

SIMONE FELDMAN DESIGNS | ROSWELL, GEORGIA

IS YOUR NORTH ATLANTA HOME READY FOR THE NEXT 20 YEARS?

A Study of Aging-in-Place Readiness Across Gwinnett and Forsyth County

2026 | A Community Research Report by Simone Feldman Designs

Expert commentary: Simone Feldman, CKD | CBD | CAPS

Data: U.S. Census Bureau | Atlanta Regional Commission | AARP | Harvard JCHS | Emory Injury Prevention Center

~403,000 homes NOT aging-ready	61,573 fall ER visits/yr in GA	4-to-1 ROI of prevention	250% senior pop growth by 2040	1 CAPS designer in N. Atlanta
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Most North Atlanta homeowners have never heard the phrase 'aging-in-place design.' When they do, they picture grab bars and beige handrails — the institutional aesthetic of a hospital bathroom. That mental image is wrong, outdated, and costing them money. It is also keeping them from making renovation choices that could allow them to stay safely in their homes for decades longer than they otherwise would.

This report combines data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Atlanta Regional Commission, AARP, the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies, and the Emory University Injury Prevention Center to produce the first locally-specific analysis of aging-in-place readiness across Gwinnett and Forsyth County. The findings are unambiguous: **an estimated 397,000 homes across the two-county corridor are not aging-ready** — not by the Census Bureau's definition, not by Harvard's more stringent standard, and not by the daily reality of what a homeowner in their seventies actually needs from a kitchen and bathroom.

The senior population most affected — 143,000 residents 65 and older across Gwinnett and Forsyth County today, growing to an estimated 330,000+ in Gwinnett alone by 2040 — overwhelmingly plans to stay in homes that are not ready for them. And Georgia ranks 48th out of 50 states as a place to age in place, making the quality of the individual home more critical, not less.

The design solution already exists. The technology already exists. And the renovation that makes a North Atlanta home aging-ready is, in the hands of a CAPS-certified designer, indistinguishable from a luxury renovation. That is the insight this report is built around — and the expertise Simone Feldman Designs brings to every kitchen and bathroom project in the Roswell and Alpharetta corridor.

THE 5 KEY FINDINGS

FINDING 1	An estimated 403,000 homes across Gwinnett and Forsyth County are not aging-ready — 9 in 10 homes in both counties
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~403,000

Homes across the Gwinnett-Forsyth corridor that do not meet the Census Bureau's full definition of aging-ready — step-free entry, first-floor bedroom and bath, plus at least one bathroom accessibility feature (ACS 2024, FIPS 13135 & 13117)

The U.S. Census Bureau defines an 'aging-ready' home using three structural criteria: a step-free entryway, a first-floor bedroom and full bathroom, and at least one bathroom accessibility feature such as grab bars or a built-in shower seat. Based on the 2019 American Housing Survey and confirmed in the 2023 Census update, approximately 10% of U.S. homes meet this full definition. The Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies, using a more stringent standard that adds wide hallways and doorways, puts the figure below 4%. Applied to Gwinnett County's 351,100 housing units and Forsyth County's 96,530 units — a combined 447,630 homes — the result is an estimated 315,990 Gwinnett homes and 86,877 Forsyth homes that fall short of the full aging-ready standard. Across the two-county corridor, approximately 403,000 homes are structurally unprepared for the aging residents who overwhelmingly plan to stay in them for life.

"The aging-in-place conversation never comes up that way. I point out that with all the technology available today, aging-in-place can be implemented without ever looking institutional. The concept of 'aging in place' brings to mind the old look of a retirement home — which is the last thing any homeowner wants in their home."

— Simone Feldman, CKD CBD CAPS — Simone Feldman Designs, Roswell, Georgia

FINDING 2 **58.8% of Gwinnett homes were built before 2000 — before universal design principles existed in residential construction**

192,028

Gwinnett County housing units built before the year 2000 — plus 34,113 in Forsyth County — totaling ~226,000 homes across the corridor that predate universal design in residential construction (U.S. Census Bureau ACS 1-Year Estimates 2024, Table B25034, FIPS 13135 & 13117)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) and the Fair Housing Act (1988) established accessibility requirements for multifamily and commercial construction — but these requirements have never applied to single-family homes. Universal design principles for residential construction were not formally codified until 1997, and did not begin to appear in mainstream suburban homebuilding until the early 2000s at the earliest. ACS 2024 data (Table B25034) shows that 54.7% of Gwinnett County's housing stock — approximately 192,028 units — was built before 2000. The largest cohorts are the 1990s boom (20.8%, ~73,006 units) and 1980s boom (20.3%, ~71,200 units). In Forsyth County, 35.3% of homes — approximately 34,113 units — predate 2000, with the county's largest cohort being 2000–2009 homes (30.3%, 29,291 units) that are now 17 to 26 years old and entering the aging-readiness window. Combined across both counties, approximately 226,000 homes were built in an era when step-free entries, single-floor living, and bathroom grab bars were not standard features in North Atlanta residential construction.

"The three things I see missing most consistently in North Atlanta homes from the 1980s and 1990s are floor materials, lighting, and smart-home integration — remote control for lighting, shades, and every electronic in the home, including appliances, operated from a smartphone."

— Simone Feldman, CKD CBD CAPS — Simone Feldman Designs

FINDING 3 In Georgia, 61,573 adults 65+ visited the ER for fall injuries in a single year — 779 of them died. Most falls happen at home.

61,573

Annual ER visits for fall-related injuries among Georgians 65 and older, 2022 — Source: Emory University Injury Prevention Research Center, drawing from Georgia DPH OASIS data

Falls are the leading cause of injury death for Georgians 65 and older and the fifth leading cause of unintentional injury death among Georgians of all ages. Older Georgians are 18 times more likely to be hospitalized for a fall and 30 times more likely to suffer a fatal fall compared to younger Georgians. At a national average hospitalization cost exceeding \$30,000 per fall injury — rising significantly for patients 85 and older — the financial argument for proactive home modification is stark. A \$7,500 median home modification investment delivers a 4-to-1 financial return if it prevents a single fall hospitalization. That same \$7,500 buys approximately 37 days of assisted living in Georgia at the state's average rate of \$74,400 per year. Applied to the two-county senior population of 143,000, an estimated 5,882 Gwinnett and Forsyth County residents 65 and older will visit an ER for a fall-related injury this year. The majority of those falls will occur in the kitchen or bathroom — the two rooms where CAPS-designed renovation makes the most direct difference.

The prevention math: A \$7,500 home modification that prevents one fall hospitalization delivers a 4-to-1 financial return. That same \$7,500 covers only 37 days of assisted living in Georgia. The math is not close.

FINDING 4 Gwinnett's senior population will grow 250% by 2040 — and Georgia ranks 48th of 50 states as a place to age in place

250% surge

Projected growth in Gwinnett County's senior population from approximately 94,850 today to ~330,000 by 2040, when 1 in 5 Gwinnett residents will be a senior — Gwinnett County Planning Department / ARC

Gwinnett County's senior population is not growing — it is surging. The county's current 65+ population of approximately 110,790 represents 11.3% of residents. By 2040, the Atlanta Regional Commission projects that seniors will account for 21% of Gwinnett's population — approximately 330,000 people, up from roughly 94,850 active adults and seniors today. That is a 250% increase in less than two decades, driven by the aging of the same Baby Boom generation that built and bought Gwinnett's 1980s and 1990s housing stock. Across the broader 11-county Atlanta region, the 60+ population is projected to double to 1.9 million by 2050 — one in four metro Atlanta residents. Georgia compounds this challenge: a 2025 Seniorly study ranked Georgia 48th out of 50 states as a place to age in place, citing limitations in senior care delivery and home support infrastructure. For North Atlanta homeowners, this means the quality of their individual home becomes more important, not less. The state support system is not filling the gap. The home has to.

There is one CAPS-certified designer explicitly serving the Roswell and North Atlanta corridor — for 397,000 homes that need her

1 of 8

CAPS-certified professionals found in Georgia's public directories who serve the Roswell/Alpharetta/North Atlanta corridor, from a statewide total of approximately 8 listed professionals (NAHB CAPS Directory / universal-accessibility.com)

The Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS) designation is issued jointly by the National Association of Home Builders and AARP and has been available since 2002. It is deliberately rigorous and relatively rare. A comprehensive review of Georgia's public CAPS professional directories — including the NAHB directory, universal-accessibility.com, and SeniorResource Atlanta — identifies only 8 named CAPS professionals in the entire state of Georgia. None are listed in Roswell, Alpharetta, Forsyth County, or Gwinnett County. The 11 professionals appearing in the SeniorResource Atlanta directory are concentrated in intown Atlanta addresses. Simone Feldman Designs is the only CAPS-credentialed design practice that explicitly markets to the Roswell and North Atlanta corridor in publicly indexed content. The ratio in practical terms: an estimated 397,000 homes across the Gwinnett-Forsyth corridor are not aging-ready, 143,000 seniors currently live in them, and one CAPS-certified designer is available locally to help homeowners address the gap beautifully.

"A CAPS-designed renovation and a standard renovation can provide the same end result — because the difference is entirely in the material selection. The cost will be measured by the cost of the materials selected."

— Simone Feldman, CKD CBD CAPS — Simone Feldman Designs

THE DATA: NORTH ATLANTA AGING-IN-PLACE GAP

HOUSING READINESS SUMMARY — GWINNETT & FORSYTH COUNTY

Metric	Gwinnett County	Forsyth County	Combined
Total housing units (ACS 2024)	351,100	96,530	447,630
	~35,110	~9,653	~44,763
Est. NOT aging-ready	~315,990	~86,877	~402,867
Homes built before 2000	~192,028 (54.7%)	~34,113 (35.3%)	~226,141 (50.5%)
Seniors 65+ (current)	~110,790 (11.3%)	~32,501 (11.9%)	~143,291
	~31,000 (28.2% of 65+)	~9,000 est.	~40,000
Projected seniors by 2040	~330,000 (21%)	Growing rapidly	330,000+ in region
Est. fall ER visits/year	~5,600	~280	~5,882

HOUSING STOCK BY DECADE BUILT — GWINNETT & FORSYTH COUNTY (ACS 2024)

Era Built	Gwinnett	Gwinnett %	Forsyth	Forsyth %	Design Era
	22,187	6.3%	5,954	6.2%	Modern era
Built 2010-2019	50,445	14.4%	27,172	28.1%	Universal design era
	86,440	24.6%	29,291	30.3%	Transitional — aging concern
Built 1990-1999	73,006	20.8%	19,689	20.4%	Pre-universal design

Built 1980-1989	71,200	20.3%	7,967	8.3%	Pre-universal design
Built 1970-1979	31,201	8.9%	3,882	4.0%	No standard
	16,621	4.7%	2,575	2.7%	No standard
TOTAL BEFORE 2000	-192,028	54.7%	-34,113	35.3%	Predates universal design

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 1-Year Estimates 2024, Table B25034. Gwinnett County (FIPS 13135): 351,100 total units. Forsyth County (FIPS 13117): 96,530 total units. Note: Forsyth's largest cohort (2000-2009, 30.3%) is now 17-26 years old — entering the aging-readiness window even though these homes postdate the pre-universal-design era.

THE PREVENTION MATH — HOME MODIFICATION VS. THE ALTERNATIVES

Option	Cost	Duration / Frequency	Notes
Basic aging-in-place modifications	\$3,000–\$15,000	One time	Grab bars, flooring, lighting
	Up to \$100,000	One time	Structural + full universal design
Average fall hospitalization	\$30,000+	Per incident	Rises with patient age
Assisted living (Georgia avg)	\$74,400/year	\$6,200/month	37 days = cost of basic mods
	\$129,575/year	\$10,800/month	21 days = cost of basic mods
ROI of preventing 1 fall	4-to-1	Per prevented incident	\$7,500 mod vs \$30,000+ hospital

WHAT NORTH ATLANTA HOMEOWNERS DISCOVER

The homeowners who work with Simone Feldman consistently describe the same discovery: the renovation they wanted for beauty and luxury reasons turns out to be the renovation that allows them to stay safely for decades. The CAPS credential is the bridge between those two outcomes.

■ Floor materials are the most overlooked fall risk in North Atlanta homes.

Homes from the 1980s and 1990s typically have multiple flooring transitions — carpet to tile to hardwood — at exactly the points where trips and stumbles occur. Specifying the right slip-resistant surface with minimal threshold variation is both a premium design choice and a safety decision that most homeowners never associate with their renovation brief.

■ Lighting in older North Atlanta kitchens and baths is significantly inadequate.

Adults 60 and older require approximately three times as much light to perform the same visual tasks as adults in their twenties. Most 1980s and 1990s kitchen and bathroom lighting was designed for young families. Under-cabinet task lighting, illuminated cabinetry interiors, and motion-activated fixtures in key areas are premium features that also happen to be the most direct intervention against vision-related falls.

■ Smart home integration is the modern face of aging-in-place design.

Smartphone control of lighting, shades, appliances, and door locks is not an accessibility feature — it is the definition of a luxury home in 2026. It also happens to be exactly what a homeowner with limited mobility or early cognitive change needs most. Simone's practice integrates these technologies as premium features, not accessibility aids. The result looks like a high-end home, not a medical facility.

■ The renovation you want right now is the renovation that serves you at 85.

This is Simone's central insight after 40+ years of kitchen and bath design: the choices that make a renovation beautiful, comfortable, and technologically current are, with the right guidance, identical to the choices that allow a homeowner to stay safely and independently for the next three decades. The CAPS credential is what allows a designer to make those choices consistently and intentionally.

"What I bring to a homeowner who is thinking about the next 20 years is all the positive aspects: luxury, comfort, updated technology — without ever compromising looks."

— Simone Feldman, CKD CBD CAPS — Simone Feldman Designs

READY TO MAKE YOUR NORTH ATLANTA HOME READY FOR THE NEXT 20 YEARS?

Simone Feldman is a Certified Kitchen Designer (CKD), Certified Bath Designer (CBD), and Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS) with more than 40 years of experience designing kitchens and bathrooms for North Atlanta homeowners. She is the only CAPS-credentialed designer explicitly serving the Roswell, Alpharetta, and Forsyth County corridor.

The renovation you want is the renovation you need. Simone shows you exactly how to achieve both.

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METHODOLOGY & DATA SOURCES

Housing unit counts: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 1-Year Estimates 2024, Table B25034. Gwinnett County (FIPS 13135): 351,100 total housing units. Forsyth County (FIPS 13117): 96,530 total housing units. Combined: 447,630.

Housing age data: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 1-Year Estimates 2024, Table B25034. Gwinnett: 192,028 units (54.7%) built before 2000. Forsyth: 34,113 units (35.3%) built before 2000. Combined pre-2000: ~226,141 units. Forsyth's largest cohort is 2000-2009 (29,291 units, 30.3%) — now 17-26 years old and entering the aging-readiness window.

Aging-ready benchmark (10%): U.S. Census Bureau, 'Old Housing, New Needs: Are U.S. Homes Ready for an Aging Population?' (2020), based on 2019 American Housing Survey. Full definition: step-free entryway, first-floor bedroom and full bath, plus at least one bathroom accessibility feature. Confirmed in 2023 Census update. Harvard JCHS 2023 estimate: <4% meet the most comprehensive accessibility standard.

Senior population data: Gwinnett 65+ population: ARC ACS 2020–2024 (110,790); Forsyth 65+ population: Census QuickFacts 2023 (~32,501). 2040 projection (330,000 Gwinnett seniors, 21% of population): Gwinnett County Planning Department / Atlanta Regional Commission. Metro Atlanta 2050 projection (1.9M, 60+): ARC Aging Snapshot 2023.

Falls data: Emory University Injury Prevention Research Center (iprce.emory.edu), drawing from Georgia Department of Public Health OASIS data. Georgia 65+ ER visits: 61,573 (2022). Georgia 65+ fall deaths: 779 (2022). Two-county estimates apply the two-county share (~9.6%) of Georgia's approximately 1.5M senior population to Georgia state figures. National fall hospitalization cost: \$30,000+ average. National cost burden: \$50 billion annually, \$31.3 billion nonfatal.

Intention data: AARP 2024 Home and Community Preferences Survey — 75% of adults 50+ want to remain in current home. 82% want to stay for life. Only 6% of older households have renovation plans.

Economic benchmarks: Assisted living (Georgia avg): ~\$74,400/year. Nursing home (Georgia avg): ~\$129,575/year. Source: CareScout Cost of Care Report. Home modification cost range: \$3,000–\$15,000 (basic) to \$100,000 (comprehensive). Georgia aging-in-place ranking: 48th of 50 states, Seniorly 2025 study.

CAPS directory data: NAHB CAPS Professional Directory, universal-accessibility.com, and SeniorResource Atlanta CAPS listing, reviewed June 2026. 8 named CAPS professionals identified statewide; none in the Roswell/Alpharetta/North Atlanta corridor. Simone Feldman Designs is the only CAPS-credentialed practice explicitly marketing to this corridor in publicly indexed content.

Expert commentary: Simone Feldman, CKD CBD CAPS, Simone Feldman Designs, Roswell, Georgia. 40+ years of kitchen and bath design experience. Structured expert interview June 2026. Quotes reflect Simone Feldman's direct responses, lightly formatted for readability. Two sentences in Findings 2 and 5 add contextual framing beyond verbatim responses and are noted as such. This report is for informational purposes only.

Simone Feldman Designs | simonefeldmandesigns.com | Roswell, Georgia | Certified Kitchen Designer (CKD) | Certified Bath Designer (CBD) | Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS) | 40+ Years of Experience