



RESEARCH METHODS

Research Methods IND6639

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INTENTION OF THE STUDY:

PROBLEMATIC

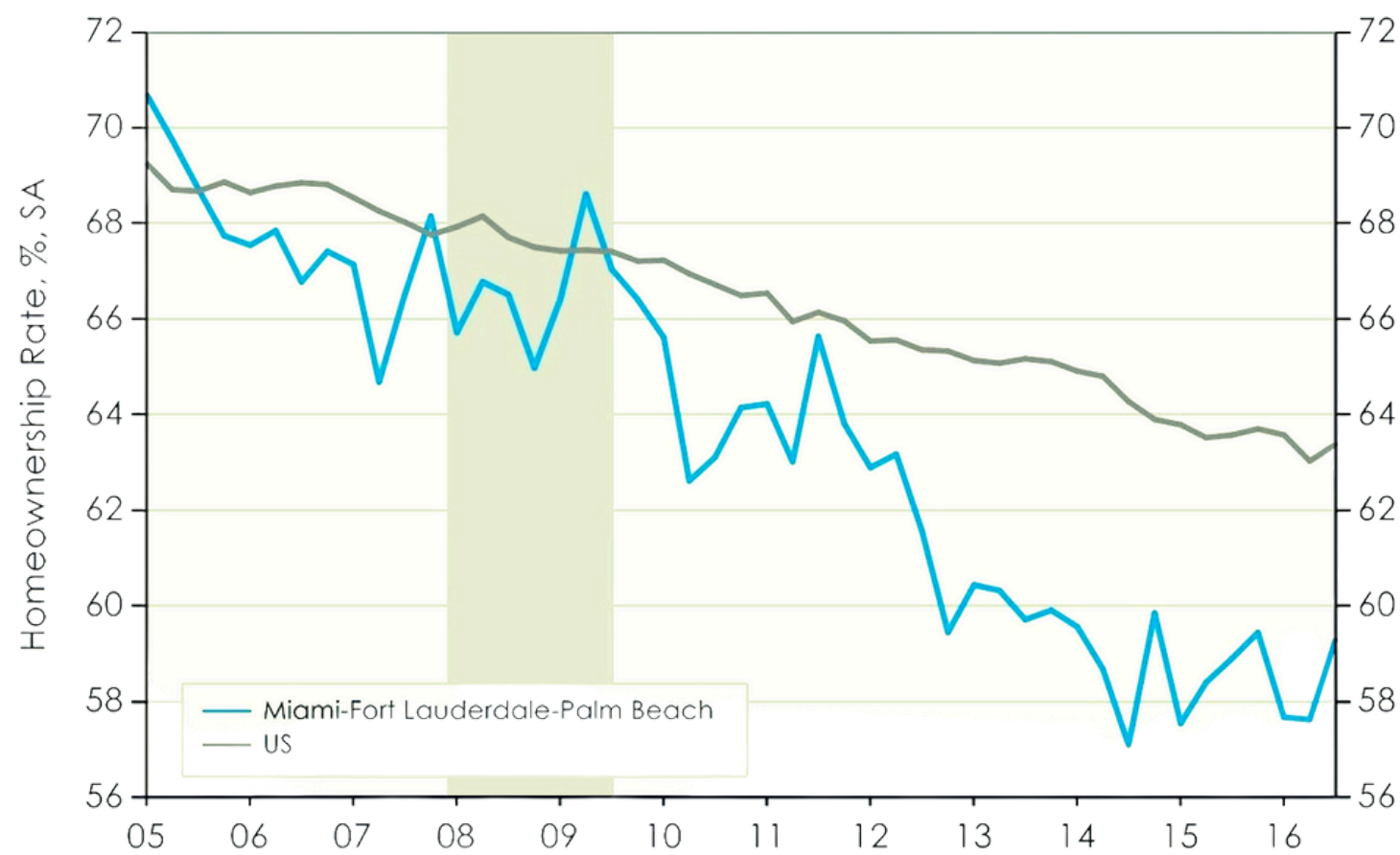


WHAT IS THE ISSUE WE ARE ADDRESSING?

Our project addresses the gap in existing efforts by focusing on **mental health-oriented design solutions** for low-income families in substandard housing. Unlike other projects that prioritize physical improvements or affordability, this research **emphasizes culturally sensitive, inclusive, and community-centered design** to directly enhance well-being. By **integrating participatory design** and **leveraging government funding**, it uniquely targets the mental health needs often overlooked in conventional housing interventions.



WHY IS OUR PROJECT VALUABLE/DESERVES ATTENTION?



Graph showing Miami homeownership rates in relation to economic growth

Throughout our project we address the mental health challenges of low-income families living in substandard conditions, using design as a tool to improve their living environments. By focusing on inclusive, culturally sensitive, and community-centered solutions, the research aims to enhance well-being, social cohesion, and overall quality of life. It also tackles broader issues like gentrification, housing affordability, and social isolation, offering practical, scalable strategies that can be implemented with government support. This work is essential in promoting public health, social equity, and sustainable urban development for vulnerable communities.

THEORIES

NORMATIVE THEORY

Theory of Social Justice (John Rawls)

This theory focuses on fairness and equity in distributing resources and opportunities within society. It is relevant to our research because it advocates for affordable housing that is designed to satisfy low-income families' needs and ensure equal access to high-quality living spaces that improve mental and physical health. This aligns with the ethical commitment to fostering just and inclusive communities.

EXPLANATORY THEORY

Environmental Stress Theory

This theory suggests that environmental factors, such as poor housing conditions and overcrowding, contribute to psychological stress and negatively impact mental health. It explains why substandard living environments can lead to increased mental health challenges among low-income families, highlighting the importance of design interventions that reduce environmental stressors to improve well-being.





SOCIAL SCIENCES



PSYCHOLOGY

For studying the impact of living environments on mental health and well-being



POLITICAL SCIENCE

For understanding the role of government policies and funding in housing and community design



SOCIAL WORK

For focusing on the practical application of these design solutions to improve the living conditions of low-income families

SOLUTIONS

This semester, we want to focus on developing design proposals for low-income housing that integrate biophilic elements, community spaces, and culturally sensitive features to enhance mental health and well-being. We will establish methods for involving residents in the design process, analyze and address potential gentrification risks, and create sustainability guidelines to balance cost- effectiveness with environmental and social benefits. Additionally, we will develop metrics to assess the impact of these design interventions on residents' mental health and overall quality of life.



Design proposals for low-income housing that integrate biophilic elements, community spaces, and are culturally sensitive



Establish methods for involving residents in the design process, analyze and address potential gentrification risks



Develop metrics to assess the impact of these design interventions on residents' mental health and overall quality of life.

A photograph of a modern, two-story building with a light-colored facade and large glass windows. The building is identified by 'FENDI CASA' signage on its upper and lower levels. It is situated on a street corner with a sidewalk, trees, and a clear blue sky in the background. The image is semi-transparent, serving as a background for the text.

CASE STUDY- CONTEXT & TYPOLOGY ANALYSIS

1.Synthesis of literature review conducted for the topics class on specific typology, what is the building typology of your case study?

The chosen typology for this project is multi-use residential, which is a development type that integrates multiple functions within a single structure or complex, with residential living as the core component. This approach merges housing with other elements like retail spaces, commercial offices, recreational facilities, and cultural venues, creating a self-sufficient environment. Residents can live, work, shop, and access amenities in the same space, promoting urban convenience and reducing reliance on transportation. Multi-use residential buildings are key to modern urban planning strategies, as they support sustainability, enhance walkability, and foster stronger community ties by encouraging more frequent interactions among residents.

In this design, residential units are crafted as multifamily housing, which typically takes the form of apartments. These units provide private living spaces while maximizing comfort, functionality, and aesthetic appeal. Each apartment is equipped with separate spaces for dining, living, and sleeping, allowing for individualized living experiences. Flexibility is key in the design, offering adaptable layouts that allow residents to personalize their spaces to suit their needs and preferences, promoting comfort and control over their environments.

Green spaces, with biophilic design elements are central to the project. These features enhance the connection between residents and nature, promoting well-being by reducing stress and improving cognitive functions. Such natural elements help create a calming environment while fostering sustainability through energy-efficient design practices.

The project's success depends on engaging local stakeholders and ensuring community involvement at every stage. A phased development approach allows for gradual integration into the existing urban fabric, reducing the risk of displacement or gentrification. This means that the design is not just about creating a functional living space but also about preserving and enhancing the social and cultural fabric of the community, ensuring that it meets the needs of local residents without pricing them out or changing the neighborhood's character. Incorporating these elements helps create a holistic, functional, and sustainable urban living environment that enhances quality of life while addressing broader urban challenges like housing affordability, social equity, and community cohesion.

2. Synthesis about my thesis project as well as the rationale and motivation for the project

This project is motivated by the urgent need to address the overlooked mental health challenges faced by low-income families living in substandard conditions. These families often endure environments that contribute to psychological stress, which further exacerbates the difficulties they already face. By using design as a tool, I aim to create living spaces that are not only functional but also foster well-being, social cohesion, and a sense of belonging.

The rationale for this project stems from recognizing a gap in current housing efforts. While many initiatives focus on physical upgrades or affordability, there is a lack of attention to how design can directly influence mental health. My approach prioritizes inclusive, culturally sensitive, and community-centered solutions that enhance the overall quality of life for these families.

Through an interdisciplinary approach, incorporating psychology, political science, and social work, I aim to create solutions that are not only practical but also deeply rooted in an understanding of human behavior, government policy, and community needs. The inclusion of biophilic elements, community spaces, and participatory design ensures that these solutions are sustainable and adaptable to the unique cultural and social contexts of each community.

Ultimately, this project is driven by a desire to contribute to public health, social equity, and sustainable urban development. I believe that through thoughtful, well-designed living environments, we can empower low-income families, reduce social isolation, and create communities where mental well-being is prioritized just as much as physical living conditions.

This project holds personal significance for me, as my upbringing in a small town in Virginia was quite different from the challenges faced by low-income families living in substandard urban housing. I didn't experience the harsh realities of overcrowded, poorly maintained spaces that many families endure daily, and this contrast has driven my desire to delve deeper into the issue. I want to develop a more nuanced understanding of the daily struggles these families face—how their living environments contribute to both physical and mental health challenges, social isolation, and a sense of instability.

3. Rationality of my case study, what makes the chosen building typology noteworthy? Additionally, what is the specific significance of the particular building I've selected for my case study?

The building I am choosing for the case study is The Lyric Point Apartments (Plaza at the Lyric Apartments) which exemplify a significant approach to affordable, mixed-use housing within the context of urban revitalization in a historically marginalized neighborhood. The building was strategically designed as part of the Overtown revitalization efforts, aiming to preserve cultural heritage while addressing the urgent need for affordable housing and fostering community resilience. This case study is rational because it focuses on an inclusive development project that not only enhances physical living conditions but also addresses broader social and economic goals, such as reducing displacement and fostering economic opportunities in Overtown.

The chosen building typology—mixed-use affordable housing—is particularly noteworthy due to its ability to balance residential needs with commercial and social functions. Lyric Point Apartments is not just a residential structure; it incorporates retail and office space, creating an environment where residents can access essential services, retail shops, and community amenities without leaving the neighborhood. The integration of both housing and commercial activities supports the economic revitalization of Overtown, ensuring that local businesses thrive and that residents can find jobs and services nearby.

The Lyric Point Apartments are particularly significant because they are located in Overtown, one of Miami's most historically significant Black neighborhoods. The project's proximity to the Lyric Theater ties it to the area's cultural history, helping preserve Overtown's legacy as a cultural hub while offering modern housing solutions for current residents. This building plays a central role in preventing displacement, a common issue in urban renewal projects, by ensuring that existing residents benefit from improved living conditions and enhanced economic opportunities. Moreover, the integration of community-centered spaces, such as fitness centers and business rooms, addresses both physical and mental health needs. The building promotes social cohesion and well-being by offering communal areas that encourage interaction and foster a sense of community, which is critical for low-income families facing social isolation.

4. Background information about the city where my case study is located (history, legacy, regional uniqueness). Why did I choose this case? How is it representative?

The Lyric Point Apartments are located in Overtown, a historically significant neighborhood in Miami.

History: Miami, founded in 1896, has its roots in indigenous Tequesta populations and Spanish settlers. The city's growth accelerated with the arrival of the Florida East Coast Railway, which transformed it from a small trading post to a booming urban center, especially during the 1920s. The "Miami Boom" attracted migrants from around the U.S. and the Caribbean, with notable waves of immigration from Cuba and Haiti, which continue to shape Miami's cultural landscape today.

Legacy: Known as the "Gateway to the Americas," Miami is a hub for Latin American and Caribbean cultures. It became a center for Cuban exiles during the Cold War and is now home to diverse immigrant communities. Overtown, once a thriving Black cultural center, holds a deep African-American history and is now a focus of revitalization efforts after years of decline due to urban disinvestment.

Regional Uniqueness: Miami is distinct for its cultural fusion, which is reflected in its architecture, cuisine, and music. The famous Art Deco district in South Beach showcases a blend of historic preservation and modern tourism. Miami's tropical climate and proximity to the ocean also bring unique challenges, including environmental concerns such as rising sea levels and sustainability efforts.

I chose Lyric Point Apartments in Overtown, Miami, because it embodies the key themes of urban revitalization, cultural preservation, and affordable housing. Overtown's historical significance as a Black cultural hub and its subsequent decline due to urban disinvestment make it an important case for studying how affordable housing can prevent displacement while fostering community well-being. Miami, with its intense gentrification pressures, is a microcosm of broader trends in American cities where vulnerable populations face the risk of being pushed out as neighborhoods redevelop. It is representative of the kind of mixed-use affordable housing that seeks to not only improve the physical living conditions of residents but also to preserve the cultural and social identity of the area. The development integrates affordable housing with commercial spaces, aligning with efforts in Miami and across the U.S. to address housing affordability while fostering economic growth and cultural sustainability. It stands out as a model for community-centered urban renewal, especially in historically marginalized neighborhoods like Overtown, where gentrification pressures often displace long-time residents.

5. Data about the community (demographic data, cultural makeup, number of people).

Overtown

Overtown, Miami, where Lyric Point Apartments is located, is a historically significant neighborhood with a primarily African-American population. Once thriving, it has faced economic challenges and urban decline. The current population ranges between 10,000 and 14,000, predominantly African-American (70%), with Hispanic/Latino residents making up around 25%. Overtown has a younger demographic, with many households living below the poverty line. Despite this, the community has a strong cultural heritage, rooted in its role as a hub for Black culture and arts.

6. Organizational and user hierarchy (who are the main players, who are the direct users/indirect users). Data about specific clients (owners, agencies, users, public)

In Overtown, Miami, the organizational hierarchy includes key players like local government agencies (City of Miami, Miami-Dade County), private developers, and non-profit organizations. These groups shape the community through housing policies, economic development, and support services. Direct users include Overtown's residents, small businesses, and service providers, while indirect users are tourists and investors attracted to the area's cultural and commercial redevelopment. The area is undergoing gentrification, and projects like Lyric Point Apartments aim to balance affordable housing with economic revitalization.

8. Summary and conclusion about the most important facts

Building Typology: The Lyric Point Apartments represent a multi-use residential typology, integrating residential, retail, and communal spaces, fostering urban convenience and self-sufficiency.

Design Focus: The design emphasizes multifamily housing with biophilic elements and community spaces aimed at enhancing well-being and promoting social cohesion among residents.

Motivation: The project addresses the mental health challenges faced by low-income families in substandard housing, advocating for inclusive and culturally sensitive solutions that enhance overall quality of life.

Historical Context: Located in Overtown, a historically significant Black cultural hub, the project underscores the importance of preserving cultural identity amid urban revitalization and gentrification.

Social Impact: Lyric Point Apartments aim to prevent displacement and promote economic opportunities for existing residents, serving as a model for balancing affordable housing with community needs.

Community Integration: The building incorporates retail and office spaces, allowing residents to access essential services within their neighborhood, thus supporting local businesses and economic revitalization.

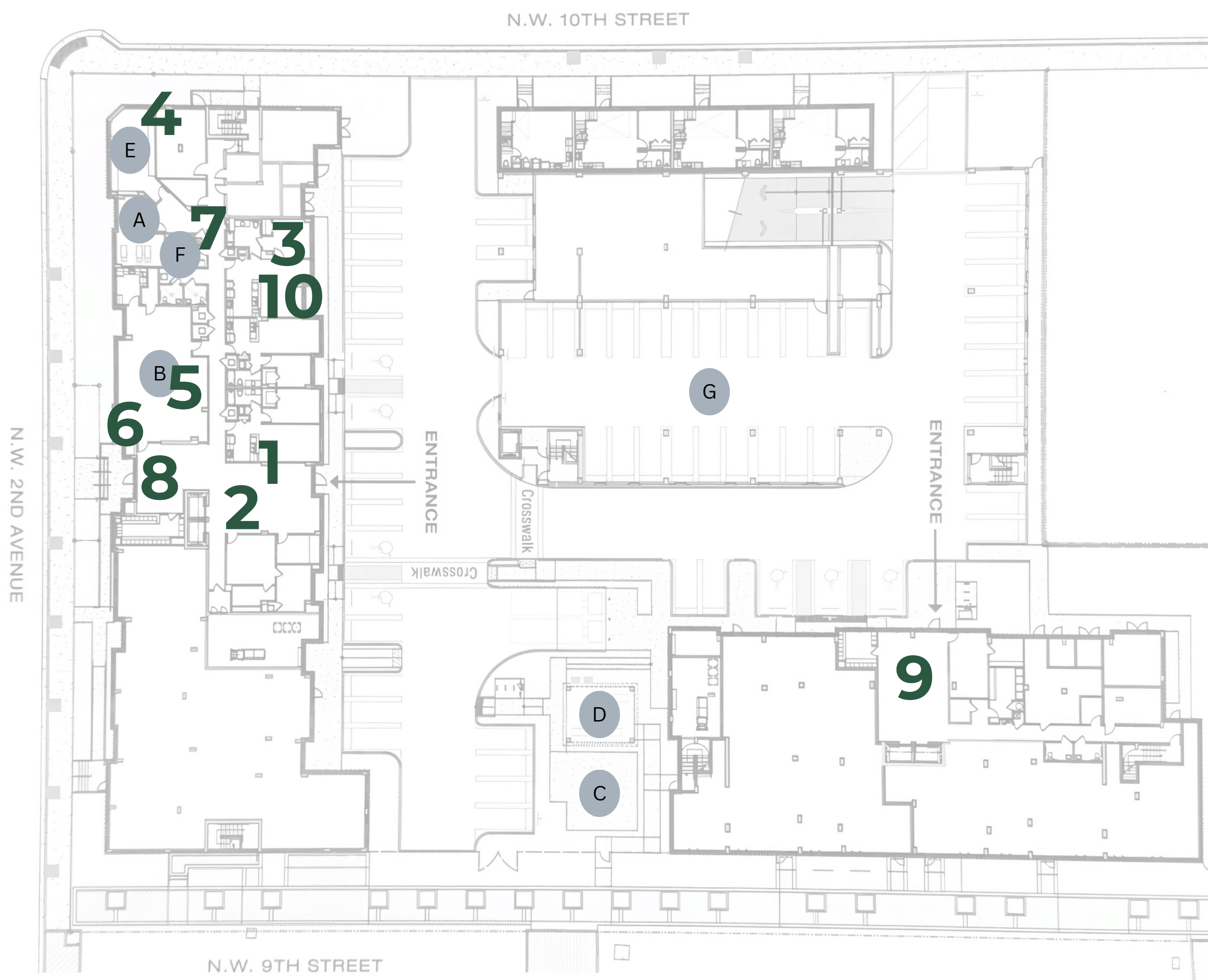
Overall Significance: This project exemplifies how thoughtful design can create sustainable living environments that empower low-income families, strengthen community ties, and promote mental well-being, making it a significant case for urban development in similar contexts.

PARTICIPANT ANALYSIS



MAP OF TRACES

- A. fitness center
- B. community center
- C. tot lot
- D. covered picnic area
- E. library with computers
- F. laundry room
- G. parking garage





PERSONAL SPACE

The space with two chairs separated by a table reflects environmental behavior factors like personal space and privacy. This layout emphasizes individual comfort and reduces direct social interaction.



SOCIOFUGAL/SOCIOPETAL SPACE

The chairs in the background, separated by a table, form a sociofugal arrangement that discourages interaction, focusing on personal space. In contrast, the foreground's sociopetal design brings chairs closer, promoting social engagement while ensuring comfort. This highlights how spatial design can either encourage or discourage communication depending on the intended use.

3



PRIVACY

In this bedroom, privacy is shaped by factors like personal space, visual control, and noise management. Noticeable features, such as the bed placement away from the doors, help create seclusion. Absent features like group interaction reflect the room's purpose for solitude. The curtains over the balcony window enhance control over light, sound, and sightlines, further improving the room's private and restful atmosphere.

4



SOLITUDE

In the library, solitude is encouraged through dividers between desks, which provide privacy, fosters concentrations and reduce distractions. This layout supports individual focus and minimizes social interaction, fitting the library's primary purpose. Enhancing personal space through ergonomic seating and better lighting could improve the environment further, promoting comfort during extended study sessions.



SOCIALITY

The arrangement of couches and armchairs around a coffee table in the community room encourages social interaction by providing comfort and a shared focal point. However, to improve flexibility and accommodate diverse activities, incorporating modular furniture and zoning elements like screens or plants would be beneficial. These changes would enhance sociality while considering individual preferences.



TERRITORIALITY

In the community room, the separation of a four-seat table from a group of couches illustrates clear territoriality, distinguishing formal and informal spaces. This layout highlights personal boundaries, which can hinder spontaneous social interactions. To improve social engagement, moving the table closer to the couches and adding shared elements could create a more inviting atmosphere, encouraging residents to interact while maintaining their personal space.



CROWDING

In a crowded laundry room, environmental factors such as limited space and the number of machines can lead to feelings of congestion and discomfort. The most noticeable feature is the close proximity of appliances and users, which often creates a stressful atmosphere. To improve the space, incorporating elements like signage, designated waiting areas, and perhaps rearranging machines for better accessibility would be modifications that promote a more pleasant experience.



FOCAL POINT

The chandelier in the front entrance serves as a striking focal point, creating a welcoming atmosphere and enhancing the space's grandeur. However, the lack of complementary elements like seating or artwork may limit social interaction. To improve the environment, I would recommend adding lighting or plants that harmonizes with the chandelier, fostering a more engaging and cohesive setting.

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PROSPECT & REFUGE

The open front lobby illustrates the prospect and refuge concept, offering clear sightlines that promote visibility and comfort. The most prominent feature is the unobstructed views, which encourage social interaction. However, the lack of sheltered areas may reduce feelings of security. Introducing semi-enclosed spaces, like seating nooks or greenery, could enhance comfort by providing refuge while maintaining openness, creating a welcoming atmosphere.

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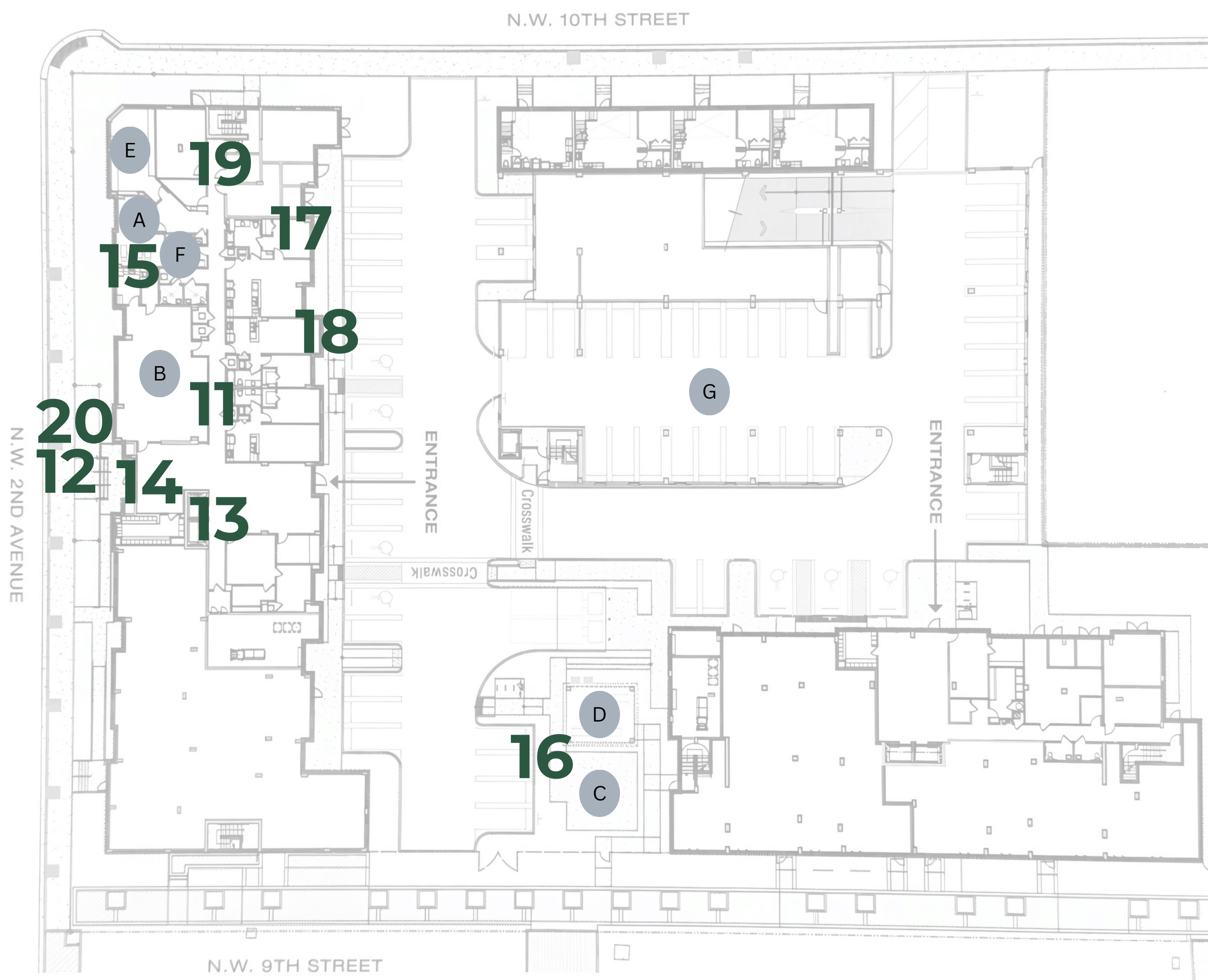


COMPLEXITY

The crowded living room, with its diverse seating arrangements, reflects complexity and a lively social environment. The variety of seating encourages interaction but may also create visual clutter. To improve comfort and cohesion, I would define zones with rugs or strategic furniture placement, fostering a more organized yet inviting atmosphere.

MAP OF TRACES

- A. fitness center
- B. community center
- C. tot lot
- D. covered picnic area
- E. library with computers
- F. laundry room
- G. parking garage



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MONOTONY

The straight hallway with minimal artwork demonstrates monotony in design, characterized by repetitive door patterns that can induce disorientation. To improve the space, adding varied textures, colors, and interactive art could enhance visual interest and make it more inviting.

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MYSTERY

The partial balconies create a sense of mystery by obscuring the interior, inviting curiosity. The segmented design is visually interesting but limits transparency, which may hinder social engagement. To improve the space, I would add full balconies or more accessible areas that preserve the mystery while promoting interaction with the surroundings.



DELIGHT

The murals by the elevators add delight and visual appeal to the space, with their vibrant colors being particularly striking. However, the lack of interactive elements limits engagement. To improve the experience, introducing tactile or digital installations alongside the murals could foster community and deeper connections with the environment.



WOW FACTOR!

The large plant at the entrance creates a strong visual impact and enhances the welcoming atmosphere. Its size and placement draw attention, contributing to the space's wow factor. However, the lack of additional engaging elements may reduce its overall effect. Incorporating complementary design features, like decorative pots or seating areas with greenery, could further enhance the environment and create a more inviting atmosphere.



STIMULATION

The gym space is designed to stimulate users with a variety of equipment and an energetic layout, promoting an active lifestyle. The arrangement encourages movement and interaction, while vibrant colors and motivating visuals enhance the overall atmosphere. To further amplify stimulation, incorporating additional workout stations and interactive features could provide even more engaging experiences for users.



RESTORATION

The outdoor playground emphasizes restoration through its design, encouraging a connection to nature for mental rejuvenation. Its open layout promotes active play, but the lack of shaded areas limits comfort for caregivers. To enhance the space, adding shaded seating and diverse plantings would create a more inviting environment for both activity and relaxation.

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COMFORT

The bed's design emphasizes comfort through its inviting materials and supportive structure, which fosters relaxation. The most noticeable feature is the plush bedding that encourages restful sleep. However, a lack of personal touches or varied textures may reduce the feeling of warmth. To enhance comfort, incorporating decorative pillows, layered textiles, or ambient lighting would create a more personalized and inviting atmosphere, promoting a sense of well-being.

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AUTONOMY

The variety of 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom, and 3-bedroom floor plans promotes autonomy by allowing residents to select spaces that suit their needs. The key feature is the diverse layout options, which encourage individual choice and privacy. However, limited communal areas hinder social interaction. Adding shared spaces could enhance community engagement while maintaining residents' autonomy.



CONTROL

The staircase entry in the image highlights user control by providing mobility options. The key feature is the choice between using the elevator or stairs, which significantly improves accessibility. However, the absence of clear signage directing users to the stair access may hinder decision-making. Incorporating visual indicators could enhance navigation and overall user experience.



SAFETY

The keypad entry enhances safety by controlling access to the building, a key factor in promoting security. Its technological barrier signifies a commitment to safety, but the lack of visible security personnel may lower perceived security. To improve safety perceptions, adding features like better lighting or visible security presence would be beneficial.

MAP OF TRACES

- A. fitness center
- B. community center
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- G. parking garage



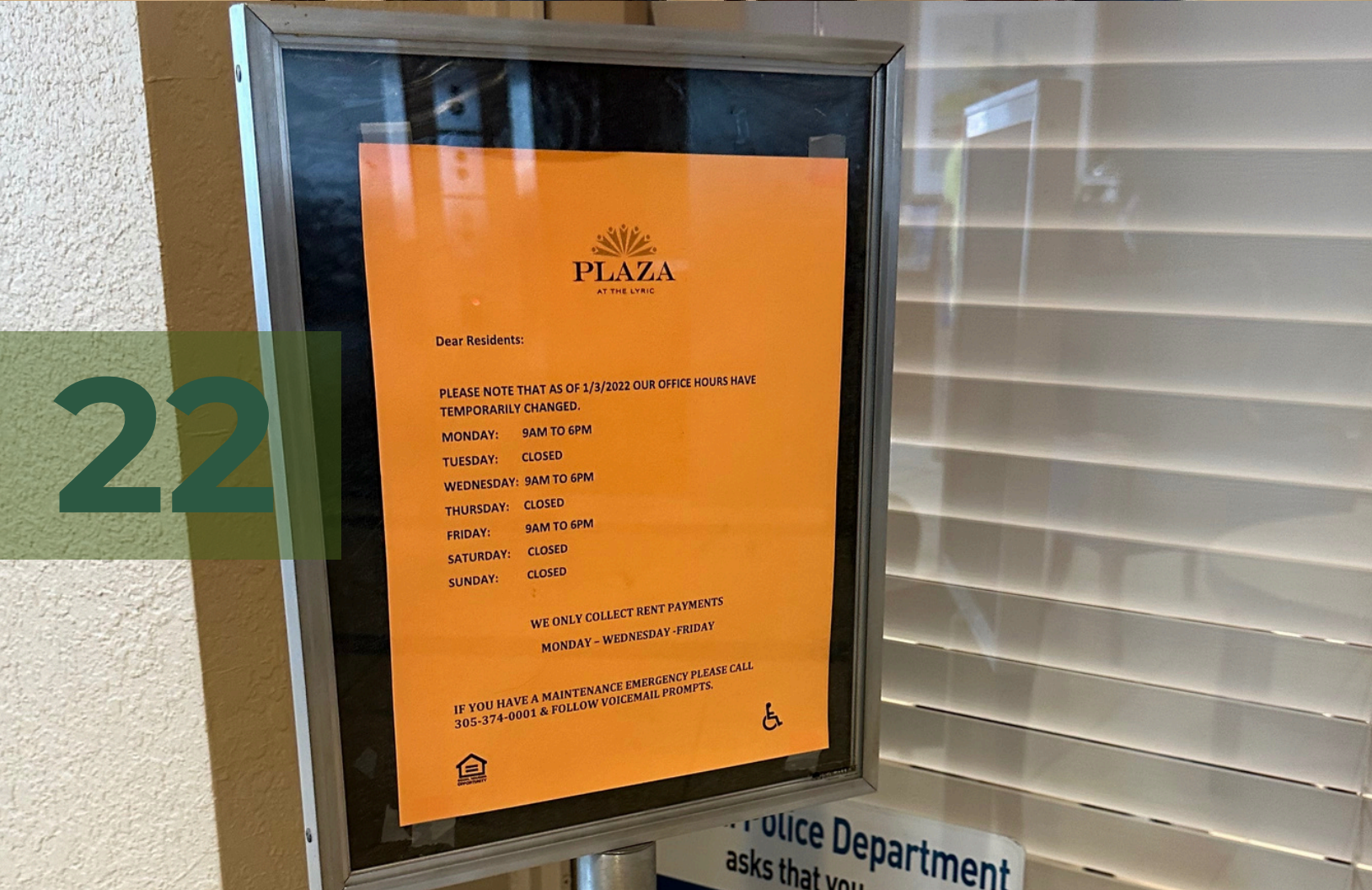
21



PERFORMANCE

The study area near the window promotes performance by providing ample natural light, which enhances focus and productivity. The most noticeable feature is the wall of books, offering both a resource-rich and aesthetically stimulating environment. Modifying the space with additional seating options could make it more versatile, allowing for both individual and group study sessions.

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ADAPTABILITY

The sign displaying new office hours outside the office improves adaptability by providing essential information at a glance, minimizing confusion and enhancing efficiency. The visibility of this feature stands out, but incorporating digital notifications like email or text alerts could further improve user awareness of changes. This combination would create a more responsive environment that better meets diverse user needs.



LEGIBILITY

The presence of braille on the sign enhances legibility by catering to visually impaired users, ensuring accessibility. The most noticeable feature is the inclusion of tactile elements, while a larger, high-contrast font could further improve visibility for all users. Modifications should focus on increasing readability for multiple user groups.



IDENTITY

The locally painted wall tiles in this space emphasize cultural identity, which is the most striking feature as it reflects community heritage. However, the absence of personal or historical context may limit its connection to users. Adding informative plaques or interactive elements could enhance the cultural narrative, making the space more engaging and meaningful.



BRANDING

The large "Plaza" sign stands out due to its contrasting color and prominent placement on a front column. This noticeable branding immediately captures attention and reinforces the building's identity. Modifying this space to integrate the sign more harmoniously with the overall design could create a more cohesive look while still maintaining the sign's strong presence.



WAYFINDING

The clear circulation path toward the elevator highlights wayfinding elements, making navigation easy and intuitive. The noticeable factor is the direct line of sight, but adding individual signage, a key plan/map, or distinct visual cues could further enhance directionality and accessibility.



AFFORDANCE

The most prominent affordance in the laundry room is its accessibility during weekends when the office is closed, intended for independent use by residents. While it caters to those who may have issues with in-unit machines during off-hours, adding clear signage or instructions could improve usability for all, including residents who might prefer on-site laundry options.

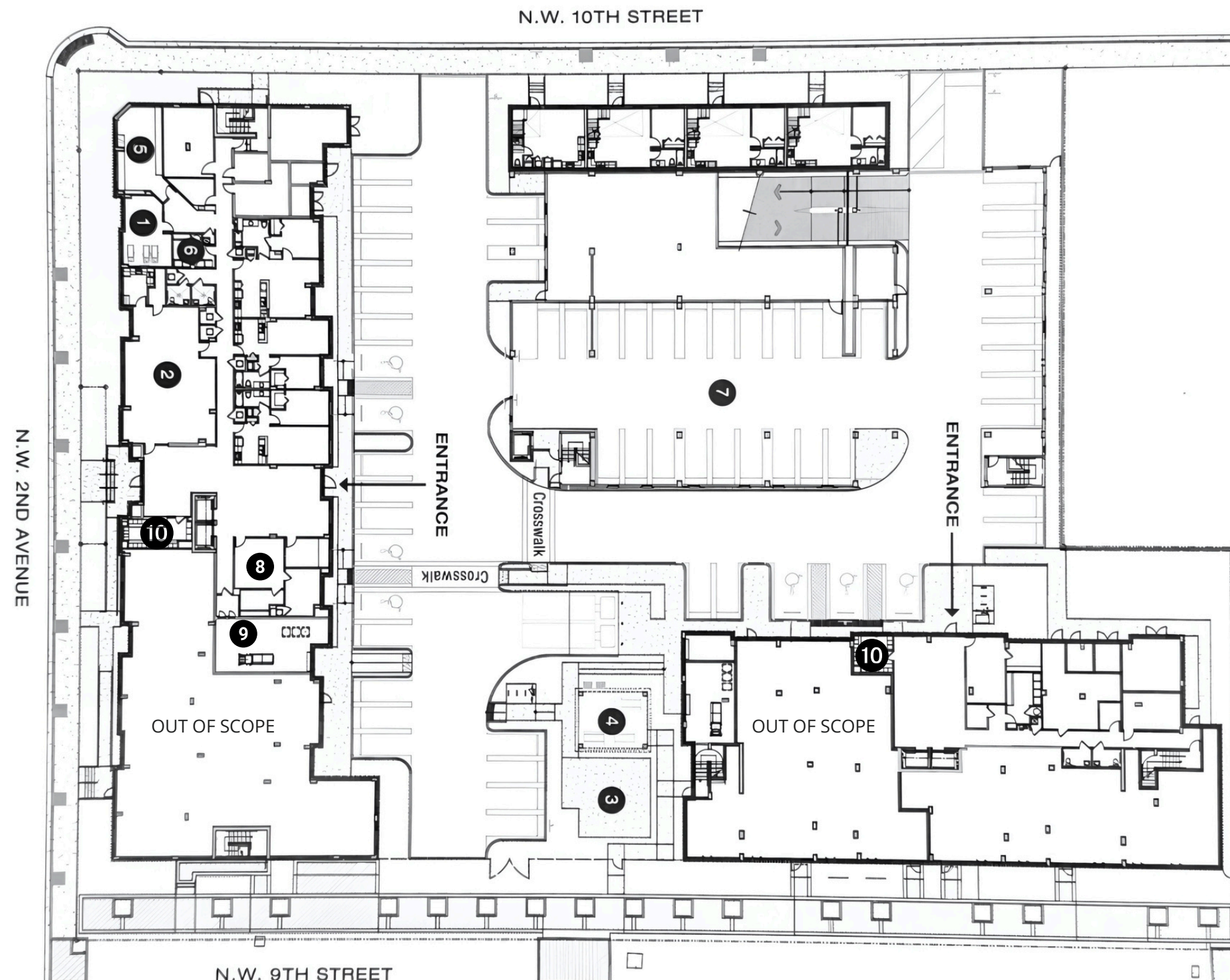
LABELLED SPACES

OVERVIEW

The Plaza at the Lyric Apartments provides a selection of essential amenities designed to foster community engagement and support mental health and well-being. These include a fitness center, community center, tot lot, library, and picnic area. The community features newly constructed, affordable one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartment homes, complete with ceramic tile, granite countertops, and modern finishes. The two buildings each have their own lobby, though the main lobby and office are located in the building on N.W. 2nd Ave, which also sees the most foot traffic.

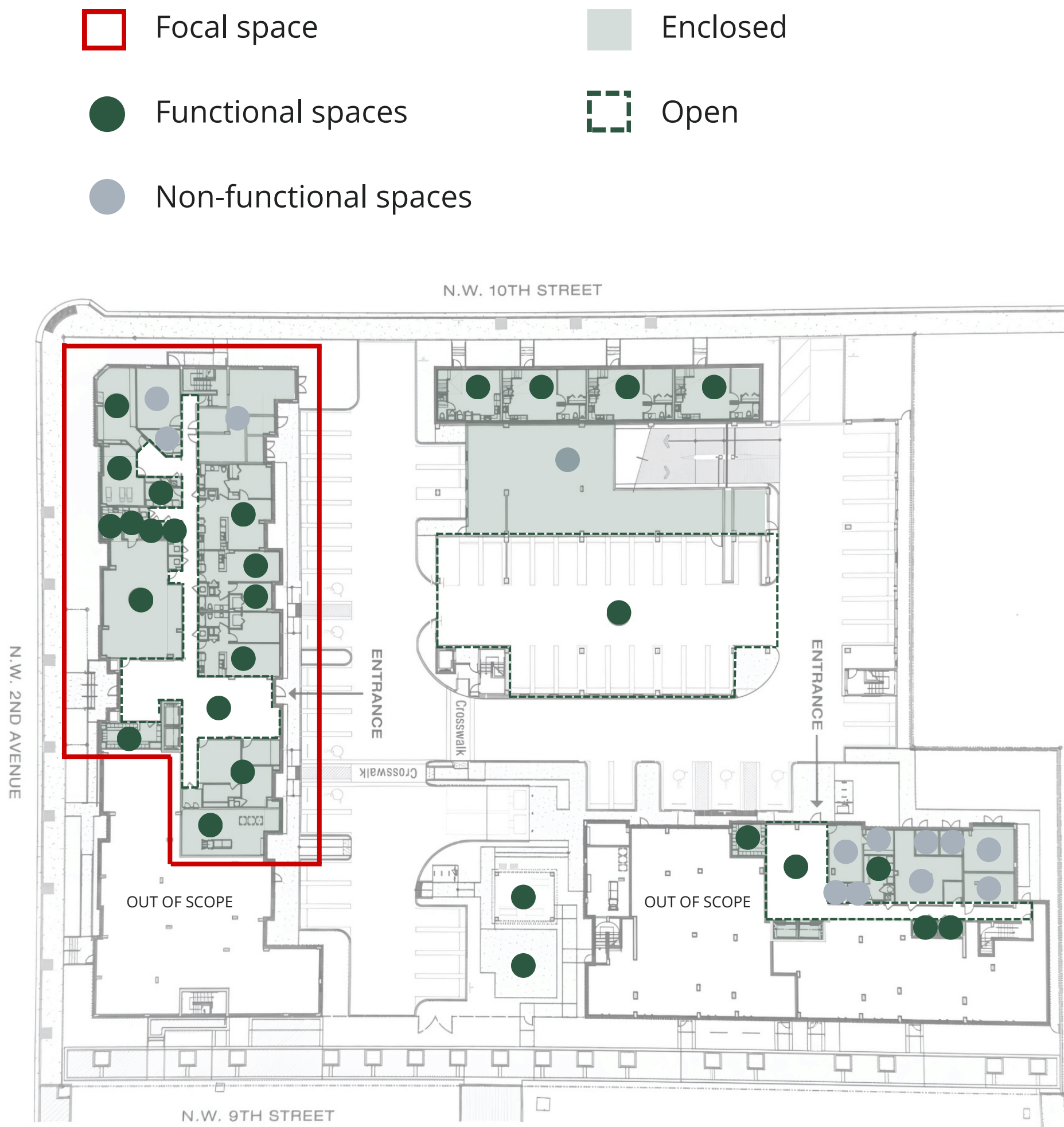
1. fitness center
2. community center
3. tot lot
4. covered picnic area
5. library w/ computers

6. laundry room
7. parking garage
8. leasing office
9. conference room
10. mail room



BEHAVIORAL MAPPING: RESIDENTIAL

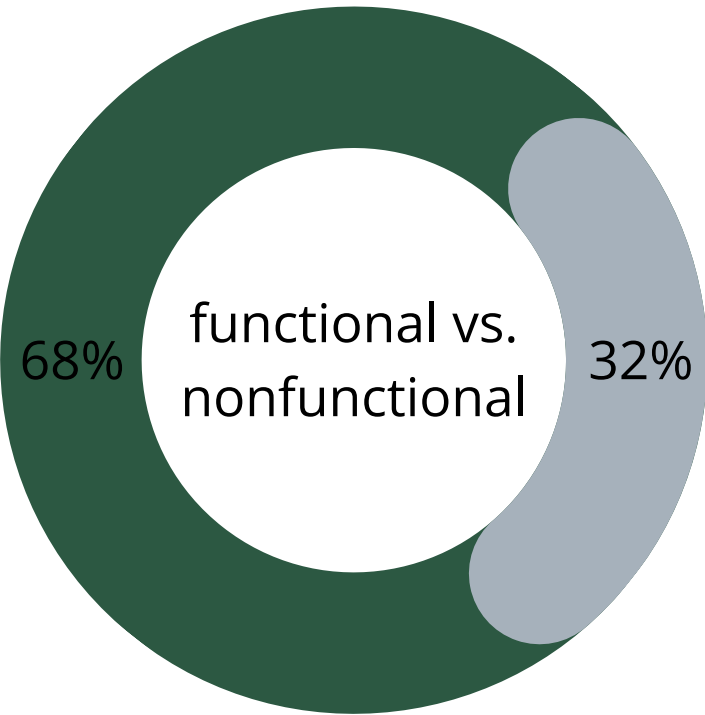
DESCRIPTION OF PHYSICAL SETTING:
Most of the apartment complex consists of enclosed spaces, with the main lobbies, hallways, and parking garage as notable exceptions. The layout includes multiple buildings or areas, with one main building that sees the most resident activity. The majority of spaces are functional, although there are a few unoccupied rooms. The second building contains more non-functional spaces, including a manager's office that remains unused.



BEHAVIORAL MAPPING: RESIDENTIAL

DESCRIPTION OF PHYSICAL SETTING RESULTS:

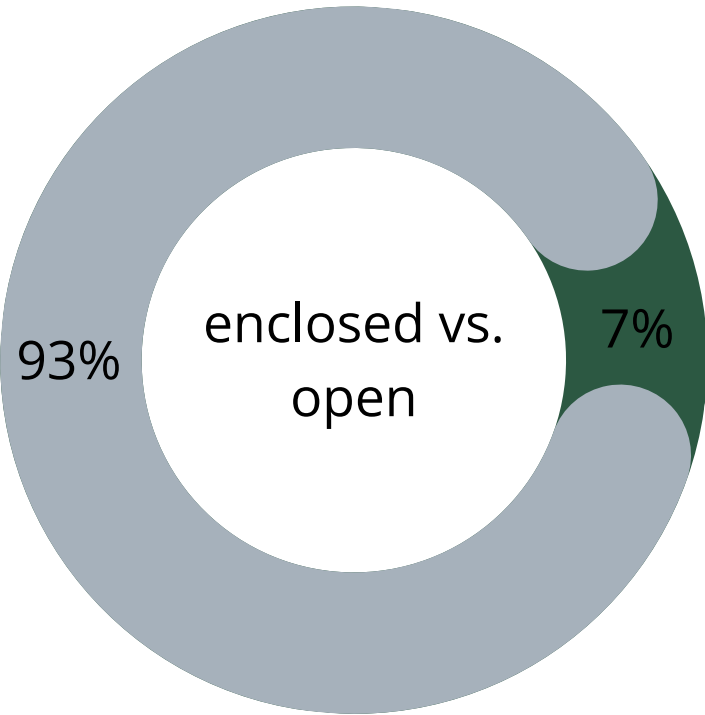
functional 28spaces | nonfunctional 13spaces



OVERVIEW:

The results indicate that 32% of the spaces are nonfunctional, while 68% are functional. This suggests that a significant number of spaces could be repurposed for additional amenities that are currently underutilized, creating more opportunities to enhance community engagement and resident well-being.

enclosed 44spaces | open 3spaces



OVERVIEW:

The findings show that 93% of the spaces are enclosed, compared to 7% that are open. This implies that privacy is a key consideration in the building's layout. However, some of these enclosed areas could be redesigned to allow more natural light, creating a more open and inviting atmosphere for residents.

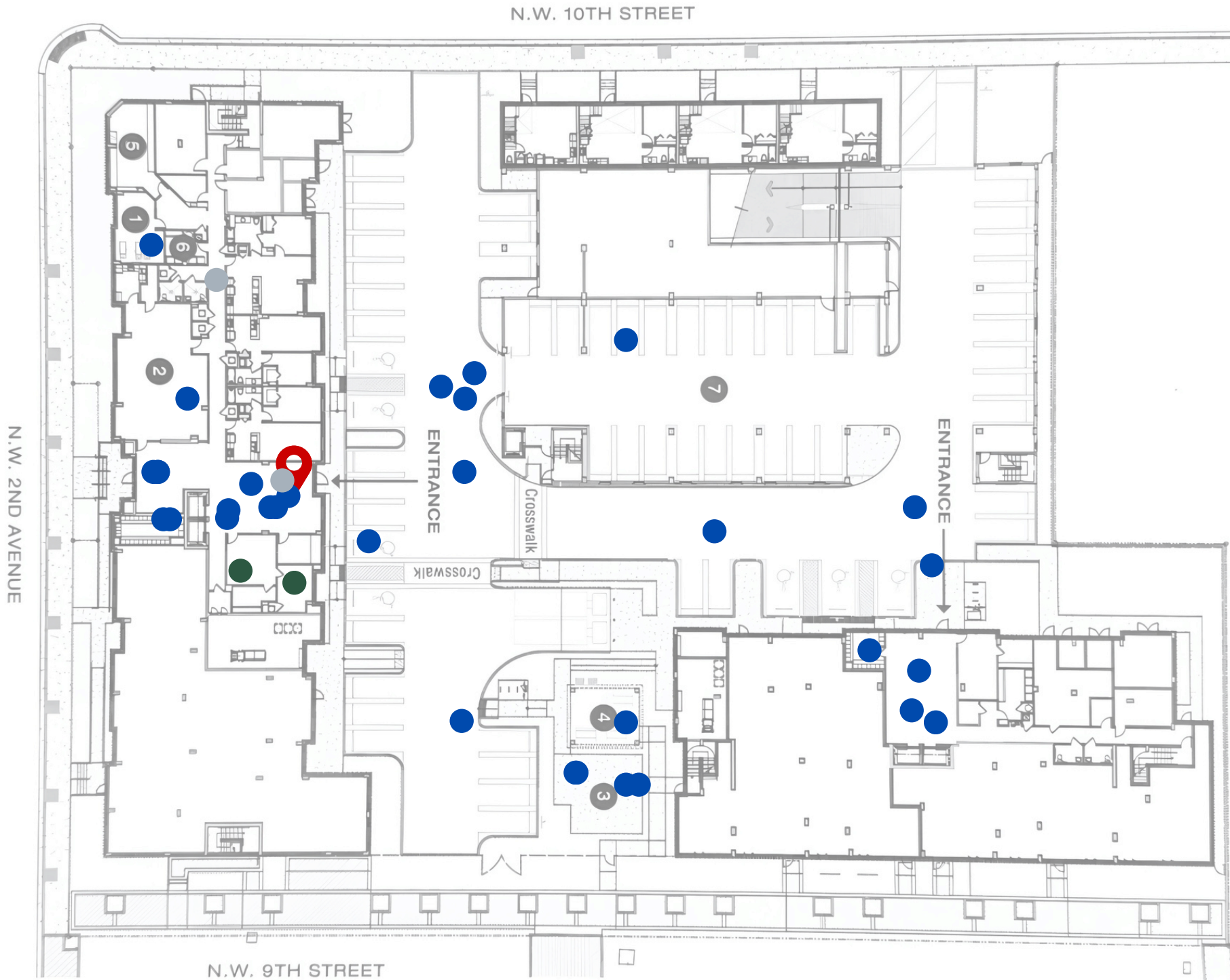
BEHAVIORAL MAPPING: RESIDENTIAL

DESCRIPTION OF PEOPLE: AGGREGATE MAP

OVERVIEW:

Overall, the highest-traffic area observed was the main building lobby, where residents passed through frequently throughout the day. A well-defined circulation path also connected the parking garage to the main building. The secondary building saw minimal traffic, which aligns with its lower number of apartments compared to the main building. The amenities, such as the gym and community center, were used sporadically, with occasional residents utilizing these spaces. During the observation periods, no residents were seen using the on-site laundry facilities. Service personnel appeared to work on an as-needed basis, while management staff were present from 9 am to 5 pm.

- 📍 observation location
- residents
- administration
- service personnel



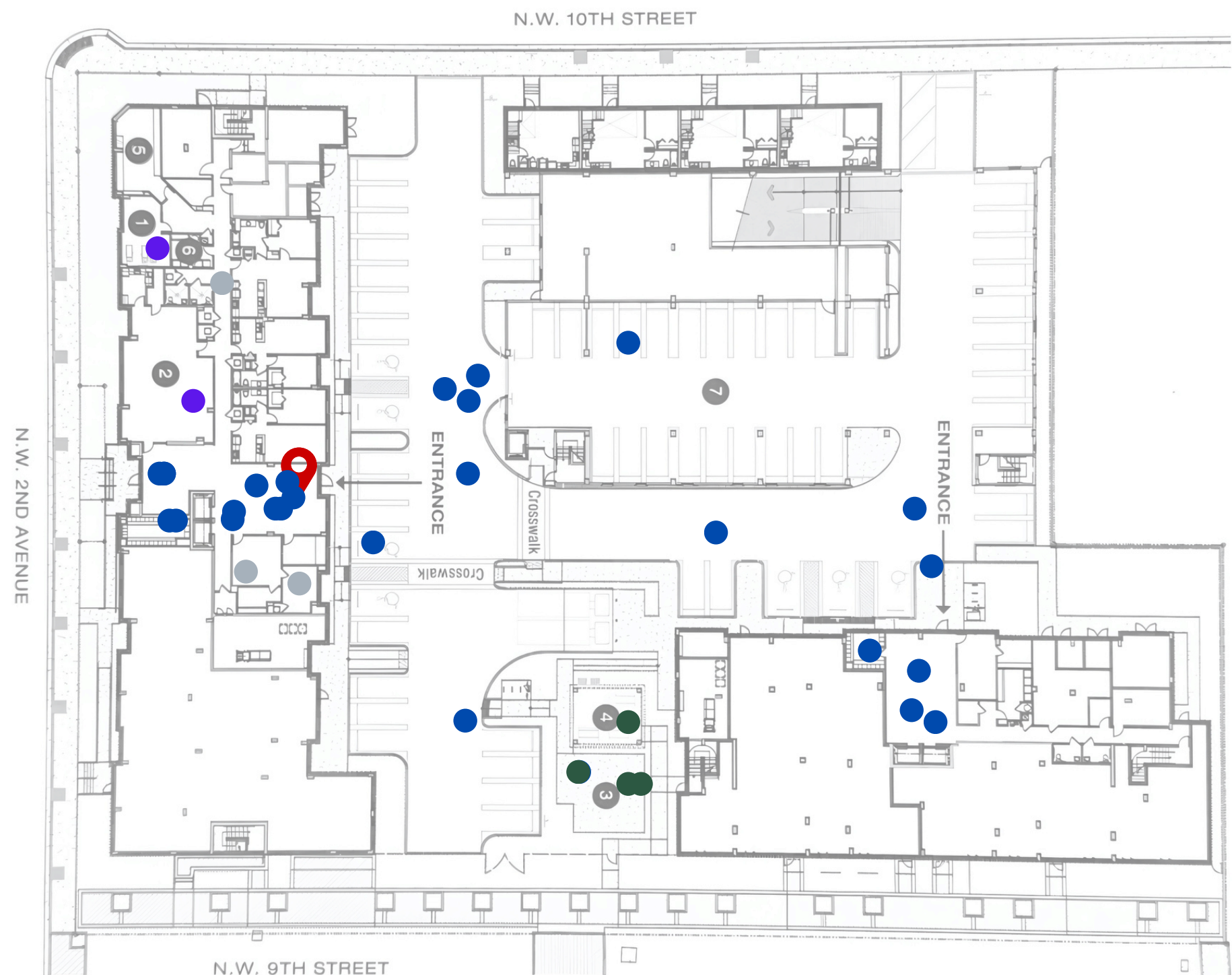
BEHAVIORAL MAPPING: RESIDENTIAL

DESCRIPTION OF BEHAVIOR: AGGREGATE MAP

OVERVIEW:

Throughout the day, there was minimal activity observed, with few residents or visitors engaging in the shared spaces or on-site amenities. Only the management team and a janitor were seen working, while the adjacent park had occasional use by families with children. Most individuals moved quickly through the building, heading directly to their apartments or leaving shortly after arrival. The majority of passersby were alone, with only a few couples or families seen entering or around the site. This lack of interaction suggests limited engagement with the amenities and a sense of detachment among residents.

- 📍 observation location
- walking
- playing in park
- working
- utilizing amenities



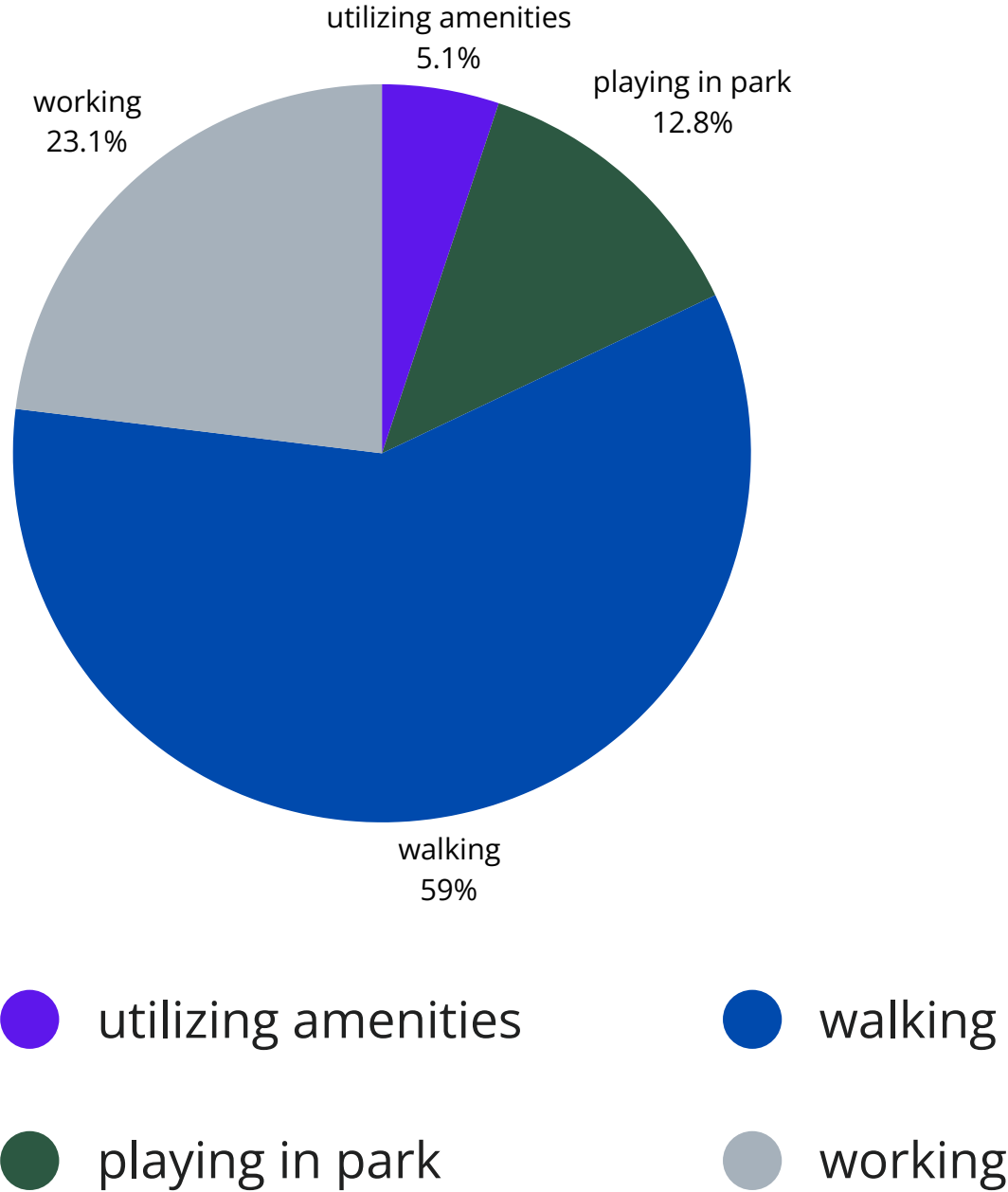
OBSERVATION CHART: RESIDENTIAL

NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO USED THE SPACE THROUGH THE TIME INTERVALS

[illegible]

PARTICIPANT ANALYSIS (FIELD OBSERVATION)

OBSERVATION ANALYSIS + THEORY
TOTAL ACTIVITY USAGE 10AM-8PM



OVERVIEW:

The findings indicate that the primary activity at Lyric Point Apartments involves residents moving in and out of the building (59%), with limited engagement in shared spaces or communal areas. During daytime hours, the only individuals regularly present on-site are service personnel and management staff, who remain in the main building to carry out their duties (23.1%). This pattern of activity may fluctuate on different days, depending on staffing schedules or other events. Among the available amenities, the adjacent park stands out as the most frequently used space, drawing residents throughout the day but particularly during the evening after typical work hours (12.8%). This suggests that while residents do seek outdoor space for relaxation or recreation, other amenities are noticeably underutilized, reflecting a potential lack of engagement or interest in communal facilities (5.1%). This limited use of shared amenities may point to a broader issue of community detachment or minimal interaction among residents, which could affect the overall sense of community within the apartment complex.

ACTIVITY MAPPING: RESIDENTIAL

FIELD OBSERVATION: AGGREGATE MAP

OVERVIEW:

Throughout the day, it is clear that residents primarily pass through the main building, while those entering the secondary building typically head straight upstairs. The park area saw a moderate level of activity, with residents moving between the park, the seating area, and occasionally going indoors. Management and staff were based in the main building, only briefly visiting the restrooms or going upstairs. Overall, this suggests limited activity on the property during the day, aside from people coming and going.



CONCLUSIONS: RESIDENTIAL

THEORIES SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW:

BEHAVIORAL MAPPING:

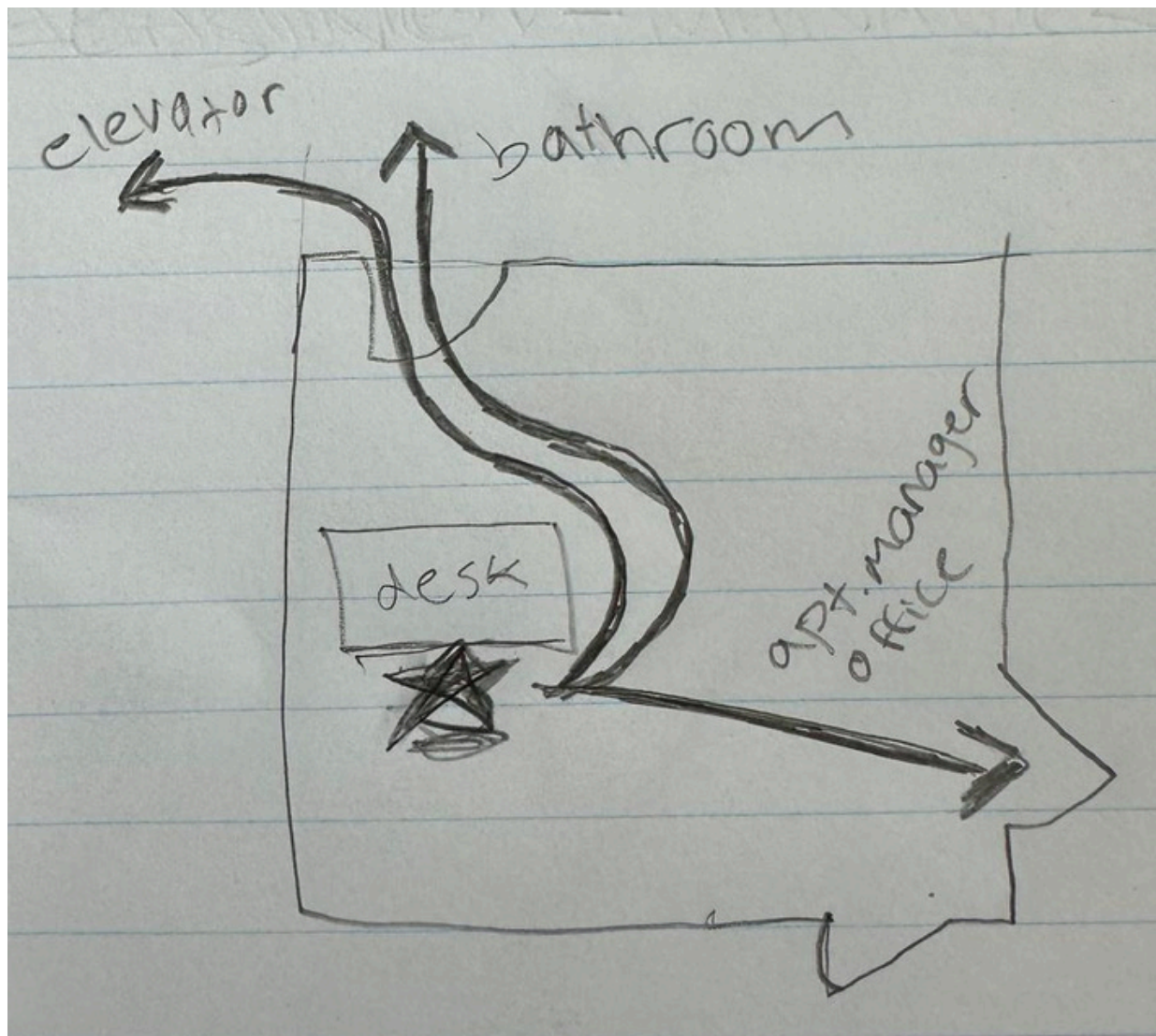
The observations suggest opportunities to enhance Lyric Point Apartments by reimagining high-traffic and underused spaces to foster community engagement. Upgrades to the main lobby, such as additional seating and improved lighting, could create a more welcoming hub for residents. Sporadically used amenities, like the gym and community center, might benefit from flexible layouts and better wayfinding, while more visibility for the on-site laundry could boost convenience. Enhancing outdoor areas, including flexible seating and shade structures in the park, would support social interaction and family use. Additionally, creating informal touchpoints for resident-staff interactions in the lobby could build stronger connections. These changes would optimize the property's functionality and promote a more vibrant, community-focused environment.

ACTIVITY MAPPING:

The observations at Lyric Point Apartments suggest that while residents primarily use common areas as transitional spaces, there is potential to redesign these areas to encourage greater community engagement. Currently, shared spaces lack features that make them inviting, with most residents moving directly to their apartments or using the park, particularly in the evening. Design solutions could include more comfortable and private lounge seating, multifunctional workspaces, and improved lighting for evening use to make these areas more appealing. Enhancing outdoor amenities, adding shaded seating, and creating family-friendly areas would further support residents' needs, transforming shared spaces into welcoming, activity-friendly hubs that foster a stronger sense of community.

COGNITIVE MAPPING: EMPLOYEE

LEASING MANAGER- MALE/HISPANIC

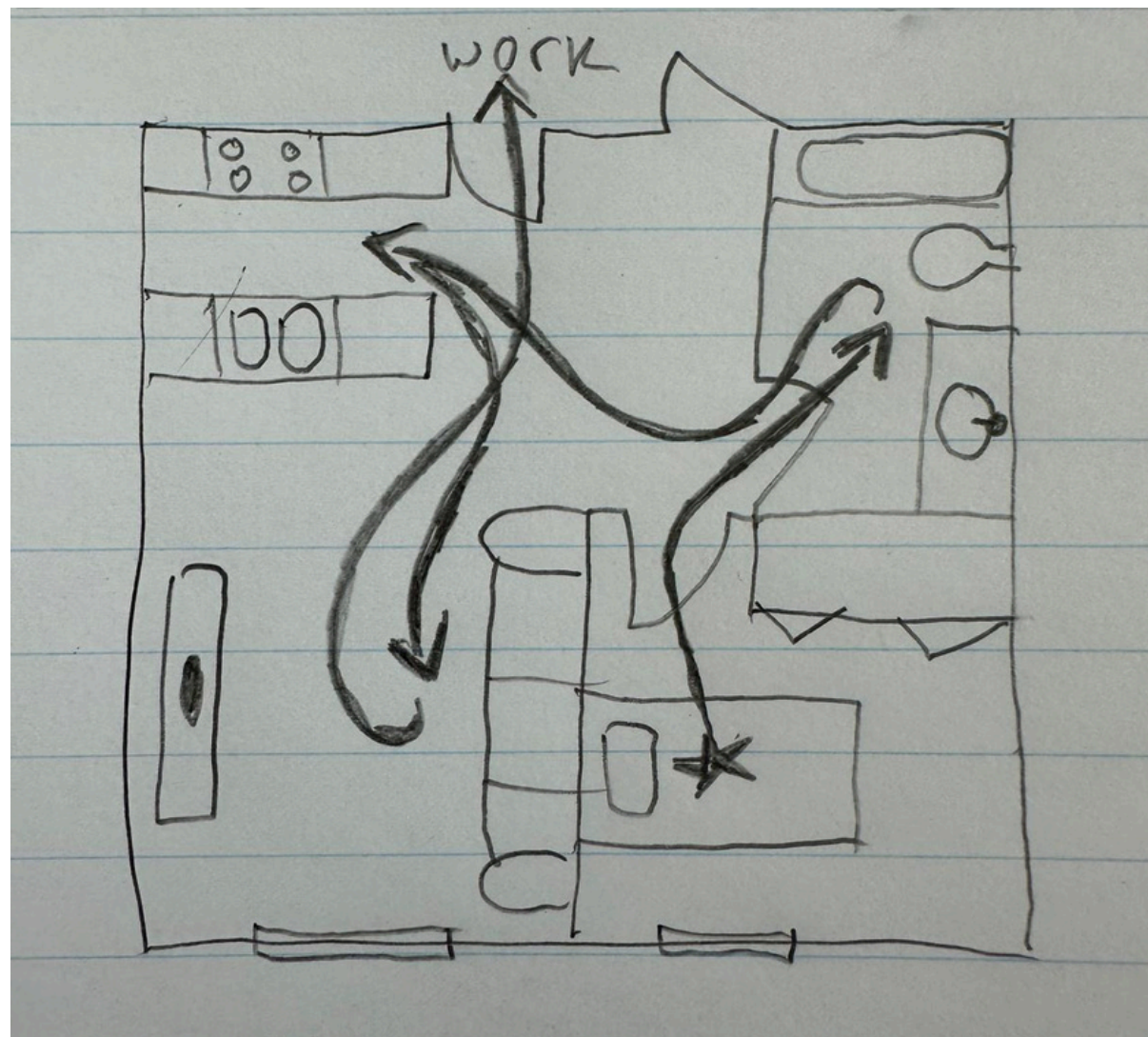


RESULT:

The apartment manager spends the majority of his day stationed at his desk, managing daily operations and handling administrative tasks. Periodically, he takes short breaks to use the restroom or visits the leasing office to discuss lease renewals, resident inquiries, and upcoming tenant agreements with other staff. Additionally, he occasionally heads upstairs via the elevator to personally address resident concerns within their apartments, ensuring that any issues or maintenance needs are handled promptly. This hands-on approach allows him to stay accessible to residents while balancing his administrative responsibilities, creating a consistent presence within the building.

COGNITIVE MAPPING: SINGLE RESIDENT

RESIDENT-FEMALE/HAITIAN

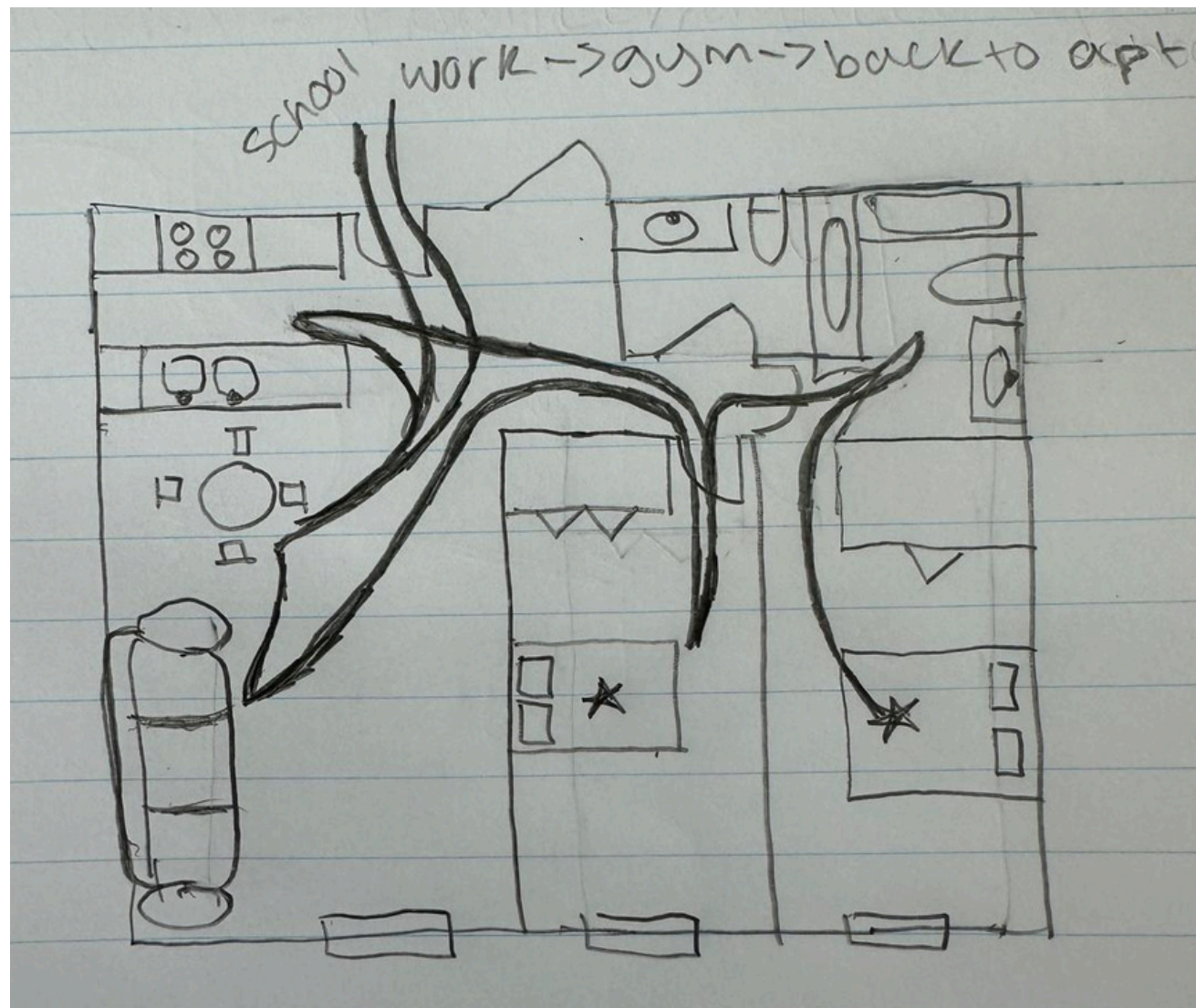


RESULT:

This resident typically follows a morning routine within her apartment, starting with a trip to the bathroom, followed by moving to the kitchen to prepare breakfast. On weekends, she has a chance to unwind, often spending time relaxing on the couch and watching TV before heading out for the day. During the weekdays, she leaves for work after her morning routine and resumes a similar pattern upon returning home in the evening. Rather than using the building's amenities, she opts for an off-site gym membership, choosing to exercise elsewhere. This routine reflects a preference for privacy and familiarity within her own apartment and a reliance on external amenities over those available in her residential complex.

COGNITIVE MAPPING: FAMILY UNIT

RESIDENT-MALE/HAITIAN, FEMALE CHILD/MIXED



RESULT:

Each morning, this single father begins his day by using the restroom before gently waking up his young daughter to start their morning routine. Together, they head to the kitchen, where he prepares breakfast while she plays nearby by the couch, engaging in her morning activities. They sit down to eat at the table before she catches the bus to school, and he heads out for work using public transportation. In the evenings, they typically arrive home around the same time, allowing them to relax together, share a meal, and settle in for the night. Occasionally, the father takes his daughter to the park, where she can play and interact with other children from the building, giving them a chance to bond and connect with the community. This daily rhythm reflects a close, nurturing relationship between father and daughter, grounded in simple routines and shared moments.

CONCLUSIONS: COGNITIVE MAPPING

SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW:

The daily activity patterns at The Plaza at Lyric Apartments reveal a community where residents primarily focus on personal routines and spend limited time in shared spaces. Most residents seem to treat the building's common areas as transitional spaces, moving quickly to and from their apartments with minimal engagement in the building's amenities. Families and individuals alike prioritize privacy and routine, using only necessary areas and opting for external amenities like gyms and other social spaces. The few shared spaces that see consistent use—like the park, primarily by families with children—highlight the need for more dynamic, inviting communal areas that encourage interaction and build community connections.

For those working in the building, such as management and service staff, this trend of limited engagement means that they are often available to assist but rarely needed outside of essential tasks. This insight suggests that enhancing shared spaces with inviting design elements, family-friendly features, and areas for relaxation or socialization could greatly benefit residents. By fostering a stronger sense of community through more thoughtfully designed communal areas, The Plaza at Lyric Apartments could become not only a place to live but a supportive, interactive environment that enhances daily life for residents and builds a deeper sense of connection.



QUANTITATIVE MEASUREMENT

SCALES AND MEASURES

To analyze the responses from 15 residents, I assessed variables including space sufficiency, amenity usage, social interaction, satisfaction with design, and value for cost. Each variable was measured through specific survey questions, with responses categorized into quantitative data (e.g., percentages of residents who felt they had enough space or used amenities) and qualitative themes (e.g., reasons for dissatisfaction or improvement suggestions). Quantitative analysis revealed trends in satisfaction levels, while qualitative analysis provided deeper insights into issues like privacy, engagement with communal spaces, and perceptions of affordability. Correlations between variables, such as the relationship between space sufficiency and value for cost, helped identify key factors impacting resident experiences. This approach highlighted opportunities to enhance design, functionality, and community engagement at The Plaza at Lyric Apartments.

SAMPLING SIZE N=15

For this study, I selected 15 participants (n=15) who are current residents of The Plaza at Lyric Apartments. These participants were chosen to provide direct insights into their lived experiences within the building, focusing on how they engage with their personal spaces, shared amenities, and overall community environment.

The sample size was determined based on the manageable number of participants needed for in-depth qualitative and quantitative analysis within the context of this study. While the group may not represent the entire resident population due to its relatively small size, the diversity of participants in terms of age, household composition, and lifestyle habits offers a reasonable cross-section of perspectives. This allows for valuable observations and trends that can inform broader conclusions about the building's design and its impact on residents' daily lives.

SAMPLE SURVEY QUESTIONS

9:29

100

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PLAZA AT THE LYRIC APARTME...

Questions

Preview

Responses

Settings

What is your age? *

☐ 5-10

☐ 10-20

☐ 20-30

☐ 30-40

☐ 40-50

☐ 50-60

☐ 60-70

☐ 70-80

☐ 80-90

☐ 90-100

What is your gender? *

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Other:

How many people live in your unit? *

☐ 1-just you

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4+

Do you feel like there is enough space to comfortably live here? If no, please explain. *

Your answer

Do you use the amenities? If so, which ones? *

Your answer

Do you have people over a lot? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Ocassionally

Do you like the lobby? If no, why not? *

Your answer

What improvements in your living space/apartment unit do you think can be done to make it better? *

Your answer

If you could change one thing what would it be? From a tenants perspective on the property? *

Your answer

Is this apartment worth it for the price you pay? If no, please elaborate. *

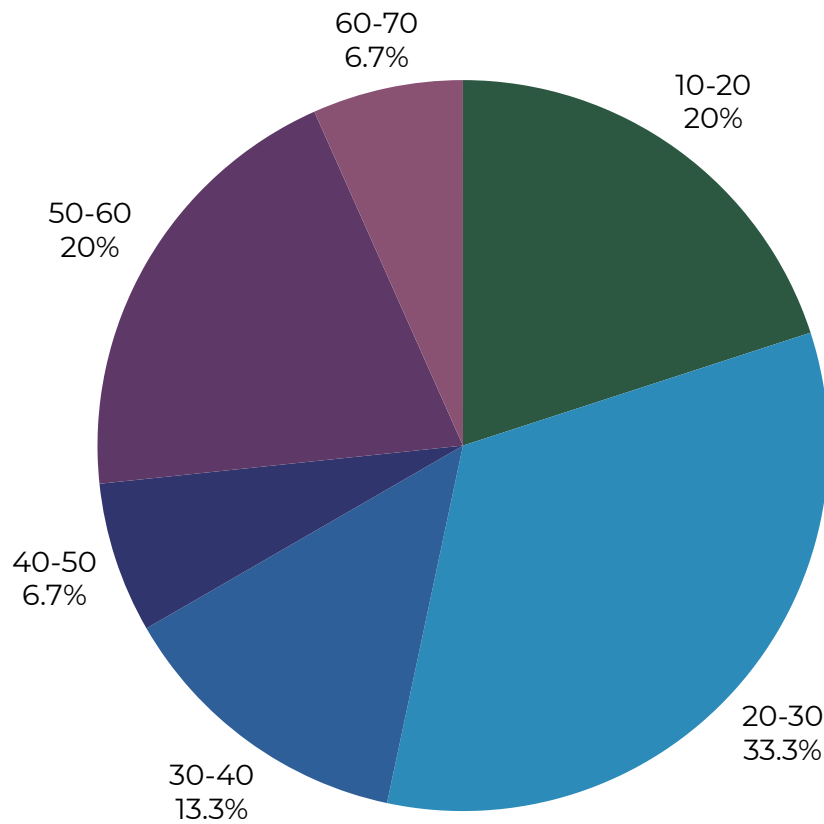
Your answer

Submit

Clear form

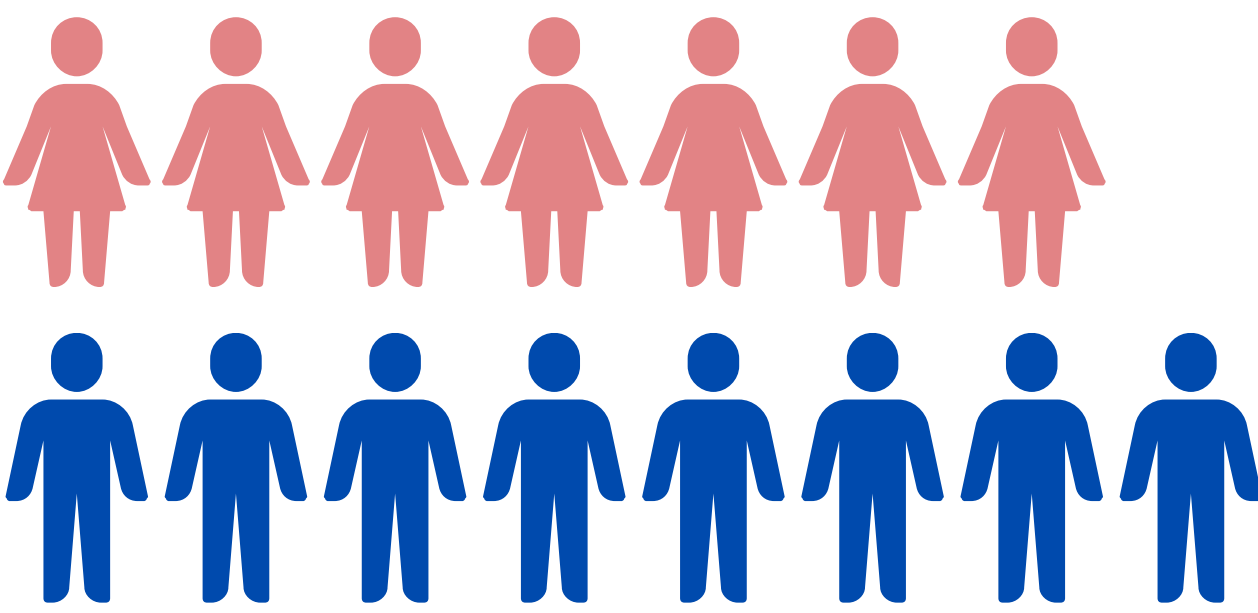
SURVEY METHODS

1. WHAT IS YOUR AGE?



According to the survey, 33.3% of residents are aged 20-30, with most being younger or middle-aged. This demographic suggests the building appeals to professionals and small families, highlighting the need for modern amenities and spaces that suit an active, contemporary lifestyle.

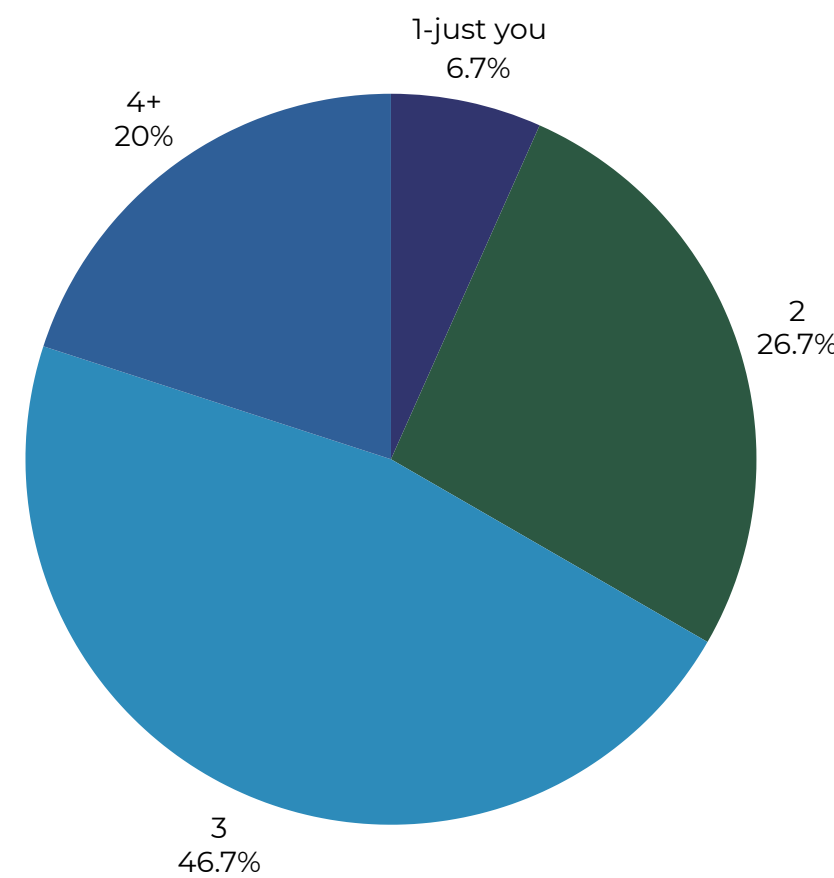
2. WHAT IS YOUR GENDER?



The survey shows that 46.7% of residents are female, with the remaining being male. No residents identified as another gender. This balance suggests the building serves a diverse mix of genders, with no need for significant gender-specific considerations in its design or amenities.

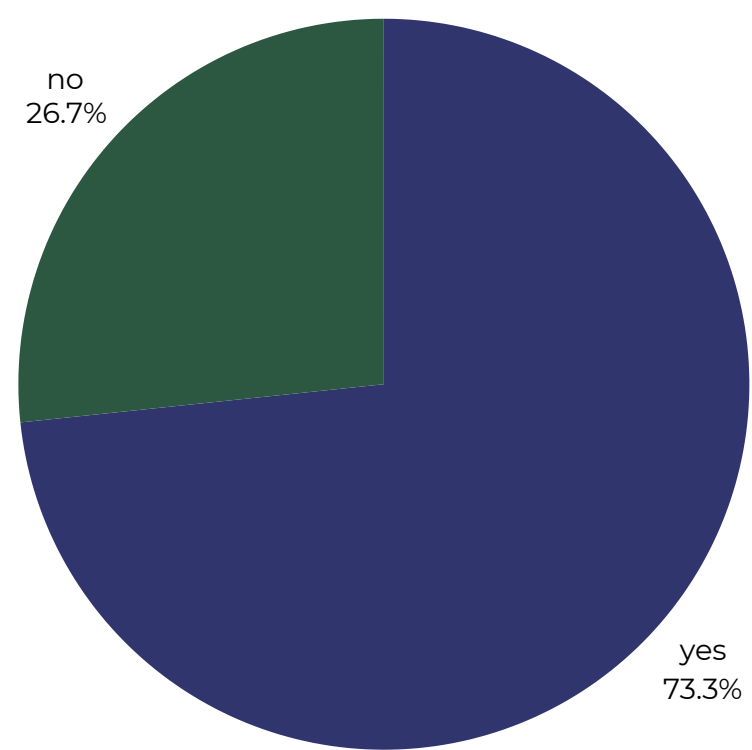
SURVEY METHODS

3. HOW MANY PEOPLE LIVE IN YOUR UNIT?



The survey shows 6.7% of units house one person, 26.7% have two, 46.7% have three, and 20% have four or more residents. This suggests most units accommodate small families or groups, highlighting a need for family-friendly spaces and amenities.

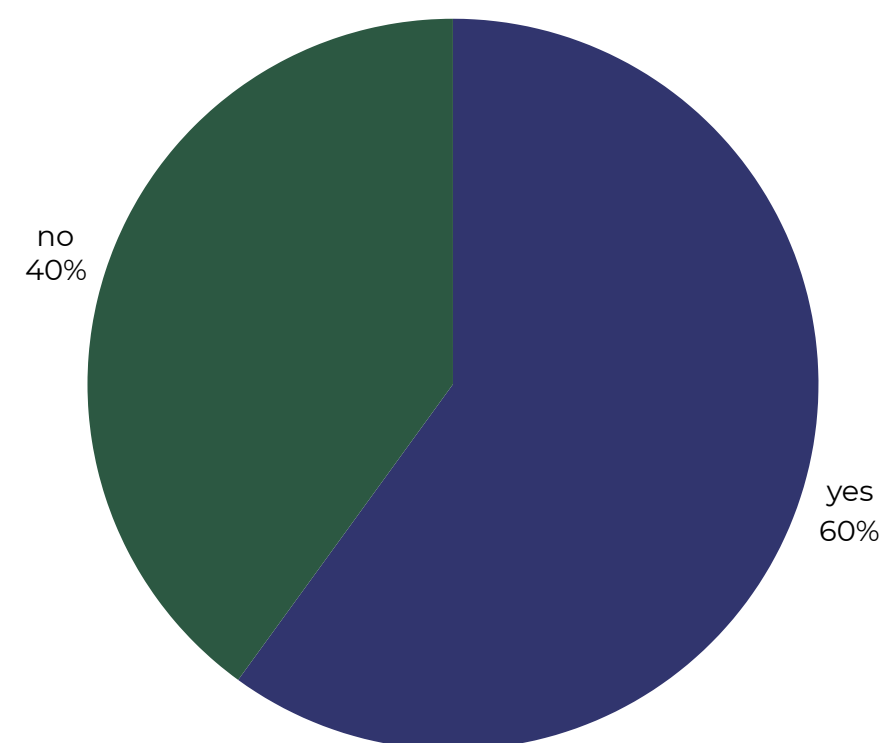
4. DO YOU FEEL LIKE THERE IS ENOUGH SPACE TO COMFORTABLY LIVE HERE? IF NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN



The survey reveals that most residents feel they have enough space to live comfortably, with only 4 respondents expressing dissatisfaction. Those who felt the space was insufficient were primarily individuals living with their entire family or in smaller units, suggesting that larger households may struggle with the current unit layouts.

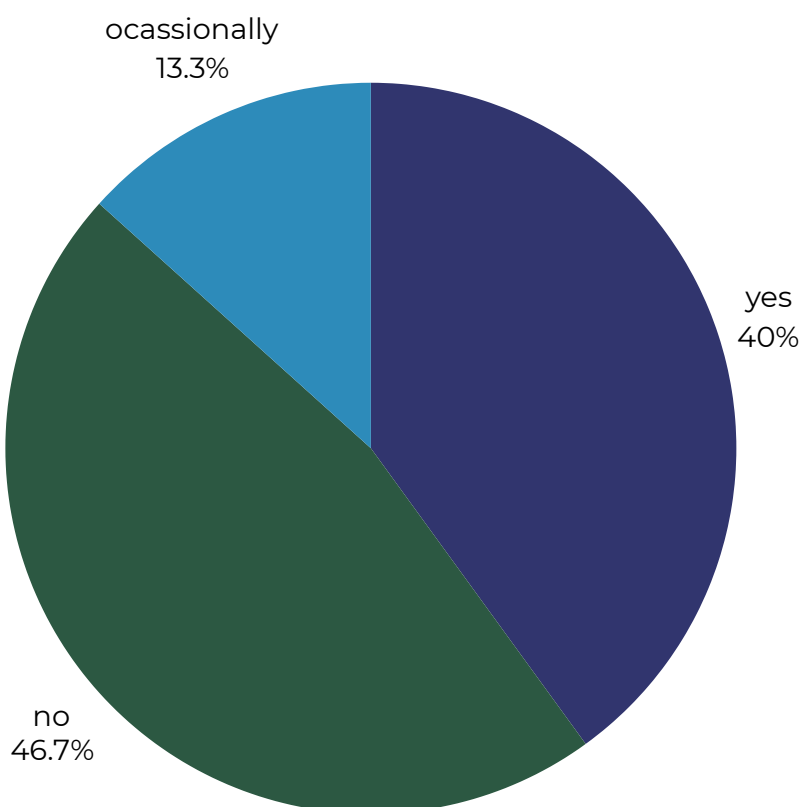
SURVEY METHODS

5. DO YOU USE THE AMENITIES? IF SO, WHICH ONES?



Sixty percent of residents reported using the amenities, primarily the gym and park. Those who did not use the amenities cited the limited space and inconvenient hours as barriers to usage. This suggests that while there is interest in the amenities, improvements in space and accessibility could increase their usage.

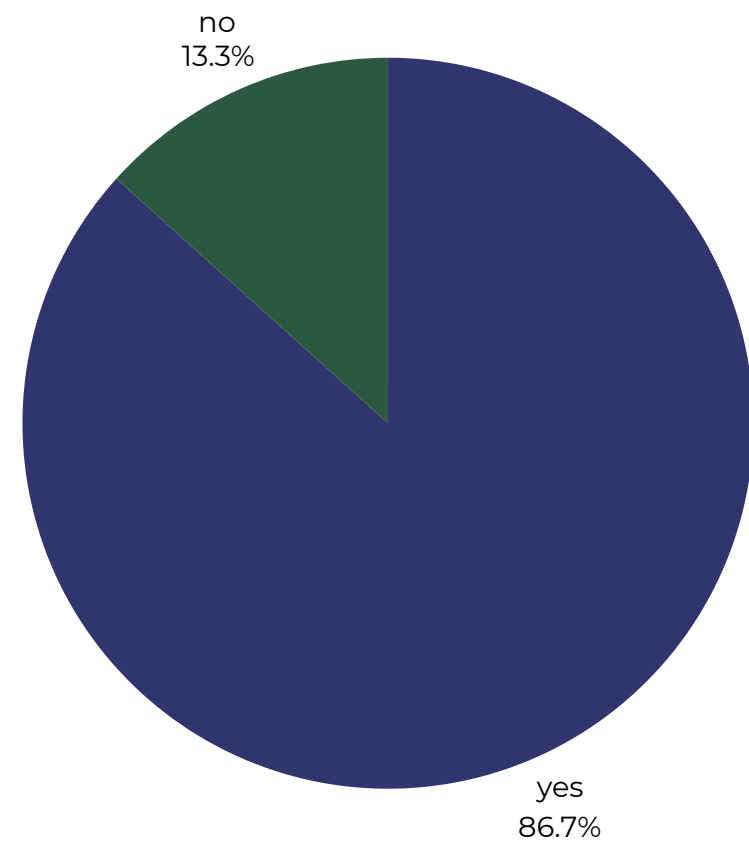
6. DO YOU HAVE PEOPLE OVER A LOT?



When asked about having people over, 13.3% said occasionally, 40% said yes, and 46.7% said no. Those who answered "no" attributed it to personal preference, rather than the building's design, indicating that social habits are more individual than influenced by the space.

SURVEY METHODS

7. DO YOU LIKE THE LOBBY? IF NO, WHY?

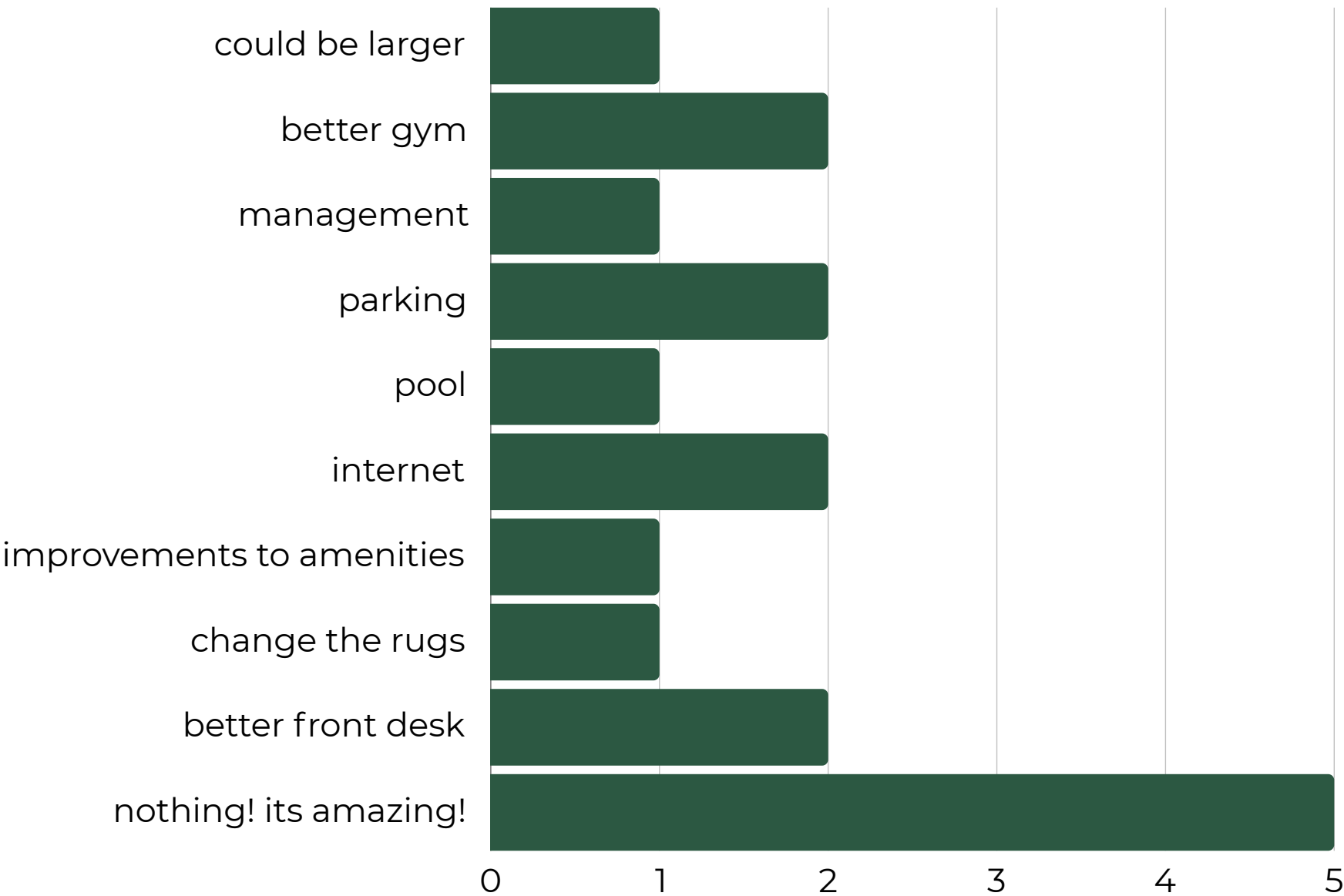


The survey reveals that 86.7% of residents like the lobby. However, those who didn't express satisfaction mentioned that it could be improved, particularly in terms of comfort and aesthetics, as they felt there were insufficient comfortable seating options.



SURVEY METHODS

8. WHAT IMPROVEMENTS DO YOU THINK CAN BE DONE TO THE SPACE TO BETTER IT?

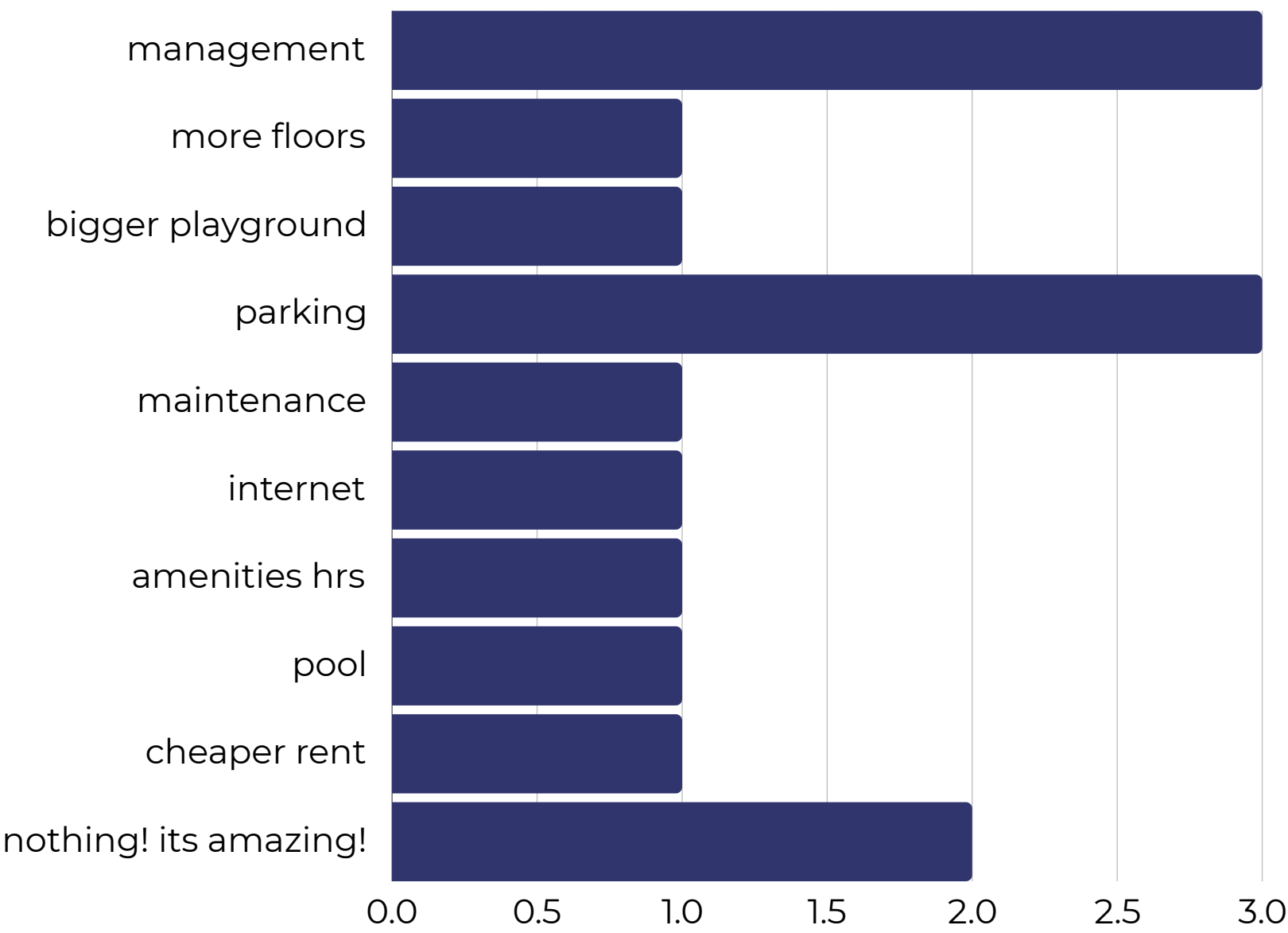


The survey highlighted a range of suggestions for small improvements that could enhance residents' daily lives. Several individuals felt the spaces, including the park and gym, should be larger. Parking was also mentioned as an area for improvement, with one resident specifically noting that the air conditioning in the parking garage elevator needed attention. Residents who expressed satisfaction mentioned things such as...

- “no improvements, im never here though”
- “it’s nice for what I want”
- “nothing, it’s really nice”
- “no, its good”

SURVEY METHODS

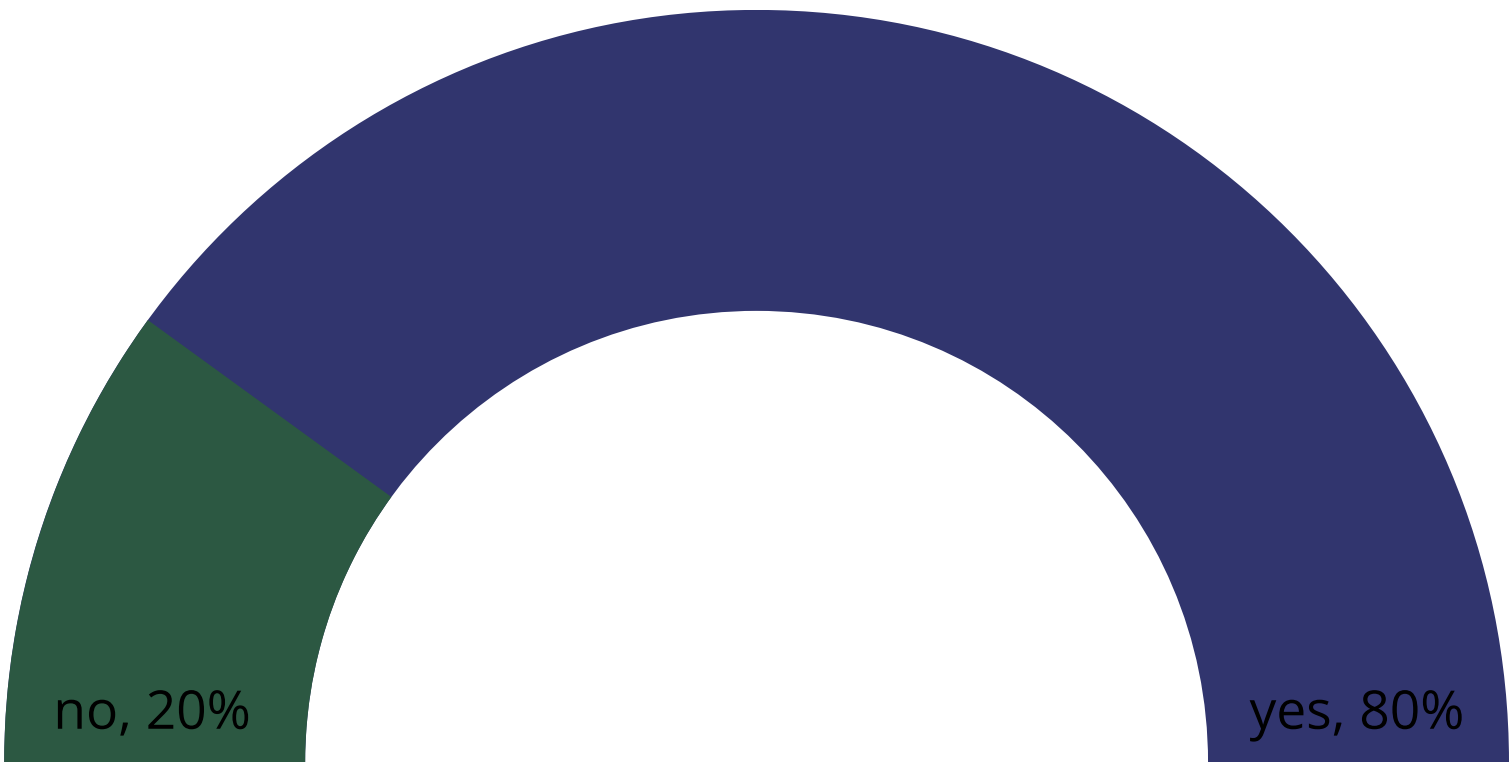
9. IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING WHAT WOULD IT BE?



This question revealed a variety of concerns, mostly focused on management and the maintenance of amenities, such as the park and gym, which some residents felt were not well-maintained. Parking was also a common issue, with frustrations over limited spaces and safety. Most residents reported at least one issue with the property, but a few who didn't express dissatisfaction noted they were rarely around, so any problems didn't affect them. This suggests that while some residents are dissatisfied, others may be less engaged with the property, possibly due to limited use or lack of awareness of the issues.

SURVEY METHODS

10. IS THIS APARTMENT WORTH IT FOR THE PRICE YOU PAY? IF NO, PLEASE ELABORATE.



The general consensus from this question is that most residents feel the property is worth the price they pay. Only 3 individuals disagreed, and when asked to elaborate, they provided the following responses:

- "No, there are better options nearby."
- "No, there are better options nearby, and every year the rent increases."
- "No, it's too expensive for the size of the units."

These responses suggest that while the majority of residents find value in their living situation, a small portion feel the rent does not justify the apartment's size or the increasing cost compared to nearby alternatives. This indicates that pricing and unit size may be key factors influencing the perceived value of the property for some residents.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

The survey findings show that most residents are satisfied with the value of the property, but there are concerns about the size and maintenance of amenities, parking issues, and rent increases. A small group of residents felt the property was not worth the price due to the size of the units and rising rents. The study's limitations include a small sample size (n=15) and potential biases in subjective responses. The findings align with previous behavior mapping and case study research, particularly in terms of the underutilization of amenities and the need for improved community engagement.

Some design interventions that could overall improve the space based on the survey research include:

Enhance Communal Spaces: Expand and redesign the park and gym to increase accessibility and usage. Create flexible multi-use spaces for social events and activities.

Address Parking and Accessibility: Increase parking capacity and improve the environment of the parking garage by enhancing air conditioning and lighting. Ensure accessible entryways and communal spaces for all residents.

Reevaluate Unit Design and Pricing: Adjust unit sizes or layouts for more space and flexibility. Review rent pricing and consider offering long-term resident incentives or flexible lease terms.

Foster Community Engagement: Organize community events and support resident-led programs. Improve communication platforms to connect residents, management, and service providers.

Improve Management and Maintenance: Increase maintenance frequency and transparency. Invest in staff training to enhance customer service and responsiveness.

These interventions aim to improve resident satisfaction by addressing functional, social, and managerial aspects of the property.

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