



Image: JLS rendering of a 55+ community currently in development

Bougie Boomers

The “Amenification” of 55+ Communities

Introduction

In recent years, the 55+ living industry has shifted from needs-based housing to hospitality-driven lifestyle communities centered on amenities, services, and curated experiences. Much of this transformation is being driven by Baby Boomers entering retirement with greater purchasing power and a stronger emphasis on lifestyle. They are living longer, remaining active later in life, and prioritizing convenience, wellness, and social engagement while downsizing their homes. One report noted that renter households age 65+ increased by 8.1% between 2019 and 2023¹, while 67% of senior renters expect to live in an apartment environment rather than a single-family home². Together, these trends reflect a broader shift that has pushed developers to prioritize experience within senior housing.

Why This Trend Exists

Several demographic and economic factors are fueling the “amenification” of senior living. Advances in healthcare and wellness have extended life expectancy and reshaped perceptions of aging: retirement is no longer viewed as decline, but another active stage of life. Many older adults today travel frequently, exercise regularly, and maintain robust social lives. Baby Boomers also possess significant wealth and have decades of expectations shaped by luxury hospitality and wellness-oriented living. A 2026 study found that the median Baby Boomer-headed household had a net worth of \$432,200, compared to \$335,900 for the Silent Generation in 2021

when adjusted for inflation³. As a result, today’s seniors increasingly expect residential environments that reflect the comfort, convenience, and amenities associated with high-end consumer experiences.

Setting the Expectation

The evolution of senior living mirrors broader trends, where amenity-rich living has become the standard. Rooftop lounges, fitness centers, resort-style pools, and coworking spaces are common in conventional multifamily developments, and that philosophy has migrated into the 55+ sector. Developers increasingly dedicate large portions of projects to hospitality-inspired common areas such as lounges, cafés, theaters, salons, and wellness suites. The result is a product type that increasingly blurs the line between residential, hospitality, and healthcare design. Modern 55+ communities often provide extensive amenities and integrated services. Dining programs often feature restaurant-quality kitchens, cocktail lounges, coffee bars, and private event spaces, while wellness offerings feature fitness centers, yoga studios, spas, pickleball courts, and walking trails. Many developments also incorporate healthcare services such as on-site medical offices, therapy suites, and preventative care to support independence and convenience. Social connectivity remains another major focus, with club rooms, game lounges, art studios, theaters, and curated event programming designed to encourage interaction. In many ways, these communities function as self-contained lifestyle ecosystems where nearly every daily need can be met on-site.

What Does it Cost?

This elevated lifestyle comes at a premium. Monthly rents in high-end 55+ communities often range from \$3,000 to well over \$10,000 depending on location, unit size, services, and level of care. Despite the cost, demand remains strong, as many residents view these communities as consolidating expenses such as maintenance, dining, fitness, entertainment, and some healthcare services. From a development perspective, the model is attractive due to recurring revenue and guaranteed long-term demand driven by an aging population.

Design Implications

As senior living becomes increasingly design-forward, architects must respond to evolving expectations. Projects increasingly prioritize natural light, walkability, hospitality aesthetics, and multi-functional amenity spaces. Reflecting this trend, one of JLS Architects’ latest projects explores many of these concepts through the design of a new 55+ apartment community. Although the development contains only 124 residential units, it includes more than 45,000 square feet of amenity space dedicated to resident experience, including a dining room for approximately 150 people, a large bar and lounge, multiple game rooms, walking trails, fitness facilities, and on-site medical offices. The design balances lifestyle and livability, supporting independence while encouraging social interaction and wellness.

Summary

The “amenification” of 55+ housing reflects a broader redefinition of aging in America. Healthier, wealthier, more lifestyle-oriented seniors are driving demand for hospitality-inspired communities. These projects are designed not just for living but for shaping daily life. The challenge for developers, architects, and operators is balancing aspirational human-centered design with long-term affordability and accessibility.

Citations

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