

By Michael Chamernik, Associate Editor

## HEALTH

NEIGHBORHOOD  
TYPE AND HEALTH

A new study finds that trees are a key factor in how neighborhoods affect residents' health.

A group led by Adriana Zuniga-Teran, a postdoctoral research associate in the University of Arizona's Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, wrote a journal entry titled "Neighborhood Design, Physical Activity, and Wellbeing: Applying the Walkability Model."

Based on a survey of 380 people in Tucson, Ariz., the report examines how four common neighborhood designs—traditional developments, suburban developments, gated communities, and cluster housing—affect residents' physical activity habits and mental wellness.

Zuniga-Teran surveyed residents of each of the four styles of neighborhood. Respondents were asked about the prevalence of local crime, their walking routines, their interactions with neighbors, and the amount of green space in their community.

Residents of low-density suburban developments were found to have the highest levels of mental well-being. Even with the annoyances of suburbia (long commutes, reliance on automobiles, and a lessened sense of community), the group benefits from local green spaces. Zuniga-Teran said that large lots and trees buffer noise, lower stress, and provide a level of privacy and security.

Cluster housing, such as townhome communities, gain the same advantages from green spaces. Since homes are packed in tight, residents also have greater connection with their neighbors and their community. They talk more and feel a stronger sense of safety.

People did the most walking, both for recreation and transportation, if they lived in mixed-use traditional neighborhoods where homes

are situated on an urban grid with nearby stores, restaurants, and other necessities and attractions. But, Zuniga-Teran found that residents of

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traditional neighborhoods had higher perceptions of crime, in part due to exposed trash, litter, and graffiti.

Gated communities didn't score well

in any particular category. "They did not score the highest in anything, not even perceived safety, which is kind of odd because they close themselves out

for safety reasons," Zuniga-Teran said in a statement.

Trees were the common thread for well-being. Zuniga-Teran said that more trees lead to a higher perception of safety, contribute to a better walking experience, and foster interaction between neighbors.

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ENVIRONMENT

## 17 MILLION HOMES FACE TOXIC RISK

More than 17 million homes, at a combined estimated market value of \$4.9 trillion, are located in areas that have considerable risk of environmental hazards.

ATTOM Data Solutions released its third annual Environmental Hazards Housing Risk Index, which analyzes more than 8,000 U.S. ZIP codes containing a total of 68.1 million single-family homes or condos. Roughly a quarter (17.3 million) of the homes studied are in ZIP codes that have a high or very high risk of at least one of four environmental hazards: Superfunds, brownfields, polluters, or poor air quality.

Home values are higher in low-risk areas. The 50 million homes with no nearby hazards have a median value of \$343,259, higher than the 15 million homes with one hazard (\$292,619), 1.9 million homes with two (\$231,654), 180,577 homes with three hazards (\$181,650), and 3,642 homes with all four (\$198,263).

Sellers in areas with no hazards saw gains of, on average, \$69,448 on their home values since the last purchase—\$13,000 more than sellers in ZIP codes with one hazard, \$22,000 more than those with two hazards, and \$39,000 more than those with three. A disproportionate share of homes near

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hazards haven't regained their value since the recession. More than 15 percent of homes with three or more hazards are still underwater, compared with just 9.4

percent of homes with no hazards.

The cities with the highest Total Environmental Hazard Index values are: Denver; San Bernardino, Calif.;

Curtis Bay, Md.; Santa Fe Springs, Calif.; and Fresno, Calif. The 95203 ZIP code in the Stockton-Lodi, Calif., market was the only ZIP code at risk from all four hazard categories.



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DEMOGRAPHICS

AGING BOOMERS  
ALTER WORKFORCE

The U.S. labor force is expected to change in the coming decades as Baby Boomers retire.

Pew Research found that the number of adults in the prime working-age range of 25 to 64 will rise to 183 million in 2035, from 173 million in 2015—a much slower rate of growth than in decades past. The working-age population grew from 97 million in 1975 to 138 million in 2005, and has expanded by 35 million since.

The youngest Baby Boomers will turn 65 by 2030, and by 2035, Boomers are projected to outnumber 25-to-45-year-olds born to U.S.-born parents 79 million to 60 million.

The share of U.S.-born working-age adults with U.S.-born parents will decline from 128 million to 120 million by 2035, and immigration will make up the difference.

The number of U.S.-born adults with an immigrant parent will rise to 25 million in 2035, from 11 million in 2015. The working-age immigrant population will rise to 39 million from 34 million during that same time. Projections are based on current immigration rates.

In 2035, 66 percent of working-age adults will be born in the U.S. to U.S.-born parents, 13 percent will be U.S.-born with an immigrant parent, and 21 percent will be foreign-born. In 2015, that split was 74 percent, 6 percent, and 20 percent, respectively. **PB**

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