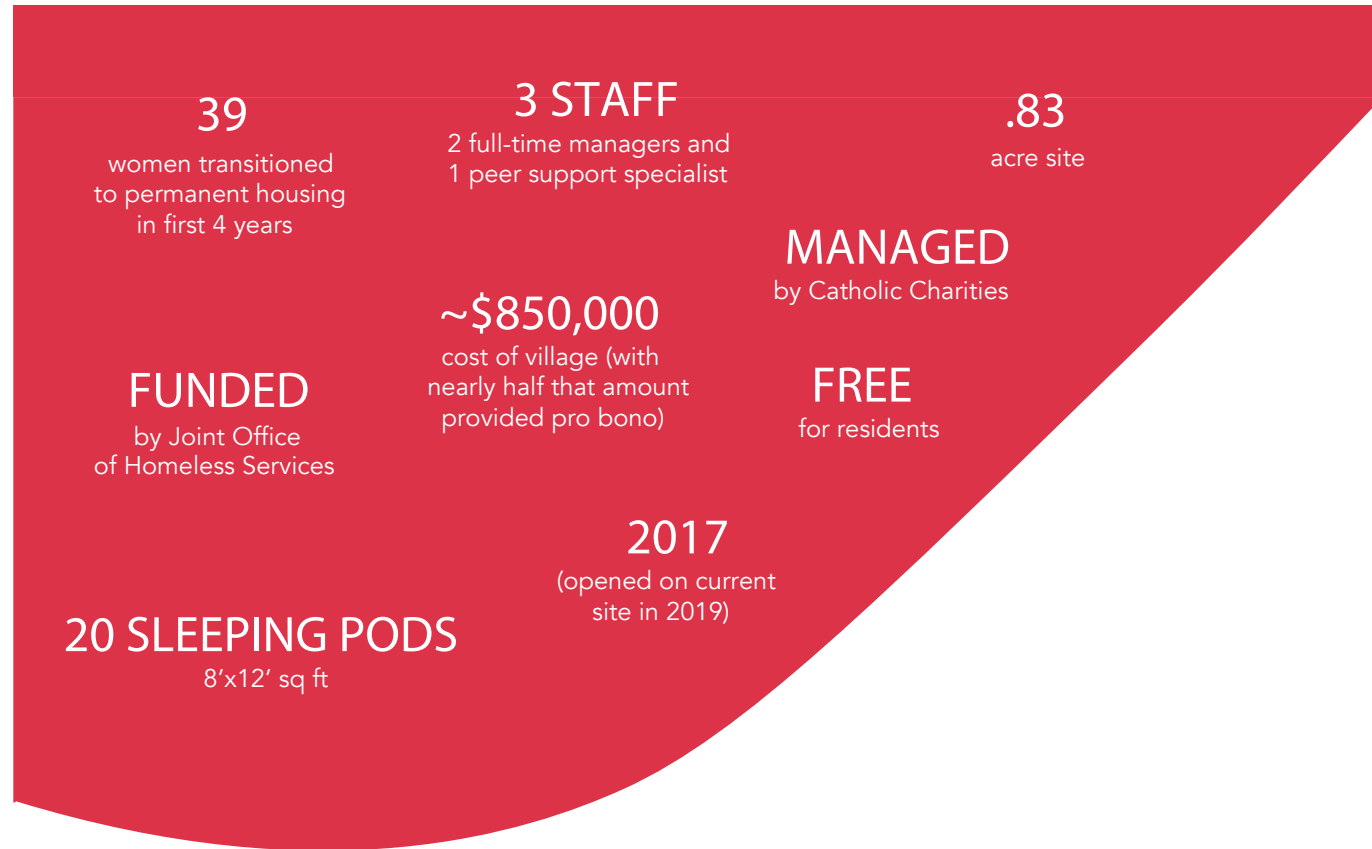




Kenton Women's Village

Image credit: Mark Stein



Kenton Women's Village

[Village Profile]

The Kenton Women's Village is a 20-person village in North Portland, and represents the region's first city-sponsored village. The village is funded by the Joint Office of Homeless Services and managed by Catholic Charities. The Kenton Women's Village is the result of a concerted advocacy effort that brought together designers, houseless advocates, and service providers aimed at challenging the City to take an active role in directly supporting the creation and operation of villages for the sake of improving village amenities and expanding shelter options for people experiencing homelessness.

The village is the outcome of an effort in 2016-2017 called the Partners On Dwelling (POD) Initiative first conceived within the Village Coalition, a newly formed village advocacy organization. Members of PSU's Center for Public Interest Design (CPID) were being asked for pod designs for use at Hazelnut Grove and other newly forming villages. Rather than concentrate on the design of pods, the CPID suggested a process that would both result in a series of new pod prototypes, but also open up dialogue with the public about the City's role in supporting village efforts.

In October of 2016 the POD Initiative organizers kicked off the effort publicly with an open design charrette that brought together architects, service providers, and those with lived experience with homelessness together to design new visions for pods and villages. Architects were convened by the CPID and context was provided to the group by POD Initiative collaborators that included residents of Hazelnut Grove and architect

Mark Lakeman who had been involved in the creation of Dignity Village and similar initiatives. Fourteen design teams emerged from the charrette committing to design and construct a pod within 2 months, when the pods would be displayed in downtown Portland. This strong showing and commitment from a wide range of stakeholders inspired the mayor's office (then Charlie Hales) to provide \$2,000 to each design team for pod materials. While many of the pods created ended up costing more than this amount, it represented a significant change in the City's relationship to villages and, crucially, would ultimately make them the owners of 14 pods that would need a home.

Following a series of workshops and public events, including an exhibit of the pod designs and a press conference at City Hall, the 14 pods were displayed in downtown Portland in the city's North Park Blocks for three weeks. Portlanders were invited to visit the pod in an attempt to advance conversation around what a village could be and what it might mean in their neighborhood. The event wasn't an abstract idea of pods, but a demonstration of these specific pods and a call to use them to provide necessary shelter and create a village. The time between the initial POD Initiative Charrette and the exhibit of the pods downtown was only about two months. The speed of the initiative intentionally responded to the urgency of the issue and demonstrated the ability to create this type of shelter quickly. Learning from the efforts of Dignity Village and Hazelnut Grove, the POD Initiative was an activist movement aimed at changing public perceptions around homelessness and inviting

“Watching the Kenton Women’s Village grow from a series of vacant pods to a community with compassion and heart solidified my core belief that architecture and design can address the immediate social and environmental concerns of our times. Learning this as a graduate student and applying the designs that I envisioned to real world design-build efforts, gave me the tools to move into a career inspired by the opportunity to create new models of community-based design. At the core of the success in the creation of the Kenton Women’s Village was the community itself. After various design charrettes, build days and a crucial neighborhood vote, the support of the neighbors proved to be invaluable to the acceptance of such a transformational project.”

- Lisa Patterson, Co-Designer of the Kenton Women’s Village (1.0)

in a broader range of stakeholders, particularly challenging the architecture profession to get involved as active participants in the issue of addressing homelessness.

The initiative gained momentum toward a village with the leadership of Mayor Hales’ Houseless Policy Advisor, Ben Mauro, who began advocating for the project and exploring potential sites. While an available site in the Kenton neighborhood was identified when the pods were completed in December 2016, the partners embarking on this effort did not want to simply drop a village into a community unprepared to welcome it into their neighborhood. The village was intended to serve as a yearlong pilot project that could be extended and/or replicated in other neighborhoods throughout Portland if successful. With this in mind, the organizing team offered to give the neighborhood an opportunity to work with the project partners and ultimately vote on whether to allow the village to move forward in their neigh-

borhood before any action was taken. After an intensive community engagement process led by CPID and PSU School of Architecture students, the Kenton neighborhood took a vote in the spring of 2017 that resulted in a decision in favor of the village with a margin of over 2 to 1. (One year later when the village asked for an extension to remain in place for another year while a permanent site was identified, the vote was nearly unanimous with a 119 to 3 vote in favor of keeping the village in Kenton). The village opened in June of 2017 with 14 pods and off-grid facilities, including a kitchen, showers, covered outdoor gathering space, a sink room, and portable toilets.

In its first 16 months in operation on the original site, Kenton Women’s Village transitioned 23 women into permanent housing. A more permanent site to host an upgraded village (often called Kenton Women’s Village 2.0 to distinguish it from the pilot project) was identified just a block away on



Placemaking at the original site of the Kenton Women’s Village

Image credit: NashCO

land owned by the Bureau of Environmental Services. Learning from the successes and failures of the original village, the new site would host improved pods with electrical hook-ups and integrated radiant heating panels, while the common facilities would provide water, sewer, and electricity, with additional amenities like a laundry room. The organizing group for the new village included SRG Partnership, the Center for Public Interest Design, Home Builders Foundation, Andersen Construction Foundation, Catholic Charities, LMC Construction, and the Joint Office of Homeless Services. In order to build the new pods and replace older prototypes that were less successful, the organizing partners worked with the construction community through the launch of the POD Build Challenge.

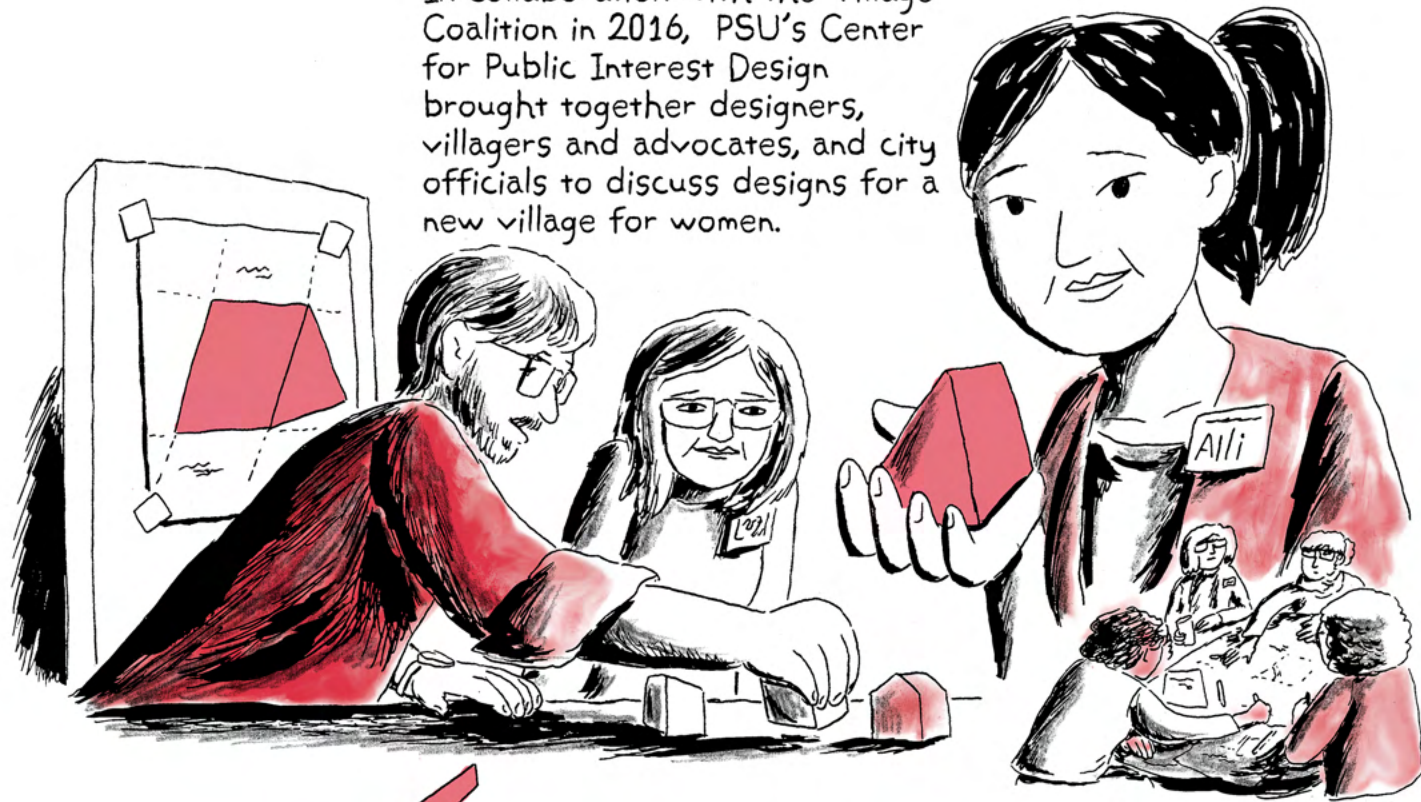
The challenge invited local construction firms to build and donate a pod based on three designs that were evaluated by villagers and village managers to be the most loved and suitable for the needs of the village. Construction firms were encouraged to be creative, think sustainably, and advance the designs through use of material, storage, and amenities. The new village opened in 2019 with 20 pods, with 8 additional pods created through the POD Build Challenge going to the Clackamas County Veterans Village. One year later, a new 680 square foot common building was added to the site with a kitchen, bathrooms, showers, laundry room, and living room. (The building was not in place at the time of HRAC's interviews with villagers at the Kenton Women's Village). Organizational partnerships, pro bono professional services, and creative collaborations with the

construction community, brought the capital costs of the project down to approximately \$420,000 (from what would otherwise have been around \$850,000).

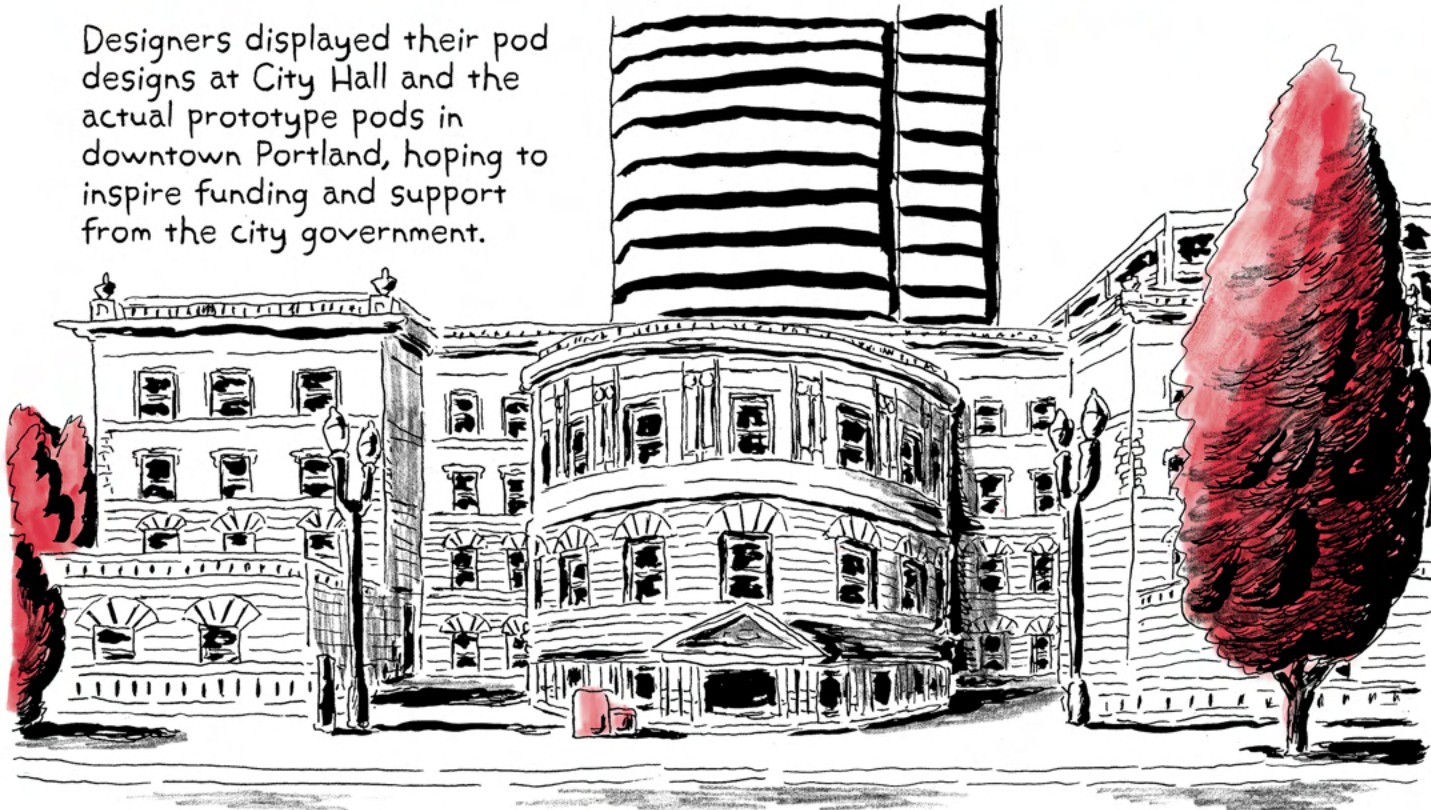
The Kenton Women's Village introduced a new level of government involvement, social service support, and public investment. With Catholic Charities providing two full-time village managers and one part-time peer support specialist, the village has high rates of access to social services and transition to permanent housing relative to the number of pods at the village, but also high operating costs. The village had originally been conceived of as a self-governed village, lightly supported along the lines of Dignity Village. However, with public funding and expectations for residents to transition to permanent housing, most of the social infrastructure of self-governance has been eliminated. In this way, the Kenton Women's Village has served as both a reference point for an alternative shelter model to be considered by municipalities, and as a cautionary tale by some village advocates who believe that a village must include at least some elements of community decision-making to meet the definition of a village. Just as the pods and site utilities have continued to evolve, it is likely that the operations of the Kenton Women's Village will evolve as well as the project continues. More recent villages like the Clackamas County Veterans Village and St. Johns Village that were inspired by the Kenton Women's Village model might suggest where that evolution could be headed.



In collaboration with the Village Coalition in 2016, PSU's Center for Public Interest Design brought together designers, villagers and advocates, and city officials to discuss designs for a new village for women.



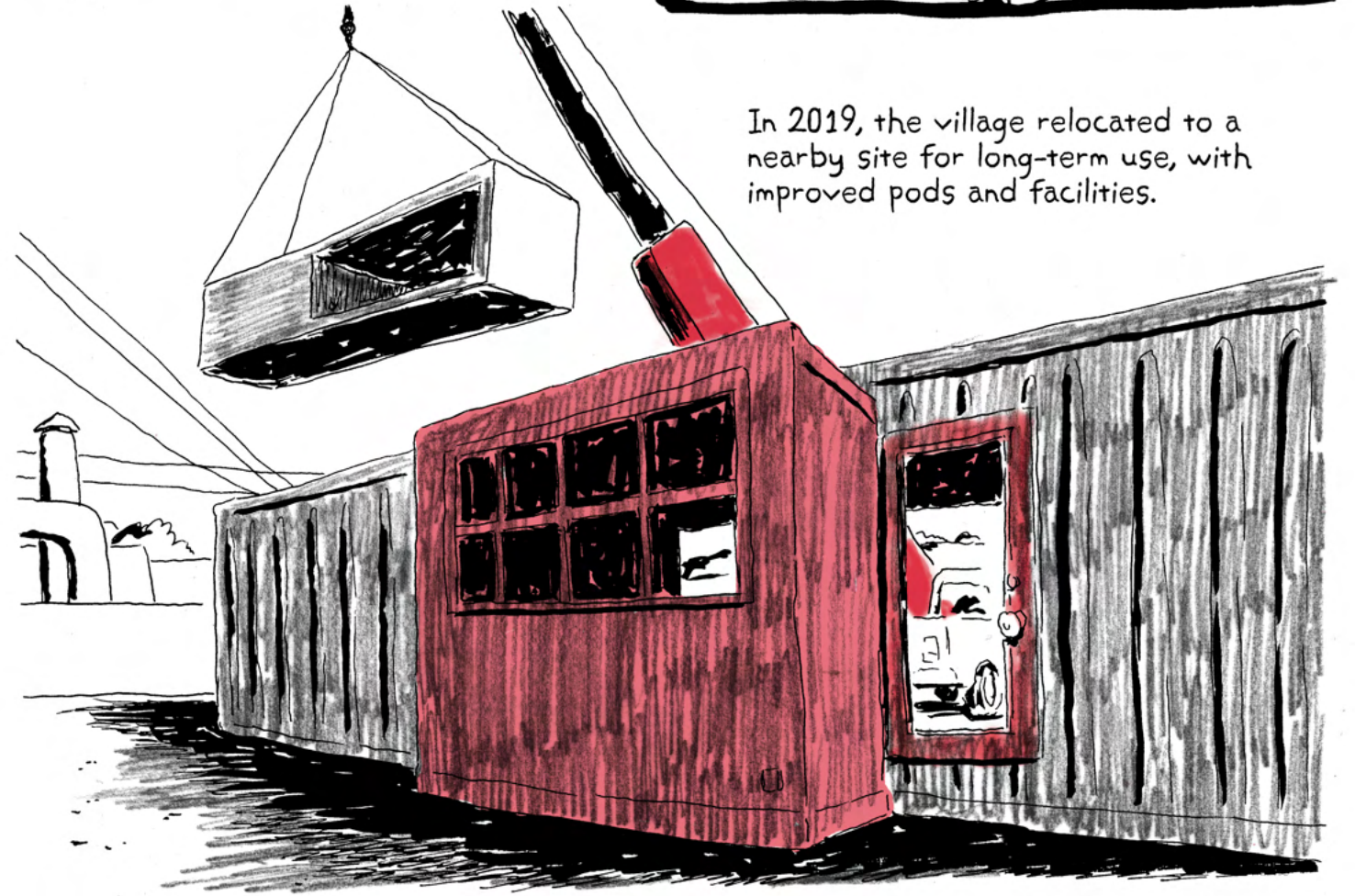
Designers displayed their pod designs at City Hall and the actual prototype pods in downtown Portland, hoping to inspire funding and support from the city government.



Forming partnerships with the Joint Office of Homeless Services, Catholic Charities, and the Kenton Neighborhood Association, the 14 pods and common facilities were installed by design teams in the Kenton neighborhood.



The Village officially opened in 2017 as a pilot project and represented the first city-sponsored village of its kind.



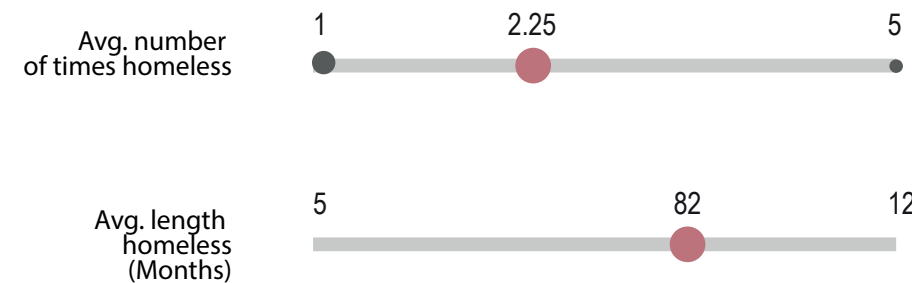
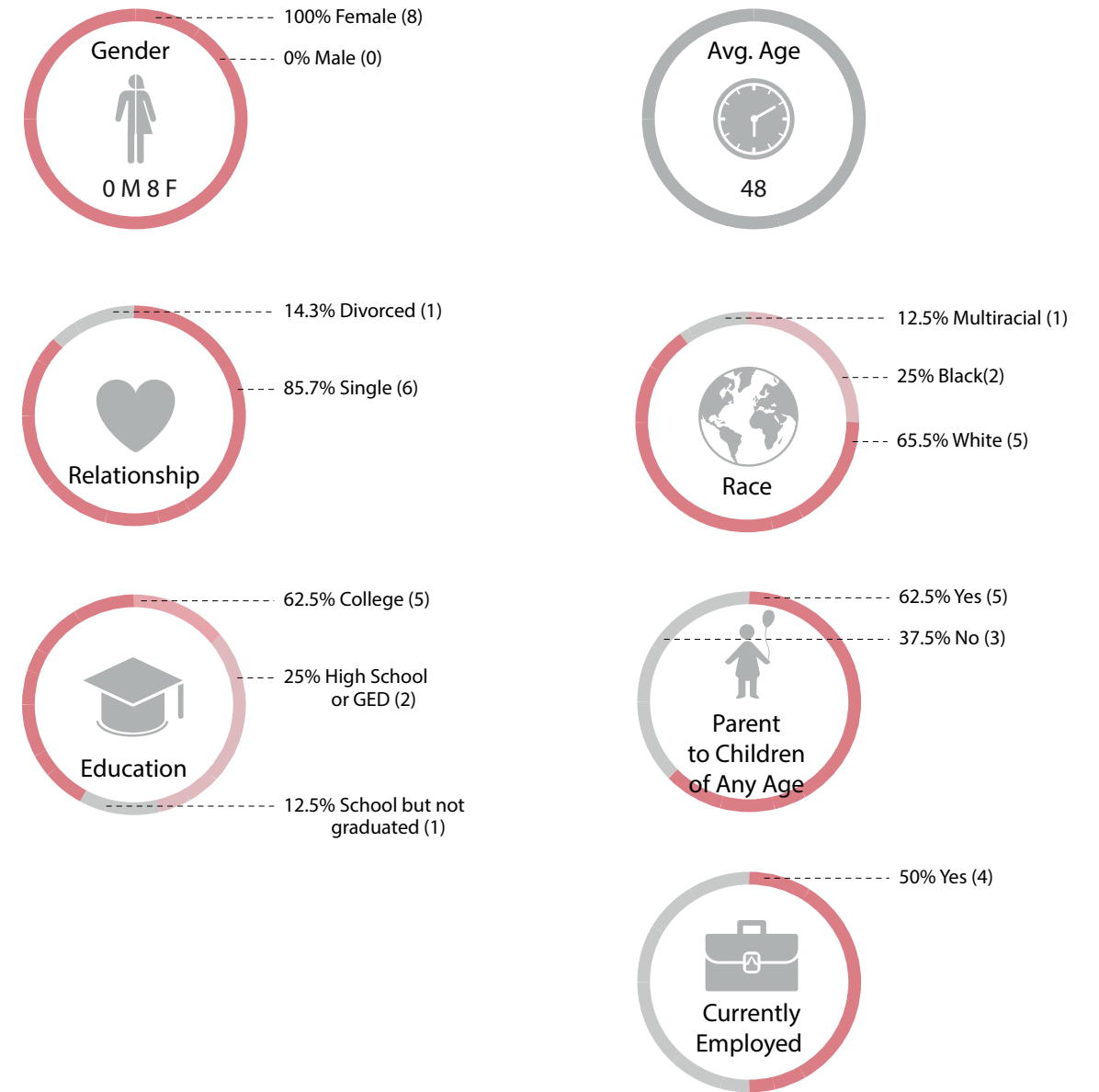
In 2019, the village relocated to a nearby site for long-term use, with improved pods and facilities.

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.

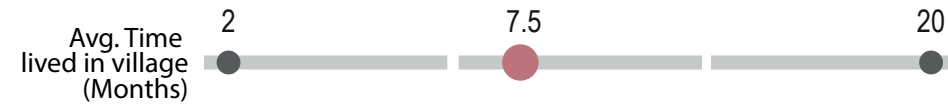
Kenton Women's Village

[Villager Interview Results]

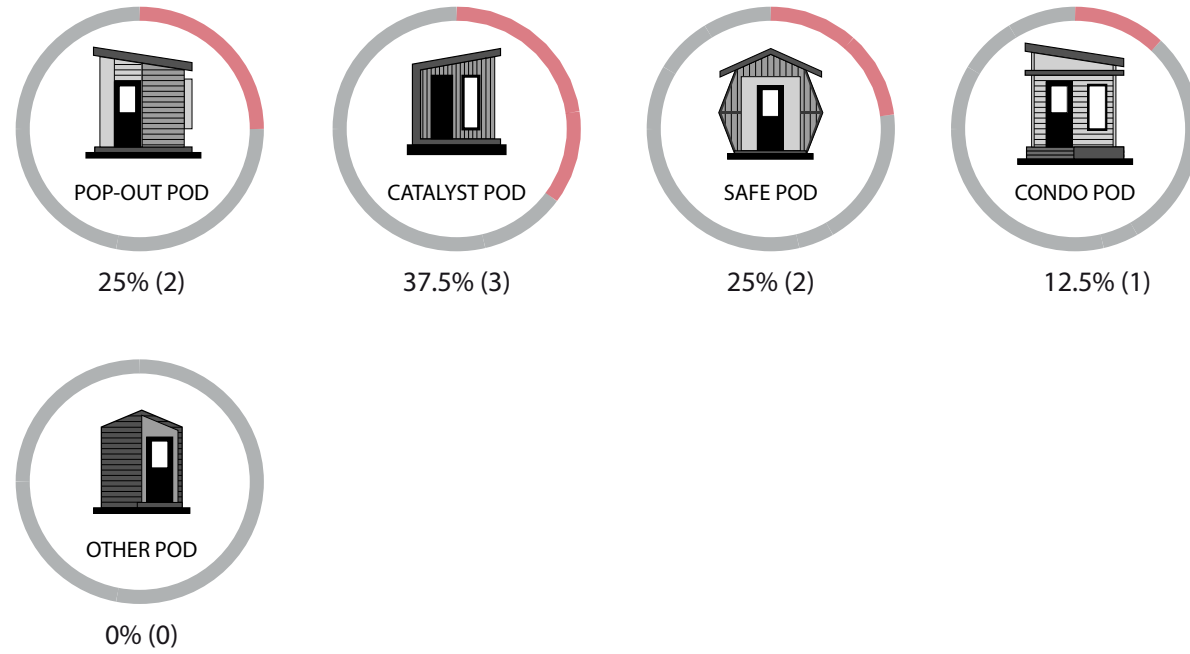
RESIDENTS DEMOGRAPHICS



RESIDENCE AT VILLAGE



PODS POD TYPE



POD DESCRIPTION, LIKES & DISLIKES

■ Likes ■ Dislikes



POD QUALITY



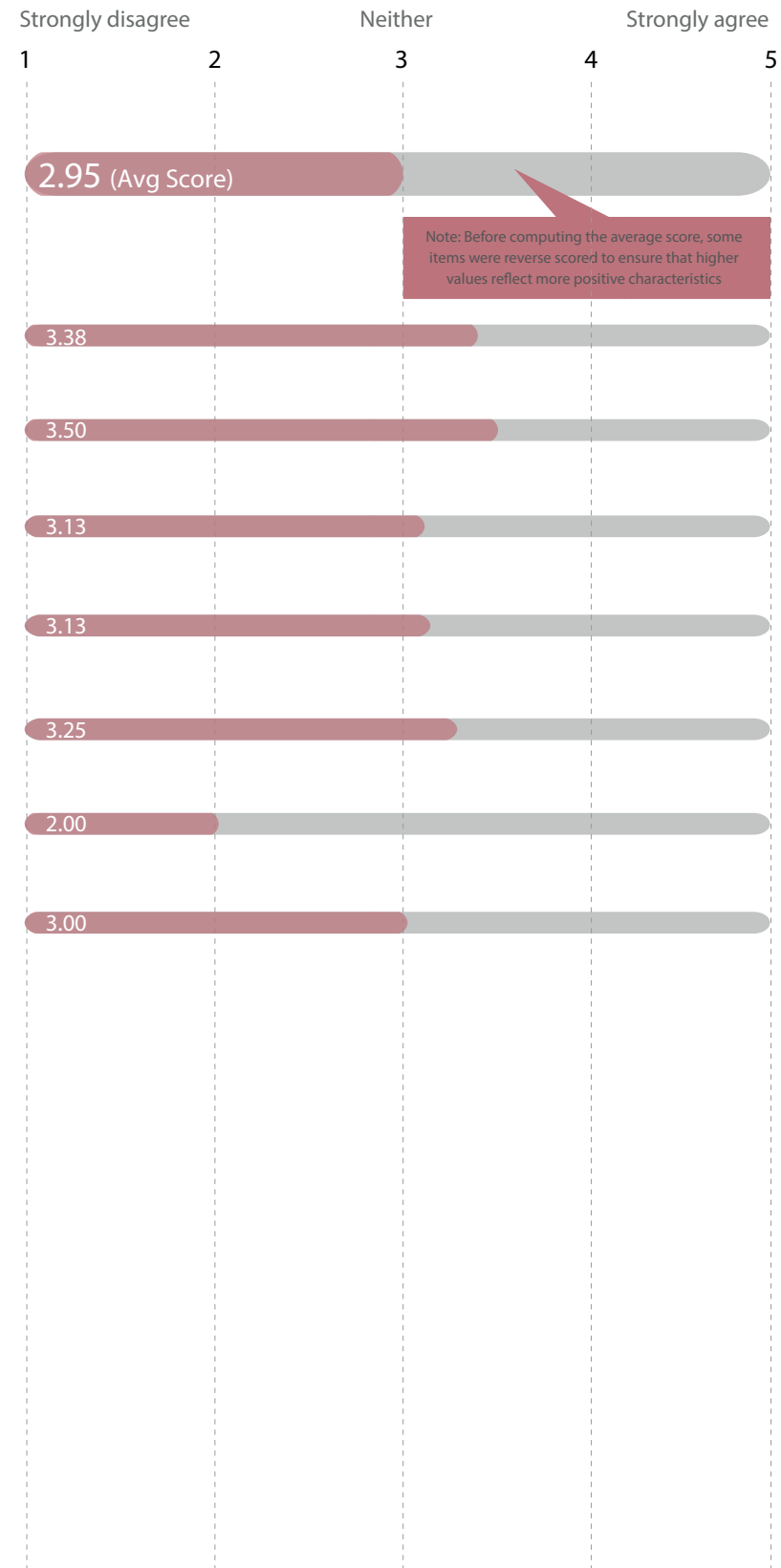
Pod Quality



VILLAGE VILLAGE SOCIAL CLIMATE



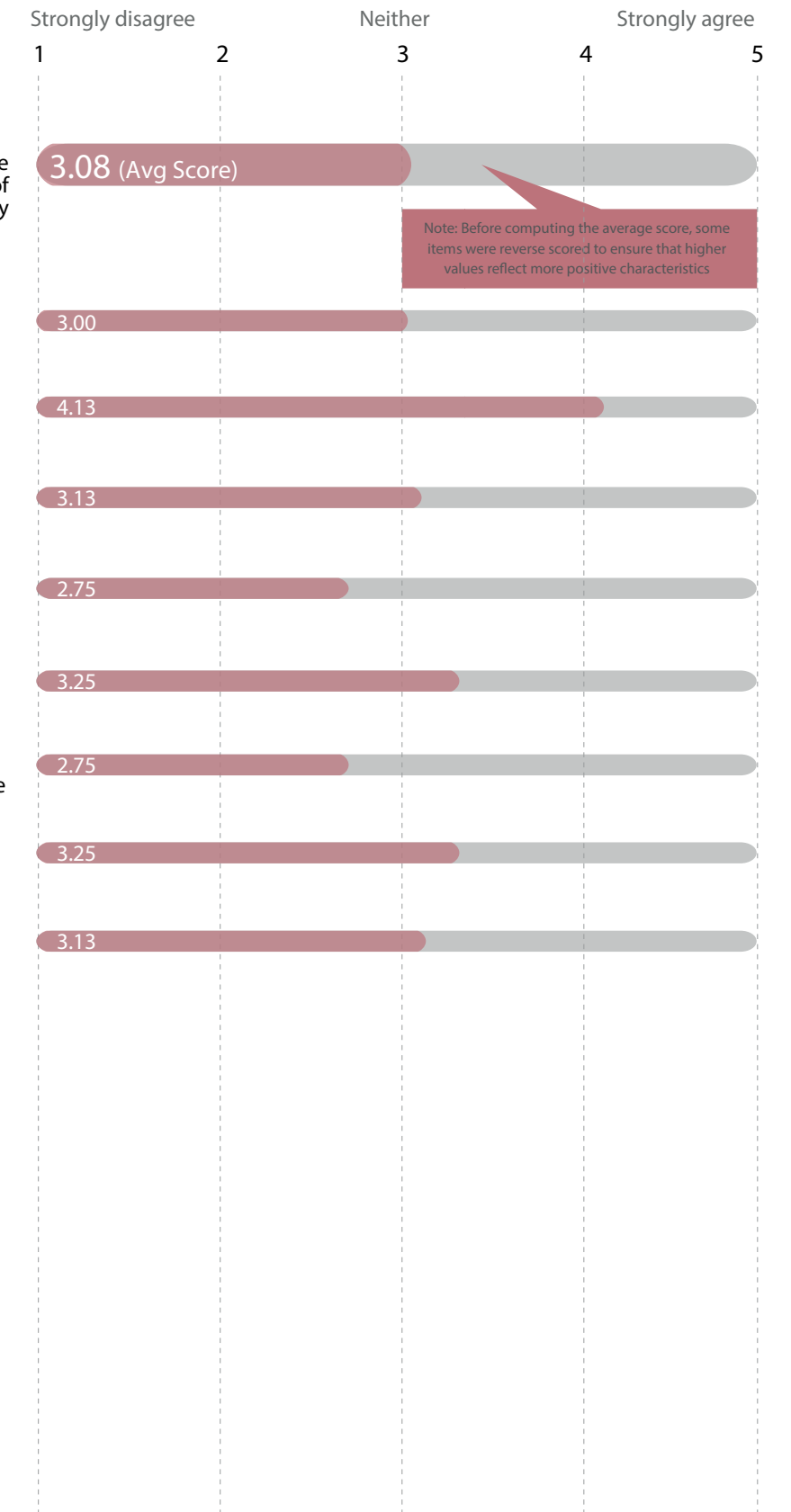
Village Social Climate



VILLAGE SENSE OF COMMUNITY



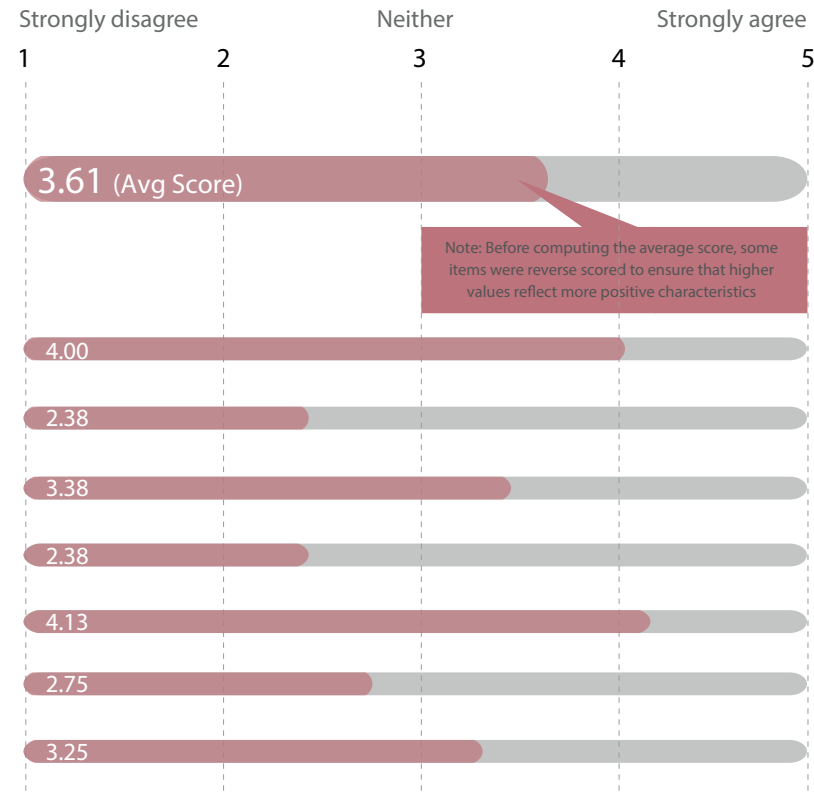
Village Sense of Community



VILLAGE RESIDENT SCALE



Village Neighbor Scale



VILLAGE DESCRIPTION, LIKES & DISLIKES

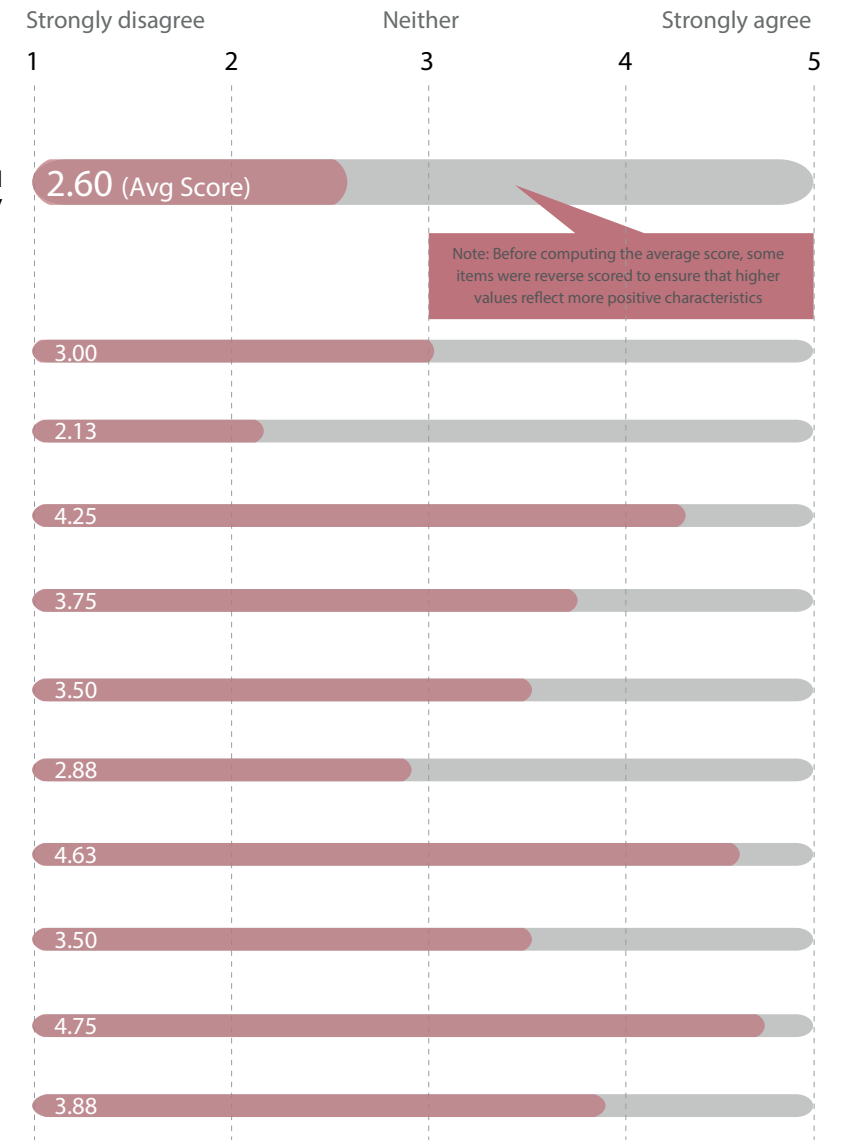
■ Likes ■ Dislikes



NEIGHBORHOOD NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY



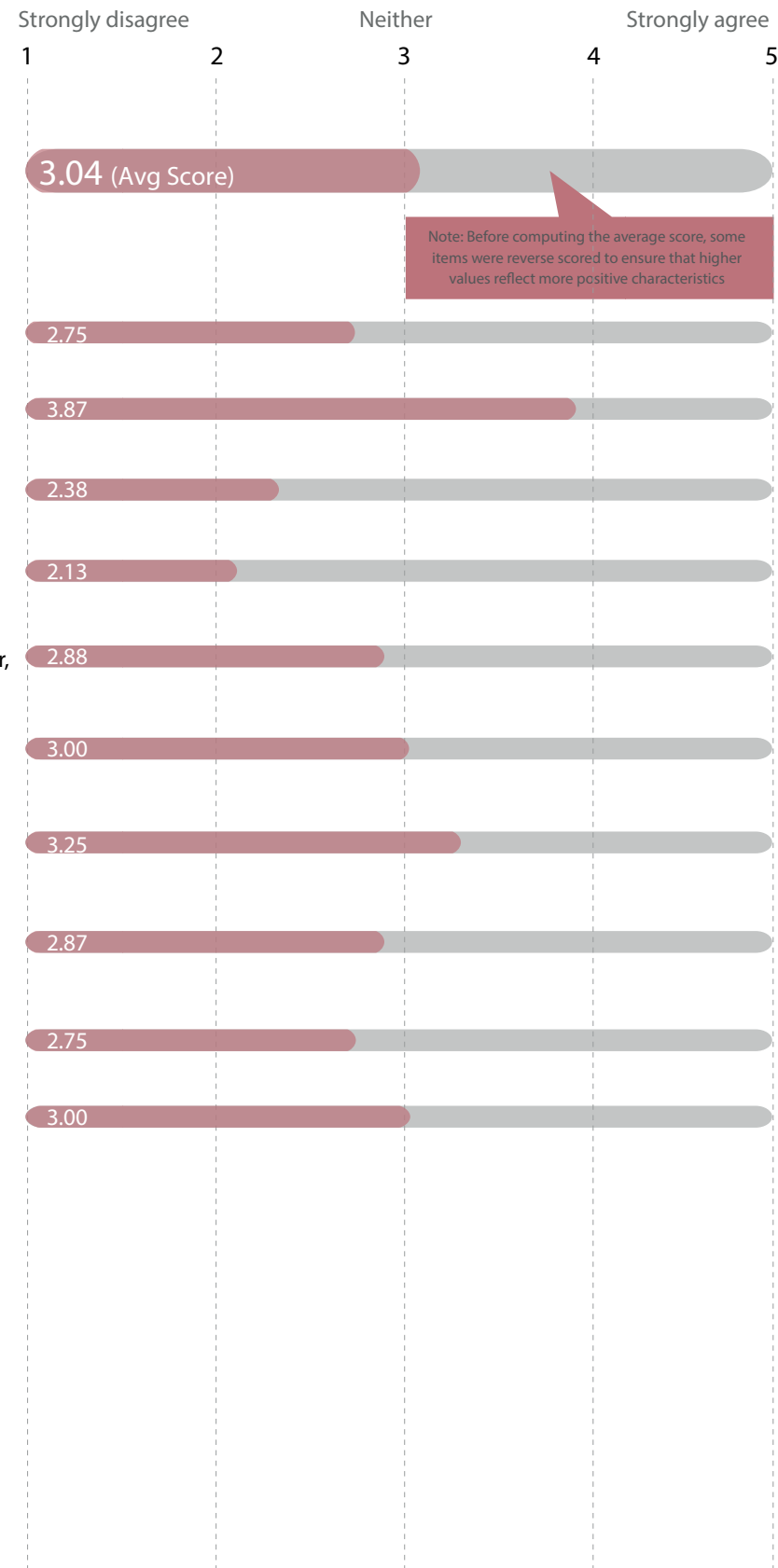
Neighborhood Quality



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
37.5% (3)



NEITHER DISSATISFIED
OR SATISFIED
25% (2)



SATISFIED
25% (2)



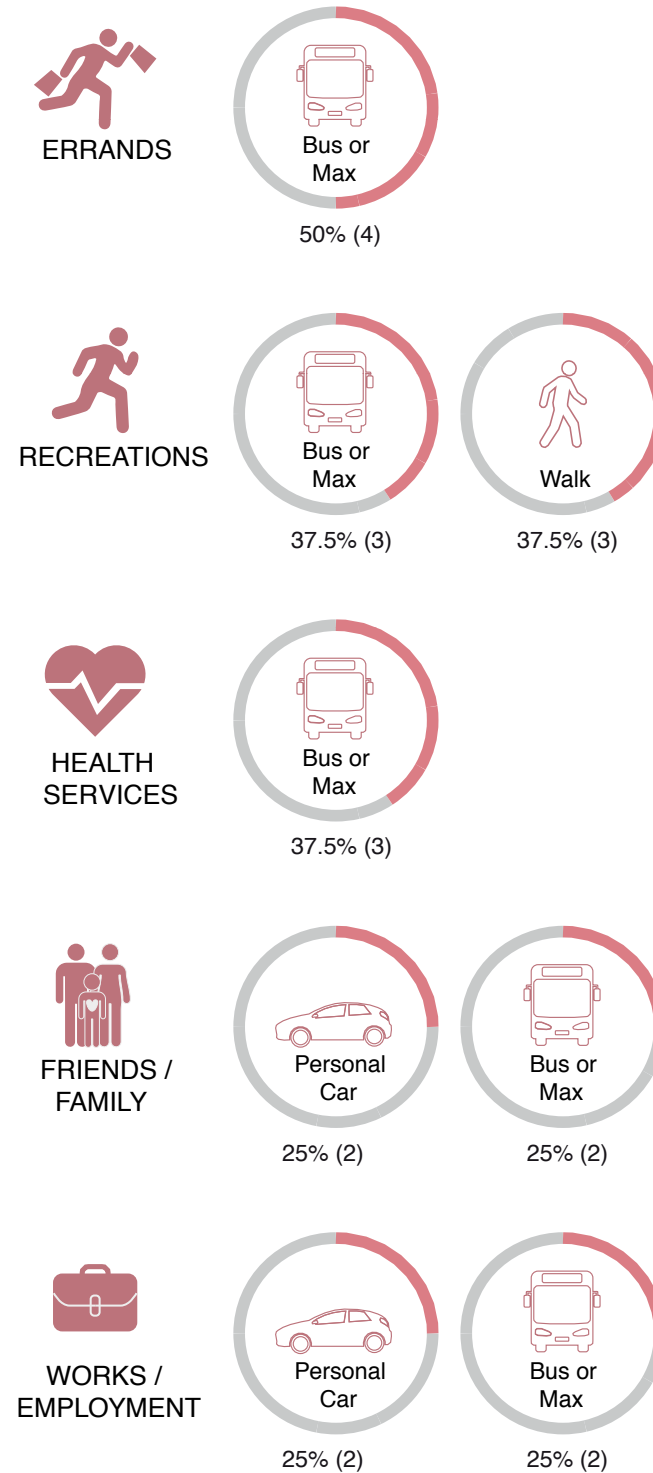
VERY SATISFIED
12.5% (1)

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



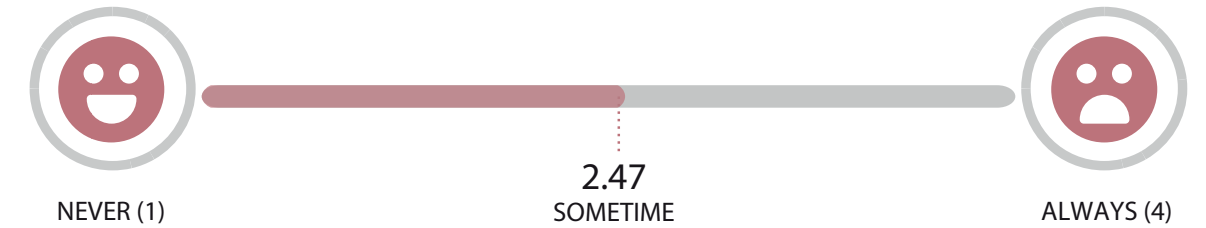
TRANSPORTATION

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

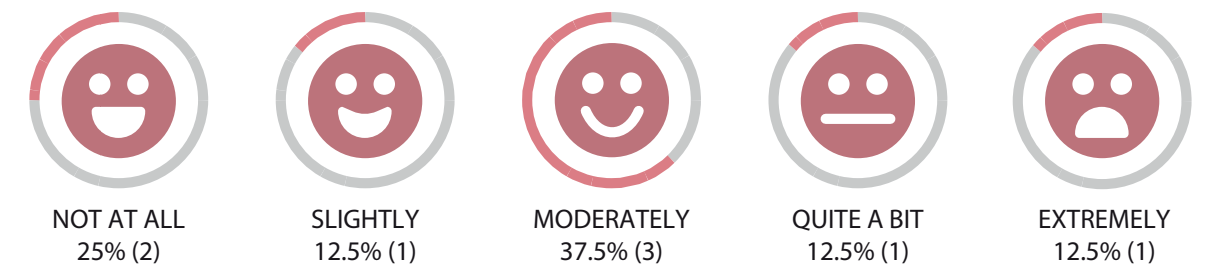


LIFE SATISFACTION AND STRESS

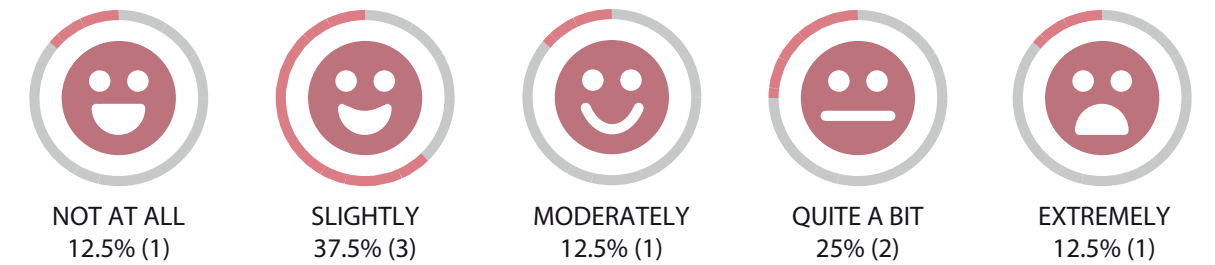
1. How often do you feel lonely on a scale of 1 (never) to 4 (always)?
On average residents said:



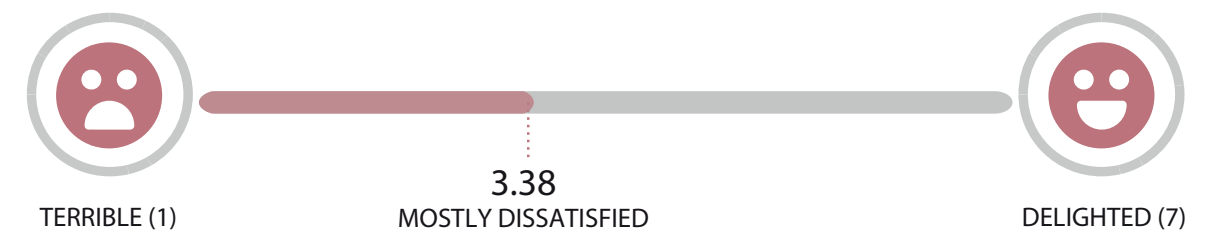
2. How much did your physical health interfere with daily activities in the last month?
The average response from residents on a scale of 1 to 5 was:



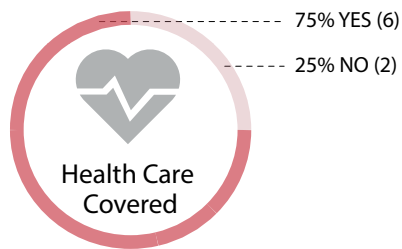
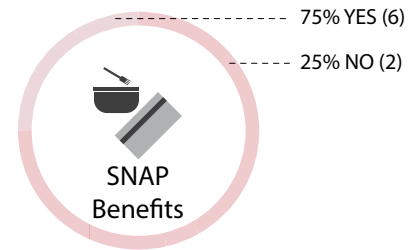
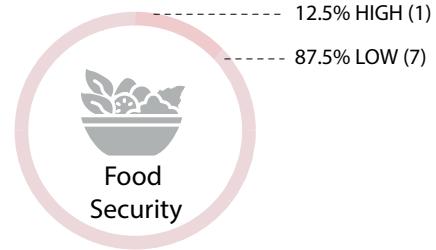
3. How much did your emotional health interfere with daily activities in the last month?
The average response from residents on a scale of 1 to 5 was:



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



I don't qualify for health insurance and can't afford it

Transportation is a barrier

Having OHP and a lot of places don't accept it



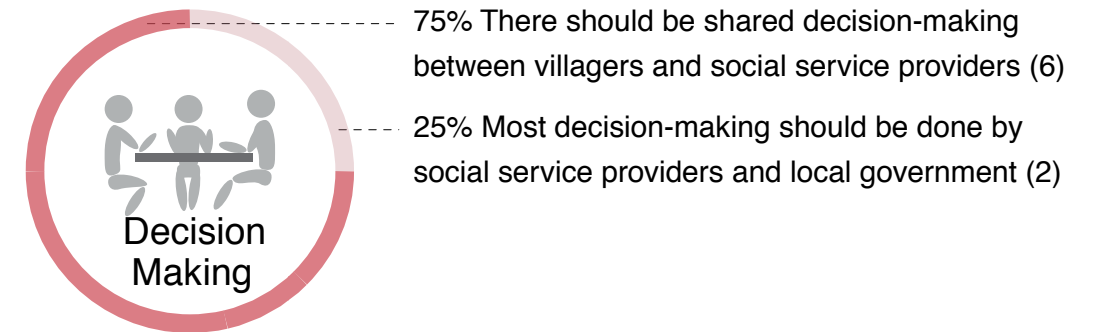
Governance and Decision Making

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	2 (28.6%)	-	2 (28.6%)	2 (28.6%)	1 (14.3%)	-
Adequate space to meet outdoors	-	1 (14.3%)	2 (28.6%)	1 (14.3%)	3 (42.9%)	-
Outside (non-villager) facilitators	2 (28.6%)	-	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	2 (28.6%)
Established rules for the meeting	3 (42.9%)	2 (28.6%)	-	1 (14.3%)	-	1 (14.3%)
Comfortable seating	-	3 (42.9%)	1 (14.3%)	2 (28.6%)	1 (14.3%)	-
Food/Drinks provided at meeting	-	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	-	1 (14.3%)	4 (57.1%)

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



Villager Experiences and Recommendations *

It would be nice to have a patch of nice grass

Having pavement, or pavers, or something, just yeah – the gravel is hard

I definitely just think the facilities need to be more, more appropriately designed for the amount of people that are here, and just larger, you know and more accessible, like to, especially people with handicaps, or disabilities

A nice big kitchen that we can all fit in, you know, not all fit in but all be comfortable in

More shaded areas. More seating areas. And a place for animals to walk.

A community space I think is important. I think they should definitely have a room where you can sit and hang out, or there's tables and chairs so if you want to do things

It's difficult to hang things. There's a couple of pegs you can hang your clothes on. And some people don't even have that in their pods. I think also creating a space underneath the bed would allow women to put things in waterproof, bug proof containers, and slide it underneath the bed, keep it out of the way, off the floor. But the way the pods are built now, it's a built-in, next to the wall bed structure made out of wood, and it's attached to the wall. So, it's very difficult to get underneath there, especially if you're disabled, and you can't bend down, and get stuff in, and out. But if they stopped making the pods that way, and just left a space for a twin bed, or a full size bed with a steel frame that could be moved. With space underneath, it would make things more accessible.



**The interviews at the Kenton Women's Village took place before the arrival and installation of a new and larger common building.*