

SENIOR COMMUNITIES

resiliency

Wellness Through Design

NOURISHMENT + AIR + LIGHT + **FITNESS** + COMFORT



Ankrom Moisan

{ PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE }

{ OPERATIONS }



{ MARKET NEEDS }

We design for wellness by finding opportunities to adapt while maintaining physical infrastructure, operations, and marketing. Wellness relies on constant attention with periodic adaptations, so we've divided our insights into two operational tracks: Normal and Adaptive.

FITNESS

MOVEMENT AND PLAY

The connections between exercise and overall wellness are well established—but how can we, as designers, create senior communities that encourage healthy movement for people all physical abilities? How can we design fitness into residents' everyday lives? These design insights reflect our solutions over decades' worth of projects. This document provides an overview of some of these considerations when thinking about designing senior living communities.

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CLEANLINESS

A clean environment communicates a healthy environment; something residents are looking for more now than ever.



MURANO SENIOR LIVING | SEATTLE, WA

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CLEANLINESS

A clean environment communicates a healthy environment; something residents are looking for more now than ever.

Cleanliness is about more than dusting and keeping free of dirt. It is the daily upkeep that keeps the buildings looking new and fresh.

Worn out carpet, peeling paint, and wheelchair gouges in doors communicates a lack of regard for the well-being of the residents.

Keeping your facility clean is about more than good housekeeping. Thoughtful attention to furnishings, finishes, and materials can have a large impact on keeping the building clean.

Transition areas, such as vestibules, are valuable tools in keeping the building clean. Walk-off mats and other specialty carpet should be used in these areas to reduce the amount of water and dirt tracked in from the outside and give people a place to shake off rain or snow.

Finished surfaces should be easy to clean and be chosen to withstand repeated intense cleaning.

Staff should understand cleaning and maintenance tasks that are required to maintain product warranties and functionality. Maintenance manuals should be kept up to date as materials and products change and be reviewed for “hidden places” that could be missed in routine cleaning.

Regular cleaning also gets staff eyes on all surfaces in the community and can help spot problems while they are still small. Staff should be trained to look for and report issues that could be symptoms of larger problems, such as water staining indicating a plumbing leak.

NORMAL OPERATIONS

Daily Upkeep



{ MARKET NEEDS }

Materials and Finishes



{ PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE }

Proactive Maintenance



{ OPERATIONS }

ADAPTED OPERATIONS

Heightened Communication

Knowledgeable staff that can communicate how the physical systems and personnel work together to flexibly respond to unexpected events, can provide the peace of mind that no matter the event they will be safe.

Post-event

After an event that causes damage to the building careful testing, inspection, and cleaning is required prior to putting spaces back in service. This can include moisture sensing in water damaged areas, visual inspection of fire damaged beams, or removing debris from roofs, vents, and other hazardous locations.

With a little careful planning vestibules can become an integral part of an infection control plan. Vestibules are ideal spots for locating screening stations, PPE donning stations, or other atypical activities needed to keep residents healthy.

Equipment Considerations

Staff should understand the functions provided by the equipment in the building and what the impacts are if it's not working properly. This is critical after an acute emergency when equipment may be damaged. While it may be basic that a functioning hot water heater helps to prevent legionnaires disease, it may not be as obvious that a cooling tower water purifier prevents bacteria from building up in the HVAC system..

Staff should be aware of locations around the campus that are susceptible to the most common events in the area.

VIEWS

In addition to being pleasant to look at, views of nature have been shown to have a positive impact on healing and health.



AEGIS GARDENS NEWCASTLE | NEWCASTLE, WA

VIEWS

Even if all the natural views are poor, on-site landscaping, or courtyards can provide pleasant, usable outdoor space.

Ideally every resident has a beautiful view out their window. When that's not possible, dining rooms, activity rooms, or lounges with good views to nature should be available in all levels of care and available to every resident.

Maintaining good views doesn't happen by accident. Clean windows, and usable curtains, or binds are also important.

Landscape maintenance should be performed with an eye to the resident's view, Large windows with low sills are a great opportunity for residents who can't go outside to see landscape up-close, but often the from the inside the view is only of the back of the landscaping and spiderwebs. Plants should be chosen and maintained to be seen from the both the outside and inside.

NORMAL OPERATIONS

Outdoor Inspiration

Access for All

Maintained Clear Views



{ MARKET NEEDS }



{ PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE }



{ OPERATIONS }

ADAPTED OPERATIONS

Vantage Points

Access to outdoor views becomes even more important when residents are unable to go outside due to weather, their own health, or more general health related restrictions. Windows should be low enough to allow for views for individuals who are bedridden or can't get outside.

Find your Spot

When residents are unable to go outside, staff can help and encourage residents to find views, or provide other opportunities.

3

OUTDOOR ACCESS

Providing quality, usable outdoor space can set a campus apart from its competitors.



MIRABELLA PORTLAND | PORTLAND, OR

OUTDOOR ACCESS

For residents in Independent living, outdoor access is a given, for those in memory care, assisted living, or skilled nursing it may not be.

For residents that are less mobile or who need supervision, secure and safe outdoor spaces are still a must. Memory care should have direct access to a secure, enclosed courtyard, that is part of a wandering loop.

Use large outdoor spaces for community gathering. Plan for temporary outdoor structures to accommodate special occasions.

Doors used frequently by residents should have auto operators.

Landscaping should be fully accessible, providing for frequent rest stops with sitting areas.

Staff should regularly inspect the walking paths. Over time, frost, tree roots, and other factors can cause previously flat walks to lift or sink and become tripping hazards.

Landscaping should be maintained to prevent it from creating tripping hazards or other obstructions.

NORMAL OPERATIONS

Outdoors as Differentiation



{ MARKET NEEDS }

Outdoor Features



{ PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE }

Outdoor Maintenance



{ OPERATIONS }

ADAPTED OPERATIONS

Flexibility

Outdoors spaces should be designed to be multi-use, flexible, and ADA compliant. They should have convenient access to utilities (electricity, water, and possibly gas.) This allows them to be used in a variety of ways in an emergency, from temporary dining, to first responder staging.

Support for temporary event structures, such as banquet tents, can be used in an emergency to provide quick dry shelter.

Impacts

Response planning should include time spend reviewing how outdoor assets could be impacted by events and how they can be utilized in various scenarios.

Planning should also identify the most common and highest priority locations of weather impacts (i.e. where does the ice buildup the quickest, does drifting snow block doors, is there a need for pads to stage temporary cooling.) Ensure that they have the tools and knowledge to address them on hand.

RESIDENT HEALTH

A robust fitness center and Telehealth support are key attractors for prospective residents that they can't get in single-family homes.



RESIDENT HEALTH

Aside from dining, access to a robust fitness center is one of the most important factor prospective residents are looking for when they tour communities.

Health and fitness programs and spaces, come in all shapes and sizes. Exercise rooms, pools, spas, weights, and other equipment encourage residents to continue a healthy lifestyle.

Community infrastructure should be able to support telehealth in the resident living spaces, as well as the possibility of a specialized room for individuals that need staff support, or basic tasks such as temperature or blood pressure checks.

It is not enough to have state of the art facilities if there is not staff support and programs for their use. Physical therapist and trainers can prove guidance on how to get the most out of their use.

Often time individuals will need assistance to use telehealth services. This includes help with the technology and also help with things like note taking, or vital signs.

NORMAL OPERATIONS

Amenity Access



{ MARKET NEEDS }

Special Support



{ PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE }

Staff Support



{ OPERATIONS }

ADAPTED OPERATIONS

Telehealth as Differentiator

One of the leading attractors to senior living communities is the services they provide that they can't get in their single-family home. The availability of not only the technology, but the staff support for Telehealth can give residents and their families confidence that they will be able to access healthcare services without the need to travel on icy roads, or to the need to sit in a crowded waiting room with other sick people.

Contained Care

Specialized Telehealth rooms can be an important asset when addressing infectious diseases and other health conditions that prevent easy contact. This is true if it is one person that is impacted, such as by a compromised immune system, or many as is the case in a pandemic.

Technical Support

As noted above, telehealth can be more effective with a level of on-site help, both on the technical side and the healthcare side.

STAFF HEALTH

Working in the senior living industry is a lot of hard work.

A health, friendly working environment will reduce turn over, which in turn will lead to a more welcoming community.



STAFF HEALTH

Healthy, happy staff will be more understanding with residents, more proactive, and more productive.

Keeping staff healthy is a critical prerequisite to keeping resident's health. Health and safety tools, PPE, and similar items for staff should be located so they can be accessed in the normal process of their duties, without inconvenience or going out of their way.

Staff should have break rooms that respect their privacy and allow them to take breaks without interference from the residents.

Housekeeping and trash collection rooms should be conveniently located for ease of use. Handwash/hand sanitizer stations should be ubiquitous.

The community should develop a safety mindset and culture amongst the staff to promote and normalize the use of PPE and other safety tools.

NORMAL OPERATIONS

Happy Staff, Better Care



{ MARKET NEEDS }



{ PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE }



{ OPERATIONS }

ADAPTED OPERATIONS

Common Convenience

Safety Culture

Critical Extras

Dual Plans

Staff health in an emergency is critical to maintaining care for the communities' residents. Many of the needs of staff during normal operations become even more critical when operations must be adapted. For example, a heated break room is nice when it's cold outside, but if staff are onsite at 3 am to respond to a burst pipe during a freeze event, it is critical.

Communications infrastructure, and phone charging locations can become much more critical for staff that needs to remain on site while also maintaining contact with their own loved ones.

Response planning should include planning for the health and safety for staff and account for the impact of events on staff and their family. Depending on the situation, executive directors, facilities staff, food service, and others may be needed by the community while also being needed at home.

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