

**University of Minnesota College of Design  
Housing Studies 5481**

# **Promoting Independence in Housing and Community**

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# **Resilient Communities Project**

## **North Saint Paul**

“Your Favorite Small Town”

# Aging in Place

“Process by which older adults continue living in their homes for as long as possible without relocating to a living environment designed for aging”

# Summary

People: Independence, well-being, safety and quality of life

Housing: Adaptable, accessible, visitable and aesthetically pleasing

- retains its value over time

- improves neighborhood livability

# Analysis:

- Resident demographics
- Housing Stock
- Housing Needs
- Policy and Planning

# Methodology:

- Senior resident presentation
- Neighborhood tour
- Census data
- Interviews with senior residents
- Literature Review
- Interviews with Key Informants

# Resident Demographics:

## Age Statistics

### Individuals

- 13.1% - over age 65
- 34% - over age 50

### Multi-generational Households

- 23% include at least one person age 65 or older

# Resident Demographics: Long Term Residents

- 49% of all households have lived in North St. Paul more than 12 years
- Among those interviewed, the longest resident term was 67 years, the average was 28 years

# Housing Needs

## Planning to Stay

In North Saint Paul:

65% would not predict an age when they would move

Of those who predicted, stated “10 years”

50% if health issues arose

35% stated no plan to move

# North St. Paul Housing Stock

Overall:

- Older
- Smaller
- More affordable

than in the broader metropolitan area

# Aging Housing Stock

- 70% is single family detached housing

Of these:

- 75% of housing built before 1980
- 40% of housing built before 1960
- 20% built before 1940

# Housing Concerns

- Property tax increases
- Utilities
- Overhousing
- In order to move to a smaller, more manageable space one must be available

# Housing Needs

- Most people want to remain in their home as they grow older, for as long as they are able

Yet,

- In 2007, **.6%** of single-family units on the market were physically accessible

# Housing Needs

## Adaptable, Accessible home environments:

- decrease rate of functional decline
- reduce required health care services
- prevent falls
- improve activity patterns
- improve overall quality of life for older adults *with or without disabilities*

# Best Practices

## Literature Review

- Universal Design
- Gerotechnology
- Home Modifications

# Gerotechnology - “Smart” Homes

Technology allows in-home, remote monitoring of physiological status

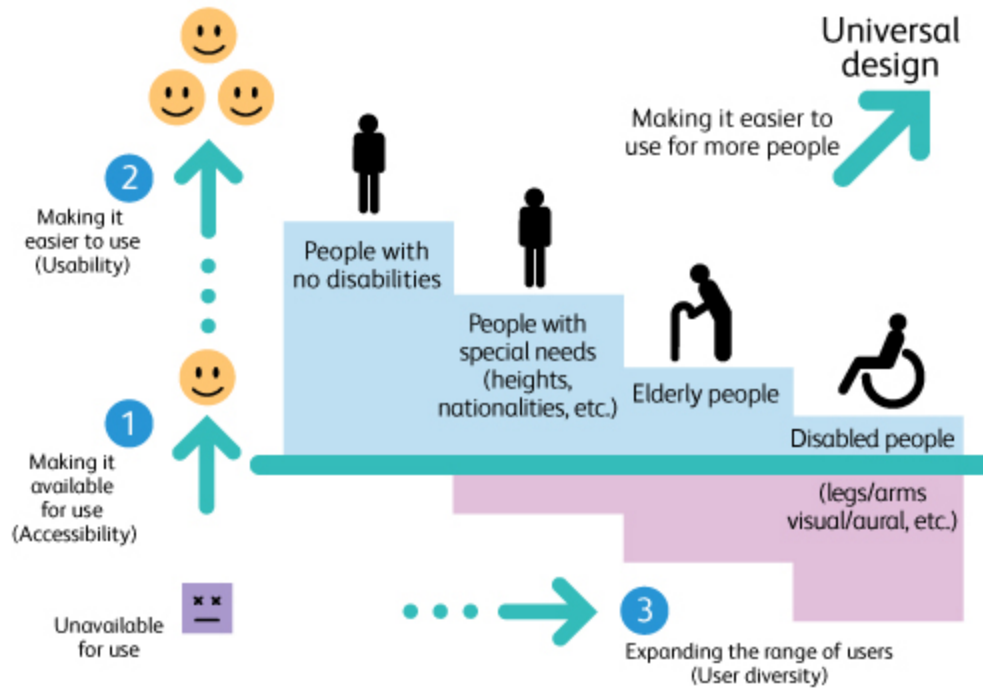
Personalized assessment and recommendations

Reduces isolation, increases independence

# Universal Design

- 1 equitable use.
- 2 flexibility in use.
- 3 simple and intuitive to use.
- 4 perceptible information.
- 5 tolerance for error.
- 6 low physical effort.
- 7 size and space for approach and use.

# Universal Design









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# A growing unmet need . . .

Best practices interviews revealed a lack of home modification programs tailored for seniors who seek to improve the safety and security of their homes.

Numerous home mod loan programs exist, utilizing city, state and CDBG funds

Sponsored by cities to support maintenance of housing stock

# Opportunity to pilot a home modification program

- improve and preserve housing stock
- improve neighborhood livability
- increase property values
- exemplify commitment to keep residents in the community

# Recommendations

Increase awareness of useful modifications by providing links on website.

Encourage long-term planning in the building permit process

Resource center and/or resource person

# Recommendations

Collaborate with the ISD trade school program to build a smart house; or to complete home modifications

Establish a senior review and advisory panel for housing and community development