

# What Do Homeowners Want Today?

2020 was a surprisingly good year for many home services businesses, and that demand has continued through 2021. But what projects are most in-demand? We took a look at three different surveys that reveal the most popular residential projects.

The surveys:

- [Houzz & Home survey](#), recently released by Houzz, looks at completed projects through 2020.
- [Thumbtack Spring Home Projects 2021](#)
- [What Homebuyers Really Want](#) 2021 survey from the National Association of Home Builders

## Outdoor Projects

In 2020, Houzz says 57% of homeowners spent money on outdoor projects. Their biggest focus was on upgrading landscaping, with 35% of homeowners updating garden beds, 20% investing in their lawns, and 14% spending money on irrigation improvements.

A smaller share (15%) updated their patios and terraces, and 21% added outdoor lighting. Homeowners also spent money on updating sheds/workshops, gazebos/pergolas, and built-in kitchens, all up 1% year-over-year.

Thumbtack reports its 10 most popular outdoor projects this spring were:

- Outdoor Landscaping & Design
- Fence & Gate Installation
- Exterior Painting
- Deck/Porch Remodel
- Play Equipment Construction
- Artificial Turf Installation
- Swimming Pool Repair
- Sprinkler/Irrigation System Installation
- Patio Remodel/Addition
- Gazebo Installation/Construction

The “top trending upgrades” for this summer included:

- Artificial Turf Installations (+275%)
- Play Equipment Construction (+255%)
- Gazebo Installations (+230%)
- Exterior Painting (179%)
- Deck Staining and Sealing (+167%)
- Deck or Porch Remodels (+166%)

## Interior Remodels

Thumbtack reports seeing a “huge increase in interest for home upgrades” compared to 2020, including:

- Kitchen Remodels (+258%)
- Cabinet Painting (+217%)
- Home Organizing (+201%)
- Basement Finishing & Remodels (+162%)

Specifically, Thumbtack reports some of the most popular indoor home upgrades it saw this spring included:

- Interior Painting
- Floor Installation/Replacement
- Tile Installation
- Lighting Installation
- Bathroom Remodel
- Door Installation
- Home Remodeling Services



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Taking a closer look at specific rooms, Houzz found:

## Kitchens

Kitchen renovations “captured the most renovation spending” in 2019 and 2020. Median spending for the 27% of homeowners who upgraded or added a kitchen rose to \$40,000, up from \$35,000 the year before. For smaller kitchens (less than 200 square feet), median spending actually fell \$4,000 to \$20,000.

## Bathrooms

Bath remodeling was the second-most in-demand reno, with an overall median spend of \$8,000 for small renovations and \$18,000 for major remodels.

## Other Remodeling Investments

Median spending increased in general in 2020, including:

- Living rooms/family rooms — \$3,000
- Dining rooms — \$1,500
- Laundry rooms — \$1,500
- Home offices — \$1,100
- Closets — \$1,000
- Guest bedrooms — \$1,000

## Home systems

Homeowners also invested in their home systems, Houzz reports:

- 26% updated plumbing
- 24% updated electrical

And Thumbtack says these were some of the most popular maintenance projects requested:

- Electrical Wiring Repair
- Plumbing Pipe Repair
- Drywall Repair and Texturizing
- Roof Repair and Maintenance
- Plumbing Drain Repair
- Sprinkler and Irrigation System Repair and Maintenance



For this summer, Thumbtack saw increased interest from homeowners for these projects:

- Concrete Repair and Maintenance (+126%)
- Sprinkler and Irrigation System Repair Maintenance (+123%)
- Asphalt Repair and Maintenance (+109%)
- Countertop Repair and Maintenance (+101%)



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## What Homebuyers Want

The 2021 report from the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) What Home Buyers Really Want (WHBRW) looks at the specifics homebuyers are looking for in a new home. Overall, 25% say the COVID-19 pandemic “affected their housing preferences.” However, if household members worked and attended school remotely, that number rose to 43%, with 35% of them specifically wanting a larger home (a median of 2,022 square feet of finished space).

They also want more outdoor space, leading to 30% saying they prefer to live “farther from city centers.” The WHBRW survey underscores the findings from Houzz and Thumbtack, with 75% or more of homebuyers saying they want exterior lighting, patios, front porches, rear porches, and decks.

The top five most-wanted specialty rooms (for over 60% of buyers) are laundry rooms, dining rooms, great rooms, home offices, and separate living rooms. But the demand for specialty rooms varies by demographics, with about 60% of millennials (the largest group of homebuyers these days) saying an exercise room is “essential or desirable.”

A lasting impact of the pandemic is that many homebuyers assume they'll be working remotely, so they want to “privatize second-floor loft space... into more enclosed spaces for kids,” so adults working remotely are separated from noisy kids. Homebuyers prefer their new homes have at least two bathrooms (37%), with 21% wanting 2.5 baths, and 26% asking for three or more.



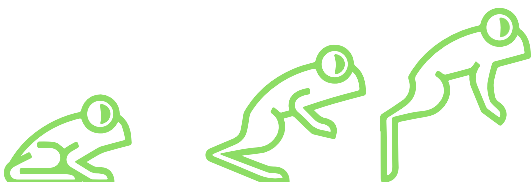
Today's homebuyers are more interested in buying homes designed for multiple generations, particularly minorities, with 53% of Hispanics, 50% of African Americans, and 46% of Asian Americans preferring this type of home. This has also led to an interest in homes with “accessibility features,” with 63% wanting the laundry room on the first floor and at least 60% also asking for:

- A full bath on the main level of the home
- Wider doorways (3+ feet) and hallways (4+ feet)
- Non-slip floor surfaces
- An entrance without steps

When it comes to home systems, most homebuyers (52%) prefer to heat their homes with electricity but cook with gas (51%). And a multi-zone HVAC system is among the top five most-wanted tech features in the WHBRW survey.

It's important to remember that most homebuyers today are millennials who are more interested in buying fixer-uppers and investing in renovation and remodeling projects.

All three surveys show that whether they're looking for new houses or remodeling their existing homes, consumers today, the NAHB says, want a home the keeps “their families comfortable, safe and healthy.”



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