

# The Future of Renting

Trends from the 2022 NMHC/Grace Hill  
Renter Preferences Survey Report



# Table of Contents

Welcome to the Source .....	3
About the Survey .....	4
Local Looks .....	5
The Future Is...	
Remote .....	6
Choice .....	8
Flexible .....	10
Smart .....	12
Delivered .....	14
Organized .....	16
Connected .....	17
Furry .....	18
Active .....	20
Healthy .....	22
Outdoors .....	24
More to Explore .....	26
Glossary .....	28
Acknowledgements .....	30



# Welcome to the Source

Since its inception in 2013, the NMHC/Grace Hill Renter Preferences Survey Report has been the premier data source for expert insights into the minds of the nation's renters.

**The survey remains the apartment industry's largest and most comprehensive resident survey and is uniquely reflective of the growing sophistication of the professionally managed segment of the industry and broader residential rental market.**

It is also the only survey that captures the myriad changes around rental preferences coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Property investors, owners, managers and developers, as well as architectural and engineering firms, financial institutions and technology suppliers, resource the information to help guide their business strategies and investment decisions. A wide variety of national and local media and trade press outlets also use the data to add critical context to their real estate reporting.

This look book marries key data trends from the survey report with real life examples of brilliant communities in a variety of geographic markets that deliver the spaces and key amenities that renters crave. However, this book only scratches the surface of what's covered in the complete survey report and provides only a narrow view of the abundance of communities serving up creative designs and services for the next generation of renters.

**The full report is available for purchase at [nmhc.org/residents](https://nmhc.org/residents).**



Photo courtesy of Greystar Real Estate Partners

## About the Survey

Our team conducted the survey in September and October 2021. Web-based surveys were distributed to more than 1 million residents. Along with the national report, metro-level reports are available. To qualify, each market needed at least 150 responses from five properties and at least two participating firms.

# 221,559

RENTER RESPONSES RECEIVED



# 4,564

PROFESSIONALLY  
MANAGED  
COMMUNITIES  
CAPTURED



## PARTICIPATING FIRMS

**AMLI**  
RESIDENTIAL

CAMDEN.

  
CORTLAND

 CUSHMAN &  
WAKEFIELD

ESSEX  
PROPERTY TRUST, INC.

FAIRFIELD  
RESIDENTIAL

  
GABLES.  
RESIDENTIAL

GREYSTAR™

LINCOLN  
PROPERTY  
COMPANY

 RANGEWATER

 SECURITY  
PROPERTIES  
RESIDENTIAL

 WINDSOR  
COMMUNITIES

## Highlights

- Resident demographics & psychographics
- Apartment search
- Touring preferences
- Lease decision factors
- Apartment features
- Community amenities
- Online services
- Connectivity needs
- Pricing expectations

# Local Looks

All real estate is local. Metro-level survey reports offer insights into how national trends are playing out locally. Here's a look at the 79 markets covered, plus a snapshot of real-life examples of properties that are embracing these trends.



## Key

-  Metro-Level Reports Available
-  Property Snapshots Highlighted in this Book

The Future Is

# REMOTE

.....

Renters of all stripes have been on the move over the past 18 months. More telling is that a quarter of respondents who moved reported that their moves were due to a shift to remote work during the pandemic.

In general, renters are teleworking with higher frequency than ever before. And there's little expectation of that changing. In fact, nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of survey respondents said they expect to be teleworking about the same amount over the next year as they are now. This shift is driving demand for home offices and meeting space. More than one in three renter respondents (35 percent) indicated interest in using shared workspace at their communities, while 19 percent said they would consider using a co-working facility when teleworking.





The Future Is

# CHOICE



Renters are in search of rental homes that are right for them. There is a growing array of options to meet their individual needs—and renters are out in the market checking them all out. Our survey asked residents what types of rental homes they considered during their last home search. While traditional apartment homes garnered a majority of responses (57 percent), townhomes and single-family rentals were also in the mix at 23 percent and 19 percent of responses, respectively.

There were also strong correlations between what type of rental home they ultimately ended up in and their preferences for features and amenities like storage solutions, fitness centers and package management.



# BEACON LAKE LANIER

RangeWater  
Flowery Branch, Ga.

Beacon Lake Lanier features 197 three- and four-bedroom single family homes. With four different floor plans ranging from 1,449 to 1,886 square feet, this Storia neighborhood by RangeWater has maximized their residents' use of space with open-concept kitchens and flexible work-from-home nooks. The exteriors feature front porches and private yards fitting of a traditional neighborhood, but with the benefits of renting.



Single-family rental living room with vinyl plank flooring and modern interior design



Single-family rental exterior with attached garage

# CANVAS AT WOODBURY

Lincoln Property Company  
Woodbury, Minn.

The Canvas at Woodbury offers renters comfort without compromising design under their own roof. In these modern, farmhouse-designed single-family units, residents can savor peace and privacy and enjoy having a yard without the worry of caring for outdoor maintenance.

The Future Is

# FLEXIBLE

.....

In the age of live-work-play at home, renters are increasingly looking for flexibility in their homes. For some, that may mean a choice between unfurnished and furnished units. For others, it might be furniture that can easily transition to different uses or floorplans that can adapt to a variety of needs. Regardless, versatility rules as nearly two-thirds of survey respondents said that flexible space in their homes was either important or extremely important.

However, flex living isn't limited to just physical space. As remote work gives more renters the freedom to move about, they are considering alternatives to the traditional leasing model. For example, 56 percent of those who moved because of a switch to remote work said they would consider joining a rental housing membership program similar to a vacation club. Similarly, that same group also indicated more interest than their non-mover counterparts in having the ability to list their rental homes on short-term rental sites like Airbnb or VRBO.

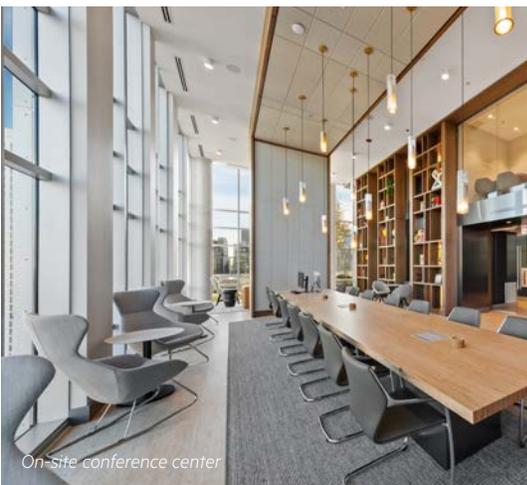




Photos courtesy of AMLI Residential



Space-saving, transformable furniture



On-site conference center

## AMLI 808

AMLI Residential  
Chicago, Ill.

AMLI 808 offers downtown living with a plethora of work-from-home amenities, including an on-site podcast studio and a DIY studio for makers and builders. The property also features Ori studio suites. Choreographing movement into apartment homes, this modular system creates a private bedroom, an open living room, work from home (WFH) space, storage and more, all at the touch of a button.

The Future Is

# SMART

.....

Renters' interest in smart home technology is tied to its ability to add convenience or drive savings. Survey results show that the most popular smart home feature for renters is a smart thermostat, with 70 percent of respondents saying they were interested in or wouldn't rent without this feature. Smart sensor technology is also feeding renter interest in leak detection systems (67 percent) and water-saving features (67 percent).



# HIGHWATER

Greystar

Redwood City, Calif.



Design meets efficiency at Highwater. Highwater offers penthouse residences—complete with elegant finishes and upgraded appliances, including Wi-Fi-enabled front load washers and dryers and smart refrigerators.

Photo courtesy of Greystar Real Estate Partners



Photo courtesy of FPI Management



*In-unit programmable Nest thermostat*

# THE CORE NATOMAS

FPI Management

Sacramento, Calif.



One of the best amenities The Core Natomas delivers to its residents is built-in Smart home technology ready to be linked. From the moment you step inside, with the seamless Assa Abloy Electronic keyless entry system, renters can quickly settle in with the help of a programmable Nest thermostat. The Core Natomas allows optimal comfort with ease.

The Future Is

# DELIVERED

.....

If online ordering and package deliveries were on the rise at rental properties pre-pandemic, volumes have skyrocketed since. Survey data show measured but significant growth in high-volume package deliveries and perishable deliveries such as grocery items.

Package pickup preferences have also shifted. While respondents said a self-service pickup solution like package lockers or a package room is still the preferred option, survey respondents were less interested in people entering their units to deliver packages and more interested in a doorstep drop-off option, according to this year's survey results.





The Future Is

# ORGANIZED

.....

Marie Kondo sparked much joy in the early days of the pandemic as people made use of their time at home to rethink their space and tame unruly junk drawers and closets. Survey data show renters value flex space in their homes and are placing a higher priority on home organization. Most telling is that renter interest in better modular closet systems jumped to 72 percent from 56 percent in the last round, making it one of the apartment features with the biggest positive change during that two-year period.



**Interest in modular closet systems has increased by**

**36%**

**since 2020**



# HERON

Strategic Property Partners  
Tampa, Florida

.....

Situated in Tampa's Water Street neighborhood, the Heron incorporates simple forms and honest materiality inspired by Scandinavian and Japanese design through every element. Form meets function with their customizable Elfa® closet systems in all closets.

Photos courtesy of Strategic Property Partners



Customizable closet system

Photos courtesy of AMLI Residential



In-Unit Closet System

# AML I 808

AML I Residential  
Chicago, Illinois

.....

AML I 808 offers downtown living with flexible closet space and an array of in-unit storage solutions. Residents can benefit from walk-in, wardrobe, pantry and linen closets with ample storage and closets with custom shelving and drawers.



#1

Reliable cell phone service ranked no. 1 community amenity

The Future Is

# CONNECTED

.....

Renters today demand seamless connectivity, from curb to couch and everywhere in between. Reliable cell phone service ranked as the No. 1 community amenity, with 86 percent of survey respondents indicating interest.

Renters are even more serious about their internet connectivity, with nine out of 10 respondents saying they were interested in or wouldn't rent their home without it.



# KANSO

AvalonBay Communities  
Rockville, Maryland

.....

Kasno Twinbrook, partnering with WhiteSky, offers seamless, secure and instant high-speed Wi-Fi internet connectivity throughout the entire community. Residents can move in and log on—no equipment or installation appointments required.

Photos courtesy of AvalonBay Communities



Photos courtesy of Bozzuto

# THE ABBY

Bozzuto  
Quincy, Mass.

.....

Declare your independence at The Abby, where 610 modern rental apartments share close to 20,000 square feet in amenity spaces. Residents can stay connected through fortified features of high IQ interiors including prewired services such as Starry and Comcast Cable, USB outlets in kitchens and bedrooms and wired quiet spaces with seamless connectivity.

The Future Is

# FURRY



Roughly one-third of renter respondents indicated they lived with a pet or service animal. Dogs are proving to be a renter's best friend, with 70 percent of pet owners indicating their fur babies were dogs. The preference is driving interest in—and premiums for—four-legged friendly amenities like community dog parks, pet washing stations and on-site pet services like doggy daycare and grooming.

Moreover, survey results show that pet breed restrictions may be falling out of favor with renters, with 77 percent of respondents indicating that pet breed restrictions would either have no effect on their leasing decisions or would make them less likely to rent a property with restrictions in place.



# PARQ ON SPEER

Greystar  
Denver, Colo.

Parq on Speer is a new collection of high-rise homes that features premier rooftop retreats. Located in Denver's walkable Golden Triangle neighborhood, this pet friendly property features a "barq parq" with an indoor and outdoor play area and pet spa.



Photos courtesy of Greystar Real Estate Partners



The Future Is

# ACTIVE

.....

Fitness centers remain one of the more popular community amenities with 70 percent of survey respondents saying they are interested in or won't rent without one on site. More than half of respondents indicated that they only use their community fitness center for their exercise needs, although usage rates vary. For those who report rarely or never using the fitness center, one-third cite no interest, another 29 percent point to not enough equipment, lack of the right equipment or outdated equipment. What is the right stuff? Cardio exercise machines—treadmills, above all—and free weights.





*Waterline Club basketball court*

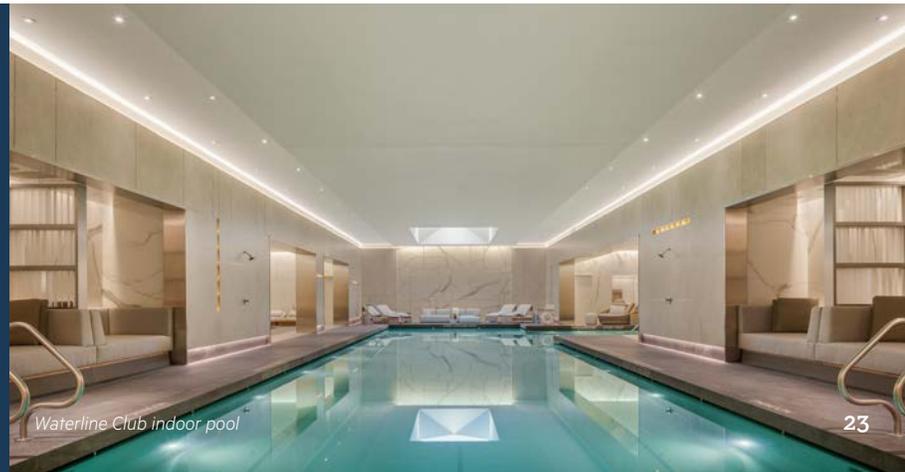


*Waterline Club pickleball court*

## WATERLINE SQUARE

GID Properties  
New York City, NY

Waterline Square offers several amenities via their Waterline Club. Fitness enthusiasts will revel in the many activities available, from indoor tennis, basketball, squash, and rock-climbing to a half-pipe skate park, golf simulator and indoor soccer field. An expansive fitness center includes private studios for yoga, barre, Pilates, boxing and more.



*Waterline Club indoor pool*

The Future Is

# HEALTHY

.....

Renters are paying attention to the effects of their homes on their overall health. Non-smoking buildings have long become the norm, but renters are expecting more. Roughly 71 percent of survey respondents reported interest in enhanced indoor air quality while 65 percent said healthy building certifications would positively influence their leasing decisions.

However, noise remains a leading environmental pollutant at rental communities, detracting from renters' wellbeing and living experience. As a result, renter interest in sound mitigating tech in windows and walls remains sky high. In fact, soundproof walls are the third most popular home feature after air conditioning and an in-unit washer/dryer, with 90 percent of respondents indicating they were interested or wouldn't rent without them.



## VESI

Lincoln Property Company  
Minneapolis, Minn.

Vesi features a suite of wellness-centered amenities so its residents no longer have to work for the weekend. The most prominent hallmark being their Spa Lounge. This rejuvenation center offers comfortable seating, a calming fireplace, sauna, rotating teas and aromatherapy for the best relaxation anyone can ask for.



Spa Lounge with fireplace



On-site meditation lounge



Social club rooftop pool

## AURELIEN

Lincoln Property Company  
Chicago, Ill.

Equipped with a motion studio and yoga room with fitness on demand® and men's and women's meditation lounges, Aurelien's onsite social club provides residents with everything they need for rest and relaxation.

The Future Is

# OUTDOORS



Renters have long put a premium on private outdoor space like patios and balconies, as well as other community outdoor amenities. Nationally, nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of survey respondents indicated strong interest in a community pool, with the strongest interest levels coming mostly from fairer climates in the Southeast and Texas.

Geography also factored into interest levels around amenities like rooftop space and common area barbecue grills as renters in higher density areas in and around some of the nation's leading cities showed stronger interest levels.





Rooftop pool

## PARQ ON SPEER

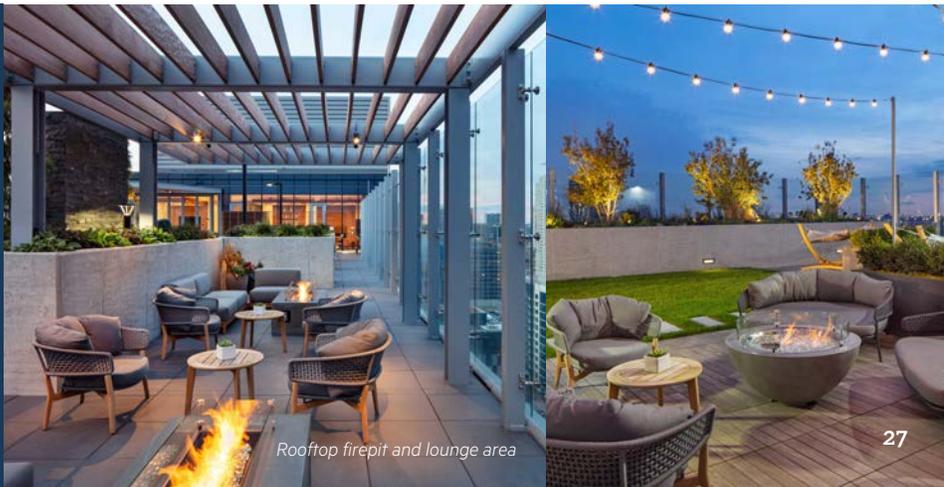
Greystar  
Denver, Colo.

Parq on Speer features an array of exclusive outdoor spaces, including a pool terrace overlooking panoramic mountain views, private pool cabanas, outdoor kitchen with gas grills, TVs, dining area and fire pits.

## MILIEU

Lincoln Property Company  
Chicago, Ill.

Located in the West Loop of Chicago, Milieu offers an array of amenities -- both indoor and outdoor. Residents can spend sunny weekends lounging by the resort-style pool and spa or bring a book to the hammock or lawn lounging area. An outdoor fitness area and dog run are also among their outdoor offerings.



Rooftop firepit and lounge area

# MORE TO EXPLORE

.....

The topics and data represented in this look book only scratch the surface of what the 2022 NMHC/Grace Hill Renter Preferences Survey Report covers. The full report follows the renter journey, delving deep into home shopping and leasing trends, interest and value around unit features, as well as community amenities and services, and thorough renter satisfaction and renewal expectations. Here's a more complete look at all the topics covered in the report. Visit [nmhc.org/residents](https://nmhc.org/residents) to purchase the full report.

## Resident Demographics & Psychographics

- Gender
- Age
- Employment
- Income
- Living Arrangement
- Homeownership
- Geography
- Move history
- Current home characteristics
- Benefits of renting
- Vehicle ownership
- Pet ownership

## Shopping

- Home search parameters
- Online shopping trends
- Ratings & reviews
- Touring preferences
- Communication preferences
- Virtual leasing



## Leasing, Move-In & Management

- Lease decision factors
- Pet policies
- Short-term rentals
- Building certifications
- Lease terms
- Security deposit alternatives
- Payments
- Utilities
- Broadband services
- Management communications

## Lifestyle

- Commuting & vehicle/transportation services
- Remote work
- Personalization
- Entertainment services
- Connectivity
- Smart home technology
- Controlled access & security
- Package deliveries
- Fitness centers
- Storage options

## Rental Home Features

- Kitchen & appliances
- Bathrooms
- Flooring
- Finishes
- Indoor air quality

- Energy efficiency
- Windows & coverings
- Sound attenuation
- Unit access

## Property Amenities

- Parking
- Concierge services
- Business centers & co-working
- Makerspace
- Pet amenities
- Party rooms
- Community kitchens & barbecue areas
- Childcare & kid-friendly amenities
- Short-term rentals
- Recycling & trash services
- Sustainability & green initiatives
- Recreation & outdoor space
- Pool & spa amenities

## Renewals & Move-Outs

- Renewal decision factors
- Reasons for moving
- Preferred lease terms
- Interest in alternative asset types
- Flex living
- Homeownership intent



## Featured Properties

# GLOSSARY



### AMLI 808

Owner: AMLI Residential

P 11

Location: Chicago, Ill.

[amli.com/apartments/chicago/river-north-apartments/amli-808](https://amli.com/apartments/chicago/river-north-apartments/amli-808)



### The Core Natomas

Owner: FPI Management

P 13

Location: Sacramento, Calif.

[liveatthecore.com/](https://liveatthecore.com/)



### Highwater

Manager: Greystar

P 13

Location: Redwood City, Calif.

[livehighwater.com](https://livehighwater.com)



### Parq on Speer

Manager: Greystar

P 19

Location: Denver, Colo.

+ 25

[parqliving.com](https://parqliving.com)



### Aurelien

Manager: Lincoln Property Company

P 23

Location: Chicago, Ill.

[aurelienchicago.com/](https://aurelienchicago.com/)



### Electric Lofts

Owner: FPI Management

P 15

Location: Oakland, Calif.

[electriclofts.com](https://electriclofts.com)



### Kanso Twinbrook

Owner: AvalonBay Communities

P 18

Location: Rockville, Md.

[avaloncommunities.com/maryland/rockville-apartments/kanso-twinbrook/](https://avaloncommunities.com/maryland/rockville-apartments/kanso-twinbrook/)



### Beacon Lake Lanier

Owner: RangeWater

P 9

Location: Flowery Branch, Ga.

[beaconlakelanier.com/beacon-lake-lanier-flowery-branch-ga/](https://beaconlakelanier.com/beacon-lake-lanier-flowery-branch-ga/)



### Bodhi at Island Creek Village

Owner: Beacon Communities

P 7

Location: Duxbury, Mass.

[islandcreekbc.com/senior-living/ma/duxbury/bodhi-at-island-creek-village/](https://islandcreekbc.com/senior-living/ma/duxbury/bodhi-at-island-creek-village/)



### Foundry on 19th

Manager: Greystar

P 7

Location: Houston, Tex.

[foundryon19th.com](https://foundryon19th.com)



### Milieu

Manager: Lincoln Property Company

P 25

Location: Chicago, Ill.

[milieuchicago.com/](https://milieuchicago.com/)



### Vesi

Manager: Lincoln Property Company

P 23

Location: Minneapolis, Minn.

[vesimpls.com](https://vesimpls.com)



### Canvas at Woodbury

Manager: Lincoln Property Company

P 9

Location: Woodbury, Minn.

[canvasatwoodbury.com](https://canvasatwoodbury.com)



### Heron

Owner: ZRS Management, LLC

P 15

Location: Tampa, Fla.

[heronresidences.com/](https://heronresidences.com/)



### North Square Apartments

Owner: Beacon Communities

P 15

Location: North Amherst, Mass.

[northsquareapartments.com](https://northsquareapartments.com)



### Waterline Square

Owner: GID Properties

P 21

Location: New York, N.Y.

[waterlinesquare.com](https://waterlinesquare.com)

# QUESTIONS?

NMHC thanks you for navigating through this look book and hopes this snapshot of data and highlighted communities have you excited for the full report, which can be purchased at [nmhc.org/residents](https://nmhc.org/residents).

For any inquiries on the data, please email [renterprefs@nmhc.org](mailto:renterprefs@nmhc.org).



A special thank you to Grace Hill for collaborating with NMHC, making the 2022 NMHC/Grace Hill Renter Preferences Survey Report possible.

