

Resident Wish List: Part 2



By Barbara Ballinger | March 24, 2025

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Resident satisfaction comes from different places and can change based on numerous factors. Included in this are amenities and how they impress upon residents as well as their connections to fellow residents, the community and the housing provider.

Pet-friendly everywhere.

National surveys point to the growing ownership of pets by renters. “Know their pet and a renter will stay forever,” says Diana Pittro, Executive Vice President, Chicago-based RMK Management Corp. Others concur and cater to four-legged residents with more durable surfaces in units and shared spaces, more pet parks with better materials for the runs such as floating grassy surfaces that are easier to clean and replace periodically, says Pittro. More washing stations, trails, agility courses, water bowls and toys are being added throughout a community as well as heat lamps in winter and water pools in summer in dog run areas. Even leasing offices may include a pet bed and treats when owners visit with their pets in tow, says Meghann Van Dorn, IIDA LEED AP ID+C, Director of Interior Design for Chelsea, Mass.-based The Architectural Team (TAT). Developer Jeff Klotz of Atlantic Beach, Fla.-based The Klotz Group of Companies is adding vending machines with treats and photo stations to “tag your fury friend,” he says. Also on site are groomers once a week and a veterinarian once a month, Klotz says.

Smaller work-from-home niches and more choices for shared areas.

While many may still work from home, they feel less of a need for a dedicated room in their apartment, Van Dorn says. Many are content with a niche or alcove where a desk can be placed or small den without a closet – rather than a full second bedroom that potentially leads to higher rent. For this reason, Chris Fletcher, Executive Vice President, Development with Atlanta-based Cortland, is incorporating spaces of about 50 square feet with a window and often a glass-paneled door. But residents continue to want to work outside their apartment even as they return to corporate offices, and many favor a choice of a cubicle for privacy or long table out in the open, Van Dorn says. Brad Lutz, Managing Principal and Multifamily Practice Leader at Orlando, Fla.-based Baker Barrios Architects, says other options are library-style carrels, private office or phone rooms, community tables or soft seating options that offer an adjacent laptop table. “[The size of the property] often dictates how many types of spaces there are,” Lutz says. The overall look has become more high-end and curated in furnishings, lighting and shades with access or at least a view of the outdoors, he says.

Colors and art.

Van Dorn has seen a shift away from gray toward earthy, warmer palettes for paint, darker hues for flooring, cabinetry and fabrics, and less brass for fittings and fixtures with the return to chrome and satin nickel. People still want to make “classic” choices (which is what originally drove the brass movement) but now want settings to feel fresh, she says. Using alternative classic metals (nickel/chrome) is an effective approach and can be mixed with the warmer brass to connect the two finishes as well, she says. More artwork, including photography, is selected from artists who live in the neighborhood or nearby, says Lutz. Showcasing that local connection can bring authenticity to a new property and is a simple but creative way to weave in the look and character of the surrounding area throughout spaces where residents interact with neighbors, says Lutz.

In-unit laundry.

These have become a universal must-have, at least for those in market-rate and luxury buildings, but apartment equipment is also becoming more commonplace for residents in affordable apartments, though it sometimes may be compact rather than large-scale. In some buildings TAT designs, it specs smaller equipment in units and oversized appliances for a room on the floor or in a basement laundry.

Fitness centers.

The size, how well it’s outfitted, programmed and maintained make a difference in residents’ interest in a building since it may allow them to forgo an outside gym membership. At its new mixed-use tower 1900 Broadway in Oakland, Calif., Bay Area-based Behring Companies, has a 6,500-square-foot gym. New fitness and wellness trends are emerging. Brad Mawhinney, Vice President of Operations with Newtown Square, Pa.-based GMH Communities says, these include sound meditation events, micro markets stocked with healthy snacks, cold plunges and saunas.

Also at value-add buildings, John Carroll, Principal with Charleston, S.C.-based Lakeland Capital, says, there's a push for more fitness equipment.

Package management.

With the arrival of hundreds and thousands of packages daily (Behring's new 1900 Broadway at 60% leased sees an average of 1,000 packages daily), residents want an easier process to know their package has arrived, where it's stored and to be able to access it when they want. Online shopping has taken over traditional brick-and-mortar stores like malls, says Mawhinney. More buildings are adopting apps that permit such information.

More outdoor areas.

Whether passive lawn or an activated terrace or trail for swimming, cooking, exercise, walking or other activities, the ability to enjoy the outdoors at ground level, on a balcony above the first level or atop a rooftop all rank high on residents' wish lists for views and the importance of nature as a therapeutic boon, says Klotz. "Everyone seems focused on an outdoor lifestyle," he says. Developers and managers keep close tabs on trends such as residents wanting more barbecue stations but close to playgrounds and other areas so parents can watch children while they cook, says Jillian Dorell, Director of Design at Branchburg, N.J.-based Larken Associates.

Focus on kids.

As more families stay longer in apartments rather than purchase a home and as empty-nesters head to rentals by choice, developers are featuring designs that appeal to children and grandchildren, from tot lots that are sensory sensitive to pools with shallow tanning ledges for adults to relax and offer kids safe access, says Dorell. At its Monte View at Pohatcong in Pohatcong Township, N.J., the clubhouse includes game rooms with pool tables, shuffleboard and pinball machines. The company is also rethinking some future designs to incorporate arts and crafts rooms and supplies.

Views and wow factors.

With amenities making many buildings look and feel increasingly similar, residents favor features that set one apart from another. At 1900 Broadway, Behring designed a penthouse lounge with panoramic views of the Bay Bridge. A large club room with a 100-inch-long TV, audio and video features, and a lanai with seating and a kitchen adds more ability to unwind. Built atop the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) 19th Street Station in Uptown Oakland, the building provides access to offices and 52,000 square feet of co-working space as more companies call staff back. Throughout the building, attention was paid to dampening noise.

[Read Part 1 of this Article](#)

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