

# **Aging in Place in the United States of America: Consumer Desires Versus Builder and Developer Perceptions**

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A perception exists amongst some home builders and developers that consumers who are planning to purchase or remodel a home will not embrace features that would make it look like they are getting older or infirm. Conversations with several Midwestern builders and developers led to the discovery of this perception. Because family members often influence these decisions, it is necessary that the study include age groups outside of aging adults.

The scope of this research is to investigate the perceptions of the population in regards to constructed accessible amenities specific to showers and believed to be appropriate for inclusion in new or remodeled single family homes for those intending to age in place. A quantitative approach is being used to survey a random sample of those living in six regions in the United States. Participants are provided photographs of a variety of showers with differing levels of accessibility. The respondents are then queried using a Likert-type scale with responses between 1 and 6 regarding their feelings about the comfort, safety and attractiveness of the photographed spaces.

Preliminary results indicate a difference between age groups yet a willingness and desire amongst most respondents for contractors to include safe, comfortable and attractive showers in the homes they build or remodel. Empirical evidence indicates that many people in the United States prefer to age independently in their own homes. The results of the study are intended to disprove the notion amongst some builders and developers that accessible design features are not desired because consumers do not want their home to look as if they are elderly or have physical limitations. Disproving such a notion would have a positive impact on the available housing inventory.

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