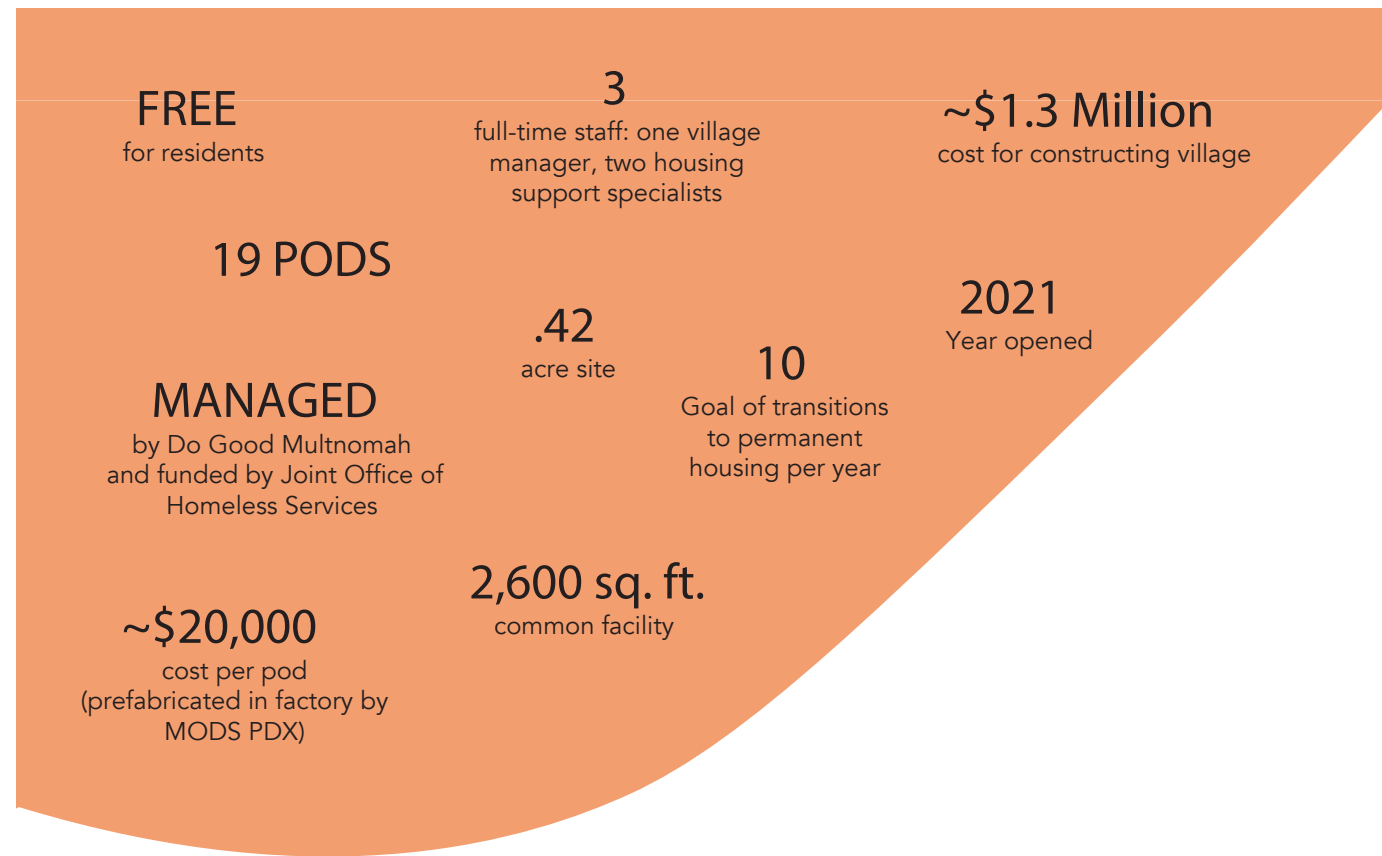




# St. Johns Village



# St. Johns Village

## [Village Profile]

The St. Johns Village is a managed village with capacity for 19 people. It marks the second time that the Joint Office of Homeless Services has been actively involved in developing and funding a village. As one of Portland's most recent villages, it represents a next step in terms of the quality of amenities and size of investment in village infrastructure, but it emerged from rocky beginnings.

The Joint Office of Homeless Services (JOHS) began pursuing options to fund another village in 2018 that could host the residents of Hazelnut Grove, allowing the site of Hazelnut Grove to be cleared in response to pressure from neighbors and the different city departments concerned about the village. Villagers at Hazelnut Grove were split about whether they were willing to relocate, but the promise of utilities and improved facilities was compelling enough to continue to engage in discussions with the City. A site several neighborhoods north of Hazelnut Grove in St. Johns was identified as a potential option for the village and a public meeting was set up to discuss the project with neighbors. Opposition to the plan was immediate and opponents attempted to rally their neighbors against the project,

often utilizing dehumanizing language and stereotypes to describe people experiencing homelessness and the behavior they feared would be associated with their presence. The neighborhood meeting and related social media discussions were dominated by conflict and hostility, but it catalyzed a group in favor of supporting the village, and the group St. Johns Welcomes the Village Coalition was formed.

As explorations of the site continued, it was deemed infeasible for a village project. However, The St. Johns Welcomes the Village Coalition (SJWVC) was still hosting outreach meetings and eager to explore options for how the neighborhood could host a village. They ultimately received a generous offer from Pastors David Libby and Janel Hovde at St. Johns Church to build the village on a parcel of church land. Like Agape Village, the church leadership saw addressing homelessness as a moral obligation, and providing space for a village could be a substantial and tangible contribution.

Members of a St. Johns based design firm, Convergence Architecture, were part of the SJWVC and offered their services pro bono

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*"In early 2019, St. Johns Center for Opportunity had put together a houseless outreach team and a houseless action team. By about April or May the group involved started growing and formed the St. Johns Welcomes the Village Coalition. It was a loose coalition of friends and neighbors interested in advocating for houseless neighbors and specifically focused on the proposed village. If you wanted to be in the St. Johns Welcomes the Village Coalition, you had to sign a letter of support for the village. I believe we had well over 400 people who signed a letter of support and were members. Especially when we needed the advocacy out there, we were able to quickly get information out to people that were in favor of the village, and I think it helped turn the tide a bit. We were able to show up at neighborhood meetings in large numbers to vote for things supporting houseless neighbors and to bring a positive message and visible backing for the village."*

*- Adam Robins, Project Manager, Convergence Architecture, & SJWVC Member*

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to design the village. Opposition continued as plans for the village advanced, but tensions gradually eased as time went on. Unfortunately, vandalism to the pods and site during development delayed the project slightly, but marked the end of significant conflict between the village and the neighborhood, which has largely come to accept the village.

Convergence used principles from trauma-informed design, biophilic design, and accessible design as primary drivers for the buildings and site in order to best serve the future residents' needs. The pods at the St. Johns Village utilized a design by PSU CPID / School of Architecture students used at several other villages for all 19 pods. The

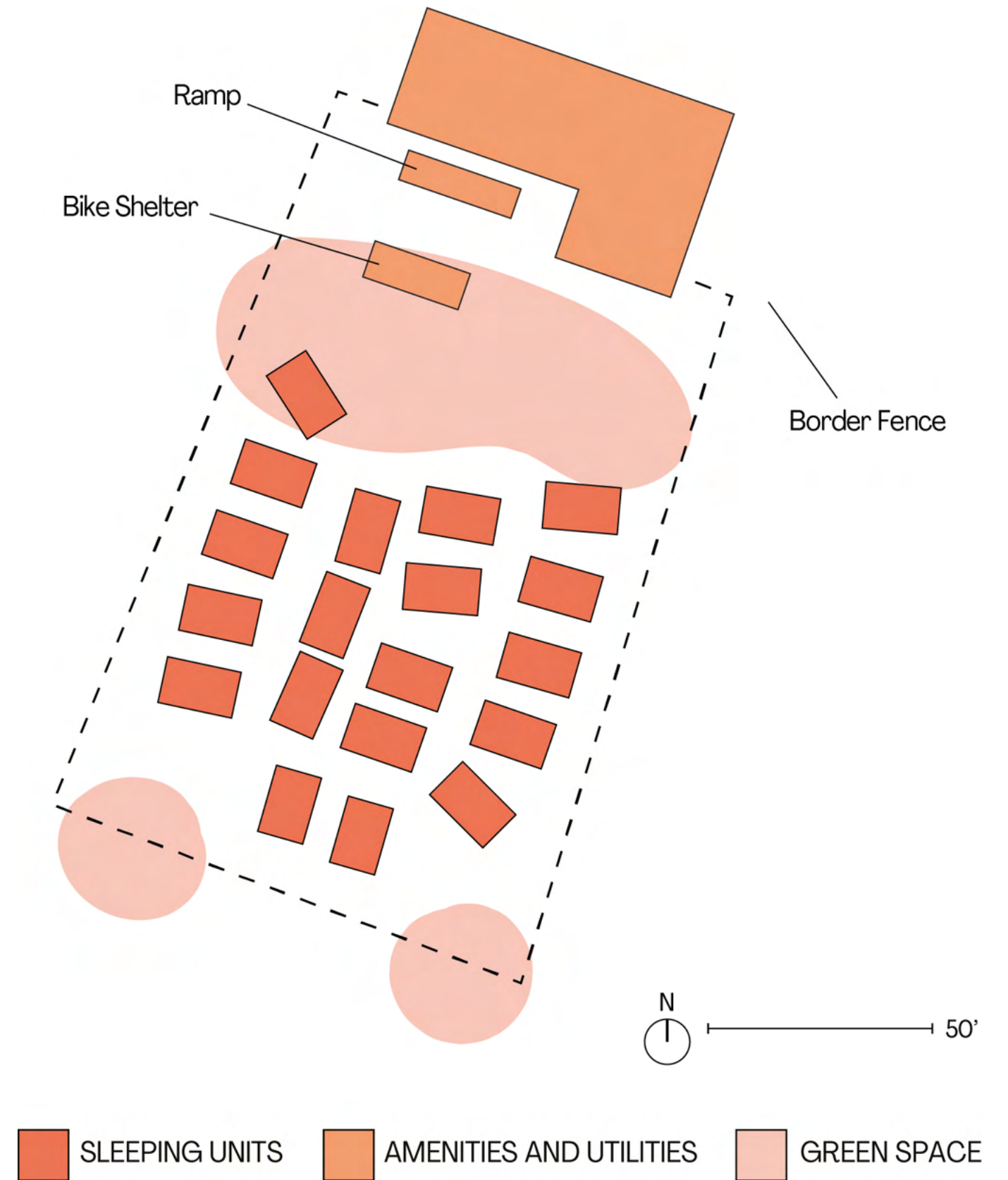
pods and the common facilities were fabricated by ModsPDX. The common building is made of four modular components joined together on site, resulting in a large facility of around 2,600 square feet containing bathrooms, kitchen, laundry, living room, and office space. The design team wanted to eliminate or reduce wait time for access to various facilities, so they placed the three toilets into separate rooms, did the same with the building's three showers, and created a bank of sinks in the hallway. The common facility has a large living room, which can also serve as a welcome area for guests, as access to the pod section of the site is accessed through the building by non-residents (villagers can also use a separate gated entry for more direct access to their pods). The quality of the



*Yard sign in support of St. Johns Village torn in half by village opponent(s)  
Image credit: Greg Townley*

common facilities and pods and construction methods contributed to an estimated \$1.3 million to build the village.

St. Johns Village is managed by Do Good Multnomah, which also operates the Clackamas County Veterans Village. While the village is managed, it has benefited from having seven of its original residents join the village from the self-governed Hazelnut Grove. By all accounts, these villagers have been instrumental in establishing a camaraderie at the village, facilitating productive group discussions, and sharing insights about village life.



The Joint Office of Homeless Services looked for a new site for residents of Hazelnut Grove.

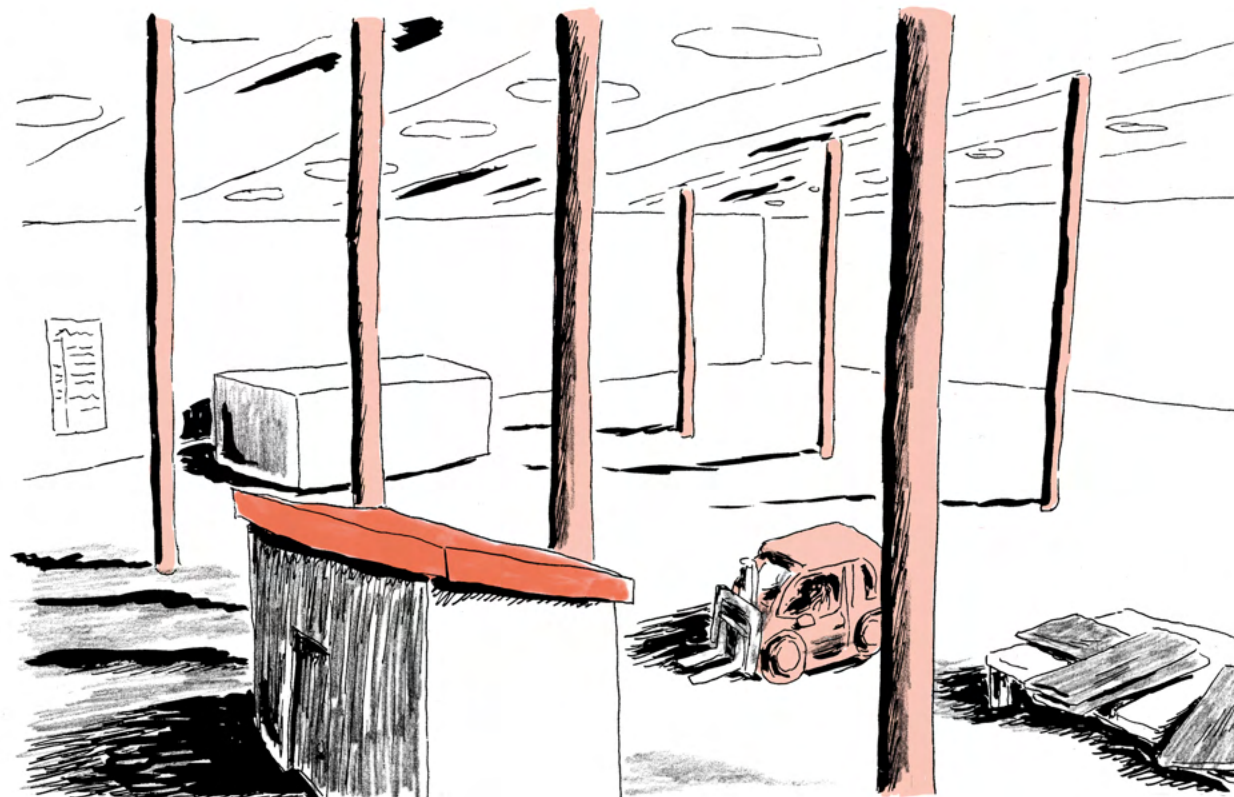


The Joint Office helped set up plans for a village in the St. Johns neighborhood.



The plans were met with both activist support and activist protest.

With City sponsorship and the assistance of Convergence Architecture, the pods and facilities were produced by Mods PDX in their factory in a short time.



St. Johns Christian Church offered land for the development of a village.



The village opened in 2021 with some villagers who had previously lived at Hazelnut Grove helping to develop the community concepts.

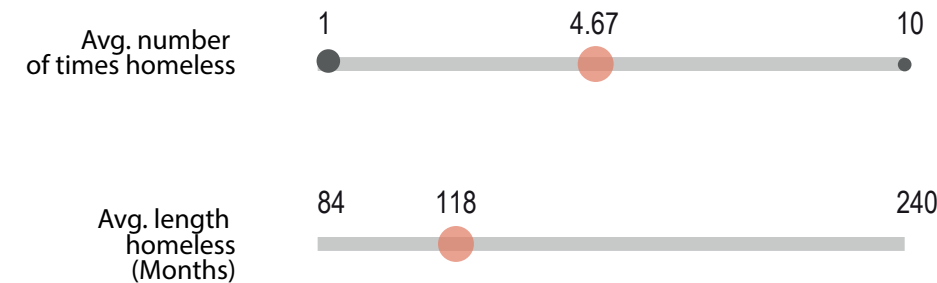
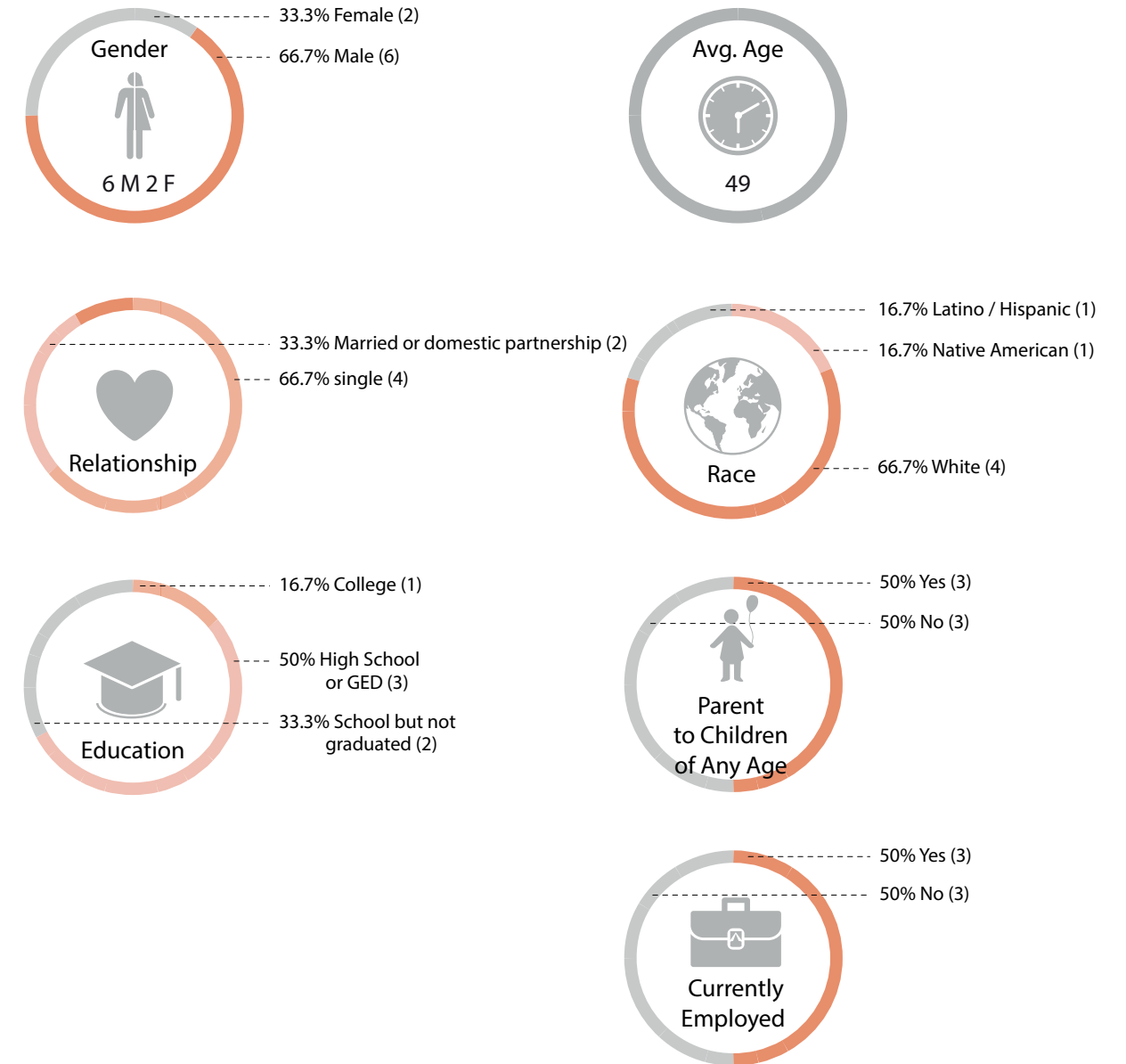


At each village, all current villagers were invited to participate in a survey and interview. The findings in the following pages represent only those villagers who elected to participate and not the entire population of the village.

# St. Johns Village

## [Villager Interview Results]

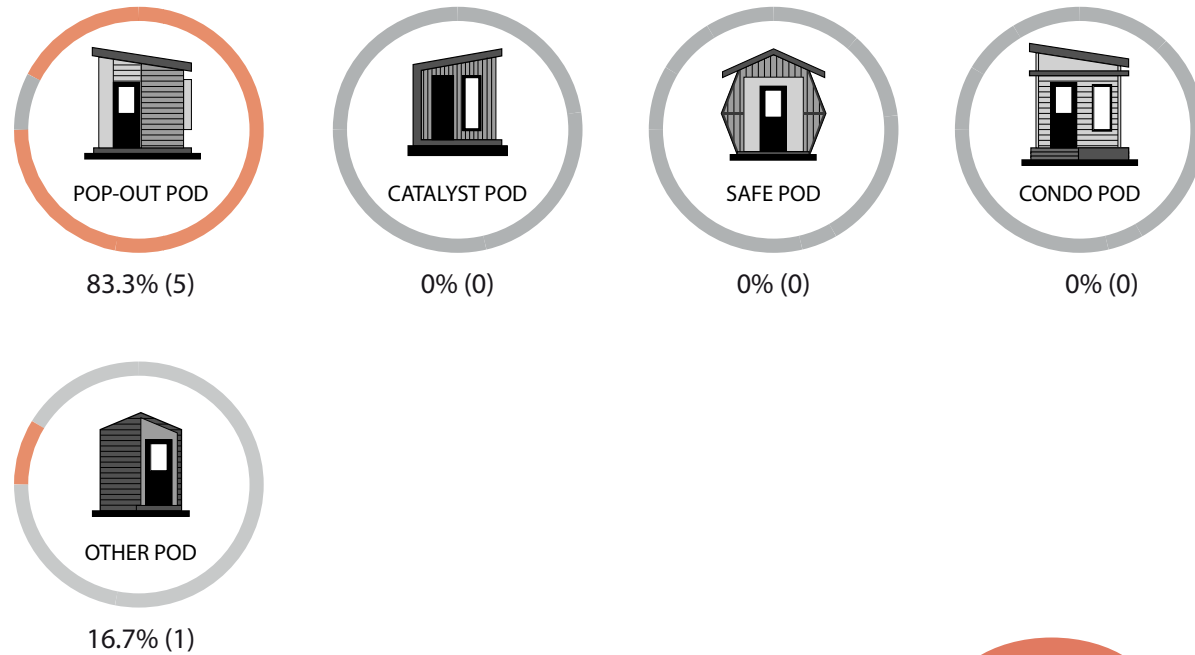
### RESIDENTS DEMOGRAPHICS



## RESIDENCE AT VILLAGE

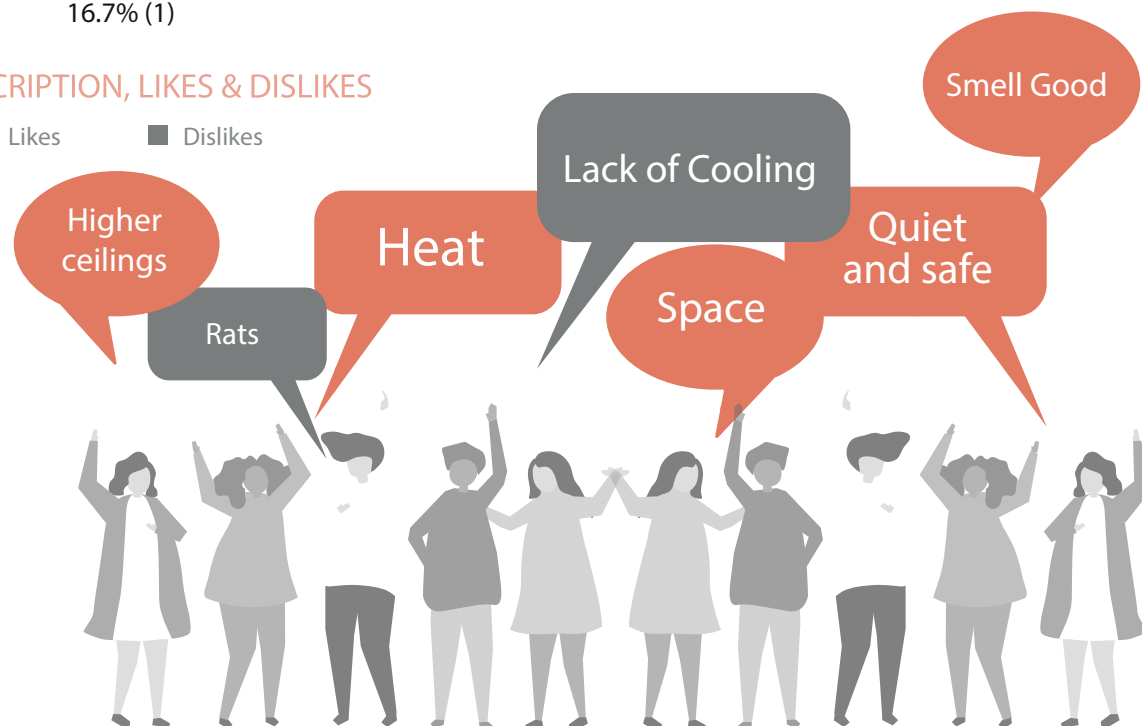


## PODS POD TYPE



## POD DESCRIPTION, LIKES & DISLIKES

■ Likes ■ Dislikes



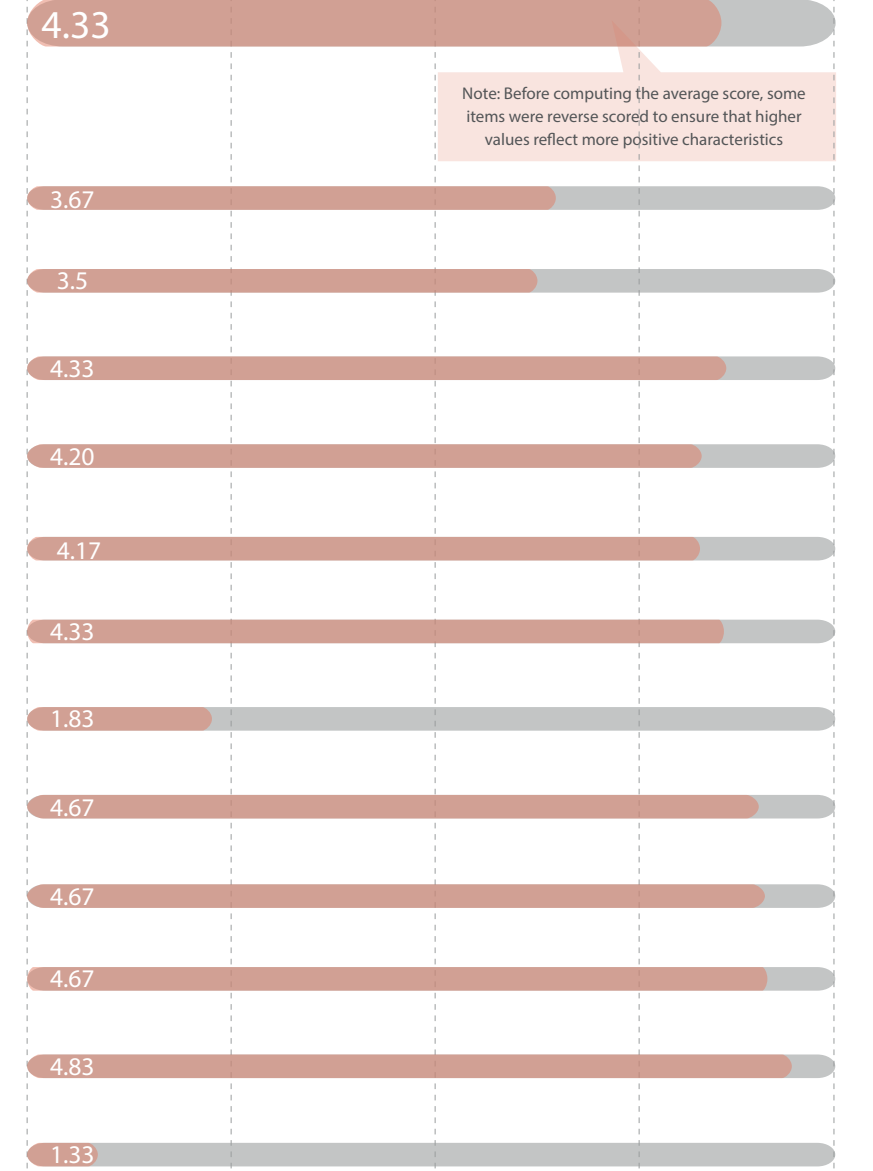
## POD QUALITY



Pod Quality

1. I have enough space in my pod.
2. My pod is usually a comfortable temperature
3. My pod looks nice
4. There is enough space between my pod and my neighbors' pod
5. The common facilities are easily accessible
6. I like the common facilities
7. I have problems with privacy where I live
8. The floors, ceilings, and walls in my pod are in good condition
9. The windows in my pod are in good condition
10. I have access to working appliances at the village
11. The locks on the doors and windows in my pod work well
12. There are problems with the electrical system in my pod.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree



## VILLAGE VILLAGE SOCIAL CLIMATE



### Village Social Climate

Strongly disagree                      Neither                      Strongly agree

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

4.02 (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.

4.33

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

4.17

3. I feel safe in the village.

4.17

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

2.00

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

2.00

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

3.67

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

3.83

## VILLAGE SENSE OF COMMUNITY



### Village Sense of Community

Strongly disagree                      Neither                      Strongly agree

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

4.00 (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

4.50

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

3.83

3. I feel at home in the village

3.44

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

4.33

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

4.00

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

2.17

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

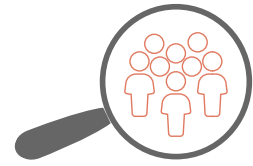
4.00

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

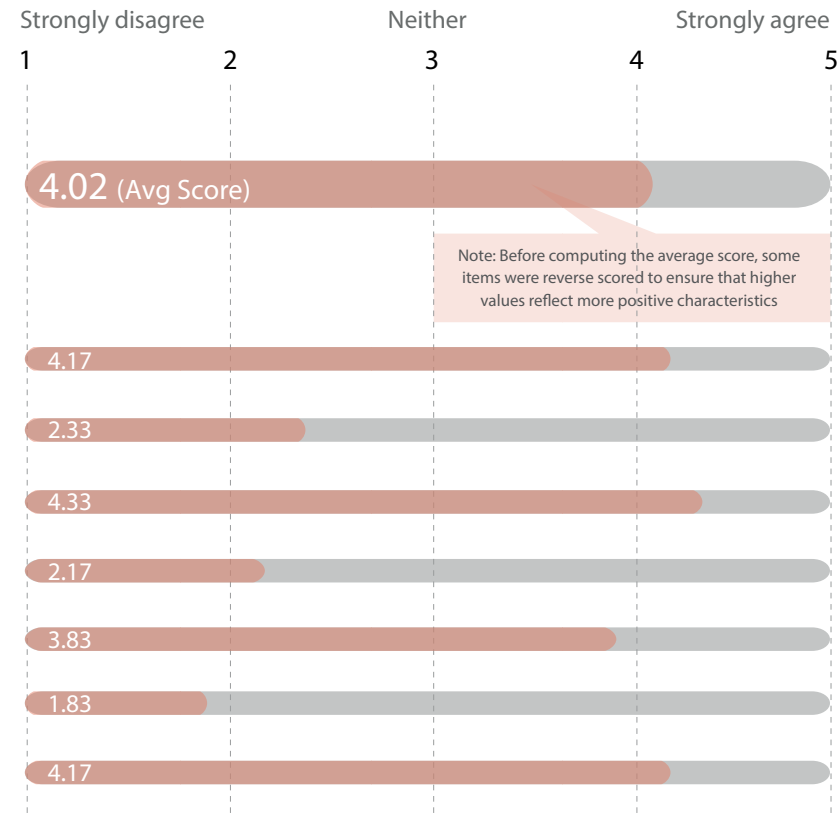
2.50



## VILLAGE RESIDENT SCALE



Village Neighbor Scale



## VILLAGE DESCRIPTION, LIKES & DISLIKES

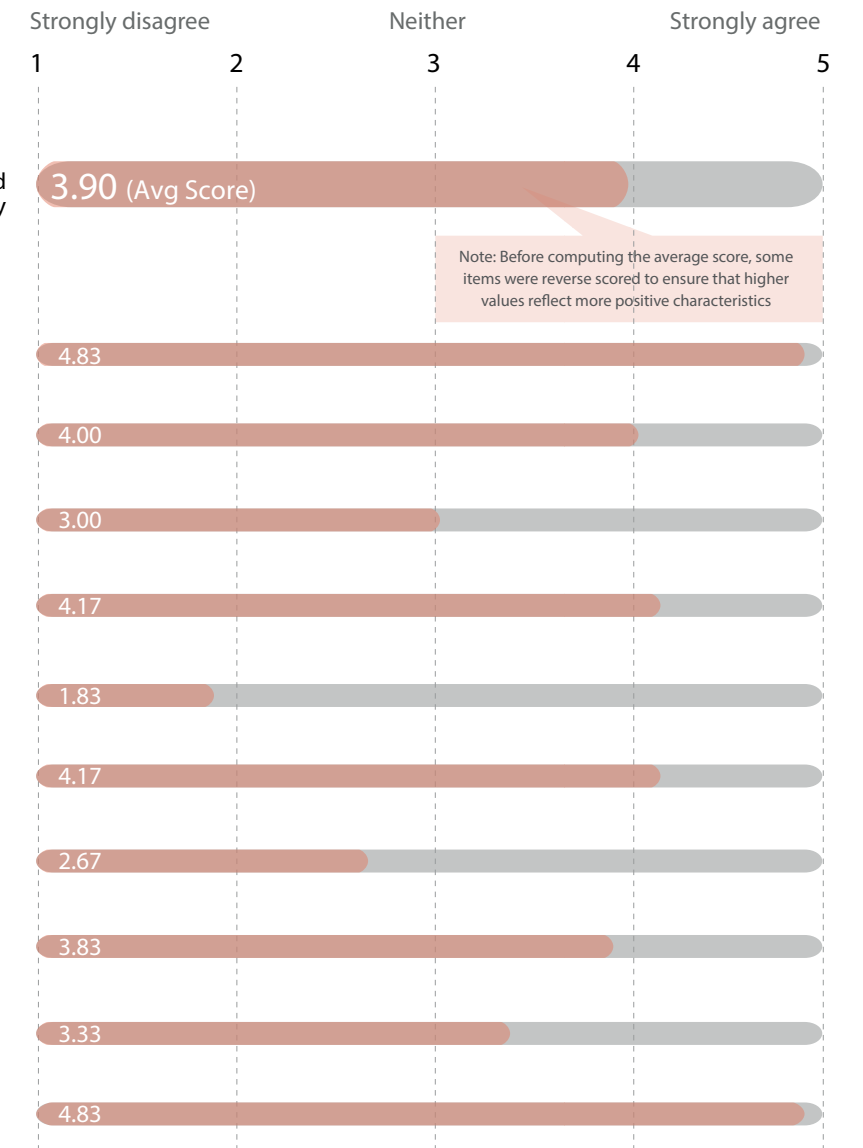
■ Likes ■ Dislikes



## NEIGHBORHOOD NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY



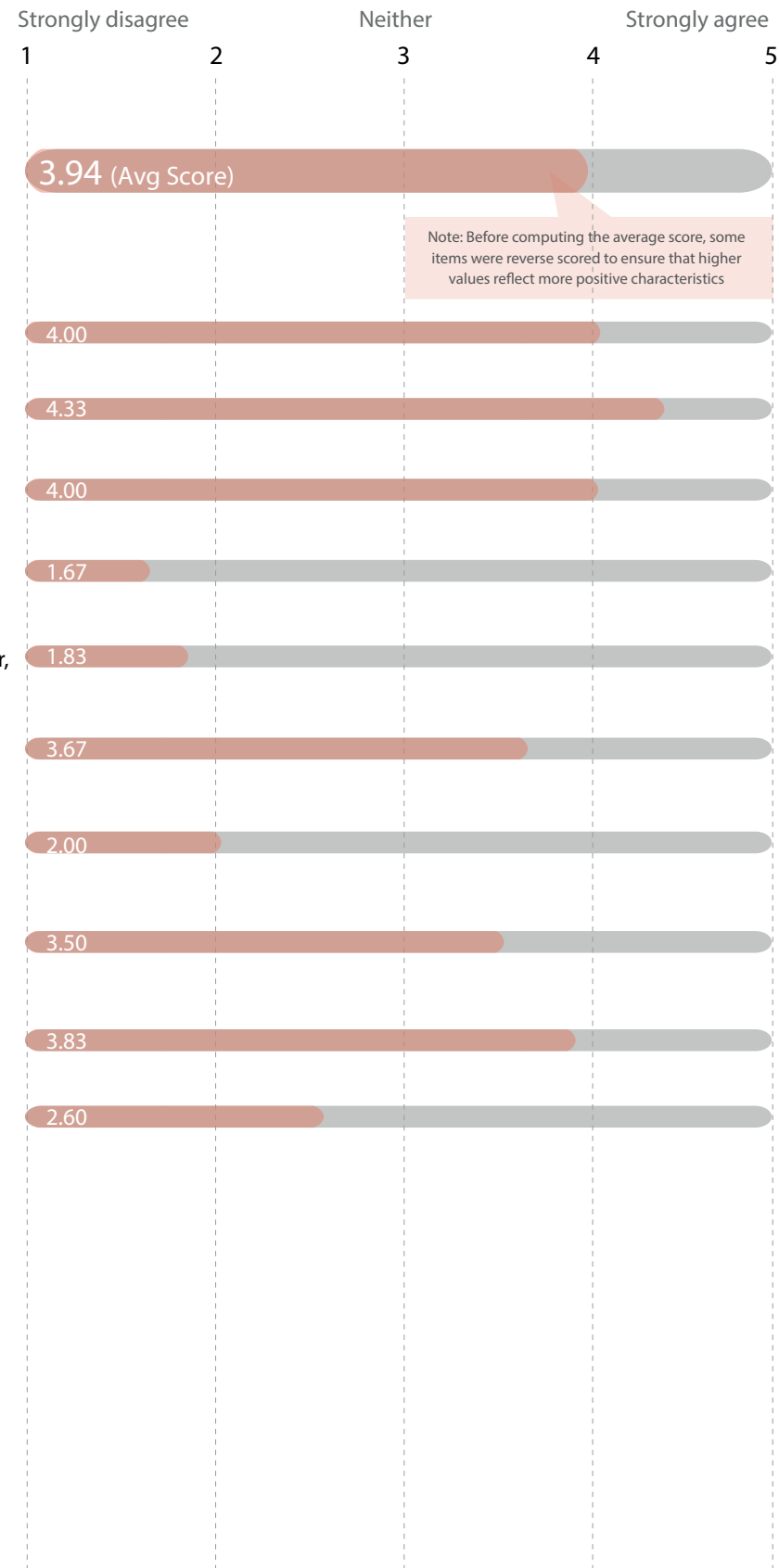
Neighborhood Quality



## NEIGHBORHOOD SOCIAL CLIMATE



Neighborhood Social Climate

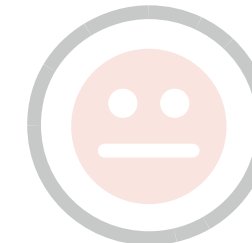


## RESIDENTIAL SATISFACTION

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



VERY DISSATISFIED  
0% (0)



NEITHER DISSATISFIED  
OR SATISFIED  
0% (0)



SATISFIED  
33.3% (2)



VERY SATISFIED  
66.7% (4)

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



VERY DISSATISFIED  
0% (0)



NEITHER DISSATISFIED  
OR SATISFIED  
16.7% (1)

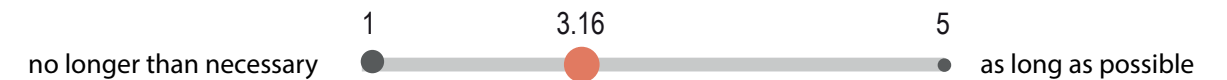


SATISFIED  
50% (3)



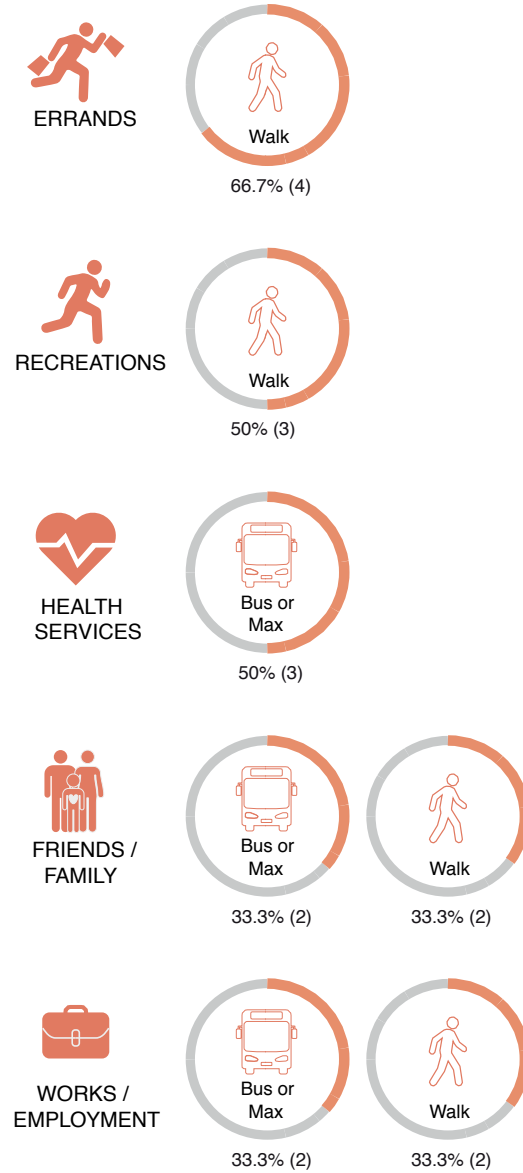
VERY SATISFIED  
33.3% (2)

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



## TRANSPORTATION

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

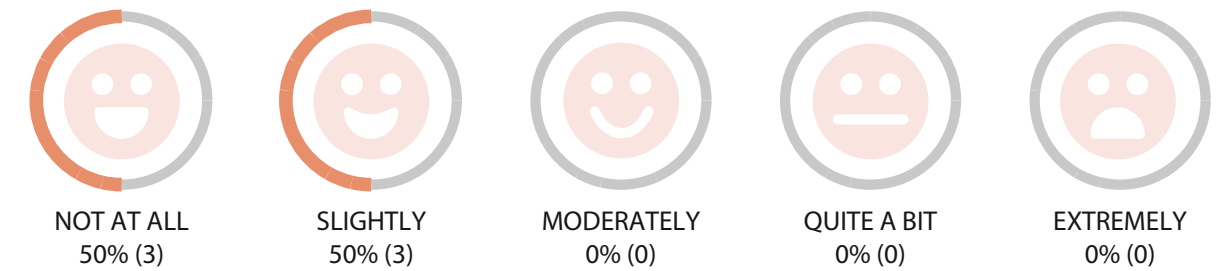


## LIFE SATISFACTION AND STRESS

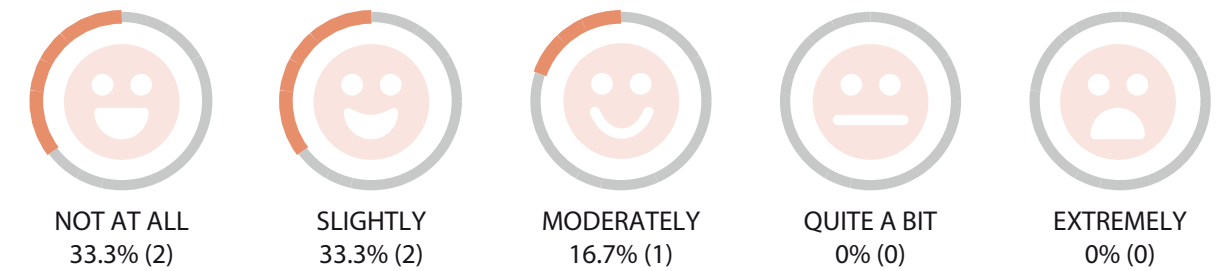
1. How often do you feel lonely on a scale of 1 (never) to 4 (always)?  
On average residents said:



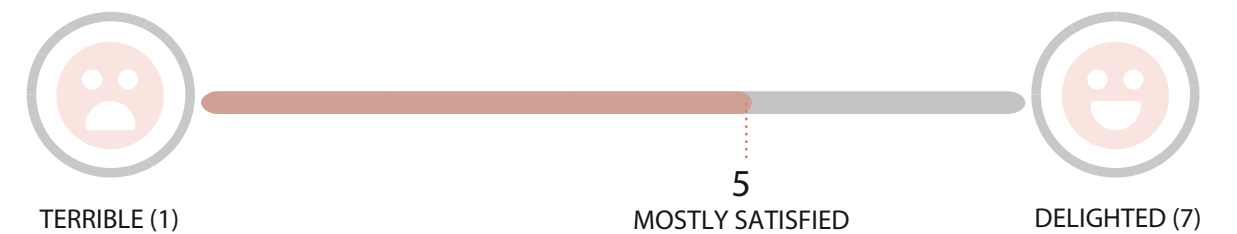
2. How much did your physical health interfere with daily activities in the last month?  
The average response from residents on a scale of 1 to 5 was:



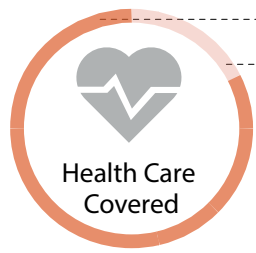
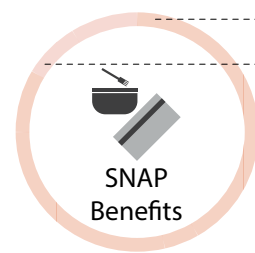
3. How much did your emotional health interfere with daily activities in the last month?  
The average response from residents on a scale of 1 to 5 was:



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



Cigna never dropped me from insurance after I got fired which has interfered with OPH access. Technology is a barrier. I'm computer illiterate.

Transportation is a barrier

Appointment making, dental care barriers— have had to prioritize other needs instead of taking care of things



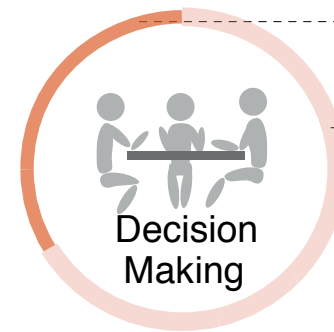
## Governance and Decision Making

### 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	4 (66.7%)	-	-	-	-	2 (33.3%)
Adequate space to meet outdoors	-	2 (33.3%)	2 (33.3%)	1 (16.7%)	1 (16.7%)	-
Outside (non-villager) facilitators	1 (16.7%)	-	-	-	3 (50%)	2 (33.3%)
Established rules for the meeting	-	3 (50%)	1 (16.7%)	1 (16.7%)	1 (16.7%)	-
Comfortable seating	-	-	3 (50%)	1 (16.7%)	-	2 (33.3%)
Food/Drinks provided at meeting	1 (16.7%)	1 (16.7%)	-	1 (16.7%)	1 (16.7%)	2 (33.3%)

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



33.3% Only villagers should determine what happens at the village (2)

66.7% There should be shared decision-making between villagers and social service providers (4)

## Villager Experiences and Recommendations

We have a fence that surrounds all around, the perimeter of the village. And there's a gate code that you have to put in to get into the gate, and only villagers are allowed to do that. So other than that, guests need to check in through the office. And so, it's a space that is ours, and I like that. I like that not just anybody can come in here. In fact, with the transitioning because we have that defense around the perimeter, even though it's right in the heart of St. John, where I grew up, and not too far from where I camped, you feel safe as soon as you pass the gate. It's just your own private little, "Ah," away from the headache that was out there.

Because they're not wanting to change who I am or what I'm doing. For example, there are people that drink. As long as it doesn't interfere with the rules set in the village itself, they're not requiring them to go to treatment. So I think that that helps, because if they can comply with rules and expectations set for the village itself, and it doesn't interfere with that, then that's not a problem. That's not a reason to be denied housing, and I think that that's great.

I have as much say as anyone... at shelters, I don't have that say at all.

Like what kind of games do we want in there. That would be a community decision. Another one, all the dog people met with one of the staff people about creating an off street area for them out here.

