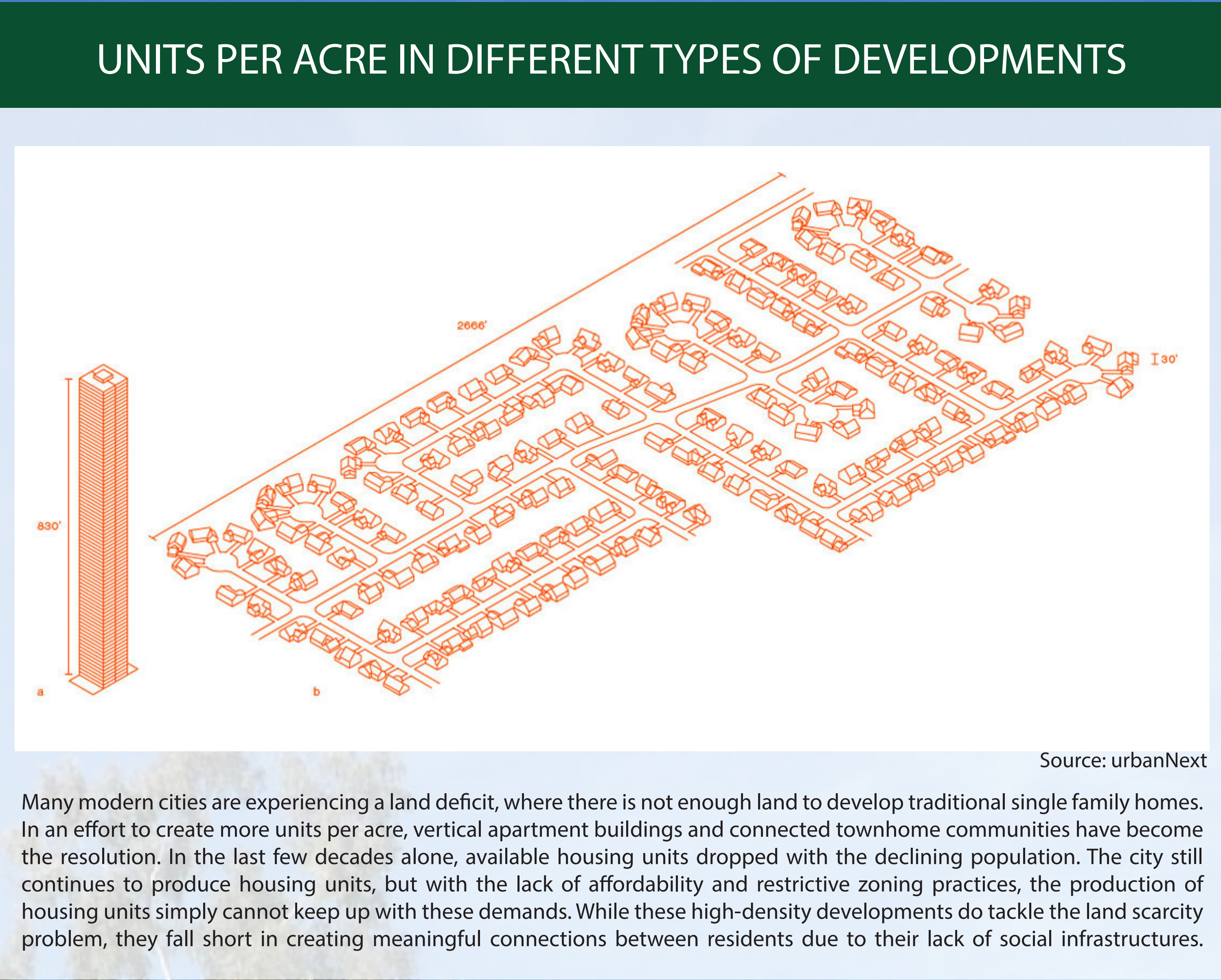


INTRODUCTION

Knowing the strengths and barriers of different types of social infrastructure, we are able to implement policies and standards for planners, developers, and architects on ways to incorporate these tactics into new developments without sacrificing the sense of community. This research will focus on how residents of both types of high-density residential housing, vertical apartment buildings and horizontal connected townhomes, perceive their space and if they feel adequately supported by the design and layout of the development they reside within. Focusing on four cities in the San Gabriel Valley, the study area has been chosen because of its diverse demographic and their mixed forms of housing, developments, and land use. Understanding the thoughts and concerns of residents will give us insight to what the residents want or need. Simply providing certain infrastructure that may not be what they agree with will not be helpful to them in any way.

Conducting a case study between apartment buildings and connected townhomes could show which specific infrastructures induce or inhibits social interactions between residents. With the ever present demand for more housing and limited amount of availability of developable land, it's important to find the balance between providing the most amount of units per acre without sacrificing the physical infrastructure that is required for communal livelihood between residents. Many residents in high-rise apartment buildings present feelings of social isolation and loneliness (Linh et al, 2024). Even with the higher density of people they are surrounded by, the lack of positive social interactions do not improve their quality of social life. A study done by Linh et al. in high-rise apartments in Vietnam showed the correlation between physical infrastructure and social contact. The lack of shared spaces, such as common areas and courtyards, in these apartments decreased social connectivity which led to a disconnected community.



METHODOLOGY

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

This will be a quantitative research using the Likert scale to record feelings and opinions of residents that live within each building type. The Likert scale will be able collect information such as how frequently residents socialize with each other, where do they do it the most often, and if they feel they are adequately supported to have social conversations by the physical infrastructure in their community. Knowing how current residents feel in their respective building type will provide insight into what amenities they feel should be added or should be removed in future developments and policies.

This study will be focused on connected townhomes and apartment buildings in the cities Alhambra, Monterey Park, San Gabriel, and Rosemead. These cities were selected due to their similarities in demographics and closeness to one another. The demographics consists of a large Asian population with some being the working class and others being older immigrants. Each of these cities has connected townhome and apartment building developments, some do not have both which is why the study area has broadened to include all four.

Surveys will be sent out and conducted at two of each types of housing that meets the set definitions. The target responses will be at least 10 responses. The surveys will be comprised of questions asking how residents feel about each variable on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the least comfortable or supported and 5 being the most.

DATA ANALYSIS

Study Area:

- Atlantic Times Square, Monterey Park (Apartment)
- 88 at Alhambra Place, Alhambra (Apartment)
- Mission Walk Townhomes, San Gabriel (Townhomes)
- Rosemead Townhome Community, Rosemead (Townhomes)

Variables:

- Intentional Public Spaces
- Unintentional Public Spaces
- Lighting
- Circulation
- Frontage
- Shared Entrances

Each location variable will have a set of questions that focus on both statistical analysis, frequency of passing by a neighbor or engaging in a conversation, and emotional analysis, how comfortable they feel engaging in a conversation in that space.

Do you feel there are sufficient recreational spaces? *

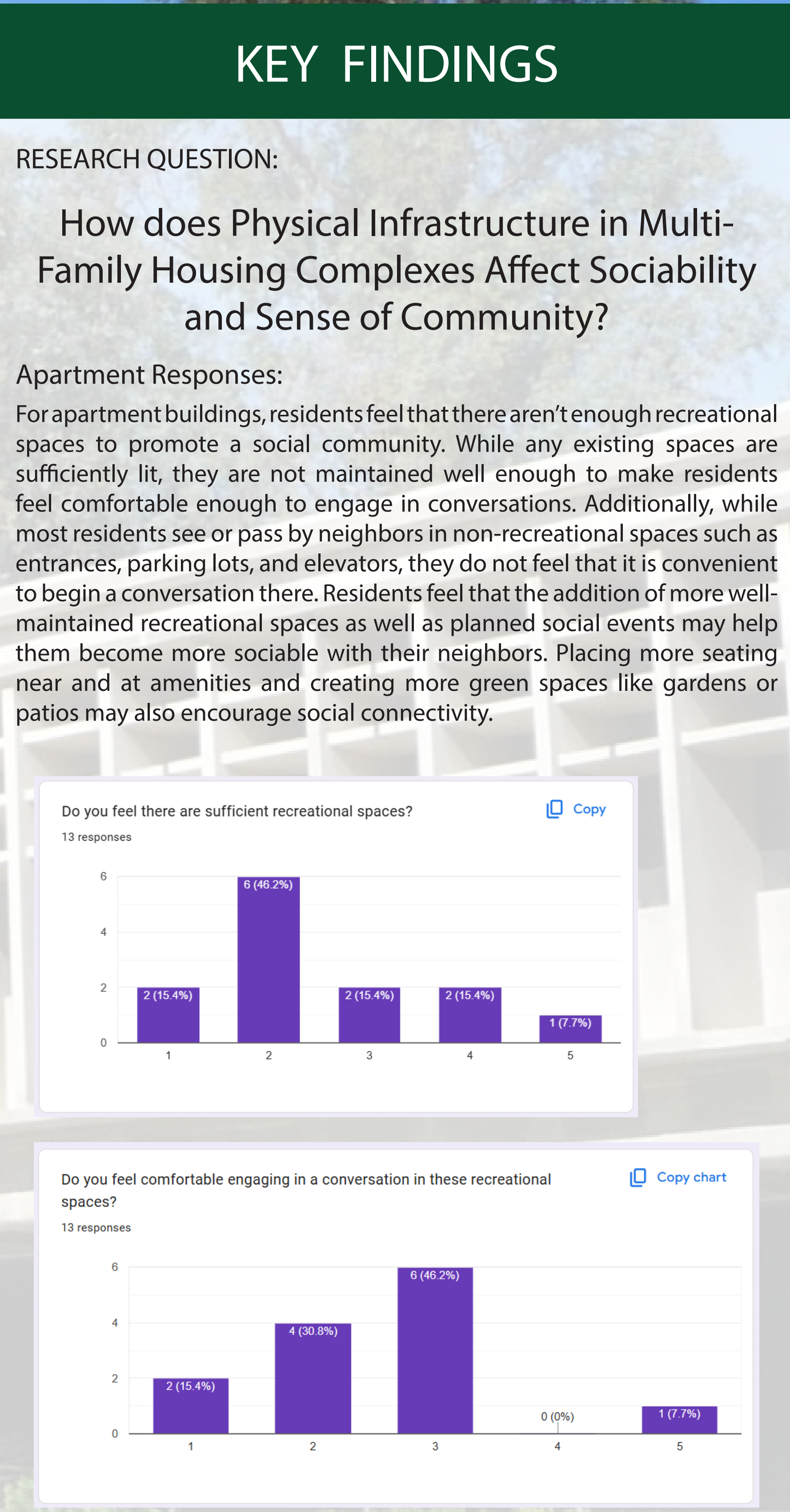
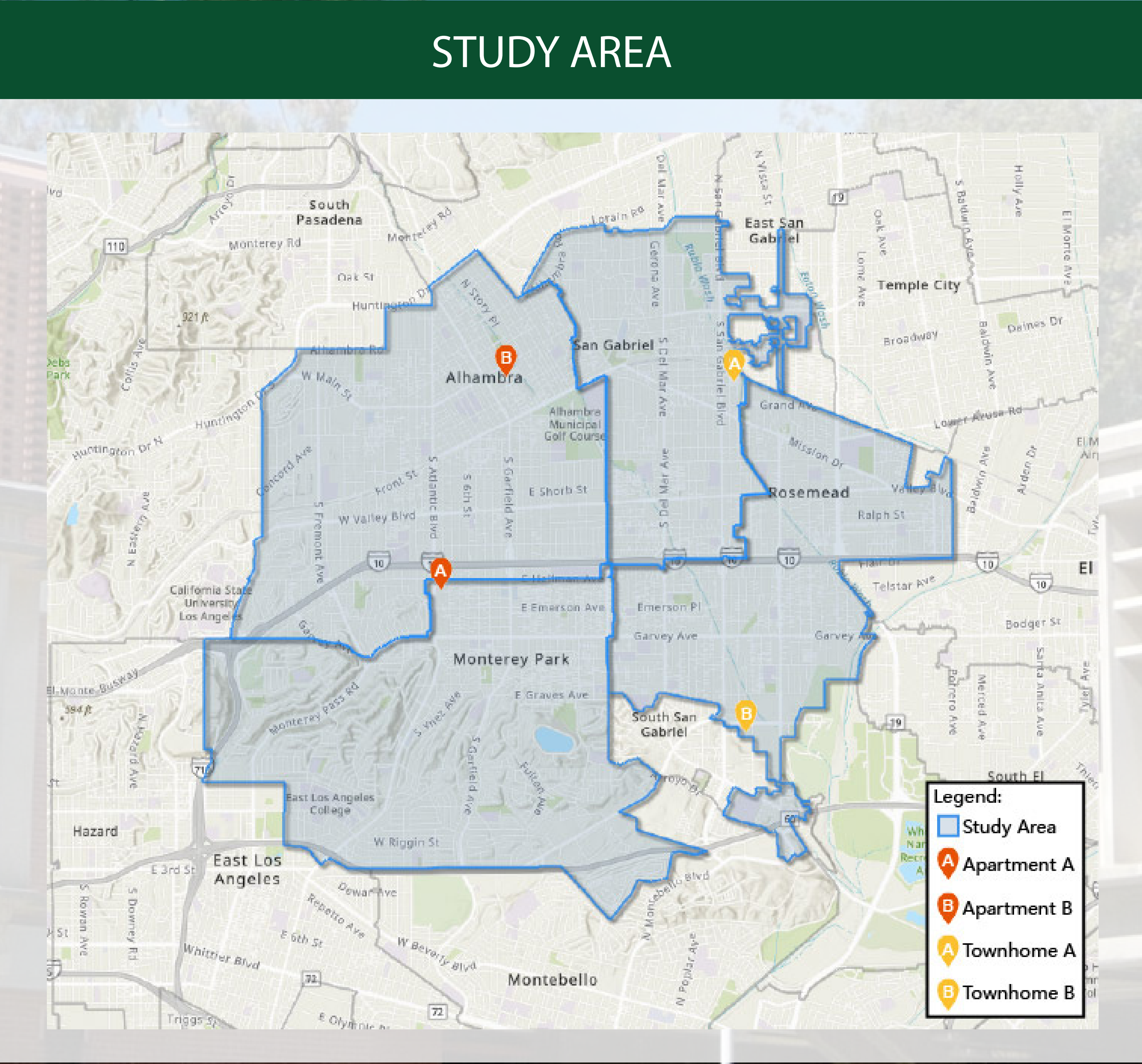
1	2	3	4	5	
None	☐	☐	☐	☐	More than enough

Do you feel comfortable engaging in a conversation in these recreational spaces? *

1	2	3	4	5	
Never	☐	☐	☐	☐	Frequently

Is the sufficient lighting in recreational spaces to make you feel safe? *

1	2	3	4	5	
None	☐	☐	☐	☐	More than enough



RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Apartments:

- Planned community events such as game nights, movie nights, and group exercise classes in existing recreational spaces
- Maintenance and upkeep of recreational spaces
- More open green spaces
- Create spaces for more unintentional encounters such as shared laundry spaces, coffee/drink stations, pedestrian-oriented circulation instead of long hallways
- Recreational spaces can be more than activity spaces, other social spaces can be shared lounges on each floor, community gardens, and courtyards

Recommendations for Townhomes:

- Planned community events similar to Apartments
- Installation of more social infrastructure such as benches on walkways and designated open green spaces
- More variety in recreational spaces such as dog parks, sports courts, and BBQ areas
- Connecting walkways of townhome communities to nearby retail or parks
- Shaded exterior walkways and green spaces
- Active frontages and ground-level transparency

CONCLUSIONS

Results from these surveys show that residents living within multi-family complexes in the San Gabriel Valley don't feel that there are sufficient infrastructure to cultivate a lively community between neighbors. While these complexes do offer amenities such as pools and gyms, they lack open spaces with seating that residents could use leisurely. It seems like residents are often too shy or don't feel comfortable enough to begin conversations themselves. Even with sufficient lighting that makes recreational spaces, walkways, and entrances feel safe, they don't create an environment that's comfortable. Many of the residents believe that formal communal events in these complexes could help residents become more social with each other.

Social connections between neighbors increases safety and trust within the community. Having these connections helps residents to feel more at home and connected with their neighbors, allowing them to have an easier time resolving disputes and stay updated on any safety concerns. The focus on creating more units per acre in a city experiencing land scarcity has caused many of these developments to leave out the necessary infrastructure to promote sociability. Based on this study, the insufficiency in communal spaces may be the reason why residents feel disconnected from each other. In both vertical apartment buildings and horizontal connected townhomes, residents stated they are the most comfortable engaging in a conversation at a recreational space. Newer developments should prioritize creating more recreational spaces that don't exist solely for an activity like a pool or a game room, but just simple open spaces where residents can visit to sit and get some fresh air. The addition and upkeep should not overshadow other shared spaces. The increase of social interactions from the additions of recreational spaces could lead to interactions at other spaces as well. Both new developments and existing developments should prioritize safety and comfortability at all shared spaces, just with an emphasis on recreational ones.

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