

HOUSING

APARTMENT
INNOVATION SURVEY
+
INSIGHTS



Ankrom Moisan

PIVOTING PRIORITIES

Today, more than ever before, daily life revolves around the home. We set out to understand how this behavioral change—and how living in an apartment through the COVID-19 pandemic—might change apartment resident’s priorities about where and how they live.

We surveyed apartment renters across Washington and Oregon, and over 400 people responded. Their responses revealed four priorities about apartment design: sought-after features that are often scaled back in the pursuit of value engineering.

- #1** Better unit layouts that support 24/7 living.
- #2** Generous access to fresh air and natural light.
- #3** Truly private, quiet spaces.
- #4** Private balconies for everyone.

We now have the opportunity to evolve apartment design in a way that meets each of these new priorities.



64%

OF PEOPLE SAY THEY WILL WANT
TO WORK FROM HOME AT LEAST
TWO DAYS A WEEK AFTER THE
PANDEMIC

THREE OR MORE DAYS PER WEEK

41%

TWO DAYS PER WEEK

23%

JOB DOES NOT ALLOW WORK FROM HOME

15%

I DO NOT WANT TO WORK FROM HOME

13%

ONE DAY PER WEEK

7%

#1

Adaptive Living

As people's lives, work, and education are increasingly intertwined, every square inch of multi-family units becomes essential. With adaptable space and convertible features, even our smallest unit design can help maintain healthy separation from home and work. In collaboration with our clients, we are integrating flexible features from the start. Many projects in design are already bringing back "plus" spaces in all unit types.

“ *i need more versatile spaces and arrangements— spaces doubling as work, education, play, and rest space* ”

37%

OF PEOPLE SAID
“BETTER UNIT
FEATURES” ARE
A TOP PRIORITY
IN CHOOSING THEIR
NEXT APARTMENT

Price, better access to the outdoors, and better unit design were consistently the top priorities. Interestingly, 30% of respondents did not choose price as one of their top three priorities.

#2

Fresh Air + Natural Light

Fresh air and natural light are basic tenets of wellness, but to meet energy codes and cost considerations, window sizes and count are often reduced. Knowing that these are among the highest priorities for most apartment residents, we work with our clients to design efficient walls without sacrificing views and access to fresh air.

ALTA PEAK APARTMENTS
PORTLAND

“ *more operable windows -
right now my unit only has
one operable window that opens
about three inches* ”

52%

OF PEOPLE SAID
GETTING ACCESS TO
FRESH AIR IS MOST
IMPORTANT

At 30%, access to light is of second-most importance.

#3

Acoustical Privacy

Spending more time at home—on Zoom calls, working, exercising, cooking meals, and more—has magnified any lack of acoustical privacy in multi-family developments. The acoustical design between and within units (the wall and floor/ceiling assemblies) is the first line of defense in creating more quiet environments.

“ anything to reduce, or better yet, eliminate normal living noises between floors would be a huge improvement

34%

OF PEOPLE SAID ACOUSTICAL PRIVACY IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN THEIR UNIT

(SECOND ONLY TO MORE STORAGE)

More space, better temperature control, improved layout, durable finishes, and in-unit appliances were also noted as challenges.

WEST EDGE TOWER APARTMENTS
SEATTLE

#4

Private Balconies

Residents are no longer hoping for private outdoor access—they are expecting it. We can make apartment living more comfortable by providing more balconies that extend the functional unit space outdoors. For years we have reduced the number of private balconies as a cost control, but now is the time to ensure that tomorrow's apartments are responding to residents' expectations.

“ I’ve realized how important it is for me to have some sort of outside space—it’s helpful to take in some fresh air, but also helpful mentally to see other people passing by or in their own spaces ”

58%

OF PEOPLE SAY THEY WANT A PRIVATE BALCONY WHEN ASKED WHICH TYPE OF OUTDOOR SPACE THEY WANT THE MOST

The balance of respondents selected a mix of preferring a Juliet balcony, shared roof deck or courtyard, or ground-level patio off their unit.

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HOUSING

Explore Beyond.

Request the full Housing Innovation Survey results at marketing@ankrommoisan.com.

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Let's get to work.

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