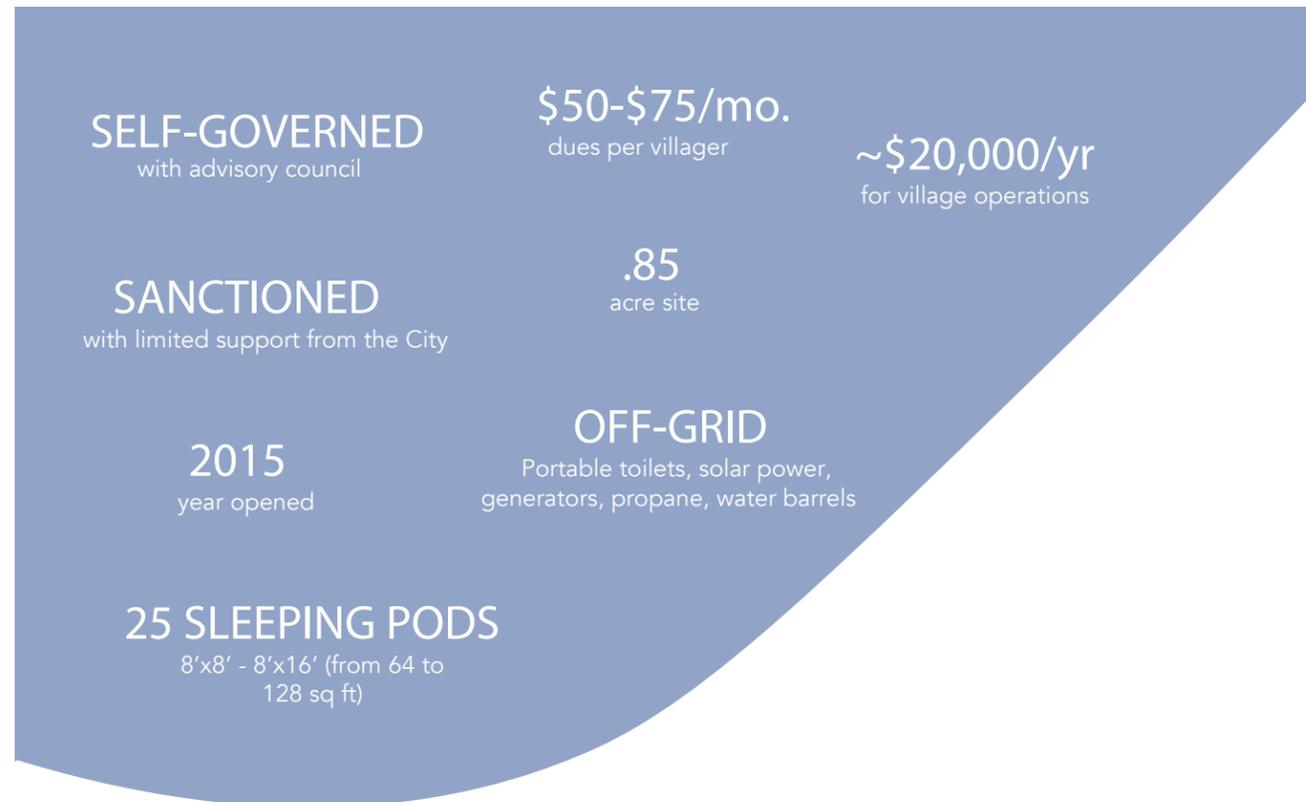




Hazelnut Grove

Students and Architects learning from villagers



Hazelnut Grove

[Village Profile]

Hazelnut Grove is a self-governed village in North Portland with around 25 villagers when at full capacity. Like Dignity Village, Hazelnut Grove grew out of activism and was able to make headway due to the City of Portland declaring a state of emergency on housing and homelessness in 2015. An existing tent camp was threatened with displacement on the site of the current Hazelnut Grove on a wooded parcel of land owned by the Oregon Department of Transportation alongside a busy road. To advocates for the houseless community, this represented backwards thinking by the city; How can they recognize the severity of the homelessness crisis through the declaration of a state of emergency, while continuing “sweeps” of communities with nowhere to go?

Advocates called for the City to allow the camp to remain in place. Houseless activists who had been camping outside of City Hall for months as part of a public vigil for houseless folks that died unsheltered in Portland joined the encampment. Some of these activists and Hazelnut Grove founders including Raven Justice, Meg Garcia, Bob Brimmer, Joe Bennie, and Jose Serega worked with the community to help prevent a sweep

and support a vision for creating a village in the spirit of Dignity Village and Opportunity Village (est. 2013) in Eugene, Oregon. Activist and housing advocate Vahid Brown worked with the group on a plan for avoiding sweeps and founding a village. A turning point in the standoff with the City was a video made by Brown directed at then-Mayor Charlie Hales calling out the hypocrisy of the planned sweep in light of the recently declared state of emergency, and the video went locally viral. Finding a sympathetic ear with the mayor’s chief of staff, Josh Alpert, the community began talking with the City about possibilities.

Having a direct line to city government with a solutions-oriented approach was instrumental in creating a fruitful path forward for the village. Alpert would host meetings at City Hall where the folks forming Hazelnut Grove would be invited, and they would all show up. The ask of the village organizers was simple: don’t displace us, provide the minimum of support needed to allow us to organize a community on this site, including portable toilets. By October of 2015 those requests had been granted, and the following year the city also provided a perimeter

“There was a lot of organic grassroots solidarity that was established for the Grove early on that was hugely significant in its success materially, politically, and culturally. While the right-wing news in Portland likes to portray Hazelnut Grove as a mess, its more positive reputation has a lot to do with that organizing work that established broader ally networks that really recognize that they’re in charge. It is a group of people living without a paternalistic infantilizing relationship with a social service agency, or a state, or city jurisdiction. They put up a fight with the city, they won, and they’ve established their own little community and, without any money, they built their own houses, and have their own shower and kitchen. All of the things that the grove has done, they’ve done on their own. People experiencing homelessness have achieved those objectives through their own activities with partnerships and support from their advocates.”

- Vahid Brown, Co-founder and Organizer of Hazelnut Grove

fence, trash cans, and a shipping container for storage.

The village was founded on ideals of self-governance and five community-generated rules: no violence, no theft, no abuse or discriminatory language, no open alcohol or drug use in common areas, and no disrespect of yourself or others. An evolution of a community of tents, to tents on pallets, to sleeping pods developed organically over the first few years of the village and in stages. Pods were built using donated materials from Portland’s ReBuilding Center by villagers and volunteers.

While the construction of the pods happened gradually over time, the establishment of the village as a community with

shared agreements and common goals happened extremely quickly. Much of this speed was due to the need to reach an agreement with the City quickly to avoid displacement, and was also likely due to a reprioritization of policies in the wake of the state of emergency on homelessness. However, this timeframe alienated some neighbors who felt that they should have been invited to participate in the process with the City. It is unclear whether this would have created better relationships but, while Hazelnut Grove has some strong advocates and allies in their immediate neighborhood, there is a vocal faction of neighbors who have publicly called on the City to remove the village since its inception.



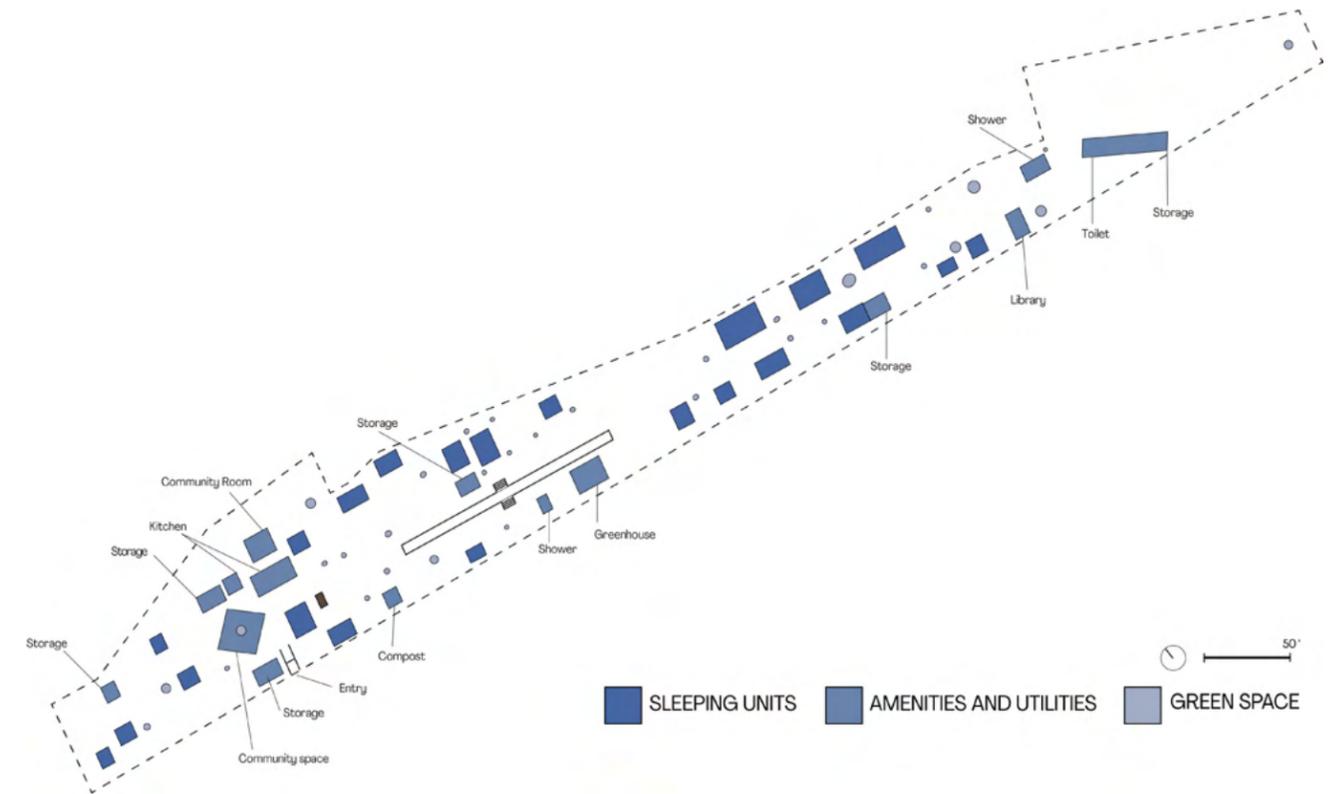
Founders of Hazelnut Grove organizing on the site of the future village

Image credit: Vahid Brown

In spite of periodic statements from the City threatening to remove Hazelnut Grove, it continues to function as a largely self-sufficient community. It is supported by a volunteer steering committee made up of housed allies chosen by the village, who offer support such as general assembly facilitation, connection to needed resources, and conflict resolution between villagers. Various volunteers have supported Hazelnut Grove with adding amenities, though the site remains fully off-grid, with no water, sewer, or electricity on site. Solar panels provide modest electrical output for charging phones and using lights, with donated propane utilized for most of the village's heating and cooking needs. Potable water remains the biggest challenge to village life at the Grove, with the chore of refilling and hauling large water bottles for drinking and showering constituting a significant amount of the work shifts assigned to villagers.

A confluence of factors allowed Hazelnut Grove to come into being in 2015, and many of those same factors in conjunction with advocacy and leadership of Grovers supported the creation of several other villages in Portland that would mark a new era of village building in the region. As key organizers and early members of the Village Coalition, Hazelnut Grove served as advisors on the POD Initiative, which resulted in the Kenton Women's Village. The nonprofit Cascadia Clusters hired three Grovers as their first set of paid trainees to build Agape Village using their expertise as villagers and growing skill as carpenters. The community life at the St. Johns Village benefited greatly from having 7 of its original 19 residents join the

village from Hazelnut Grove, opting for the improved facilities and services available at the new village. In these ways and more, the emergence of Hazelnut Grove sparked the current village movement that continues to this day.



In 2015, after the city threatened the original Hazelnut Grove site with displacement, campers from other locations joined the site in solidarity and with a vision of a stronger community.



The city agreed to Hazelnut Grove's survival, and contributed a security fence, trash services and portable toilets.



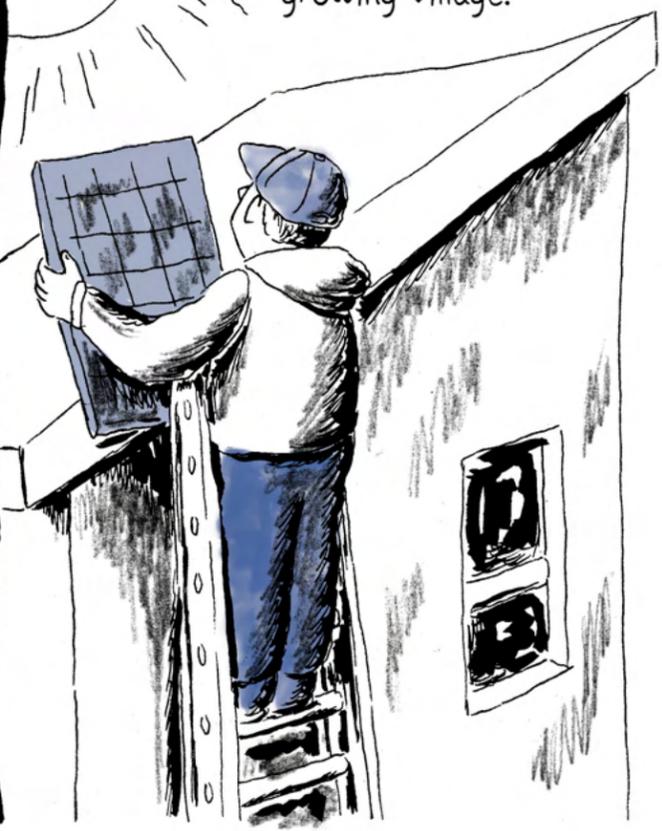
Members started to see themselves as part of a strong community, and to view Hazelnut Grove as a living organism.



The system of tents was slowly converted to a collection of sturdier pods.



Solar panels, gardens, a shower pod, and a communal space were added to the growing village.



In spite of ongoing threats of displacement by the City, Hazelnut Grove continues to build its community internally and support unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness in the broader community.

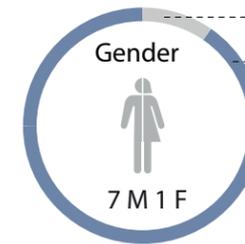


At each village, all current villagers were invited to participate in a survey and interview. The findings in the following pages represent only those villagers who elected to participate and not the entire population of the village.

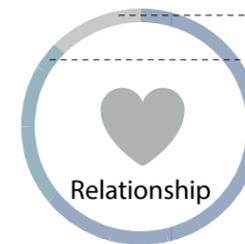
Hazelnut Grove

[Villager Interview Results]

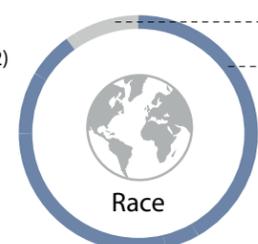
RESIDENTS DEMOGRAPHICS



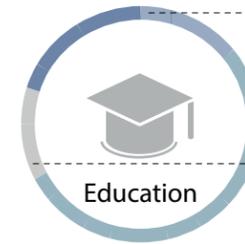
12.5% Female (1)
87.5% Male (7)



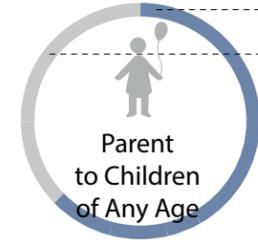
12.5% in a relationship (1)
25% Married or domestic partnership (2)
62.5% single (5)



12.5% Native Hawaiian/
Pacific Islander (1)
87.5% White (7)



37.5% College (3)
[1 with Master's]
50% High School
or GED (4)
12.5% School but not
graduated (1)



62.5% Yes (5)
37.5% No (3)



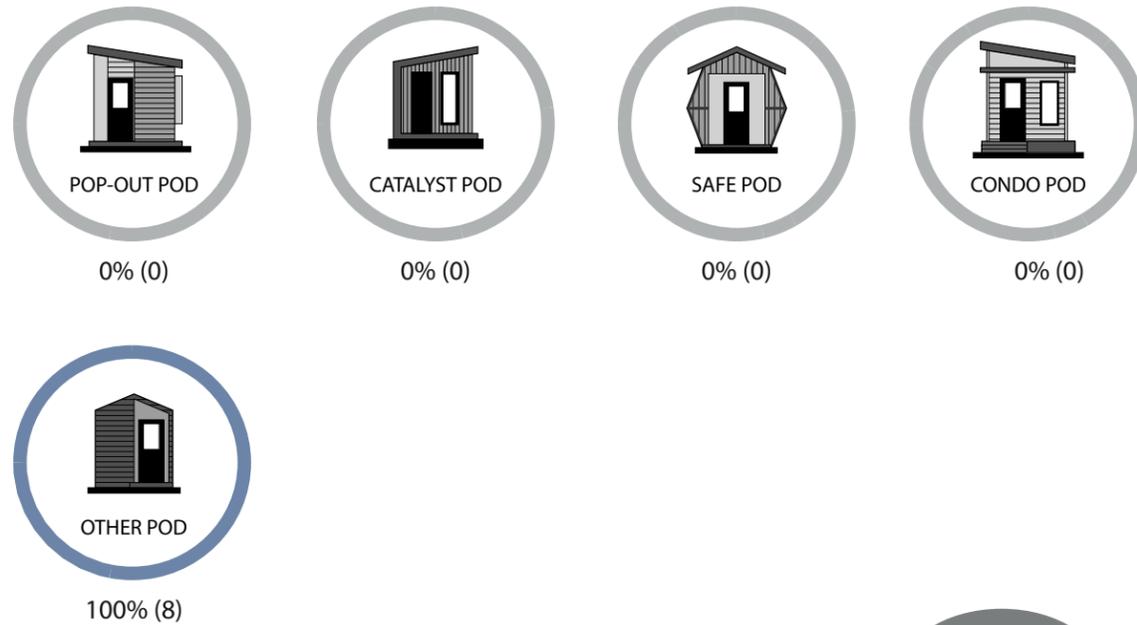
62.5% Yes (5)



RESIDENCE AT VILLAGE



PODS POD TYPE



POD DESCRIPTION, LIKES & DISLIKES

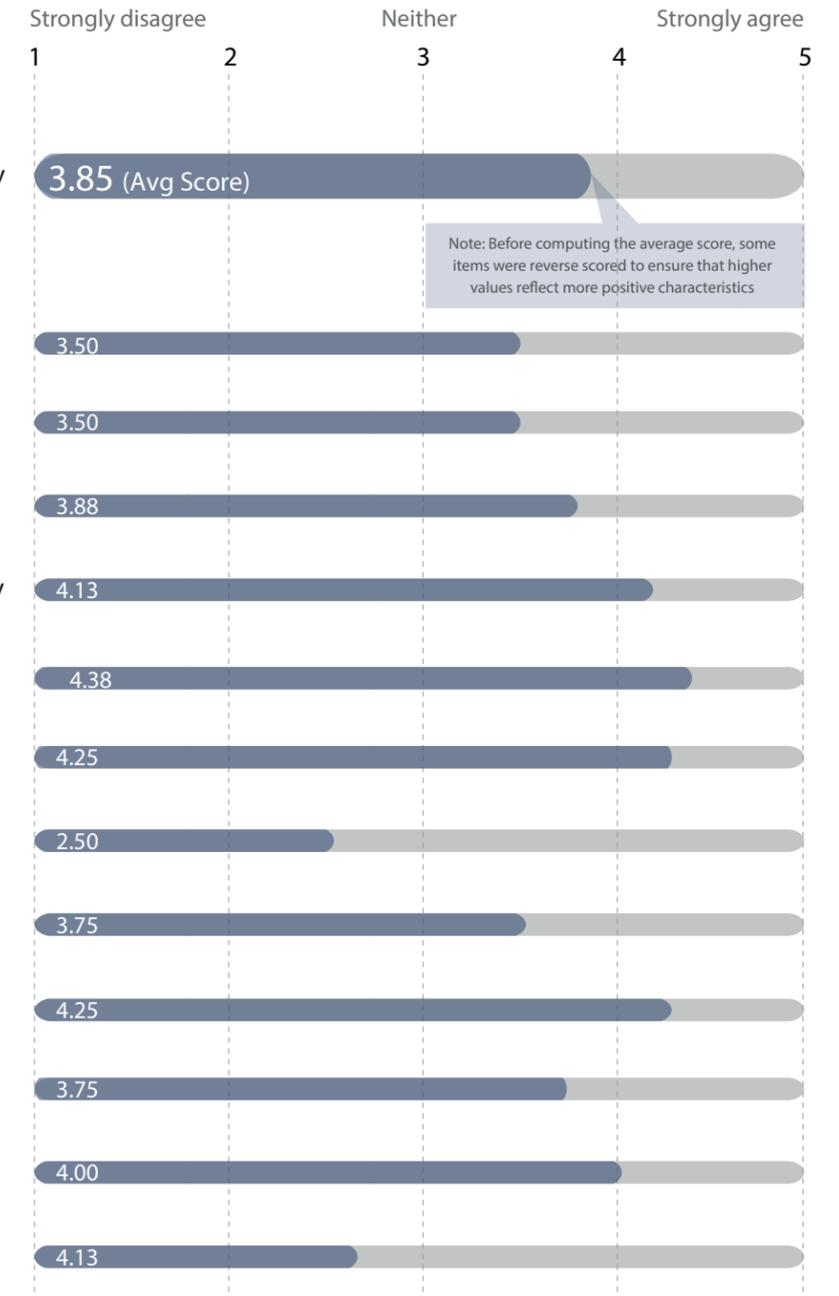
■ Likes ■ Dislikes



POD QUALITY



Pod Quality



VILLAGE
VILLAGE SOCIAL CLIMATE



Village Social Climate

Strongly disagree Neither Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5

4.19 (Avg Score)

Note: Before computing the average score, some items were reverse scored to ensure that higher values reflect more positive characteristics

1. I feel like part of this village, like I belong here.

4.63

2. I know the rules in this village, and I can fit in with them.

4.50

3. I feel safe in the village.

4.25

4. Sometimes I feel unwelcome in the village because of my ethnicity and my cultural background.

1.38

5. There are other aspects of who I am that make me feel unwelcome in the village

1.63

6. People in the village are friendly to everybody no matter what the person's skin color or ethnic

3.00

7. People in my village treat me as an equal.

4.00

VILLAGE SENSE OF
COMMUNITY



Village Sense of Community

Strongly disagree Neither Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5

3.86 (Avg Score)

Note: Before computing the average score, some items were reverse scored to ensure that higher values reflect more positive characteristics

1. I think this village is a good place for me to live

4.13

2. Other residents and I want the same things from the village

3.75

3. I feel at home in the village

4.38

4. I care about what other villagers think of my actions

4.13

5. I have no influence over what this village is like

2.38

6. If there is a problem in the village people who live there can get it solve

3.38

7. I feel a strong sense of community in this village

3.88

8. People in this village generally don't get along with each other

2.38

VILLAGE RESIDENT SCALE

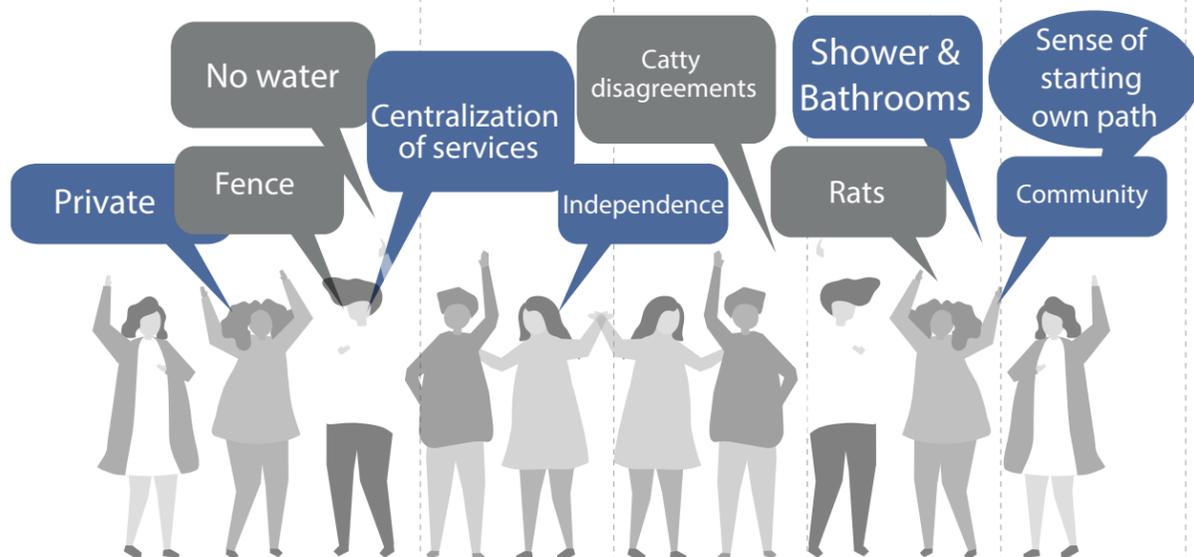


Village Neighbor Scale



VILLAGE DESCRIPTION, LIKES & DISLIKES

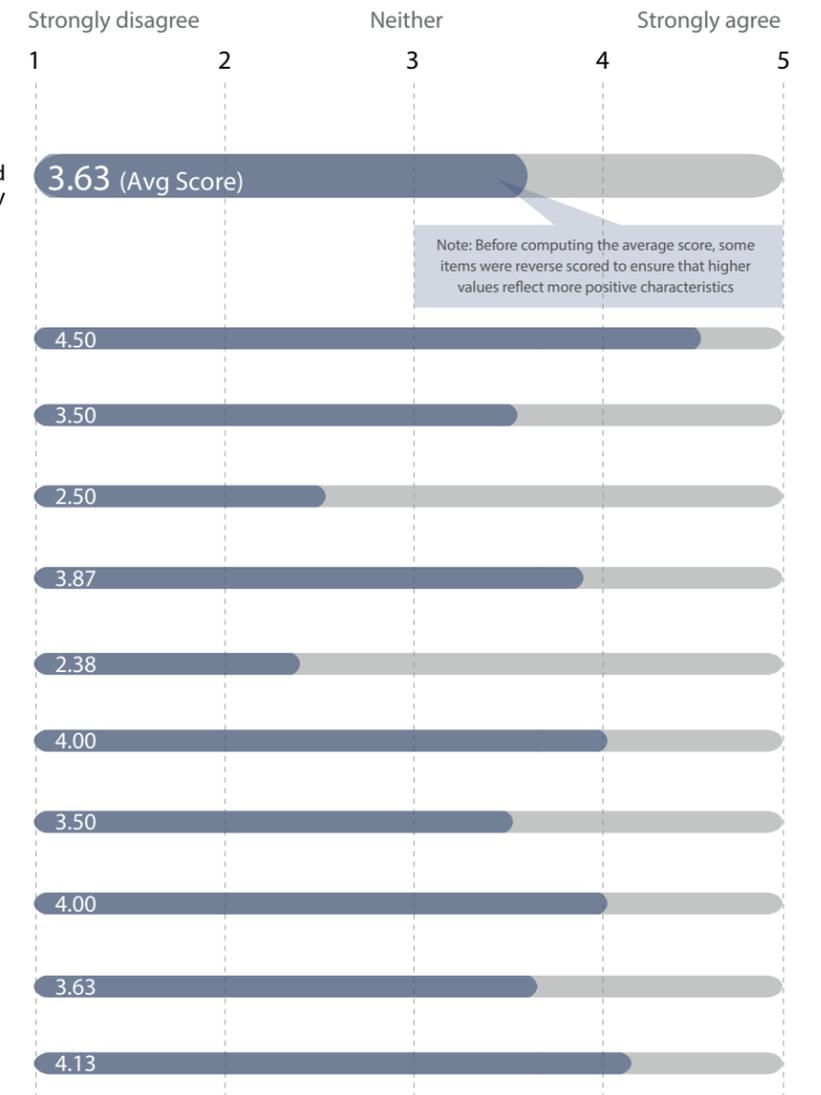
■ Likes ■ Dislikes



NEIGHBORHOOD NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY



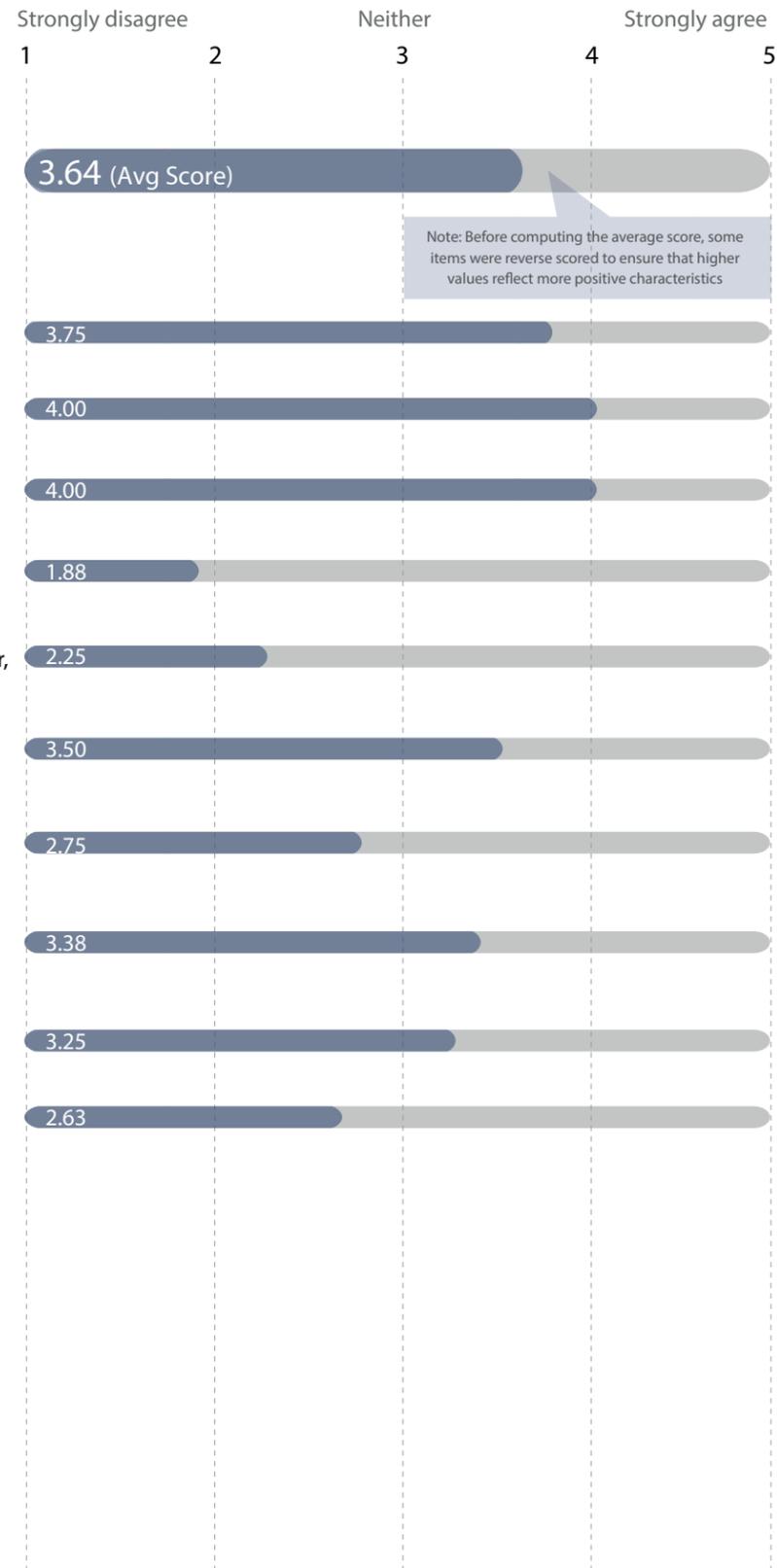
Neighborhood Quality



NEIGHBORHOOD SOCIAL CLIMATE



Neighborhood Social Climate



RESIDENTIAL SATISFACTION

1. "How satisfied are you with your pod as a place to live?"



VERY DISSATISFIED
0% (0)



NEITHER DISSATISFIED
OR SATISFIED
25% (2)



SATISFIED
37.5% (3)



VERY SATISFIED
37.5% (3)

2. "How satisfied are you with your neighborhood as a place to live?"



VERY DISSATISFIED
0% (0)



NEITHER DISSATISFIED
OR SATISFIED
12.5% (1)



SATISFIED
50% (4)



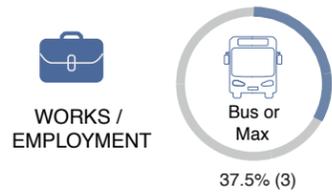
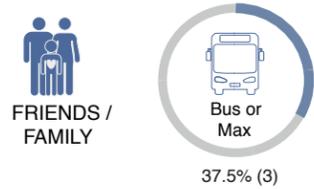
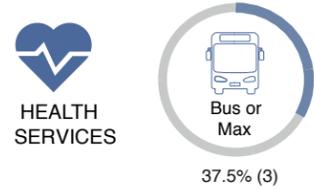
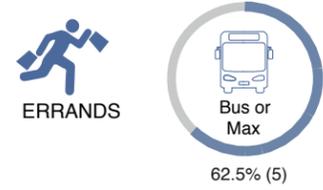
VERY SATISFIED
37.5% (3)

3. "How long do you want to live in the Village? And why?"



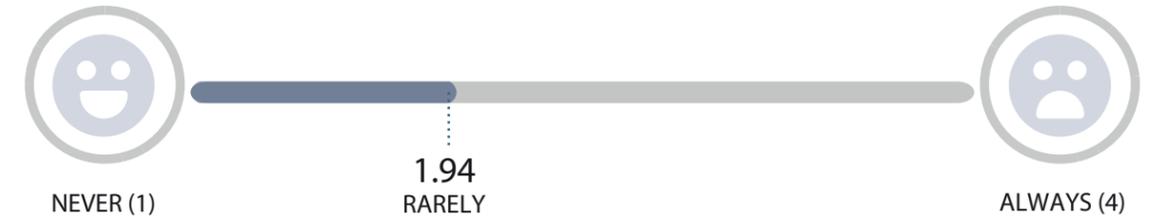
TRANSPORTATION

1. Most commonly used transportation methods in the past month.

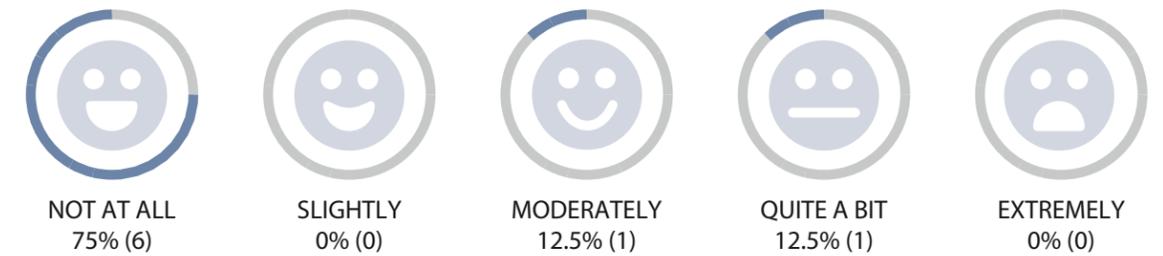


LIFE SATISFACTION AND STRESS

1. How often do you feel lonely on a scale of 1 (never) to 4 (always)?
On average residents said:



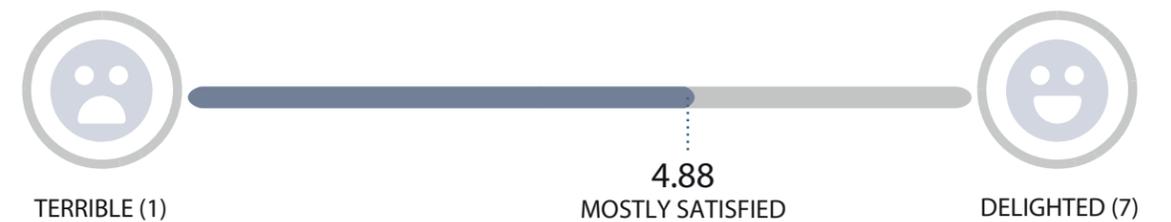
2. How much did your physical health interfere with daily activities in the last month?
The average response from residents on a scale of 1 to 5 was:



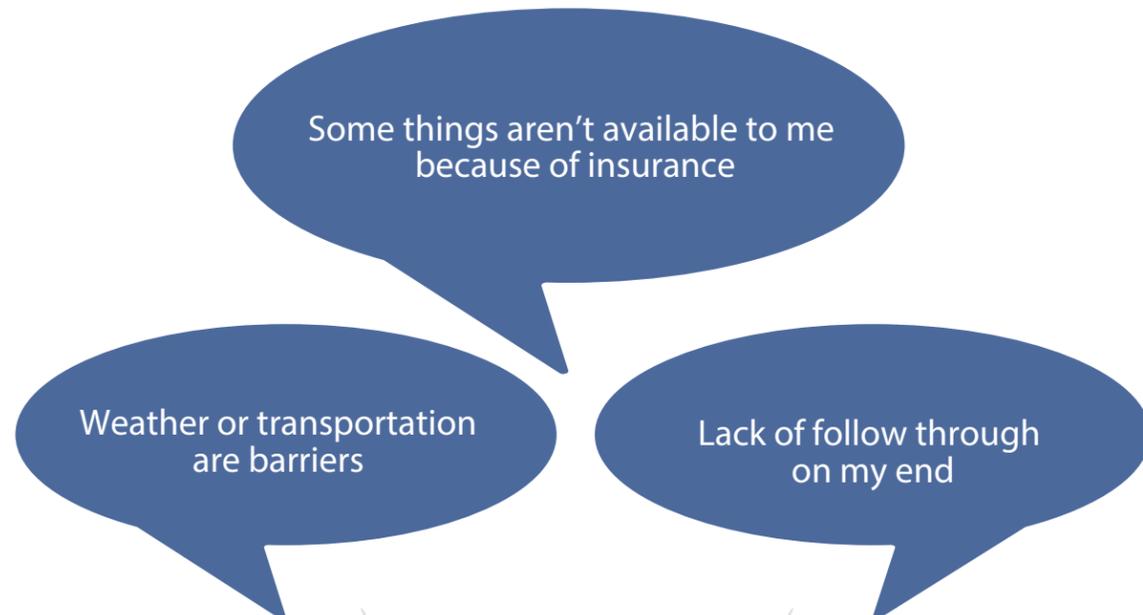
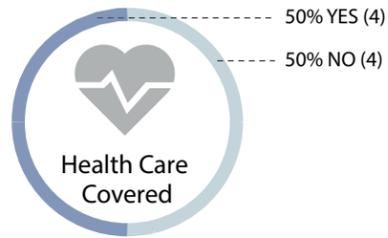
3. How much did your emotional health interfere with daily activities in the last month?
The average response from residents on a scale of 1 to 5 was:



4. How do you feel about your life overall right now?
The average response from residents on a scale of 1 (terrible) to 7 (delighted) was:



HEALTH AND BASIC NEEDS



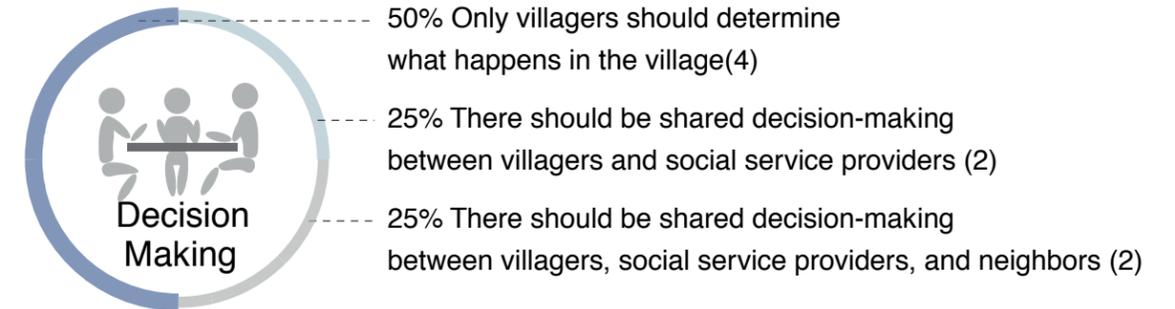
Governance and Decision Making

1. When the village has group meetings, what are the most important elements to help facilitate a productive meeting?

Elements ranked from most important to least important

(1= most important, 6= least important)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Adequate space to meet indoors	-	3 (37.5%)	-	1 (12.5%)	2 (25%)	2 (25%)
Adequate space to meet outdoors	3 (37.5%)	1 (12.5%)	2 (25%)	-	1 (12.5%)	1 (12.5%)
Outside (non-villager) facilitators	-	2 (25%)	1 (12.5%)	2 (25%)	2 (25%)	1 (12.5%)
Established rules for the meeting	3 (37.5%)	-	1 (12.5%)	1 (12.5%)	-	3 (37.5%)
Comfortable seating	-	1 (12.5%)	3 (37.5%)	3 (37.5%)	1 (12.5%)	-
Food/Drinks provided at meeting	2 (25%)	1 (12.5%)	1 (12.5%)	1 (12.5%)	2 (25%)	1 (12.5%)

2. How much decision-making power should village residents have?



Villager Experiences and Recommendations

Everything's accessible. But they've made me feel welcome because of my disability, they didn't tell me you can't be here. They've helped me, so I appreciate that.

The best is like when we've got our kitchen up and running really well, it hasn't been. There's like a solid three and a half year period where everybody was on pitching into the kitchen and making sure that there were huge meals for everybody every night, and that was awesome. Just the sense of comradery that it brings is really cool.

"It was really disheartening to hear all the people in the neighborhood board association meetings that I went to just called for our remove just based on stereotypes of what you should expect from having a homeless camp in your community or whatever... And most of them I'd never seen their faces down here once."

Don't wait for somebody to tell you to do something. If you see something that you can fix, get down and do it. It's your home, consider it that. You don't want to have that, well, then you're in the wrong place.

"The sense that if anything gets really crazy the community is pretty good at breaking it up and trying to deescalate. The communal watching, I guess. As soon as there's an external threat, it's immediate. We're a super organism and we've got each other's backs."

Being here is good for me because it gives me a place that I can bring people, my friends that don't have something like this. It gives them a place that's warm. And that's why I do what I can to actually stay here. So I can bring friends that are in the same place I am. And I know they will be safe here.

