



Boomers are changing the tone of senior housing.

Expect to see senior housing boom

What do seniors want?

That's a multi-billion dollar quandary for developers who are trying to capture the attention of aging boomers.

As they have their whole lives, boomers refuse to think of themselves as "old," even though their age says otherwise. Occupancy in senior housing hit an eight-year low, despite boomers not getting younger.

Real estate trends expert Greg Paquin of The Gregory Group in Folsom sees that attitude reflected in new senior developments.

"With the increasing numbers of aging baby boomers, there has been an increase in the desire to live in an age-restricted, active-adult community," Paquin said. "I do not see this abating anytime soon."

Will Sacramento see a senior building boom? "Absolutely!" Paquin said. "I believe that Sacramento will be a major market for age-restricted, active-adult buyers in the future. Many of these buyers will be

homegrown (from Sacramento), but others will be from the Bay Area as they sell very high-priced real estate and relocate to a more affordable area, where oftentimes their kids have already moved to.

"It is expected that in the next 10 years, the age group of 65 years and older (in Sacramento's six-county region) will increase by 170,106 people or an increase of 41.8% as all the baby-boomers continue to age," he added. "These are astounding numbers and will manifest themselves in various ways."

Developers have incorporated practical senior-friendly features into new adult communities such as master suites on the main floor, wide doors (to accommodate wheelchairs) and roll-in showers to allow seniors to age in place.

Another trend: Seniors are selling their homes and opting to rent upscale apartments loaded with resort-like amenities such as downstairs restaurants, lounges and entertainment centers. "They can rent, don't pay a mortgage and enjoy an adults-only environment with no kids at the pool," Paquin said. "This evolving lifestyle is really interesting."

Some new senior communities emphasize fun, such as the Jimmy Buffett-inspired Latitude Margaritaville in Daytona Beach, Fla., and Hilton Head, S.C. Co-creator Eric McBride said, "We wanted to make sure these communities felt like it was your reward for all your hard years of work, not something you're downsizing into or moving into."

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